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## Some Follow Up Questions For Elon Musk, After He Admits He Gets Stuff Wrong Sometimes



from the *confirmation-bias-on-ketamine* dept

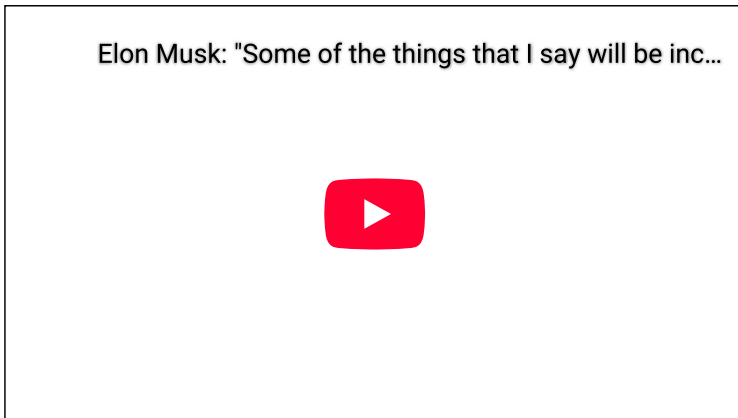
Thu, Feb 13th 2025 09:27am - [Mike Masnick](#)

Here’s a story about being wrong. Not just regular wrong – we’re all wrong sometimes! – but spectacularly, publicly, “I’m going to double down again and again and again on this obviously false thing even after being corrected” wrong.

Failures

This week, Elon Musk stood in the Oval Office at the White House and was finally challenged about one of the Musk/Trump administration’s more creative (i.e., made up) claims: that the US was sending \$50 million worth of condoms to Hamas in Gaza. (Sometimes it was \$100 million. The details are flexible when you’re making things up.)

When confronted with the claim that the USAID grant in question was for a different Gaza, one in Mozambique, for anti-HIV and anti-TB programs rather than condoms, Musk responded by admitting that maybe “some of the things that I say will be incorrect and should be corrected.”



Now, for many people, this would be the moment to say “Ah yes, my mistake about that whole condom thing, I will try not to let that happen again.” But no! Musk immediately went on to insist that the \$50 million was still too much for condoms. (It was not for condoms.) The funding from the US to Mozambique **was actually a grant** to the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, which has told reporters that **none of it went to condoms.**

*BBC Verify contacted the aid agency that granted the funding - the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) - who told us that no money has been used to procure condoms.*

You could claim – as Musk implies – that this is just one random mistake, but no. This is part of a **pattern** that has become **Musk’s signature move**: Find some anonymous ExTwitter troll’s creative interpretation of a government document they don’t even remotely understand, amplify it as absolute truth, and then – this

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Got it

We saw this the other week with the false claims of pundit Bill Kristol supposedly getting funds from USAID **when the reality was** that they basically just used the same bank as a USAID recipient. (Yes, really. That’s the whole story. Same bank = SCANDAL!)

The admission that he “might get stuff wrong” would be commendable if we were talking about minor errors. But Musk isn’t making small, easily correctible mistakes. He’s consistently wrong about massive, consequential issues in ways that cause real, irreversible damage. It’s gotten so bad that people have started keeping a grim tally: **the Elon Musk death toll**. (When people start tracking the body count from your “mistakes,” maybe it’s time to reconsider your information-sharing strategy.)

But here’s the thing that makes this situation truly dangerous: It’s not just that Musk is wrong. Being wrong is, after all, a deeply human trait. We all suffer from confirmation bias – that tendency to believe things that confirm what we already think. I do it, you do it, everyone does it.

But Musk? Well, Musk has turned confirmation bias into an extreme sport, with a playing field littered with bodies. I would say it’s confirmation-bias-on-steroids, but given **recent revelations**, perhaps confirmation-bias-on-ketamine is more apt.

We’ve talked before about two important and related concepts that seem to bedevil Elon: **the idea of Chesterton’s Fence** (taking time to understand why something is where it is before you rip it out) and the concept that **everything is a conspiracy theory** if you don’t understand how anything works. Both of these seem to be at work here. He’s ripping out important systems without understanding why they’re there, and then – because he doesn’t understand them, nor even wish to try – insisting that they must be part of some grand conspiracy for fraud.

But here’s the incomprehensible bit that makes this whole situation move from merely absurd to genuinely tragic: There is literally no human being on Earth better positioned to get *actual*, detailed, thorough explanations for how things really work than Elon Musk.

He could easily get an actual briefing on literally anything. From many actual experts. Want to know how USAID actually works? He could have a dozen top experts in his office within the hour. Need to know how congressional appropriations work under the Constitution? I’m sure the foremost experts in the world would be at his door. He has unique access to all of the expertise in the world, not to mention the bank account to help pay for such expertise.

And yet, he consistently chooses to rely on sketchy anonymous accounts with names like TeslaFucks420 pushing transparently false narratives that any expert could debunk in minutes.

So here’s what someone should have asked as a follow-up to the admission about possibly being incorrect about the condoms: “Mr. Musk, you have unprecedented access to expertise and information. You could literally summon Nobel laureates to explain how government funding works. And yet you’re getting your information from anonymous ExTwitter accounts with anime avatars. Why?”

But wait, it gets better! (Or worse, depending on your perspective.) While Musk wants forgiveness for his “incorrect” statements, he’s showing absolutely zero mercy to others. Remember, this is the same Musk who, along with DOGE, is eagerly firing thousands upon thousands of federal employees for the grave sin of... [checks notes]... **attending voluntary training sessions** about being respectful to people from different backgrounds, as encouraged by Trump’s last education secretary, Betsy DeVos.

That’s right: Spreading demonstrably false information about government funding that affects people’s lives? “Oops, my bad, everyone makes mistakes!” Attending a workplace diversity seminar? “YOU’RE FIRED!”

But perhaps most telling is what happened after the press conference. Even after being directly corrected about the Mozambique HIV program funding, Musk doubled down. He not only continued to insist the money was for condoms but took to ExTwitter to amplify the false narrative, mockingly posting about “a LOT of condoms.”

It would indeed be a lot of condoms. If, you know, any of the money had actually gone to condoms. Which it didn’t.

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**@deadspatula** everything should be working normally now - thanks again for calling this to my attention!  
**deadspatula:** It appears to work from my end now. Glad to help!  
**BentFranklin:** I just want to say one thing: Elonald Trusk  
**Kernighan:** I was unable to create an account using the link emailed to me :/ says unknown address  
**candescence:** <https://bsky.app/profile/jonchr...>  
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\$50M of condoms is a LOT of condoms 🧑🏻‍🦲



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This isn't just about being wrong anymore. It's about choosing to be wrong, repeatedly and destructively, when you have every possible resource to be right. So, it seems like the next time reporters have an opportunity to interview Elon, they should be asking things like, "why do you keep falling for the most blatantly bullshit nonsense around? Why are you "incorrect" so often about such basic stuff? Why should someone who consistently chooses conspiracy theories over readily available facts have the power to impact millions of lives?"

These seem like relevant questions. Though given the current political climate, I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for anyone to ask them.

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