

Stephen Gutowski (00:03.286)

All right, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to another episode of the Weekly Reload Podcast. I'm your host, Stephen Gutowski. I'm also a CNN contributor and the founder of TheReload.com, where you can head over and sign up for our free newsletter today. If you want to keep up to date with what's going on with guns in America, you can also, of course, buy a membership. If you want to get exclusive access to hundreds of pieces of analysis and original reporting that you will not find anywhere else in this world.

This week on the show, we're talking about YouTube again. We have done this a number of times in the past, but they have changed their firearms policy once more. And it's actually some of the unwritten bits that are perhaps having the most impact on gun tubers. And to talk about that, I have with me this week, a popular gun tuber, Jon Patton from the Gun Collective. Welcome to the show, John. I appreciate you doing this.

Jon Patton (00:54.678)

Thanks for having me, man. I'm excited to dive into this a little bit. It'll be interesting.

Stephen Gutowski (01:00.118)

Yeah, absolutely. Can you tell people just a little bit more about yourself or anyone who any of our listeners who haven't heard of you before?

Jon Patton (01:06.016)

Sure, sure. So I shout a lot on the internet for a living. Mostly about guns. I release a weekly gun news show called TGC News, where I cover the latest and greatest in the firearms industry. New products, new ammunition, blah, blah, all that kind of stuff. I also run a growing event called GunCon every year, which for the past three years has been at Brownells in Iowa.

and I do my own podcast and you know generally when it comes to firearms the second amendment etc I'm involved in some way.

Stephen Gutowski (01:40.834)

Yes, and you have a pretty large YouTube channel as well, right?

Jon Patton (01:44.822)

Yes. Yeah, the channel's at like 360 -some thousand, I think? I don't know. Yeah, it's pretty good.

Stephen Gutowski (01:51.15)

Yeah, that's great stuff. so yeah, you you do a lot of gun industry news, especially do some reviews occasionally as well. I've been watching your stuff for, quite a long time. You know, I think your work is, is, top notch, but today we're yes, absolutely. And, and, you know, I recommend people check out the channel if they haven't already.

Jon Patton (01:58.954)

That's right.

Jon Patton (02:06.112)

Thank you man, I appreciate that.

Stephen Gutowski (02:14.04)

It's a great source, especially for like gun industry stuff, stuff that we focus obviously here at the reload much more on politics, policy, culture stuff. You do some of that as well, of course, but I think your bread and butter is like the latest guns that are coming out and really quality reviews that are, know, personally, I find to be right in my wheelhouse of like, you know, you're not just fawning over every gun that comes out and you're plenty skeptical.

Jon Patton (02:41.02)

I would say that it's the exact opposite. Like I am very, very... Some people would call me mean. I would call it

hypercritical of the new products that come out and that's with intent. Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (02:43.555)

Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (02:51.394)

which is the right approach. And so, you know, cause I, and I've talked about that on the show before and we can get into some of that stuff at the of the episode too, but you know, there's all kinds of hype and not all these guns always live up to it. And there's, there's issues in the industry, that deserve to be, discussed and,

Jon Patton (02:58.966)

Sure.

Jon Patton (03:05.076)

Ain't that the truth?

Stephen Gutowski (03:11.188)

scrutinized but and I think I feel like you do that but you also scrutinize that of course YouTube's policies and how they affect Really? There's a whole industry on YouTube Surrounding gun content, know gun entertainment content gun review content and gun politics content, right and

Jon Patton (03:17.11)

That's right.

Stephen Gutowski (03:32.204)

That has been a, I don't know, an uneasy relationship from the start perhaps, but it seems as though it's only gotten harder. And this latest update to the policy, I think exemplifies some of the problems that people who make gun videos have with YouTube.

Right. You know, there was a change to the written policy on June 18th. Right. And I haven't talked about this with John Korea from active self -protection on the podcast at the time. We went over some of the direct implications. It really affected more of your 3D printed gun channels or

people who shoot automatic weapons, usually for entertainment, but, you know, there's sort of more direct impact on that. But it seems in that time, since this policy went into effect, there's been, an unexpected, I guess, results or consequence where YouTube has started to enforce, in a different way, a previous policy that I had, can you talk, it deals with sending viewers to certain kinds of, of websites, certain kind

retailers. Can you just describe for people what exactly has been going on?

Jon Patton (04:46.326)

So, years and years ago, sort of outlawed, I guess you could call it, the, or disallowed the use of a link to gun -related websites in the description of your videos. And the workaround that all of us had taken was a verbal callout or a visual callout or something like that. And people have done it many different creative ways. I typically just put it right on the screen, say it out loud and...

that has been okay to date. And more recently with this change, they've gone back and said, no, no, that is no longer acceptable. cannot, you can't say dot com or anything like that when talking about a gun related website, retailer, know, gun maker, whatever, whatever it is, you can no longer say dot com or even insinuate that they have a website.

