

I'm a Federal Worker. Elon Musk's Government Data Heist Is the Entire Ballgame.

BY DENISE CANA

On Friday night, reports emerged that Elon Musk's aides had tussled with Office of Personnel Management and Treasury staffers while demanding access to troves of information about federal employees. And on Sunday, it was reported that Musk had ousted top officials at the U.S. Agency for International Development for refusing him access to classified security and personnel information.

Those of us within the ranks of the federal workforce looked on in horror at all of this. Those outside the federal government might not understand the gravity of this situation. Think of OPM and the Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service as the valet sheds of the federal government. They're not flashy or big, but they hold all the keys. OPM maintains the private information of federal civil servants—bank codes, addresses, insurance information, retirement accounts, employment records. The Treasury's system processes every payment to everyone from grandmothers waiting for their Social Security check to cancer researchers working to crack the cure. Now there's a ham-fisted goon in an ill-fitting valet attendant's coat rummaging in broad daylight through all of the keys—all of that private information, previously given in trust, handled with care, and regulated by law.

Now is the moment to act. We should not be waiting until the perps are driving off with every Bimmer in the lot. This information demands careful management, and transparency around its collection and use. Its inadvertent disclosure could irreparably harm millions of American families. And it's being taken by people

that still can't figure out how to send an email from within the government without having it flagged as a likely phishing attempt. Someone needs to do something.