

Elon Musk tweets right-wing conspiracy theory about violent assault on Paul Pelosi

Kevin Reed
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Three days after he assumed private ownership of the social media platform Twitter, Elon Musk joined with right-wing personalities and retweeted baseless information about the violent assault on Paul Pelosi, husband of Democratic Party House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, that took place early Friday morning.

San Francisco authorities reported that 42-year-old David DePape had broken into the Pelosi residence, attacked and seriously injured the 82-year-old husband of the speaker with a hammer. It has been reported that DePape demanded to know, “Where is Nancy?” during the assault in which he planned to tie up her husband and remain in the house until she returned home.

DePape was arrested at the scene and is expected to be charged with multiple felonies including attempted homicide, assault with a deadly weapon, elder abuse and burglary. A subsequent review of his social media activity showed DePape to be a supporter of the stolen election lie of Donald Trump, a promoter of QAnon conspiracy theories and a spreader of bigoted screeds against racial minorities, Jews and women.

On Sunday morning, responding to a tweet by Hillary Clinton regarding the connection between DePape, the Republican Party “and its mouthpieces” and demanding that those responsible be held accountable, Musk tweeted, “There is a tiny possibility there might be more to the story than meets the eye.”

Musk’s tweet included a link to an article published by the *Santa Monica Observer*, a right-wing news site with a history of posting misinformation, that falsely claimed Paul Pelosi had a previous relationship with his attacker. The post also claimed DePape might have been let into the Pelosi residence by a third person.

According to an NBC News report on Sunday, police officials characterized the incident as a “violent break-in” and confirmed that Paul Pelosi and DePape did not

know each other before the attack. Police also added that zip ties were found at the scene.

By early Sunday afternoon, Musk had deleted his post without explanation. However, with more than 110 million followers, Musk’s deleted tweet had already received more than 30,000 retweets and was liked more than 110,000 times by late morning.

Others promoting the false narrative about an “alleged attack” on Paul Pelosi include former Trump White House fascist adviser Steve Bannon who spoke on his radio show about the “very strange new details on Paul Pelosi attack.” Longtime Trump bagman Roger Stone posted on the social media platform Telegram that there was a “stench” around mainstream media reports about the attack by DePape on Pelosi.

Responding in typical clownish fashion to comments about his spreading of misinformation about the latest manifestation of the same fascistic violence that reached a high point during the January 6, 2021 coup attempt at the US Capitol in which Nancy Pelosi was a primary target, Musk tweeted later on Sunday, “I’ve now been through so many hero to villain cycles I’ve lost count.”

He also posted an image of a report in the New York Times with the headline, “Elon Musk, in a tweet, shares link from site known to publish false news,” to which he commented, “This is fake—I did *not* tweet out a link to the New York Times!”

Musk also spent much of Sunday responding to media reports that he was planning to carry out mass layoffs at Twitter. A report in the *Times* on Saturday, based on the comments of four unnamed sources, said, “The layoffs at Twitter would take place before a Nov. 1 date when employees were scheduled to receive stock grants as part of their compensation. ... By laying off workers before that date, Mr. Musk may avoid paying

the grants, though he is supposed to pay the employees cash in place of their stock under the terms of the merger agreement.”

To this new, Musk tweeted, “This is false,” and he did not provide any additional information about what his plans are at Twitter.

Musk took over Twitter as his private property last Thursday following the completion of a \$44 billion purchasing agreement that was initiated last April. This episode has proven very quickly that placing Twitter, a powerful social media tool of communications, news and public relations with 330 million active users all over the world, under the private control of the American oligarch Musk is a deeply reactionary development.

Meanwhile, the removal of Twitter from the New York Stock Exchange and its takeover by the self-styled “free speech absolutist” Musk also immediately coincided with a dramatic rise in racist and anti-Semitic content on the platform. According to the Anti-Defamation League, in the 24 hours after Musk’s takeover, there were over 1,200 tweets and retweets of anti-Semitic memes on the platform.



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