

“Take These Broken Links”

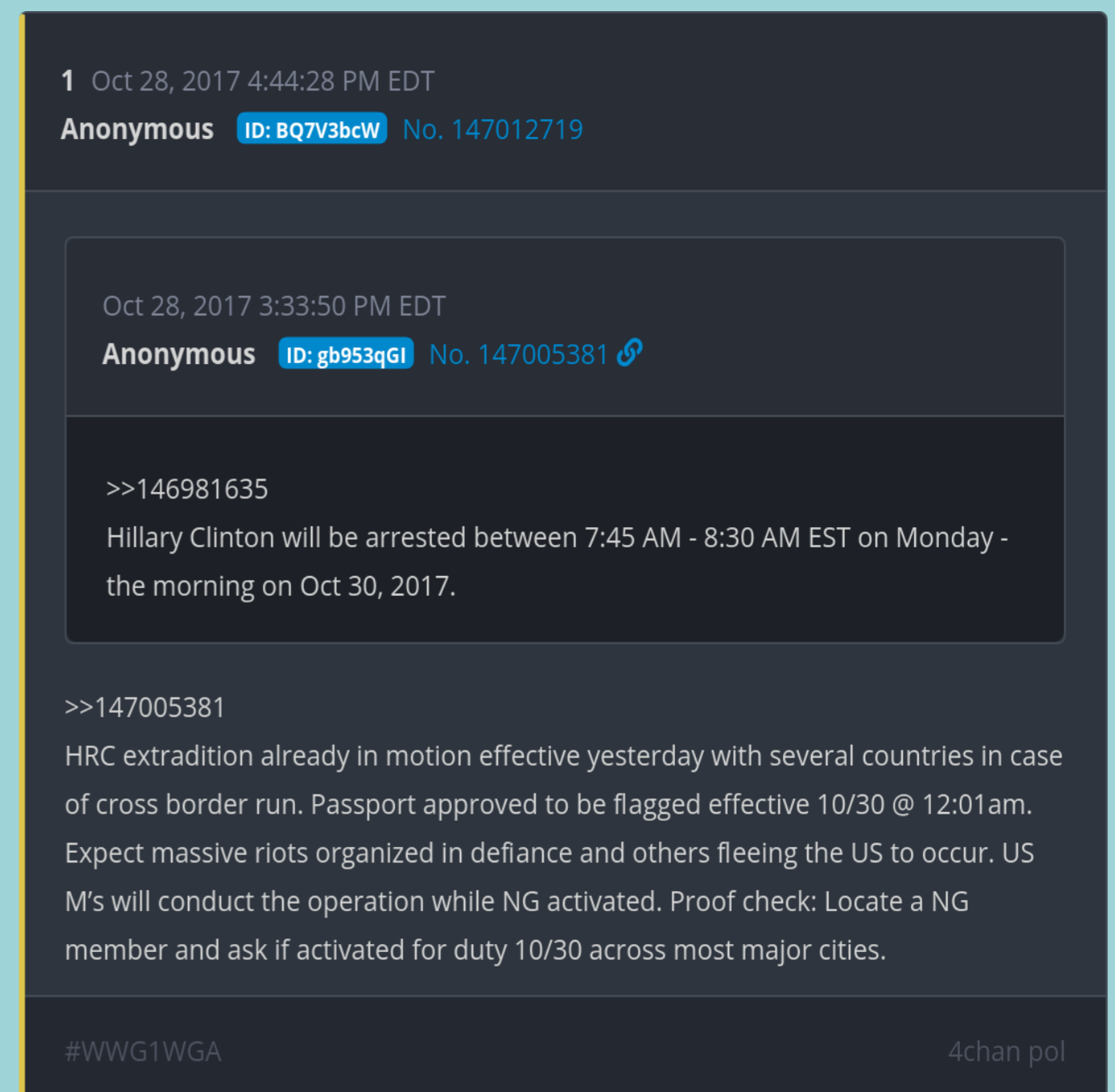
- Twitter, the Q-drops and the collapse of a digital ecosystem

Rikard Friberg von Sydow
Södertörn University

If we observe a source created through Forum-posts, full of links to external sites like Twitter, how many of the links are still valid a year later? This is the story of the Q-drops and the QAnon-movement.