If you are saying that language that could be construed as this company X that you talking about sells the product that you showing, that's a problem now. Which is not written down anywhere. We don't have clear boundaries. It's kind of terrible. It's terrible, it's vague, and...

Jon Patton (06:12.522)

The general, like, gun -tuber community, as it were, doesn't understand it.

Stephen Gutowski (06:18.506)

And you know, you've obviously been on the platform for years and years now doing this kind of content. What is YouTube's communication been with you on this particular point up until now? If, if there's been any communication at all.

Jon Patton (06:23.018)

Yes.

Jon Patton (06:33.472)

So I prior to this particular issue, I had zero communication with YouTube for the last eight years. So when I started my channel, it grew pretty fast at the time and I had a YouTube rep and that person changed jobs. I got, they got replaced and then disappeared on me. Couldn't get any answers. I don't know why, you I was never told anything and I still

don't have a YouTube rep. I've been on the platform as the gun collective for nine years now and I don't, I definitely do not because I don't, I'm not big enough and they only want to talk to the people that have big channels. And unfortunately some of those guys do not do a good job of sharing the information they're learning. So when it comes to communications from YouTube, this recent thing, I actually got in contact with a guy who has a channel called Clover Tack.

Stephen Gutowski (07:12.92)

Sure.

Jon Patton (07:30.039)

and he was able to help me get in touch with YouTube and talk about all of this kind of stuff. You know, just try to learn what the F was actually going on.

Stephen Gutowski (07:41.998)

Hmm. So before, just I guess a couple months ago, no one had to talk to you from YouTube about like the way that you've been promoting your sponsorships or anything like that.

Jon Patton (07:53.59)

Correct. Yeah. That was, that never happened.

Stephen Gutowski (07:57.656)

Because this has been a common critique of YouTube over the years and most of these major social media platforms, right, that they don't do a good job of communicating their rules with the people who make a living on their platform, right?

Jon Patton (08:12.918)

Correct. Yeah, they've never done a good job, like not once ever have done what I would call a good job communicating with and working with the firearms community. It's always, we are always reactionary. You know, the policies get put out and then we all panic. That's how it goes.

Stephen Gutowski (08:31.256)

Can you lay out what, you know, when you made a video on this and Hickok45 is another very extremely popular gun tuber, right? And he made a couple of videos on this point where he was initially extremely concerned that he might not be able to continue on with YouTube. Then he did a follow -up video after, guess, talking with somebody at YouTube where he was a little more confident that he could work around the new rule or work with the new rules.

Jon Patton (09:00.382)

Mm -hmm.

Stephen Gutowski (09:01.815)

but he was still pretty not entirely sure is the vibe that you get from the second video. Your video on this, your initial video on this was pretty dire, right? Like you're talking about, you know, the end of your company and maybe even broader effects in the gun industry as a whole. Can you just give us your view on that?

Jon Patton (09:22.848)

So, obviously it's been a few weeks since that video got released and I have learned a little bit more but I still think it's a problem in general because the entire industry feeds off of YouTube. Whether they will admit it or not, there were a lot of people that said the gun industry existed before YouTube, it will exist after. Yeah, it will be a much much different version of the gun industry. Because if you strip away the ways to

make any kind of money or pay for it, pay for the content, pay for any of the time and production and effort that goes into it, you basically gut what it is and people will have to stop, they'll have to pivot and do other things. And I think the industry as a whole to date, prior to that, was using YouTube as a sort of...

promotional platform in terms of like almost direct sales or promo code usage or links and things of that, like, you know, some variation thereof, the platform was being utilized as a marketing tool. And obviously now that's changed in a significant way and the promotions have to change that the ROI is no longer trackable.

Stephen Gutowski (10:32.686)

Sure.

Jon Patton (10:42.83)

There's no way for a gun company to directly quantify the results from a given creator and that is a big problem for them because a lot of these companies sort of use that tracking. I would say it's a dumb thing to do to directly rely on only one type of ROI but that's how a lot of these guys track their spending and that's gone. You just can't do it anymore.

Stephen Gutowski (11:10.387)

Because before you could call out where to go to buy

Jon Patton (11:14.88)

Sure, call it out, say, know, like for example, I worked with a company called Midwest Gunworks and you can't say, like we showed their website in the promo that I did. You can't show that anymore because that shows that they have a website. It shows that they are a .com and that you can use stuff there. I don't remember if we did a promo code for them specifically, but I mean, that's a very common thing. That was almost a given that if we were doing a promotion, there's a promo code.

and now saying that promo code is a violation of unwritten rules.

Stephen Gutowski (11:49.998)

Is that what they, YouTube has communicated to you since you made your video?

