

Elon Musk's Takeover Is Being Aided by a Sociopath Power Couple

Stephen and Katie Miller—he's "the prime minister," sources say; she's DOGE's comms guru—liaise between the White House and Elon Musk, and are centrally involved as he tears the government apart.



Photograph: ALASTAIR PIKE/Getty Images

When President Donald Trump's aides and advisers relay concerns about Elon Musk's takeover of the federal government, they're often given what's intended to be a reassuring answer: Don't worry, Stephen and Katie Miller will take care of it.

As Musk and his so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) task force dismantle key parts of the government and plan to cut the workforce at federal agencies by half or more, the Millers have become pivotal figures in Musk's orbit, multiple sources tell WIRED. The couple has been tasked as intermediaries, bringing news about Musk's latest targets and communications strategies to the rest of the White House, say members of Trump's inner circle and people outside the administration who know them personally. Just over a month into the new administration, they have been privately projecting themselves as two pairs of steady hands at the till.

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Stephen Miller is the White House deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security adviser; two sources described his current role as that of a prime minister. His wife, Katie Miller, is a special government employee who functions as the top communications official at DOGE. She is also on the payroll of the firm P2 Public Affairs, The Wall Street

Journal reported, which has ties to Musk and several alumni of Florida governor Ron DeSantis' 2024 presidential campaign.

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Stephen was a senior adviser in Trump's first term, and an architect of the administration's anti-immigration platform, including advocating for the policy of separating migrant children from their families. Katie served in the first Trump administration as deputy press secretary at the Department of Homeland Security during Kirstjen Nielsen's tenure before ascending to the role of press secretary in 2019 and communications director in 2020 for then-vice president Mike Pence. The Millers were married in 2020.

Katie Miller, like many people associated with DOGE, is, as a special government employee, limited to working in the federal government for no more than 130 days in any given 365-day period and subject to less stringent ethics requirements than permanent employees. She was assigned to run communications for Musk prior to the transition, a White House official tells WIRED, beginning her journey with Musk as a "comms sherpa." Now she has become the richest man in the world's guide to life in Washington and integral to the high-velocity, high-volume barrage of cuts to the government's workforce and spending—many of them being questioned in the courts as to their legality—that have come to dominate Trump's first month back in office.

Her relationship with Musk, the White House official says, is central to DOGE's interactions with the rest of the White House. She's the key intermediary, delivering the DOGE message of the day to the rest of the

administration. She's also the one to deliver any sensitive or bad news to Musk, says the official.

The Republicans who spoke to WIRED for this story all requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. They are all generally supportive of the DOGE initiatives but share varying degrees of concern about Musk harming Trump's image and felt compelled to speak up out of an urge to protect the boss. (Trump, meanwhile, has continued to back Musk publicly with enthusiastic praise for DOGE's cuts, most recently with a flattering introduction before Musk held court at Wednesday's cabinet meeting.)

Meanwhile, Stephen Miller has, along with Project 2025 coauthor and Office of Management and Budget director Russell Vought, become one of Musk's closest allies in the administration, The New York Times reported earlier this month. WIRED has learned that the relationship is far closer, and more complicated, than has been previously known publicly.

In many ways, Musk's targeting of federal agencies is perfectly in sync with the aims of Miller, who has championed DOGE's work internally and even helped in making a lot of it possible. (In public, Miller has equated federal workers with "radical left Communists" and "criminal cartels.") Still, sources tell WIRED that Trumpworld is more comfortable with Musk taking the heat for the recent federal cuts rather than the less famous—and, in their view, far less telegenic—Miller.

Yet through their actions so far, the Millers and Musk have developed a MAGA version of the Pet Shop Boys adage from the song "Opportunities (Let's Make Lots of Money)": You've got the brawn / I've got the brains. Stephen Miller's knowledge of the federal apparatus, Katie Miller's contacts on Capitol Hill, and the couple's good standing among Trump loyalists, coupled with Musk's relentless ambition and effectively infinite resources, made the scale of the DOGE government takeover possible. Musk is not the independent actor he's often portrayed as and taken to

be, in other words, but is rather carrying out actions essentially in concert with the man to whom the president has delegated much of the day-to-day work of governance.

“Stephen is kind of the prime minister,” one of three Republicans close to Trump and familiar with the situation tells WIRED. Another Republican familiar with the dynamic also used the term “PM” to describe Miller, short for prime minister. The implication is that Miller is carrying out the daily work of governance while Trump serves as head of state, focusing on the fun parts of being president.

The White House did not answer questions about who reports to or outranks whom.

The Millers are seen inside Trumpworld as glorified babysitters for Musk, tasked with ensuring he stays within bounds, insofar as that’s possible. “He gets a lot of grace,” the first Republican said of Musk. “Many people aren’t nervous, because Stephen Miller is deeply involved. And Katie.” This Republican compared Musk to a preteen child.

The involvement of the Millers is also one of the many reasons why Trumpworld sources say they now don’t currently see an implosion between Trump and Musk happening anytime soon even though, as WIRED previously reported, rifts have already emerged within the president’s inner circle over the centibillionaire’s level of power.

Still, Musk’s relationship with the Millers has become a subject of great intrigue in Washington as DOGE continues to wreak havoc on the federal government. Little is known about how often they interact outside of work and how the relationship grew over the late stages of the campaign into the transition.

“If you can find out anything about Stephen Miller’s social life, I don’t wanna know the answer,” says a longtime Republican operative who knows the couple personally.

“Stephen and Katie are very attentive to [Musk],” the Republican who referred to Stephen as “prime minister” tells WIRED. There’s also only one audience which truly matters, they say: “He’s got a forgiving audience: the audience of one, and all of us around him.”