

91. Rabbit Holes

In December 2022, amid the unfolding of the Twitter Files, Elon Musk faced a direct threat to his family, kicking off a series of controversial actions on his part. A stalker, previously fixated on Grimes, Musk's partner, and mother of his son X, shadowed a vehicle carrying X, leading to an altercation but no police arrests. The incident was linked by Musk to a Twitter account, @elonjet, which tracked his jet's movements, managed by student Jack Sweeney. Despite Musk's prior restraint from banning the account out of a commitment to free speech, he suspended @elonjet following the incident, contradicting his stance and sparking criticism for censoring free speech.

The situation escalated when Musk suspended journalists reporting on @elonjet's suspension, citing doxing, which led to backlash from within and outside Twitter. Bari Weiss, among others, criticized Musk's hypocrisy, noting the contradiction to his proclaimed mission of turning Twitter into an unbiased public square. This period also saw Musk engage in a contentious Twitter Spaces conversation, defending his decisions before unilaterally shutting it down.

Musk's behavior during this time reflected broader concerns. His tweets became increasingly erratic, including a controversial post mocking Dr. Anthony Fauci, which attracted criticism even from his close circle. His actions not only alienated parts of the Twitter community but also impacted Twitter's business relationships and Tesla's stock value. Amidst advice from allies and industry executives to moderate his approach, the episode highlighted the complexity and controversy surrounding Musk's leadership, his struggle with personal boundaries, and the challenges of balancing the ideals of free speech with the practicalities and responsibilities of running a major social media platform.