

# When Deleted Data Becomes Evidence: Digital Forensics in a High Profile Civil Dispute

After a celebrity filed a civil suit against an influencer over the sharing and promotion of a deepfake portraying the celebrity, counsel engaged FTI Technology to evaluate evidence from the defendant's devices and provide expert testimony during the trial.

## Situation

High profile litigation places extraordinary scrutiny on digital evidence. In this matter, FTI Technology's digital forensics experts were retained to examine a mobile device after questions arose regarding gaps in communications and deleted messages from a critical time period. Identifying these deletions and the supporting evidence and patterns around them required deep technical ability and expert analysis.

Because the deleted messages were not recoverable, the team needed to analyze surrounding artifacts, metadata and usage patterns to reconstruct events and evaluate whether the deletions were consistent with ordinary device activity or intentional destruction of evidence.

## Our Role

FTI Technology's digital forensics experts have provided investigative support and testimony in some of the world's most contentious disputes. Working closely with counsel, the team performed a defensible forensic acquisition, analyzed messaging databases, correlated metadata and timestamps and evaluated communication patterns surrounding the missing records.

Rather than focusing solely on data recovery, the analysis emphasized what the remaining artifacts revealed about user activity, deletion timing and the broader evidentiary context. These findings were translated into expert reports and testimony capable of withstanding cross examination. FTI Technology reported on the findings and testified in court about how investigators identified the missing records in the device's database.

## OUR IMPACT

FTI Technology's expert opinions were grounded in objective forensic artifacts demonstrating significant gaps, correlated events and technical indicators consistent with deliberate deletion. By presenting these findings in clear, defensible language, the team enabled the court to understand both the technical evidence and its significance to the issues in the dispute.

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