

Elon Musk rise to power after cruel childhood with dad he branded 'evil'

Twitter, formerly X, owner and tech billionaire Elon Musk has been growing closer to incoming US president Donald Trump, after handing him millions for his campaign - but what is behind his love of power?



by **the levels of toxic vitriol** thrown out by its owner, Elon Musk.

The Tesla and SpaceX mogul who, with a net worth of £340bn, is the richest person in the **world**, has spent hours promulgating **far-right conspiracy theories about grooming gangs, spreading disinformation** about Keir Starmer's time as head of the CPS, and targeting several Labour MPs - including lifelong women's rights campaigner Jess Phillips.

But who is Elon Musk and what is motivating him to meddle in other countries' politics? As well as praising Reform leader **Nigel Farage** - then hours later **denouncing him** for disagreeing with Musk's personal opinions on Tommy Robinson - the tech billionaire has also been throwing his support behind the far-right AfD political party in Germany.

With a direct line to incoming US president **Donald Trump**, we look at how Musk has risen to unprecedented power - and why...

Musk's friendship with Trump

Having thrown his support behind the **twice-impeached former president Donald Trump** during his third bid for the White House, Musk spent weeks in the run-up to the 2024 U.S election bombarding his X followers with posts about how only Trump could save the country.

Musk was also **roundly mocked for his bizarre behaviour at a Trump rally**, in which he was seen jumping up and down on the stage as Trump watched.

His slavish loyalty was rewarded when Trump - who is still awaiting sentencing for **the 34 felonies he was convicted for** in the hush money scandal with porn star **Stormy Daniels** - appointed Musk joint head of the new Department of Government Efficiency, which will aim to cut government spending.

Tech giant Elon Musk jumps around on stage at a Trump campaign rally in October 2024 (

Image:

AFP via Getty Images)

Along with giving Trump's campaign a vast \$277 million (£221m) in donations, Musk also ensconced himself at **Trump's luxury Mar-a-Lago estate** in Florida during the election campaign, camping out in a £1,600-a-night cottage on the grounds. So it's little wonder Musk's own father, Errol Musk, called his son "Trump's right-hand man".

"Although Elon's not vice-president, he's like Trump's right-hand man. With Trump in office, the **Ukraine** war will end very, very soon, maybe even this year," Errol told the **Daily Mail**.

Worryingly, Musk has previously slated Ukraine's **President Volodymyr Zelensky's requests** for financial aid to help expel the Russians from his country, and even appeared on Trump's first phone call to Zelensky after he was announced the winner of the US election.

Donald Trump deep in conversation with Elon Musk at a celebration at his Mar-a-Lago headquarters after the election

He has previously been criticised when it emerged the Russians were using his Starlink satellite network to operate battlefield communications - **Starlink has so far been crucial** to keeping the internet running in Ukraine.

"Elon is able to switch on and off the WiFi to the Ukraine," says Errol Musk. "Last year he refused to let Starlink operate over the Crimea because of a plan to sink the Russian fleet in their home base. Putin thanked him. So, Elon has tremendous power with Starlink."

He also appears to have huge power with the incoming president, though political commentators have pointed out Trump will need to rein him in for diplomatic reasons if Musk is to remain at the heart of US government.

Elon Musk's childhood

Musk grew up in South Africa during the **Apartheid** regime, a system of racial segregation that stripped its majority Black population of rights afforded to its white citizens. Musk's mother, Maye, is a model and dietitian and married his engineer father Errol in 1970, welcoming Elon in 1971.

Elon Musk and his brother Kimbal on their way to school (

Image:

Errol Musk)

They went on to have second son, Kimbal and daughter Tosca, before their divorce in 1979. In her memoir, Maye alleged their marriage was abusive and claimed her husband had once come looking for her with a knife as she sought refuge with a neighbour. Errol repeatedly sued his ex-wife for custody of their children, and Elon went to live with him at the age of 12.

After their divorce, 45-year-old Errol went on to marry Heide Bezuidenhout, then 25, who he described as "one of the best looking women I've ever seen in my life" and became stepfather to her daughter Jana, who at the time was just four years old. Errol went on to make Jana his romantic partner when she was an adult, and they had a son and a daughter together, although they are no longer a couple. He once described dating his own stepdaughter as "completely normal".

Errol and Elon have made no secret of their tricky father-son relationship, with Elon telling Rolling Stone magazine in 2017 that Errol is "evil". "He was such a terrible human being. You have no idea about how bad," he said at the time. "Almost every crime you can possibly think of, he has done. Almost every evil thing you could possibly think of, he has done."

Errol Musk poses in front of a car (

Image:

Denver Post via Getty Images)**DON'T MISS**

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During Elon's childhood, his father had plenty of money - owning one of the biggest homes in Pretoria, a yacht, a plane, five luxury cars and a truck - as well as partially owning an emerald mine. Errol once bragged he had so much money at home they couldn't shut the door of the safe. But by flaunting his riches, Errol also became a target and he once shot dead three people who broke in. He was later cleared of all charges on the grounds of self-defence.

Elon Musk's riches

Despite being the richest person on the planet, Elon - according to his father - isn't flash with his cash. "We are a very frugal, stingy family. If I want to spend anything, I have to answer 100 questions of why," Errol once claimed.

The reason behind that was revealed by Elon in a series of tweets in 2019. "Errol ran out of money in the 90's," he wrote. "My brother & I financially supported him and his extended family in South Africa since then on condition that he not do bad things. Unfortunately, he did do bad things :(."

He didn't expand on the allegations, but has repeatedly slammed claims his father owned an emerald mine in South Africa.

Elon - a self-avowed natalist - has at least 11 children with three different women (

Image:

AFP via Getty Images)

"He didn't own an emerald mine and I worked my way through college, ending up ~\$100k in student debt," Musk tweeted. "I couldn't even afford a 2nd PC at Zip2, so programmed at night & website only worked during day."

But being a billionaire does come with a few perks, including a private jet in which he travels around the world. "His office is his jet," Errol told the Daily Mail. "He has a masseuse and a chef who travel with him. The jet inside is like being in the finest five-star lounge imaginable. It enables him to be in touch with everybody around the world all the time."

Elon also owns a \$35m (£28m) compound in Austin, Texas, which he bought to house 11 of his children and some of their mothers. The 14,400 sq ft mansion has an adjacent six-bedroom home, and it's believed his employee at **Neuralink**, Shivon Zilis, who is also mother to three of his children, has already moved in.

Musk also shares three children with the music star Grimes, real name Claire Boucher, plus five older kids from his first marriage to Justine Wilson.