How many links are DEAD?

The Q-drops were created between October 2017 and December 2020. Of all links to Tweets in this material around 53% are actually not working today. Linked material is one of the main building blocks of content today – especially in material retrieved from forums. Links provides context and are used as evidence in discussions. Telling us who said what, when. For a researcher interested in internet-based extremist movements this loss is a disaster comparable to a destroyed archive.



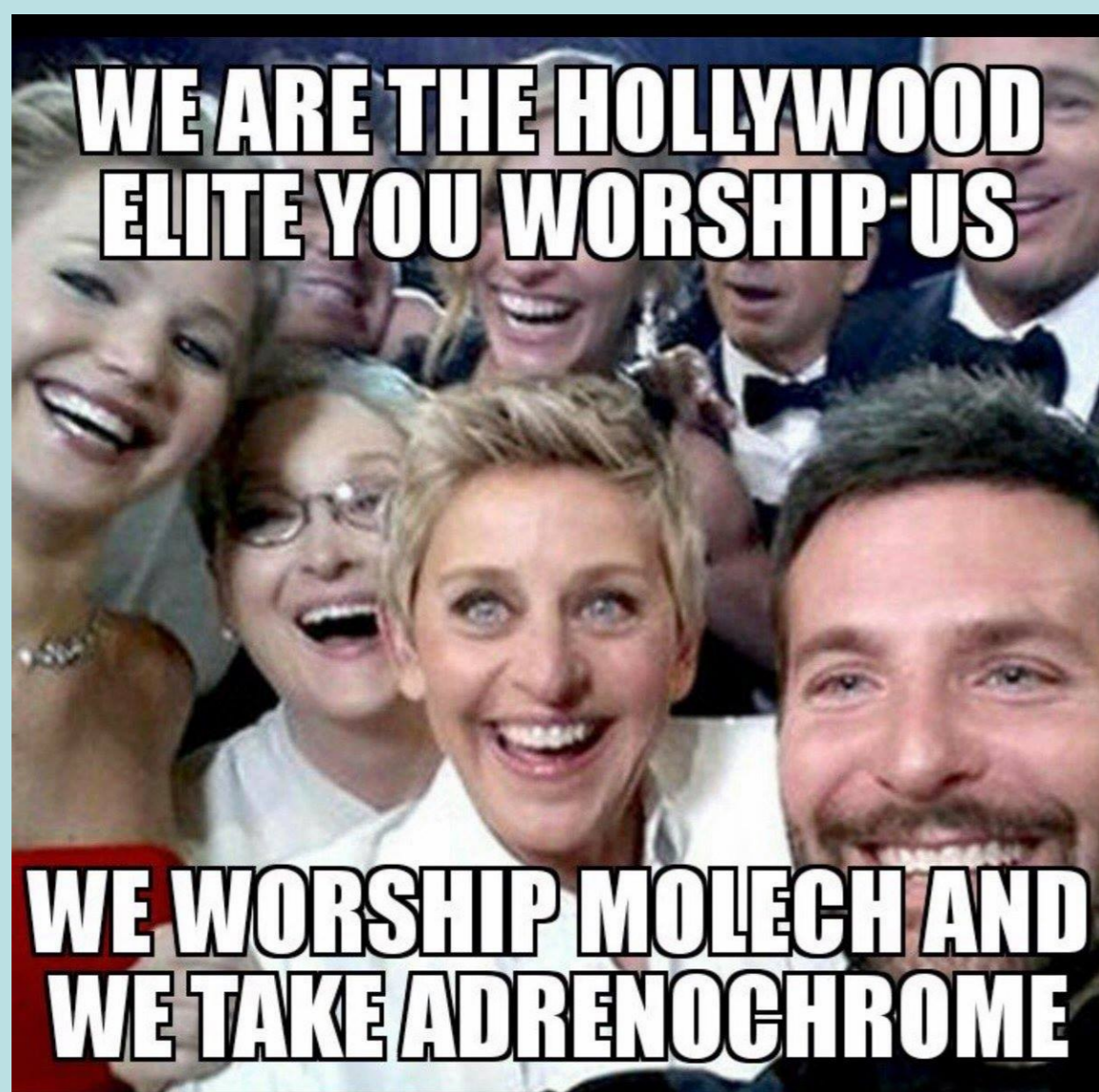
The first **Q-drop** posted on **4Chan pol** 28 October 2017. Providing (false) information of a forthcoming arrest of **Hillary Clinton**.

