

# Elon Musk's Anti-Semitic, Apartheid-Loving Grandfather

The billionaire has described his grandfather as a risk-taking adventurer. A closer read of history reveals something much darker.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2023/09/joshua-haldeman-elon-musk-grandfather-apartheid-antisemitism/675396/>

In Walter Isaacson's new biography, Elon Musk, a mere page and a half is devoted to introducing Musk's grandfather, a Canadian chiropractor named Joshua N. Haldeman. Isaacson describes him as a source of Musk's great affection for danger —“a daredevil adventurer with strongly held opinions” and “quirky conservative populist views” who did rope tricks at rodeos and rode freight trains like a hobo. “He knew that real adventures involve risk,” Isaacson quotes Musk as having said. “Risk energized him.”

But in 1950, Haldeman's “quirky” politics led him to make an unusual and dramatic choice: to leave Canada for South Africa. Haldeman had built a comfortable life for himself in Regina,

Saskatchewan's capital. His chiropractic practice was one of Canada's largest and allowed him to possess his own airplane and a 20-room home he shared with his wife and four young children. He'd been active in politics, running for both the provincial and national parliaments and even becoming the national chairman of a minor political party. Meanwhile, he'd never even been to South Africa.