Jon Patton (11:54.302)

Yes, so essentially it's like that is part of the sort of insinuation that you can buy stuff. So you can't, I mean you can try and go around it and you can try and be vague and you might get away with it. I don't know, I don't think any of us really know now, but I have been told that that is part of this thing that we're dealing with.

Stephen Gutowski (12:11.821)

Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (12:17.708)

Yeah, and I, cause you know, obviously I, I've, I've spoke to you too. have a whole report of peace on this and we have some comment from, YouTube themselves, but they, sounds like they probably operate the same way with you as they,

they have been with me, which is a lot of what they're, what they told me was on it was.

On background is what we call it in journalism. You have on record, which is quotes, and usually I would say on record is a quote that's attributable to a person, although a lot of these major companies, including especially YouTube, they don't like to have quotes be attributable to specific people. They prefer them to be attributable to the company generally. So that's what I have in my piece is a on record quote from YouTube as an entity or YouTube spokesperson who didn't want

Jon Patton (13:06.9)

Hmm.

Stephen Gutowski (13:09.054)

to be named. And then on background is more a conversation that I'm allowed to report on and to relay what I've been told and to paraphrase it, but not directly quote from it. That's one of the conditions that they put. And that's again, a common thing you see with these major companies, especially social media companies, which I've been sort of made mine.

Jon Patton (13:22.43)

Yeah, yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (13:35.222)

voice known that I do not like this practice. think it's bad for everybody. But, and, it leads to stuff like this, cause that seems to be your understanding. It's close to what I understand from what I was told by two spokespeople at YouTube, which is essentially that they don't want the promotion of websites that sell guns or ammunition. One of the things that they did clarify to me, and confirm was that this policy now includes ammunition dealers, not just.

gun dealers or dealers of certain accessories, mostly like bump stocks and I guess force reset triggers, things like that, things that simulate automatic fire in YouTube's view. right, actually I think that in the policy they say that a bump stock converts semi -automatic into fully automatic, which I guess they're not keeping up with their Supreme Court decisions, but that is.

Jon Patton (14:17.941)

quote unquote

Jon Patton (14:30.024)

Yeah, they're definitely, they're not up on Bruin or anything of the sort.

Stephen Gutowski (14:33.006)

They haven't read Cargill yet, which explicitly says that's not how bump stock works. regardless, it does simulate, I guess, automatic fire. It's probably fair to say that. Either way, you know, the written policy says you can't link to gun dealers or dealers of these certain accessories. And then ammunition mag... people who sell ammunition magazines that hold more than 30 rounds, because that's... for whatever reason, that's YouTube's high capacity standards. Even though the...

Jon Patton (14:59.284)

Yeah, the arbitrary nonsense.

Stephen Gutowski (15:01.068)

It's different from what most state magazine limits are, regardless, the policy doesn't say explicitly ammo dealers, but they did confirm that it does include them. So Lucky Gunner, I don't know what's going to happen with Lucky Gunner. Lucky Gunner has a very popular YouTube channel of its own. Like how does that work? But you know, any.

Jon Patton (15:21.058)

I mean, they just can't say .com anymore. They're under the same rules. You know, it's just this, we all now have to go

back to how TV used to be and I don't know, it might still be, I don't watch TV anymore, but it's this vague, know, hey, here's a product from blah, blah, blah. I really like this part, like a little testimonial or a highlight of a product. Thanks to them. Yeah, yeah. Like that's really the only way around it that I've seen.

Stephen Gutowski (15:24.726)
I guess, right?

Stephen Gutowski (15:42.828)
Yeah, product placement, I guess.

Stephen Gutowski (15:49.342)
You know, they, it was a little more gray when we, when I talked to them about it, cause I did ask them about promo codes and things of that nature. And they did imply that that was probably not kosher. yeah. I mean, you know, they're,

Jon Patton (16:02.324)
I like that. Probably not. It's like they're taking out the ATF playbook. It might be fine.

Stephen Gutowski (16:09.518)
It's actually very similar to how ATF has tried to regulate firearms in the approach, which is not an uncommon approach across social media, right? With moderation. They do not want to give hard lines as policy. They want to allow themselves to have wiggle room on these things because in YouTube's view,

Jon Patton (16:18.494)
Right. Right.

Jon Patton (16:29.206)
Well, if you like we were talking about before the show, if you have hard boundaries, you'll figure out how to work around it.

Stephen Gutowski (16:35.468)
Right. This is YouTube's view of this. I and I think it's fair to say that this is every major social media platforms view except for I guess probably now X or Twitter, whatever Elon Musk is calling has taken a very different approach to moderation than all the other major platforms. But you know, Facebook, YouTube for a very long time, their view has been and in my conversations with YouTube, it certainly continues to be.

Jon Patton (16:50.644)
I, yeah, yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (17:03.446)
that if they give hard lines, bad actors will find ways to work around those rules.