Introduction

The QAnon-movement, a conspiracy theory and political movement who gained fame in the storming of the Capitol in Washington D.C in the beginning of 2021, sees the messages from the source “Q” as their most important source of information. “Q” has posted short messages on different message boards (4Chan, 8Chan etcetera) since October 2017. The messages comment on contemporary political events and claim to foresee political development. Who the source, “Q” is, is not known, although speculations exist on the internet.

Theoretical outline and analysis

Pioneers of the information society, as Vannevar Bush and Ted Nelson claimed creating links between bodies of information as the main benefit. Using GNU/Linux tools as GREP and AWK I have extracted and counted Twitter links and assessed the content quality of the Q-drops by investigating how many Twitter links that are still valid.



The adrenochrome-conspiracy in which celebrities use the blood of children to keep themselves young, is a key part of the QAnon mythology.

| | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|---|
| 3670 | elenochle | Suspended | https://twitter.com/elenochle/status/1205331292700594176 |
| 3671 | DocRock1007 | Suspended | https://twitter.com/DocRock1007/status/1204513241507999745 |
| 3677 | FollowQanon | Suspended | https://twitter.com/FollowQanon/status/1206045134036582400 |
| 3678 | RudyGiuliani | Exists | https://twitter.com/RudyGiuliani/status/1206249638732423174 |
| 3681 | LadyRedWave | Suspended | https://twitter.com/LadyRedWave/status/1206267112647348225 |
| 3684 | Brotello | Deleted | http://twitter.com/Brotello/status/1206286429581725696 |
| 3701 | paulsperry_ | Suspended | https://twitter.com/paulsperry_/status/1207003010641076225 |
| 3704 | LizzyBelleFox | Suspended | https://twitter.com/LizzyBelleFox/status/12043464725458821147 |
| 3709 | Jerusalem_Post | Exists | https://twitter.com/Jerusalem_Post/status/1206911991702577153 |
| 3710 | elenochle | Suspended | https://twitter.com/elenochle/status/1204129788065042433 |
| 3715 | NatSecLisa | Exists | https://twitter.com/NatSecLisa/status/1206957392275087360 |
| 3722 | realDonaldTrump | Suspended | https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1121023509029892096 |
| 3730 | QanonMichele | Suspended | https://twitter.com/QanonMichele/status/1207557095299567616 |
| 3731 | #2Madness | Suspended | https://twitter.com/#2Madness/status/1207699372055711744 |
| 3732 | #2Madness | Suspended | https://twitter.com/#2Madness/status/1207699372055711744 |
| 3733 | thehill | Exists | https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1207695342764387877s=19 |
| 3737 | ChuckGrassLey | Exists | https://twitter.com/ChuckGrassLey/status/1207720412404240386 |

The analysis were performed by adding columns with the status of the tweets. **Suspended** declares that the account have been suspended by Twitter. **Exists** that it still exists.



If you follow the QR-Code you will reach an internet-site that I have used as a log book through my research. Here you will find material created during the research, abstract, links, sources, and similar material that will help you to understand and review the work I have done.

Most of my research is focused towards internet culture and digital administration. Recent publications spans over subjects such as loneliness and digital work during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the implementation of GDPR among different professions, and conspiracy theories on the internet.



Södertörn University
Rikard Friberg von Sydow
Dr, Senior Lecturer • Archival Science

SÖDERTÖRNS HÖGSKOLA
Alfred Nobels allé 7 Flemingsberg

SÖDERTÖRNS HÖGSKOLA
141 89 Huddinge

E-mail: rikard.friberg.von.sydow@sh.se

Phone: 08-608 44 18

Web: sh.se , arkivfeber.se

