

‘I’m selling the Nazi mobile’: Tesla owners offload cars after Musk fascist-style

Dara Kerr

Tesla once appeared the future of vehicles. Then Musk’s salutes and support at Trump’s inauguration left owners feeling ‘saddled with a symbol of hate’

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When [Elon Musk](#) unveiled [Tesla’s](#) “truck of the future” in 2019, Filipos could barely contain his excitement. He quickly paid \$100 to get on the waitlist. Filipos described himself as a “true Tesla fanboy”, and the Cybertruck would be the third vehicle he’d buy from the company.

“When the Cybertruck came out, I watched the live event that night, and my wife was sitting there going, ‘No. No. No,’” said Filipos, who lives in a suburb of Philadelphia and whose last name is being withheld for fear of online retribution. Despite his wife’s disapproval, Filipos loved the bulky trapezoidal truck. “I was truly geeking out on it,” he said.

Now things have changed. Filipos bought a Ford F-150 Lightning instead of the Cybertruck. And even though his other car, a Model 3 Performance Tesla, had just 30,000 miles on it, he traded it in for an Acura in February. Frustration had been building for Filipos over the last few months, but the turning point was when [Musk did back-to-back Nazi-style salutes](#) during an inauguration day celebration for [Donald Trump](#) in January.

“I didn’t want to be saddled with a vehicle that was associated with something so awful,” Filipos said. “When you own a vehicle like that, you are advertising for that company.”

Elon Musk appears to give fascist-style salute after Trump inauguration – video

Filipos is part of a [growing movement of Tesla enthusiasts](#) who are now [turning their backs on the company](#) – selling their cars, dropping their leases and getting rid of Tesla stock. Many say that, while they still love the cars, they can’t square the CEO’s politics and behavior with their own. Musk is synonymous with Tesla; his vehicles, the Cybertruck in particular, are his calling cards.

The Guardian spoke with three people who offloaded their Teslas in protest of Musk over the last month alone. All said they did so explicitly because of Musk’s salutes during the inauguration. Another person who spoke with the Guardian on the condition of anonymity started the process of dropping her lease on the day of the salute with an email to [Tesla](#) reading: “Your boss is a Nazi.”

Across Reddit, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook, dozens of posts are popping up with people saying they are also getting rid of their Teslas. Some have added photos of themselves flipping the bird as a goodbye gesture to their cars. Still more have posted receipts to prove they sold their Tesla stock, saying they didn’t want to be associated with the Maga-happy CEO.

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One celebrity Tesla owner has even taken part. Singer Sheryl Crow [posted a video](#) of herself [to Instagram](#) waving goodbye to her vehicle as it was hauled off in a flatbed truck on Valentine’s Day. Her caption read: “There comes a time when you have to decide who you are willing to align with. So long Tesla.” She said she was donating the sale proceeds to National Public Radio because it was under threat by “President Musk”. Musk, the world’s richest man, has wholeheartedly thrown his weight behind Trump. He [donated \\$288m](#) to his presidential campaign and uses X, the social media platform

he owns, [as a megaphone](#) to tout the new administration's policies and goad anyone who disagrees. This support has earned Musk a coveted position heading the unofficial "department of government efficiency" (Doge), which is tasked with cutting federal spending. His government overhaul has been so sweeping that Democrats such as Senate minority leader [Chuck Schumer](#) have [called Doge](#) an "unelected shadow government".

Musk and Tesla did not return requests for comment. The CEO responded to backlash over his fascist-style salute [with jokes and memes](#) on X.

‘No Swastikars’: protesters across the US lambast Musk

The Tesla selloffs come amid [nationwide US protests against Musk](#) and his actions.

Protesters have gathered [outside Tesla showrooms](#) in cities including New York, Seattle and Kansas City, and in towns as small as West Chester, Pennsylvania.

[‘I felt nothing but disgust’: Tesla owners vent their anger at Elon Musk](#)

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In San Francisco, roughly 100 people descended on the city's Tesla showroom in late February chanting: "Hey hey, ho ho, [Elon Musk](#) has got to go". They unfurled a banner reading "Musk must GO" showing a boot kicking a swastika and carried signs saying "No Swastikars", an apparent new nickname for Teslas. Passing cars drove by honking enthusiastically.

Several anti-Musk websites and social media accounts have also popped up. [Tesla Takedown](#) encourages people to protest. One of the organizers is [actor and activist Alex Winter](#), the titular Bill from Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure. A TikTok account called [Cybertruck hunters](#) has also surfaced. It's filled with posts of people projecting anti-Musk videos onto the massive rear bumpers of Cybertrucks.

The Instagram account [Everyone Hates Elon](#) is distributing stickers that say, "Don't buy a Swasticar" and sending out posters for people to plaster around their cities that say "Goes from 0 to 1939 in 3 seconds" with a picture of Musk doing the Nazi salute. Tesla

showrooms and individual cars are also [being vandalized](#), according to [Wired](#). One Cybertruck in downtown Manhattan was spraypainted with a swastika last week.