And so instead they, they kind of want to put forth things that are more general principles. And it seems like their general principle on this particular point, the one that is, has, I think the most impact among people who make a living off of gun content on YouTube is that they do not want anyone to tell their, to direct their viewers where they can buy, guns and ammunition and, and

firearms accessories. anything that could fall into that does seem like fair game, but they don't say it explicitly. know, there, there may be a promo code wouldn't, but it seems like it would violate the heart of what we're trying to do is kind of the vibe that they give off.

Jon Patton (17:59.808)
Well, the only way to use a promo code is to buy something. And that's kind of the, what I understood. And I don't remember exactly what was said to me because I've had a bunch of different conversations about this recently, but the only way to use a promo code is to buy something. There's no other reason to have it. So that to in their mind is, you

know, Hey, there's a website, go buy whatever. It's, it's that it's exactly what you were talking about. This sort of directing people in a direction to purchase.

Stephen Gutowski (18:24.003)

Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (18:30.328)

Although they did make it clear that I guess sponsorships are not inherently disallowed. Like you could be sponsored by Glock.

Jon Patton (18:38.678)

Correct. Yeah, that was my biggest panic was like, we're not allowed to have sponsored content at all, which is a huge effing problem because I would say that 90 % of my videos are demonetized or limited ads or whatever the whatever they're calling it this week. You know, like I don't in terms of AdSense, my channel, even though it has good numbers, is not bringing in a ton of cash.

Stephen Gutowski (18:55.98)

Hmm. Yeah.

Jon Patton (19:06.046)

So if we were not allowed to put those sponsorships in the videos, it would literally kill my business.

Stephen Gutowski (19:12.022)

Right. And that's the problem that I think all of you guys who are doing this full time, because obviously we have a YouTube channel at the reload, but we don't really make content specifically for YouTube. There's not been an area of focus for us to this point. Maybe, hopefully it will be down the line. We have more resources, but you guys who are doing it full time, who have had success with this, I mean, it's like a sword of Damocles, right? Hanging over you is what it seems like from the outside here.

YouTube, if you run afoul of their policies and you, you know, your whole business could be gone because the problem is most of the moderation is automated, right? And you have, I would imagine like a lot of channels, thousands of videos, a backlog of thousands of videos. And if a policy change happens or they,

Jon Patton (20:01.331)

Mm -hmm. Yep.

Stephen Gutowski (20:07.886)

renew their efforts in force, because that's how they're framing this move, right? It's not so much that the policy changed, it's how they're enforcing the policy that's changed, because they put it in in 2018 that you couldn't link to places that sell regulated goods, basically, is what they're talking about, firearms and ammo and so forth. And so they haven't changed that policy, they've just changed how they're enforcing it, or the emphasis of enforcement. And the issue is like,

If you have just three videos out of the thousands that they determine, generally on first pass by a robot, right? Some sort of algorithm determines this, that you've violated these policies, you can get a channel strike and three channel strikes in 90 days and you're gone. And that can all happen almost instantaneously, right? That's the big worry here, isn't it?

Jon Patton (20:59.798)

yeah. Yeah. It's not like you're, only going to get one per day or something like that. Like you do. They, you could literally get three strikes instantaneously and right. And then you're gone and you're, you're reactionary. Like I said, I think one of the scariest things about this is that you, we really don't have anybody at YouTube to, like I'm fortunate that I was able to get a contact, but like,

Stephen Gutowski (21:09.218)

Right, and then your channel's just gone.

Jon Patton (21:29.626)

I'm speaking about the community as a whole. A large majority of the people out there doing this do not have any recourse. And all it takes is, you know, a bot or whatever to crawl your channel and find something it doesn't like based on some machine learning nonsense that was pumped into it. Somebody typed it in wrong or whatever. It flags your stuff. Then you've got a problem. Then what other...

things have happened many times over is people in other countries are, you know, sort of saying, yes, this is a good thing for the machine or it is not a good thing for the machine. And given that, that's a bigger problem because we're talking about American rules and regulations and we've got somebody that lives under, you know, a dictatorship making comment on these and saying yes or no.

And I think, to be fair, one of the most difficult things that YouTube is up against is they are a global platform. So they have to try and do these policies and craft these policies in a way that the entire world can function under. I think the issue is that I would venture to say that 99.9% of gun content on YouTube is in America. The rest of it is...

very limited. So you would assume as a reasonable individual that they would work with American gun content creators to craft an effective policy and have these two way conversations and they just don't.

Stephen Gutowski (23:11.5)

Yeah, and I mean, you're talking about that sort of second level. Once it's passed the robot moderation and the algorithm moderation, get to a sort of, usually these play how most major social media platforms work is they have like an hourly paid staffers, not really staffers. Usually they're like,

Jon Patton (23:33.45)

It's a contractor of some sort.

