

Hacked Off Facebook

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Way back when, when I was a kid, I visited the school library and often read things that had nothing to do with classwork. Kind of regret that now...but not completely.

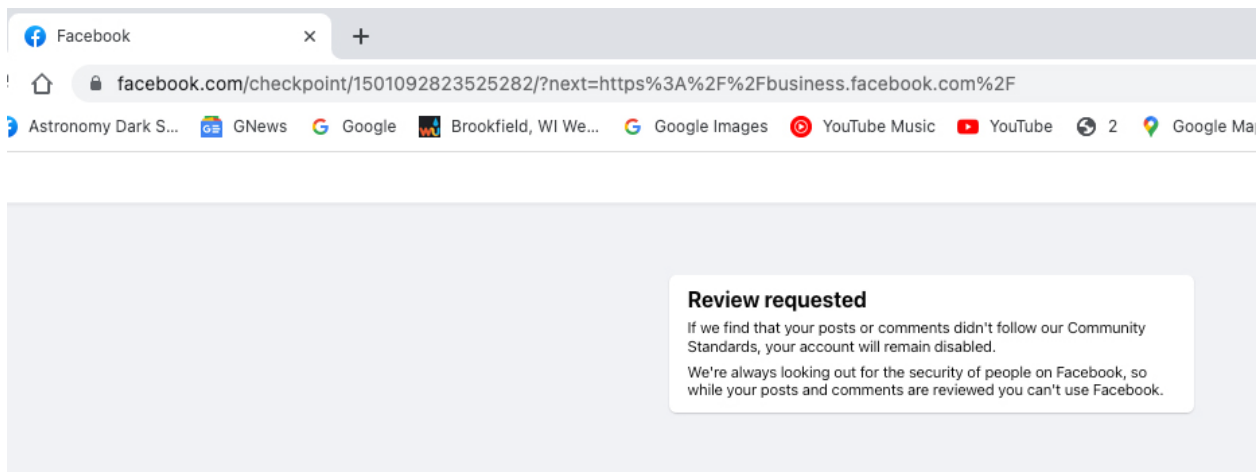
One of the features I enjoyed was in a magazine called *Outdoor Life*, which still exists but is distributed digitally these days.

Titled "This Happened To Me" it told tales in a comic-book style using drawings and captions and sometimes dialogue balloons. Stories were usually harrowing, things like a fly fisherman tripping in rapids and his waders filling with water or a hiker waking a grizzly deep in the woods.

Every once in a while I'm reminded of the feature, not by a death-defying experience but by one that is irritatingly memorable. For example, my recent "disabled" account status on Facebook.

It started when I tried to access FB as usual around 6:30 a.m. on February 18. I got a message stating something to the effect that my FB account was suspended—no reason given—but I could appeal.

Quite a surprise. I thought it was a mistake and immediately appealed but didn't receive anything from FB. When I tried to access FB again, the message below appeared. I concluded the company was aware I felt I had been treated unfairly, would investigate, and reinstate me.



Looking at my e-mail inbox a little later, I noticed one from FB and have posted it below.

From: "Facebook" <security@facebookmail.com>
Subject: Facebook password reset
Date: February 18, 2022 at 3:20:12 AM CST
To: "Ted H. Schaar" <ted@tswrites.com>
Reply-To: noreply <noreply@facebookmail.com>



Hi Ted,

Your Facebook password was reset on Friday, February 18, 2022 at 3:20 AM (CST).

Operating system: Windows
Browser: Edge (Chromium Based)
IP address: 104.190.123.27
Estimated location: Brookfield, WISCONSIN, US

If you did this, you can safely disregard this email.

If you didn't do this, please [secure your account](#).

Thanks,
The Facebook Security Team

Note the time and that the culprit who reset my password had a Windows operating system and used the Edge browser which I didn't know existed until that moment. I'm a longtime Mac guy and currently use Chrome or Safari.

More trouble appeared a few days later when Pam, who handles our Natural Scratch business, noticed \$250.00 had been charged against our PayPal account by FB. What?

