

Twitter bans, then restores, Beto O'Rourke parody account

Late on Tuesday, Twitter banned an account that was parodying former House representative and potential presidential hopeful Beto O'Rourke's social media gimmicks and personal blog, according to *The Hill*. Later this afternoon, the account was restored.

Shortly after O'Rourke failed to secure a Senate seat in Texas last November, he began blogging on Medium. He started infrequently writing about the people he met and places he traveled along the campaign trail in a lyrical, 20th century voice likened to that of Jack Kerouac or even .

"Maybe if I get moving, on the road, meet people, learn about what's going on where they live, have some adventure, go where I don't know and I'm not known, it'll clear my head, reset, I'll think new thoughts, break out of the loops I've been stuck in," he wrote last week.

That cheesy, nostalgic tone mixed with his recent social media gimmicks became prime territory for someone to create a parody account. From viewing a cached version of the account, none of the tweets were hyper-partisan or vulgar. Each tweet was a mock-up of O'Rourke's own Medium blog, sometimes taking situations he had written about before and exaggerating them or morphing them into a more surreal scenario.

@BetosBlog

In most circumstances, parody accounts do not violate the rules so long as there is a disclosure in the bio or in the user name stating that the account does not belong to the person it's satirizing. @BetosBlog's bio read, "On the road of life," and nothing else to identify whether it was a parody

account.

Twitter has enforced its impersonation rules in a case like this before. Back in August, new Elon Musk parody accounts, like the infamous Italian Elon Musk, appeared to be popping up every other minute. Other accounts like Irish Musk and French *Elon Musque* also ended up being banned. Soon, Twitter instantaneously locked every account that changed its name to "Elon Musk." The Musk impostors were seen as particularly urgent because many of the accounts were used to promote cryptocurrency scams.

Still, many conservatives have taken the ban as evidence of liberal bias from Twitter. Some cited President Trump parody accounts, some of which have thousands of followers. One user wrote, "So the Beto parody blog gets banned but @LouisFarrakhan's account is still up, even after posting a video calling Jewish people termites."

Later Wednesday afternoon, the account was restored. More Beto-style blogs were posted, and the Twitter handle and user name now explicitly state that @BetosFakeBlog is a parody account.

Updated 1/23/18 at 4:40 p.m. ET: The account has been restored and can now be found under the handle @BetosFakeBlog.

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/23/18194879/twitter-beto-orourke-parody-account-elon-musk>