

Trump Privately Complains About Clingy Elon Musk - NYT Reporter

| ONLY ROOM FOR ONE SHERIFF |

The president-elect is also not a fan of those “President Musk” jokes, journalist Maggie Haberman said during a podcast appearance.

Publicly, [Donald Trump](#) is [thrilled](#) to have his mega-donor and “[First Buddy](#)” [Elon Musk](#) camping out just a few hundred feet from his house.

Privately, he seems to be tiring of Musk dropping in whenever he feels like it.

“Trump does complain a bit to people about how Musk is around a lot,” *New York Times* journalist and “Trump whisperer” Maggie Haberman told tech reporter Kara Swisher during the latest episode of Swisher’s podcast, *On*.

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After pouring more than a quarter-billion dollars into Trump’s re-election effort, Musk has been renting the \$2,000-per-night Banyan Cottage at Trump’s private Mar-a-Lago club, the [New York Times](#) reported last week.

It’s not clear who will ultimately foot the bill for the cottage, which is just a few hundred feet from Trump’s main residence and transition-team headquarters. From Banyan, Musk has been able to attend Trump’s personnel meetings and crash [awkward](#) dinners with rival tech billionaires, like Amazon founder [Jeff Bezos](#).

“He really parked himself in Trump’s face,” Haberman said.

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Dan Ladden-Hall



For now, Musk seems to be on the winning side of the MAGA [civil war](#) that’s pitted Silicon Valley’s regulation-hating tech bros against the original grassroots loyalists who have backed Trump since 2016, she said.

But it’s not clear how long that will last. Trump hasn’t even taken office yet, and already Musk has inserted himself in policy battles to the point of Democrats calling him [“President Musk.”](#)

“It definitely bothers him,” Haberman said of Trump’s reaction to the taunt. “The ‘President Musk’ line was always going to be a way to get him. Trump’s not a wind-up toy, but there certainly are very specific things that can zotz him.”

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Josh Fiallo



Trump is a “one-ring circus,” according to his long-time friends, and “I’m not sure Musk has figured that out yet,” Haberman added.

She predicted that Musk will try to maintain his current level of physical proximity to Trump even after the inauguration on Jan. 20. But it's likely to be far more difficult once the Trump apparatus moves from Mar-a-Lago to the White House.

"I don't anticipate that Musk is going to have an office in the West Wing," Haberman said. "I don't even know that he will have a blue pass to wander around."

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The blue badge gives staffers access to the White House and Executive Office Building. Despite his hanging around, Musk isn't Trump's most influential adviser, Haberman said. Those would be Trump's campaign manager turned chief of staff [Susie Wiles](#) and his white-nationalist deputy chief of staff [Stephen Miller](#).

Publicly, Trump's inner circle all say what a great supporter Musk is, Haberman said. But that doesn't mean they like having him around.

"I think a bunch of people around him are also struggling with how aggressive Musk can be in their interactions," Haberman said.

Musk, she noted, seems more willing to "irritate" Trump than some of his other advisers. The fact that he's willing and able to fund primary challengers probably buys him more time than usual, but it's still a fraught relationship.

"It's like watching shifting sands around Trump," she said. "It's like this one's up, this one's down, but nobody's ever totally out."