Begin forwarded message:

From: "service@paypal.com" <service@paypal.com>
Subject: Receipt for Your Payment to Facebook
Date: February 18, 2022 at 8:50:39 PM CST
To: Ted Schaar <ted@naturalscratch.com>

Transaction details [Print](#)

Subscription Payment Sent
February 18, 2022 at 6:50:13 PM PST | Transaction ID: 41L93266NW1425125
Payment Status: COMPLETED Gross amount -**\$250.00 USD**

We have no postal address on file

Order details	Quantity	Price	Subtotal
Facebook Ads	1	\$250.00 USD	\$250.00 USD
Purchase Total			\$250.00 USD

Your Payment

Purchase Total	-\$250.00 USD
Sales Tax	\$0.00 USD
Shipping Amount	\$0.00 USD
Handling Amount	\$0.00 USD
Insurance Amount	\$0.00 USD
Gross Amount	-\$250.00 USD
PayPal Fee	\$0.00 USD
Net Amount	-\$250.00 USD

I immediately filed a dispute with PayPal, saying the \$250 wasn't authorized. Very quickly PayPal resolved the case *in Facebook's favor*.

Got on the phone with PayPal. I've been a business customer for more than 20 years and had never disputed a charge until then. Explained the hack situation to a customer service representative in India; she assured me it would be reversed, and I should watch for it. Instead, the following arrived on March 8.

Update on your case

We received the case(s) you filed on February 21, 2022.

We have reviewed this transaction(s) and are denying your case(s). This decision was made because we received shipment tracking from the merchant confirming that the merchandise was delivered.

We're sorry for any problems you may have experienced with the transaction(s).

Transaction information

Dispute Case ID	PP-D-142706689
Transaction Amount	\$250.00 USD
Dispute Amount	\$250.00 USD
Transaction ID	41L93266NW1425125
Transaction Date	February 19, 2022

My quick reply:

This is crazy!

I have spoken to several PayPal customer service people about it, the latest Jennifer [many times customer service personnel in other nations use American names] yesterday afternoon. She said she was crediting my account for the \$250.


I DID NOT purchase anything from Facebook this year or last. And I have NO RECEIPT from Facebook. Below I've attached a receipt for the **last advertising I purchased from Facebook in 2018.**

Your e-mail states you "have received shipping tracking from the merchant confirming that the merchandise was delivered"—what merchandise?


My Facebook account was hacked (changed e-mail notice attached) on February 18, the same day this \$250 was assessed against my PayPal account. I've attached the notice from FB. Whoever changed my FB password used a Windows system and Edge browser, and I'm a Mac user and have never used Edge. It wasn't me! Currently, I am locked out of Facebook, and I don't know why.

Please resolve this goofy situation in my favor and credit my account. You should go after whomever or whatever received the \$250!

Thanks,



Facebook Ads Team
 Your Facebook Ads Receipt (Account ID: 4487370295755)
 To: Ted H. Schaar,
 Reply-To: noreply

December 31, 2018 at 9:01 AM


Receipt for Ted H. Schaar (Account ID: 4487370295755)

Summary
 AMOUNT BILLED
\$154.92 USD

DATE RANGE
 Nov 29, 2018, 12:00 AM - Dec 29, 2018, 11:30 PM
 PRODUCT TYPE
 Facebook Ads
 BILLING REASON
 Remaining ad costs at the end of the month.
 PAYMENT METHOD
 PayPal Account ted@naturalscratch.com

CAMPAIGN	RESULTS	AMOUNT
 Traffic	19,256 Impressions	\$154.92
TOTAL		\$154.92

Transaction ID: 2063161960466006-4063079

Almost immediately this arrived:

Dear Ted Schaar,

Thank you for contacting PayPal Customer Service.

In an effort to assist you as quickly and efficiently as possible, please direct all customer service inquiries through our website.

1. Log in to your PayPal account.
2. Click on Help & Contact at the bottom of any PayPal web page.

This will give you further information on how to "Call us" or send an email via "Message Center".

Alternatively, you can log in to your PayPal account and choose "Resolve a problem in our Resolution Center", which will take you to PayPal's central hub for buyer and seller resolution and limitation information. You will find information about the limitation and steps to remove it below:

1. Log in to your account.
2. Click [Resolution Center](#). If you have a Business account, click **More** and then **Resolution Center**.
3. Click **Go to Account Limitations**.
4. Next to each step required to remove the limitation, click **Resolve** and follow the steps to provide information.