Stephen Gutowski (23:34.262)

Yeah, contractors that they pay minimum wage or they might be even foreign contractors that are paid very small amount to be sort of the human, you know, second level to this process. Yeah. And then you're getting pretty far up the line before you get to somebody who actually sets the policies. And the problem you can also face, as we saw last year in another story where that

Jon Patton (23:45.903)

So they can say that they had a human look at it.

Stephen Gutowski (24:00.684)

that we did on the reload where we talked to YouTube.

Sometimes the that mid-level management even beyond the the hourly workers, you know, you're sort of mid-level enforcement management at YouTube can be just wrong and how they're interpreting rules that this happened with silencers or sound suppressors last year and that caused a huge ripple effect throughout all the the gun tubers spaces where people were scrambling to delete videos and repost them and try to figure out exactly what it was that was causing the the strikes because it wasn't clear for

while and then YouTube came out and said this was just an error on our part we didn't you know somebody got the wrong message on how this was supposed to be enforced and and that's what created all the drama so you know and look it's I will say for YouTube's sake it is not easy to moderate a site like YouTube there there are

Jon Patton (24:56.874)

course.

Stephen Gutowski (24:59.735)

There's like hours of footage uploaded every second to the website. I don't know what the actual breakdown is, but it's unimaginable. So it is a difficult process to do. you can obviously see the logic in trying to keep their enforcement rules vague, because YouTube has to deal with much more serious things than whether or not...

Jon Patton (25:05.628)

It's more than humans can comprehend.

Stephen Gutowski (25:28.11)

Hickok 45 is posting a video with a bump stock or whatever. They're worried about somebody live streaming themselves murdering people, because that's happened on the platform and on other social media platforms. And they're worried about even more horrific things that they have to deal with across the gambit.

Jon Patton (25:41.098)

Yeah, yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (25:51.8)

here and they're not great at even handling the things that everyone agrees should not be on the platform. Stuff that exploitation of children and things like that that ends up on there that nobody wants to see on there and is illegal.

Jon Patton (26:04.502)

Well, I mean, to be fair, they welcome exploitation of children in the toy space. You know, these toy review channels and all that, like that's pure exploitation of children. I know what you're saying, but like, if you really look at this, they're, you know, from my position, there shouldn't be any children on the platform at all, other than in like their parents' videos. But like this, I don't know, that's a whole rabbit hole of like, it's more of a moral discussion.

Stephen Gutowski (26:09.986)

Well, sure, but I...

Stephen Gutowski (26:14.902)

Yeah, I understand what you mean.

Stephen Gutowski (26:26.464)

Even then that can be exploitative. Yeah, I just, all I mean is, yeah, of course. All I mean is that there's a lot of content out there that gets put on YouTube that the vast majority of people would agree should, I mean, people should be arrested and go to jail over, you know what mean? And they have trouble with, you know, keeping that stuff off the site. So it's not easy running.

Jon Patton (26:47.734)

Sure, sure.

Stephen Gutowski (26:55.47)

a giant platform like that. At the same time, that's, you have to give people some level of reliability if you want them to build businesses on your platform, right? That's what it comes down to. And, you know, it just seems oftentimes they struggle with that. will say, you know, the last two big blowups here, YouTube has tried to do some outreach. You know, they've talked to us at the reload. I don't know if,

I'm glad that they do that. think while I have critiques of how they do it, it's better than if they weren't talking at all. And so maybe there's, and you've been able to get in contact with them, other gun tube creators, which like as big as the gun tube space may seem to us, it's pretty small compared to many of the other parts of YouTube. So there's maybe some encouragement in that.

And I will say that I've talked to them in my conversations with them on, you know, stuff like how, like how, how people can be competent in the moderation.

You know, they don't really have a great answer. I think they know there's an issue that this can be a problem and that the best they can offer is like, if you run into issues where YouTube is like falsely flagging your videos, striking you or deleting your channel when it shouldn't have the, you know, their hope is that you'll be able to reach a human to interact with. And yeah, I don't know. That's how I would phrase it.

Jon Patton (28:27.862)

I mean, imagine a guy that has, I don't know, 10,000 subscribers or even 1,000, like a smaller, newer channel that's trying to grow. They've got nothing. They've got nothing. They probably have, it's very likely that they have limited contacts within the Guntuber space because they're still young and they're still growing in the space. So this idea that somebody could get ahold of YouTube at all is...

almost laughable. Like, I'm very lucky that I have been around a long time and know most of these guys that have direct lines into YouTube. You know, like, I'm very, very lucky to have that. Most channels do not. And I think that's the issue.

Stephen Gutowski (29:06.199)

Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (29:10.678)

And I'll say, yeah, and I agree. And I'll say that with the silencer problem that they had last year, after I wrote my story that included quotes from YouTube, I ended up becoming a sort of unwanted third.

