

Comment on the #horror Controversy Inbox x



Danno of the Dead <dannoofthedeadblog@gmail.com>

May 8, 2019, 2:46 AM

to andrea ▾

Good Morning,

My name is Dan Lee and I am a writer with 52 Weeks of Horror (52weeksofhorror.com). I'm writing this morning looking for comment regarding the ongoing censorship and harassment of horror creators and fans on social media.

Instagram and Facebook specifically have been targeting the #horror hashtag and blocking posts under it unless they are paid advertisements or from users considered " influencers. Adding to the insult are a series of warning messages that pop up during a search of the hashtag suggesting that users may be mentally ill or dangerous for searching this term. Meanwhile, images and posts depicting or inciting racial, sexual, and politically motivated violence and hate remain unchecked.

There are a growing number of people in the horror community who feel that this is an issue that needs to be addressed and my outlet would like to know your thoughts on the matter. I appreciate your time and look forward to your response.

-Dan



Andrea Subissati

May 9, 2019, 11:42 AM

to me ▾

Hi Dan,

Thanks for reaching out about this! I have received messages from Instagram concerned about my mental health for using horror-related hashtags. This is, in my view, silly and a little disappointing, but I don't consider it censorship or harassment.

By using social media platforms, we agree to that platform's terms of service, which grants that platform that right to take down any content it wants to for any reason whatsoever. There are a variety of reasons why a platform might refuse content – oftentimes, I suspect that it boils down to the advertising that keeps these platforms afloat. Censorship refers to the negation of one's constitutional right to the freedom of expression – these rights do not apply to social media, so it's not the appropriate term to use here.

It is annoying that these platforms still associate horror and fictitious violence with the real thing, but that's something the horror community has been coming up against for decades. If a store doesn't want to carry Rue Morgue because our cover art is too horrific or suggestive, I respect their right to make that call. If we want to have our tastes and lifestyle choices respected, that respect has to go the other way for people who might be upset or offended by that kind of content as well.

Furthermore, I feel as though Instagram does make some effort at sensitivity in their messaging, encouraging people to seek help if the content of their feed might be causing them harm. Instagram has also recently hidden the 'like' count for many accounts in an effort to curb the adverse effects of the platform on youth self-esteem. Their efforts may not be perfect, but I do appreciate that they're trying. I imagine it's more difficult to target racial/sexual/political violence on social media unless they're using particular hashtags that Instagram can monitor.

Looking forward to the article, Dan! Please do share when it's live.



ANDREA SUBISSATI
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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