If you prefer to contact us, please log into your account and click Contact or Help at the bottom of the page.

Thanks,

PayPal

* * *

Telephoned PayPal again. This time I asked to speak with a supervisor and soon was connected to Mara. Again, I explained the dastardly Oil Can Harry situation and suggested she ask FB to provide a receipt showing *what* I supposedly purchased for \$250.

Within a day or two, notice arrived that Facebook had supplied the refund.



Facebook refunded \$250.00 USD from your purchase on February 18, 2022.

The money will be refunded to your bank account ending in 9951. It may take a few days to appear on your statement. If we can't refund the money to your bank account, we'll refund it to your PayPal balance instead.

Your refund summary

Transaction ID: 1ES7430364195431H

March 13, 2022 1:52:20 AM PST

Total purchase amount \$250.00 USD

Amount refunded \$250.00 USD

Refund paid by

Facebook

paypal-charges@support.facebook.com

Invoice ID: P4902064923242349

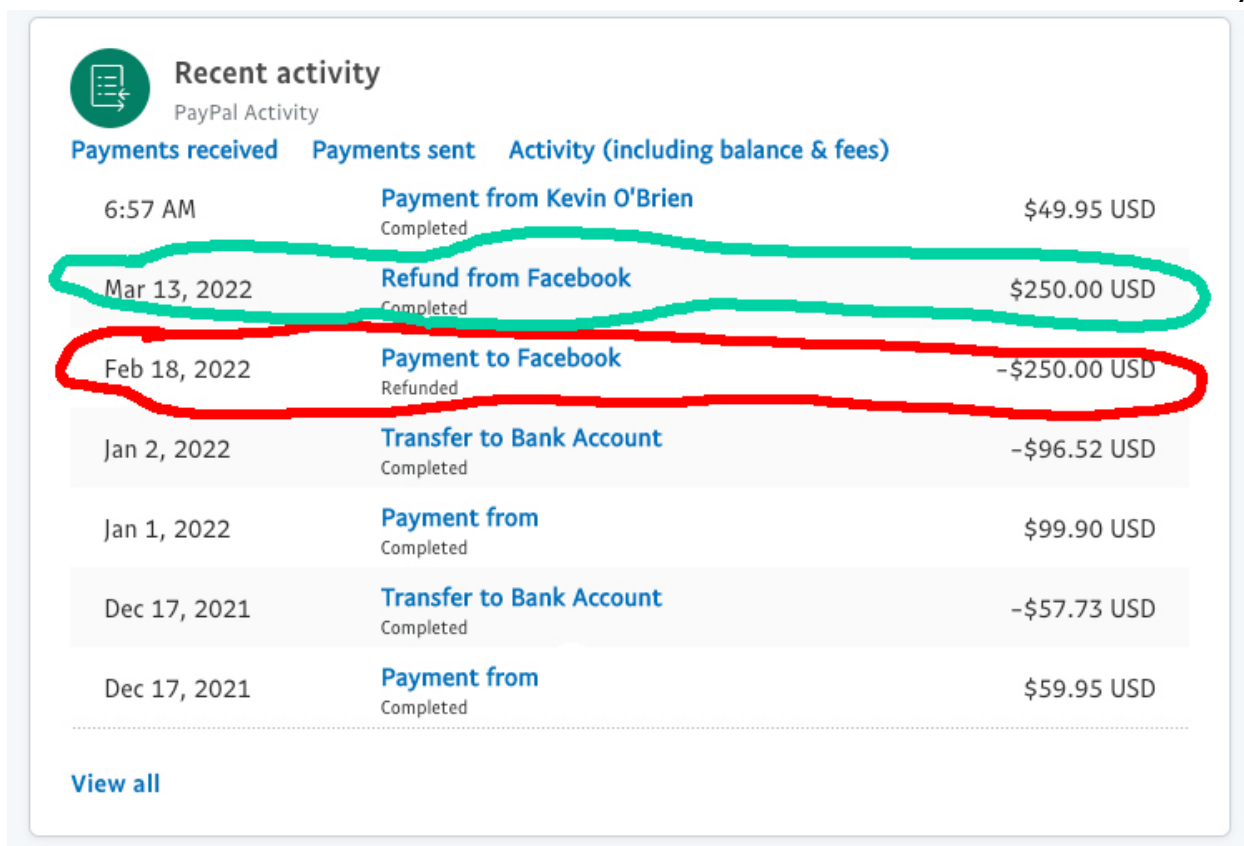
Refund paid to

Ted Schaar

ted@naturalscratch.com

Refund details

Refunded to bank 9951: \$250.00 USD



The screenshot shows the 'Recent activity' section of a PayPal account. It lists several transactions. Two transactions are highlighted with hand-drawn circles: a green circle around the 'Refund from Facebook' entry dated March 13, 2022, and a red circle around the 'Payment to Facebook' entry dated February 18, 2022. The 'Payment to Facebook' entry is marked as 'Refunded'.