Jon Patton (29:17.719)

my gosh, what a nightmare that was.

Stephen Gutowski (29:29.962)

you know, contact point for the company, because it's like people would reach out to me with the problems that they had related to this issue and want me to forward things on. And YouTube would accept forwards or whatever sometimes or whatever, respond to them.

Jon Patton (29:43.99)

Well if you look through the comments on the video I recently made, there's a whole bunch of people in there. all, it's not just gun people either. Hey I had them delete XYZ video from me, I can't believe it is, my whole channel is gone. There's been a bunch of that kind of stuff.

Stephen Gutowski (29:59.116)

Yeah, I really don't know why they, I suggested them they should try and like find an industry group or somebody that they could talk to that they could funnel these complaints through because, because I don't, I'm not an intermediary. It doesn't make sense. I'm a reporter. Like why, you know, they need to have a better process for that, I think.

Jon Patton (30:18.762)

I mean, I am very fortunate that I put on an event that has an enormous amount of content creators. Through that, I know a lot of these content creators and can communicate directly with a lot of them. I would be happy to work with YouTube instead of reacting against YouTube. I would love to do that. You know, the same could be said about any sort of governing body or...

anything like that. they would rather work with than against, it would be great, but they don't make the effort.

Stephen Gutowski (30:52.012)

Yeah, you know, I asked them how they come up with their policies, how they determine these policy changes.

Jon Patton (30:56.97)

Huh. Well you see they've got a dartboard and they just throw shit at it.

Stephen Gutowski (31:02.722)

And that is what, that's the general feeling I've gotten from gun tubers. mean, I had Ian McCollum on the show a while back talking about these exact same issues. I've had John Correa on, you know, some major gun tubers. And they all seem to feel the same way about the firearms policies that YouTube sets, which is that they don't seem very well informed on the issue that they're trying to regulate on. That's been a common critique, right? And...

You know, so I did ask them in our conversation, how do you make these decisions? Do you consult with any expert groups or whatever? And also there was speculation that the most recent update was related to, you know, specific events like like the Trump assassination attempts because the assassin was wearing a demolition ranch shirt wildly because it's like not the.

Jon Patton (31:47.0)

The timing lines up. The timing lines up.

Stephen Gutowski (31:56.234)

if you were gonna pick like a gun tuber that a potential assassin's shirt should be wearing. That's not the one I would have guessed, but, and it doesn't seem to be any sort of connection, obviously.

Jon Patton (32:04.222)

Right, right. I definitely would have called Brandon Herrera's shirt more than Matt's.

Stephen Gutowski (32:13.439)

I don't know about for a Trump assassin, but I get, like it's just not a, Demolition Ranch is like your, you know, their entertainment channel. It's not political very much at all. But regardless, you know, and then obviously there was also a letter from,

Jon Patton (32:15.922)

No, I mean, you know, if they're going to be a gun tuber that's a young person.

Jon Patton (32:25.812)

Yeah, absolutely.

Stephen Gutowski (32:37.898)

District Attorney of Manhattan, Alan Bragg, that was trying to get YouTube to make some of the changes that they did make. YouTube claimed that those weren't related, that their policy was in production for months beforehand. And they also said that they consult with internal and external experts, stakeholders, they called them, from law enforcement and public safety.

Jon Patton (32:45.556)

Mmm.

sure.

Jon Patton (33:05.792)

Well see, the problem is if they consult with experts, they're not consulting with gun experts. They're consulting with law enforcement. And generally speaking, law enforcement doesn't know a damn thing about firearms as a whole. Of course, if they gave away their sources, those people would be then hounded over being involved in not making it better. I mean, I would bet that we got a version of...

Stephen Gutowski (33:12.664)

Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (33:16.332)

And they wouldn't say who exactly they consult with.

Jon Patton (33:34.632)

the policies that are the least terrible at this point.

Stephen Gutowski (33:42.241)

Yeah.

Jon Patton (34:00.402)

If they had a major problem against gun content as a whole, they would have just shut it off.

Stephen Gutowski (34:05.356)

Yeah, and that is one of the counterpoints that you hear, especially from people like John Korea. YouTube doesn't need to allow gun content on its platform at all. But also at a certain point, if you're making it so hard to make money doing this on...

Jon Patton (34:07.391)

It's super weird.

Stephen Gutowski (34:21.454)

on the platform, it's just going to incentivize people not really doing it very often. So it is a bit of an odd situation they are. And, you know, as evidenced by them talking to you, talking to HICOC 45, talking to other members of the gun tuber community, insofar as such a thing exists, they seem to have some interest in trying to keep people coming back. They just...

also have these rules that tend to be pretty vague and they shift a bit and maybe don't make a whole lot of sense if you look at them too closely. But I don't know, what do you make of it all? What do you see as the future for the gun collective, for gun content on YouTube?