Seen today in Lower Manhattan... pic.twitter.com/9a92yfAm2Y

— Molly Ploofkins (@Mollyploofkins) [February 22, 2025](#)

This anti-Musk protest movement started to percolate over the summer, when Tesla owners began to [put bumper stickers on their own cars](#) that said: “I bought this before Elon went crazy”.

Rebekkah, who lives in the Tampa area and is only going by her first name for fear of retribution, said she started looking for one of those bumper stickers to put on her Model 3 after Musk [endorsed](#) Trump for president in July.

“It was just the shame of driving it around and getting out of it,” she said. “The potential optics that we were supporting him.”

Rebekkah bought the car in 2020 because she was passionate about the climate crisis and wanted an electric vehicle, she said. She was initially thrilled with her Tesla, but like Filipos, things started to sour as she watched the Musk-Trump alliance grow. Then came Musk’s two-time inauguration day salute.

“I was dead set on selling the car after that,” Rebekkah said, adding that her grandmother was a Holocaust survivor. Rebekkah said she called her mom and told her: “I’m selling the Nazi mobile.”

The car was gone within days. “We haven’t looked back since,” Rebekkah said. She put down a deposit for a Rivian.

Tesla owners sell at a loss: ‘I happily paid \$4,000 to get rid of that car’

Ron likewise decided to sell his Tesla after Musk’s salute, even though he knew he would lose money. He bought his first Tesla in 2020, a gray Model 3 Performance, and loved it from the minute he test drove it. In 2023, he upgraded to a Model Y. Ron said he hadn’t

really followed Musk at the time, but last summer, he began to pay attention to the billionaire's increasing involvement in politics.

"I started looking back at some of the things he said, and I started to feel guilty that I didn't do more research beforehand," said Ron, who lives in Los Angeles and is only going by his first name for fear of retribution. "I always just assumed he was a quirky, nerdy, you know, space-first exploration technology type of guy."

As time progressed and Musk became more outspoken, Ron said he grew increasingly embarrassed to drive the Tesla. "I felt like I was driving a billboard that supported his endeavors and his thoughts and ideologies," he said.

In the beginning of February, Ron swapped out his Model Y, which only had 15,000 miles, for another electric vehicle, a Hyundai Ioniq. He still owed thousands of dollars on his Tesla. Online trading sites and dealerships were driving hard bargains and ultimately he lost \$4,000.

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"I guess you could say I happily paid \$4,000 to get rid of that car," Ron said. "That's how much I disagree with his politics."

Tesla sales have plummeted over the last year. In California, the biggest US market for electric vehicles, they fell by 12%. And registrations for new Tesla vehicles fell by 11.6%, according to the [California New Car Dealers Association](#), even as overall registrations for electric vehicles have grown in the state. Nationwide, the slump in Tesla sales marked the company's [first decline in how many cars it delivered to buyers annually](#). It's unclear if the decrease can be fully attributed to Musk, since the electric vehicle market has seen increased competition over the past couple of years, especially out of China.

In Europe, Tesla has taken an [even more severe hit](#). In January, sales fell by 12% in Britain, 38% in Norway and 63% in France, [according to the New York Times](#). Sales in Germany [fell by 59%](#) that month, coinciding with Musk's outspoken [support for](#) the far-

right alternative party AfD and with scolding Germans for focusing too much on “past guilt” for the Holocaust.

Tesla stock flies, then plummets

In spite of its poor sales and weak earnings reports, Tesla’s stock price soared in 2024 – likely boosted by Musk’s proximity to Trump and a regulatory outlook that’s friendlier than ever to the car maker. The day after the election alone, shares jumped 14%. But, as Musk has become increasingly involved in the day-to-day of the new [administration](#), that has changed, too. Since mid-December, Tesla’s stock has plunged 25%.

[Tesla owners turn against Musk: ‘I’m embarrassed driving this car around’](#)

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On social media, people are encouraging others to sell their Tesla stock. Reddit has threads of people posting their share sales with headlines like, “Never normalize Nazis” and “This is my way of fighting Nazis and I’m damn proud.” Since inauguration day, there’s been a [21% selloff of Tesla stock](#), according to ABC. Musk has lost more than \$100bn from his personal fortune and the company’s valuation has now dipped below \$1tn.

Filipos is one of the people who sold his stock. He first bought 40 shares in 2020, not long after he joined the Cybertruck waitlist. Over the years, that number grew to 717 shares. He planned to keep holding, but when Musk endorsed Trump last summer, Filipos changed his mind.

“I had to come to a reckoning,” he said. Filipos didn’t see Trump as standing up for the environment, and Musk’s endorsement “was against what I perceived as the original vision for Tesla”.

In late July, Filipos sold all of his shares – even though he knew he probably would have made more money if he held. Now, he and his wife have gotten rid of their Model 3 too and are free of all things Tesla.

“We feel lighter not being saddled with a symbol of hate,” he said.