Recent activity		
PayPal Activity		
Payments received	Payments sent	Activity (including balance & fees)
6:57 AM	Payment from Kevin O'Brien Completed	\$49.95 USD
Mar 13, 2022	Refund from Facebook Completed	\$250.00 USD
Feb 18, 2022	Payment to Facebook Refunded	-\$250.00 USD
Jan 2, 2022	Transfer to Bank Account Completed	-\$96.52 USD
Jan 1, 2022	Payment from Completed	\$99.90 USD
Dec 17, 2021	Transfer to Bank Account Completed	-\$57.73 USD
Dec 17, 2021	Payment from Completed	\$59.95 USD

[View all](#)

A day later, I sent the following to Facebook:

My FB account was hacked on February 18, and I've been locked out by FB ever since.

See below.

Some bad character also assessed a \$250 charge against my PayPal account purportedly from FB on the same day, February 18—see immediately below.

Finally, PayPal and Facebook were able to determine it was fraud and my \$250 was refunded yesterday, March 13.

Now I would like to regain access to my FB account.

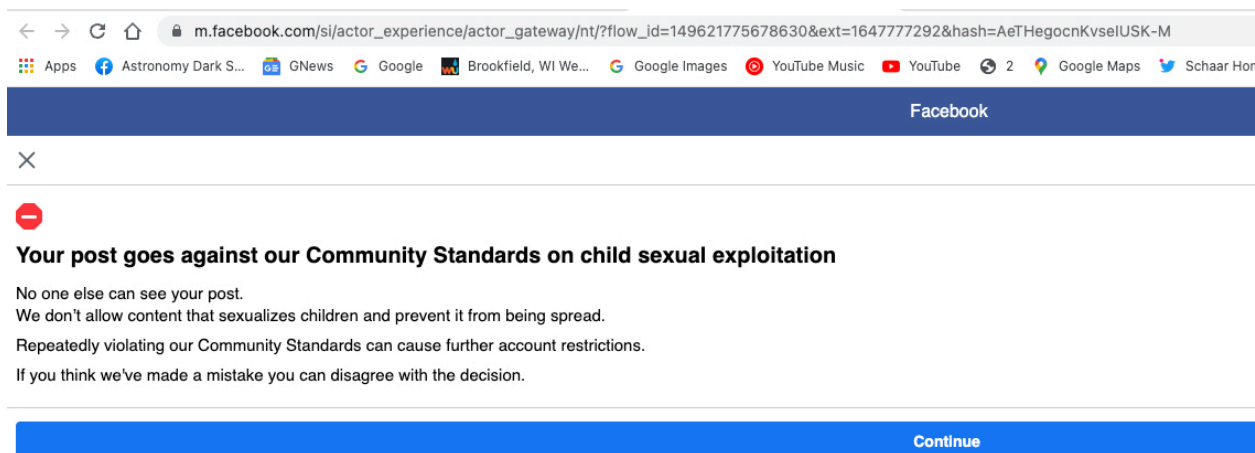
Thanks,

* * *

This and other communications I sent to FB were unanswered. I Googled how many users FB has and discovered 2.9 billion. The company doesn't care about us one at a time.