Jon Patton (35:05.567)

cheese

Jon Patton (35:08.95)

I mean, I'm always searching for the latest and greatest place. I mean, we've, as a gun community, we've been lied to or misled about what platform is going to be the next place. Because as long as I can remember, YouTube has been making policies against our content and reducing what we can do and reducing how they sort of accept what's allowed on the platform, who's allowed, et cetera. So I think...

I think it's right now we're all kind of in a holding pattern going, okay, well when does this really come down? When are they... I think we all expect it to happen. It's just a matter of when. I have backup plans. Everybody has their own version of a backup plan. I'm on Rumble. I'm on Floatplane, which is a Canadian tech YouTubers sort of Patreon thing.

Stephen Gutowski (35:57.688)

Yeah. Linus Tech Tips,

Jon Patton (36:00.67)

Yeah Linus Tech Tips. Those guys are great. They accepted me on that platform. They accepted Ian from Forgotten Weapons on that platform. They are not anti-gun. In fact, I was tweeting with Linus about it when this happened and he said, we will always allow stuff that is legal on our platform. Which was like, my gosh, what a stance to take, right? What a stance.

And I think a lot of people are just really scared and exhausted from all of this. Because if you think of it this way, if we all could do what the car community is doing, right, that is a huge, huge portion of YouTube. If we could freely grow our businesses to the scale that some of these guys have done, it would be amazing. you know, earlier we were talking

about how we're both car guys.

And if I could build a range somewhat similar like what Cletus McFarland did with his racetrack, wouldn't that be incredible? Wouldn't that be amazing? But you know, we are, there have been a few that have grown successfully in the entertainment side of the Guntuber space, but you know, I feel like we are being shoehorned further and further and tighter and tighter into a corner. And I don't know what the future is. I know I like, have to be on

Stephen Gutowski (37:02.04)
Hmm. Yeah.

Jon Patton (37:22.486)
6 different platforms at all times, I have to be commenting all the time, I have a video editor, everybody knows about Izzy my video editor. All of the other stuff for the business is me. can't afford to have employees and I can't afford to grow and it's stifling creativity and stifling as a person.

Stephen Gutowski (37:49.082)
I know the feeling. we similar struggle over here at the reload. It's not an easy, not an easy business to do this on your own. But, you know, as Linus said in his, you know, they talked about this on their, their podcast or their live stream that they do at the land show. Yes. And, you know, basically his advice is that alternative platforms don't work. Is that how you feel as well?

Jon Patton (38:05.088)
The WAN Show.

Jon Patton (38:12.79)
100%. They've never worked. We have seen sites like those that have been around a long time in terms of watching gun content will remember a cycle full 30. And that was stood up by some of the major gun tubers and it quickly fell apart. There were issues with, you know, the back end in terms of like functionality because, know, here they're going, Hey, we're a competitor to YouTube and it wasn't

It was barely 1080, you couldn't do 4K video, the comments section was terrible, the monetization was terrible, and it changed hands and owners many times, and now it's not even called the same thing and it's a shell of its former self. The problem with these quote unquote pro -gun platforms is they are not good at bringing on anybody but gun channels. You know, like...

I will say that Rumble is not a viable replacement for YouTube at this point, although they are trying and all this because they are heavily right wing, they are heavily political as a platform, and because of that, it shuts out this whole other group of people that either A. are the opposite viewpoint or B. don't give a crap. So if you are focusing in as a platform on one segment of a person,

and only one hobby and only one thing and you're saying we do this really well it will not be a competitor to YouTube it is not possible people are more than one thing they're multifaceted

Stephen Gutowski (39:48.857)
Yeah, makes a lot of sense. mean, YouTube is where the people are. It's also very hard to run up a competitor with a well -established site.

Jon Patton (39:58.656)
You would need trillions of dollars to accelerate fast enough to get the server space all around the world, to have the infrastructure, that it's just unreasonable to assume that somebody could come in and knock YouTube off their pedestal. The only thing that's going to do that is going to be YouTube itself.

Stephen Gutowski (40:20.31)
Yeah, I mean, you could even look at it smaller space like live streaming and look at Twitch, which isn't really even

doing that well as a company, but it's all the attempts to, stand up a competitor, even by major companies like Microsoft had a Microsoft created mixer and they signed away ninja like in the streaming spaces is a big deal. And it went nowhere. Like it's just very hard to challenge these giant,

Jon Patton (40:25.511)
Mm

Jon Patton (40:39.069)
Yeah? man.

Stephen Gutowski (40:46.68)
near monopolies in these spaces. you know, YouTube is where people are for if you want to make online video content and it's difficult to go elsewhere. I think that makes sense. And that seems to be the conclusion that the major gun channels, the biggest ones have come to as well. I Hickok45 talked about that in his...

videos on this subject too. it just doesn't seem like YouTube is going anywhere anytime soon, but perhaps it's becoming increasingly difficult to make a living as a gun creator on there, though not impossible, right?

