

# 85. Halloween

In October 2022, Yoel Roth was taken aback by a controversial tweet from Elon Musk about an attack on Paul Pelosi, linking to a conspiracy theory—an action reminiscent of Musk's tendency to engage with such content. This tweet, which Musk quickly deleted with an apology, highlighted his struggles to balance his vision for Twitter as a platform for free speech with the need for a safe environment for advertisers that make up 90% of Twitter's revenue. This incident led to a significant decline in advertising sales, compounded by an earlier downturn.

Musk's trip to New York City, accompanied by his son X and his mother Maye, aimed to reassure Twitter's ad sales team and advertisers at their Manhattan headquarters. Despite his intentions, Musk's validation of his controversial tweeting habits and the underwhelming assurance of Twitter's commitment to safety and broad appeal did little to mitigate advertisers' concerns. The fallout was rapid, with significant resignations among Twitter's top executives and further reduction in advertising sales, which Musk later attributed to a campaign by activist groups against him.

Amid these tensions, Musk, a known enthusiast for Halloween, took a detour to attend Heidi Klum's Halloween party in New York with his mother. However, the evening, intended as a respite, ended shortly due to their discomfort with the atmosphere and Musk's irritation at the relentless attention. This personal anecdote underscores Musk's enduring spirits amidst professional upheavals, marking his complex relationship with both his public image and his business ambitions.

The chapter poignantly captures Musk's fraught navigation of Twitter's operational realities against his ideals, reflecting on the pragmatic challenges of maintaining a platform's financial viability while endeavoring to uphold principles of free speech. It also provides a glimpse into Musk's personal life—his close relationship with his family, his dedication to company milestones like SpaceX's Falcon Heavy launch, and his struggle with the contrasting demands of his public and private personas.