Meanwhile I continued trying to log on to FB. On March 17, I received the following, the first and only time it appeared. Whether it truly reflected what

someone had posted when appearing as me on FB or was some robotic mistake I don't know...and probably will never know.



It did motivate me to seek a USPS address for FB, since the company never responded to my e-mails, and send a letter with five attachments.

Corporate Secretary
Meta
1601 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

March 23, 2022

Dear Corporate Secretary,

I have been a frequent and happy Facebook user for about ten years. At 3:20 a.m. (CST) on February 18, someone hacked into my account and changed my password—please see Attachment 1. *I am an Apple user, not a Windows user.*

Between that early hour and when I tried to log in about three hours later, the hacker-imposter did something so bad Facebook disabled my account. Please see Attachment 2. I appealed immediately but never received any kind of reply from Facebook.

A friend suggested I try changing the password on my account. Somehow I was able to accomplish this. Please see Attachment 3 and note the system is Apple and the browser Chrome, not Windows and Edge (whatever that is).

Next, I discovered someone had assessed a \$250 charge (purportedly from FB) against my PayPal account on the *same early morning*—February 18, 2022, my FB account was hacked; it took three calls to PayPal but finally FB

refunded \$250 to my account—please see Attachment 4. (I haven't used Facebook advertising since 2018—please see Attachment 5.)

On March 17, almost a month after the hack, things got *slanderosly ugly* when I checked to see if my account had been re-activated and received a terrible message [Attachment 6]. I immediately sent an e-mail to support@fb.com (excerpt):

"Today, when I tried to access FB, I received the message in the directly below screen grab [Attachment 5]. No way did I post anything exploiting children! I'm a dad and granddad. Someone hacked my account in the wee hours of February 18, 2022, and it's been disabled ever since. The bad character must have done some crazy stuff when he or she had control of the account."

No reply.

I'm the victim but am being treated like the perpetrator. Please look into this; contact me by e-mail, letter, phone, or text if you have questions; and re-enable my account.

I miss Facebook and all the friends I have on it.

Sincerely,

* * *

No reply. Nothing. I felt like I was watching the 60s TV show *Laugh-In* with Lily Tomlin-character Ernestine's rejoinder to questioning telephone company customers: "We don't care. We don't have to. We're the phone company!"

* * *

Checking on the appeal I filed with FB more than a month earlier, I encountered the following:

Your account has been disabled

You can't use Facebook because your account, or activity on it, didn't follow our Community Standards.

We can't review this decision because too much time has passed since your account was disabled.

To learn more about the reasons we disable accounts visit our Community Standards.

[Go to Community Standards](#)

That was it.

I decided to wait 60 days and then open a new FB account under my legal name Theodore H. Schaar.

Why this happened to me is a mystery.

In no instance did posts I authored violate FB community standards. My political comments might have angered bad characters who then endeavored to knock me off FB. But they never contained foul language, offensive slang terms for racial or ethnic groups, personal attacks on other users, fake names, advocated or celebrated violence, or any of the other things FB forbids. Many of my posts were just passing on news stories found in reputable publications such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.

Looking back I remember after years of never entering a password on FB, in the weeks before the hack, one day when I tried to open my page using my iPad, FB—*evidently*—requested my password. It wasn't automatic as usual.

This happened more times over the next number of weeks, but I didn't think much about it. There are a lot of junk actions on FB and I just thought the company was being careful.

Now I think someone, somehow had *interceded* to request the password and stole it when I typed it to log in. The point probably was to steal money from my PayPal and bank account and closing down my FB account was a diversion. Just a guess.

This happened to me and it can happen to you. What I'm doing differently now is only logging on to FB through my desktop computer. Hope is this hard-wired—not WiFi—connection is more secure.

Giants of our time such as Facebook and PayPal are wonders and have made life easier and more interesting in many ways. However, their success leads to impersonal, robotic treatment of us, the individuals who, one at a time, have made them successful.

And they stick together. My contacts with PayPal didn't produce a positive result at first because fellow IT company Facebook had far more credibility and I was swimming against the current. It took hours of my time to get the \$250 refund from Facebook and I never received any message from the company. Nothing. No reply that was personal in any way.

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