Jon Patton (41:23.328)
Yeah, I mean, I'm able to survive, you know, I am able to make a living currently. It's just how long does that last? And with these new policy changes, how does that affect my bottom line? You know, are we able to fill all our ad space? And I'm very fortunate again, that I've been ahead of the curve in terms of being on the platform for long time and having a decent sized audience. So that allows me to have multiple outlets and these

these different strategies, whereas a guy that's growing right now, they don't have that. It sucks, man. It really does. And I don't know, man. It's something that I think about every single day, and I don't know what the future holds, and it's pretty damn scary.

Stephen Gutowski (42:13.144)
Yeah, well, look, I appreciate you coming on and giving us your insight and really telling us how things really are over the, know, as somebody who focuses on YouTube primarily for their gun related business, you know, it's and YouTube is really a behemoth, I think, for gun culture, too. Like it's you don't have YouTube that good.

Jon Patton (42:34.54)
absolutely.

Stephen Gutowski (42:37.9)
modern American gun culture would change quite a bit. It's unpredictable how it would go, but it'd probably be bad for the gun -owning community, I would assume. Now, it's probably come up somewhere else, but not the same.

Jon Patton (42:51.2)
Well, you you remove you remove the ability to educate right by by getting rid of one of the most prolific outlets for gun content right now despite being pushed back. We are, you know, the YouTube gun community is still one of the largest ways and fastest ways to learn about firearms in the world. So if you remove that, you basically silence

gun owners as a whole and revert to where we were 20 years ago and culture will not, it'll just forget about it. It's moving too fast and I don't think people will suddenly, like if YouTube said, hey, there's no more guns, I think gun content creators would panic and move somewhere else, but I think society as a whole would just move past it. And that's pretty bad. It's pretty bad.

Stephen Gutowski (43:44.91)
Interesting. All right, well, look, if people want to hear more from you and see more of your work, where can they do that?

Jon Patton (43:54.026)

Just get on your google machine and punch in The Gun Collective and you'll find me on your favorite platforms everywhere. I make a lot of content. I shout a lot. I talk a lot of crap. Find me. It's going to be fun.

Stephen Gutowski (44:06.944)

Awesome. And you're in Pennsylvania, right?

Jon Patton (44:10.26)

Yes, sir.

Stephen Gutowski (44:14.434)

Hmm. This is, like a rivalry thing we have here then, cause I'm from Downingtown Pennsylvania, which is in the same high school division. We were actually in high school at the same time. I believe so we're right around the same age, us and, Matt Ryan and Miles Teller all, in the same high school, football division and because.

Jon Patton (44:27.924)

I don't know what you're talking about.

Jon Patton (44:40.798)

Yeah. I went to, I mean, what's his name? Rip. We had, yes.

Stephen Gutowski (44:44.002)

Well, those two moved away before and got famous. We should have moved, you that's the thing, we should have moved before high school down to somewhere else. That's what those two did. And Taylor Swift too. Taylor Swift is also from our area. Grew up on a Christmas tree farm. That's not just a song. She really did do that. But they all moved away before they got famous.

Jon Patton (45:02.602)

Yes, it's actual truth. Rip Hamilton went to high school with me as well. He went to Connecticut and then I think he played for the Raptors. don't know, an NBA guy graduated the year before me, I think. I don't remember. Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (45:13.037)

Mmm.

Stephen Gutowski (45:17.107)

weird weird I mean but I you know Taylor Swift Matt Ryan Miles Teller Steven Gutowski John Patton very it's all the same same level but yes that was a big football rivalry

Jon Patton (45:25.27)

It's all the same. We're the same.

Jon Patton (45:35.86)

Yes it was, very much so. And if I'm not mistaken, we beat the crap out of you guys every damn time. I don't know if that's true. I don't know if that's true.

Stephen Gutowski (45:37.762)

Very much so.

No, you are very mistaken on that. That's not true. Good times, good times. it's over the years and we're back, we end up in the same industry, basically, same area of interest as professionals. But I live down in Virginia now, Although my mom, the farm is still up there in Chester County. So maybe next time I'm up, we'll have to.

Jon Patton (45:46.718)

Yeah. Yeah.

Jon Patton (45:58.196)
super weird.

Jon Patton (46:03.059)
Okay.

Stephen Gutowski (46:11.042)
Do some shooting. How about that? All right. Sounds good. All right. Well, that's all we've got for you guys this week.
We will see you guys again real soon.

Jon Patton (46:12.074)
Dude, I'm in. And next time you're up here, let's go.

Jon Patton (46:22.752)
Thank you.