

## **Elon Musk Becomes #1 Covidiot By Exploiting Pandemic For Personal Promotion**

By [Paula Froelich](#)

After working as a journalist for over 20 years, much of it in the celebrity world, I have found that whatever age a person becomes famous is the age when his or her maturity (usually) stops.

But something a little different happens in the tech industry: Tech bros, it seems, develop a Jesus complex right after their first big deal — believing they (and only they) can save the world because, as their acolytes and mothers have told them, they are just that brilliant.

See: Uber's Travis Kalanick, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon's Jeff Bezos and, most especially, Elon Musk.

The guy behind Tesla, The Boring Company and Space X — the one who is convinced he can make Mars inhabitable — has been showing off his arrogance to dangerous effect during the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.

Here's a rundown of recent examples of him wildly throwing his opinions out there.

[March 6](#): "the coronavirus panic is dumb," Musk tweeted to his 32 million followers.

[March 16](#): “maybe worth considering chloroquine for C19,” he tweeted. (In some cases, this treatment has produced frightening side effects, and a small study testing it as a cure was halted due to [risk of fatal heart complications](#).)

March 16: Musk’s Tesla [defied a California shelter-in-place](#) order and kept its Silicon Valley factory open, with workers saying it was “business as usual.” Several Tesla workers have since [tested positive](#) for COVID-19. Alameda County, Calif., officials said on March 18 that the factory had reduced its workforce – but that 2,500 would still report to the factory.

March 17: According to the BBC, Musk [proclaimed](#) that “Kids are essentially immune” to the virus. This is demonstrably false: In an early April report the CDC confirmed coronavirus [contagion in children in all 50 states](#).

[March 28](#): “Many doctors are not treating patients due to fear of giving or receiving C19,” he claimed.

[March 31](#): Musk tweeted that he was rushing to the rescue! “We have extra FDA approved ventilators. Will ship to hospitals worldwide within Tesla delivery regions. Device & shipping costs are free. Only requirement is that the vents are needed immediately for patients, not stored in [a] warehouse.” Turns, out, what he actually sent was five-year-old BiPAP [sleep apnea machines](#) that can’t be used to treat coronavirus victims in the ICU.

[April 5](#): He retweets “engineering update on the Tesla ventilator” from Tesla — is Musk now making his own medical equipment?

[April 16](#): Musk tweets out a “partial list of hospitals to which Tesla sent ventilators.” A day later, [CNN contacts](#) hospitals on the list who confirm they were not sent ventilators, but BiPAP apnea machines.

**see also**

### [Tesla asks landlords for rent reduction during coronavirus pandemic](#)

This is not the first time he’s promised to step in and be a hero, only to flail. Remember his bid to “save” the Thai soccer team trapped in a cave in 2018? Musk offered up a kid-sized submarine via his Boring Company, which experts said [would not work](#) — and which showed up after the actual rescue was in process.

When British diver Vern Unsworth, who actually was heroic in helping save the team, criticized Musk — claiming that the tech bro was using the opportunity for public relations — Musk accused Unsworth of being a “pedo guy.” Only after Unsworth [threatened to sue](#) did Musk issue a [rare apology](#). A nasty libel lawsuit followed which Musk eventually won.

A year later, [Vanity Fair](#) published a piece titled “He’s Full of S–t: How Elon Musk Fooled Investors, Bilked Taxpayers, and Gambled Tesla to Save Solar City.”

It outlined how New York taxpayers funded almost a billion dollars for Musk’s dream of SolarCity — a solar factory that was part of Andrew Cuomo’s [controversial “Buffalo Billion” program](#)

that was supposed to revive the upstate economy. In the end, just 750 jobs were created at the plant and the project was embroiled in a [massive federal bid-rigging scandal](#) that led to the downfall of top Cuomo advisers and donor contractors.

In November 2019, [The Buffalo News](#) reported that Tesla was getting an \$854 million write-down on the plant: “New York State spent \$958.6 million to build Tesla Inc.’s solar panel factory in South Buffalo and buy a big chunk of the equipment inside. Now, auditors are saying the building and all that equipment is worth just under \$75 million — or just 8 percent of what the state put into the RiverBend factory.” As of mid-February, the plant, now called Gigafactory2, still needed to hire 360 people to meet its employment quota of 1460 by April 30, or face a “pay a \$41.2 million penalty to the state for each year it falls short,” according to the Albany Business Review.

Elon, it’s time to take a breath and think — and possibly research work that may not have been done by you — before you speak. Take a page from the founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, and put your money where your big mouth is (without constantly crowing about it). Dorsey, who has [teamed up with Rihanna and Jay-Z](#) to donate \$6.2 million to CoVID 19 relief funds, recently announced the creation of [Start Small LLC](#), using \$1 billion of his own equity to “disarm this pandemic.” After that, the fund will “shift to ... health and education” for girls.

Now *that* is a hero.

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