

Elon Musk's 'Boring Company' is no joke

By Rufo Quintavalle in Opinion, Energy I February 13th 2017



Last December, while Donald Trump was lining up his new cabinet and while Vladimir Putin and Bashar Al-Assad were busy bombing what was left of eastern Aleppo, Elon Musk was stuck in traffic. He decided to pass the time by writing a few tweets:







"It shall be called 'The Boring Company'"

"Boring, it's what we do"

Various media outlets reprinted these tweets and what started as a rather labored pun became a news story. Was Musk for real? Was his next venture going to involve digging tunnels? Probably not was the conclusion, but it provided a little light relief from the ugly stuff that was going on in the real world.

But now, a couple of months later, with Mr Trump sworn in as president in a ceremony watched by the entirety of the free world and with Mr. Musk newly appointed as President Trump's Special Advisor on Job Creation and Productivity, the tunnel idea has resurfaced and it looks like the pun may become reality.

This shouldn't however prevent us from treating it as a joke.

If traffic is really so bad that one cannot move, then digging a tunnel might afford you temporary relief, but without a long term reduction in the number of drivers at some point the tunnel will be packed as well. At which point you could always build a flyover. Or better yet privatize the tunnel and reserve it for tech executives. The genuine solution — a reduction in the number of cars — by definition will not appeal to someone who runs a car company and has just been given a mandate from a Republican President to create jobs through infrastructure investment.

All of which wouldn't really bother me (GOP behaves like GOP, CEO behaves like CEO) if it weren't for the fact that Musk is so regularly held up as a hero by certain parts of the environmental movement, who see in Tesla's electric cars the promise that we can carry on living exactly as we do now and indeed that billions more people can one day live like us. This is a wonderful vision, combining progressive social change, free markets, care for the environment and a car that does 0-60 in two and a half seconds. And best yet, it comes at no cost; we do not need to give up anything and indeed could even make a great deal of wealth if we manage to back the right technological horse.

Unfortunately, it is also a lie. We as a species are in a deep, deep hole right now and we have got here through the extraordinary technological progress of the Twentieth Century, of which fossil fuel extraction is both a cause and a symptom. But we are so wedded to this beautiful, frictionless world which we inhabit that we cannot imagine the solution to our problems coming from anywhere else but technology. If engineers have come up with such amazing things as air travel.

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replacing fossil fuels? Isn't it only a matter of time before we are all clean, green, wealthy and on our way to living forever? I would love to believe this (apart from the living forever part which has never really appealed) but I cannot see any evidence to support this techno-optimism.

My grandfather, Bruno Antonio Quintavalle, was for almost fifty years the CEO of Magneti Marelli, a company that built high tech component parts for the automobile industry. As early as 1931 Magneti Marelli was building batteries for electric drive vehicles. In 1939 they built the first experimental system for television broadcasts, long before Italy even had televisions. In the 1950s they helped construct the proton synchrotron at CERN in Geneva. My grandfather was a Twentieth Century version of what Elon Musk is now, a technological visionary. Like Musk, he had a good relationship with the ruling parties (including the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini) and was knighted for his services to the Italian economy.

But his vision of the world was shaped at a time when global population was under three billion, when resources were abundant and when we didn't know what we do now about climate change. And what we do know is alarming. According to the latest figures, if we want to keep the planet below 2°C of warming we have twenty-five years to wean ourselves off fossil fuels. This will be hugely difficult to do, and two degrees of warming will still cause major disruption to human and animal life, but this goal remains within the realm of possibility if we start immediately reducing our energy consumption. However, if we are to maintain our current lifestyles while simultaneously building an entirely new energy and transportation infrastructure then we will need to expend a massive amount of energy. This is the Catch 22 situation in which we find ourselves – to get out of the hole by using technology alone we will have to not only carry on digging but also significantly increase the speed at which we dig.

Which is why an electric car, with all the copper, cobalt and energy it embodies, is a Twentieth Century solution to a Twenty First Century problem. When my workaholic grandfather finally retired in the 1970s, there were approximately 200 million cars in the world; today there are 1.2 billion, of which 260 million are in the US. This is an unsustainably large number and the current boom in electric car sales should not divert our attention from this fact. On paper, an electric car is better than a gaspowered one (although bear in mind that two-thirds of the world's electricity is still generated by burning fossil fuels), but without a significant reduction in the number of cars on the road and a concomitant reduction in overall energy usage, then electric cars will simply drive us to hell by a slightly more scenic route.

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BREAKING NEWS President Donald Trump approves expedited request for major disaster declaration





Local governments caught off guard by Elon Musk's Hyperloop announcement



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Friday, July 21, 2017

Local governments were apparently caught off guard by Elon Musk's announcement this morning that he has received "verbal" approval to bore a tunnel from New York to





But the New York City mayor's office and spokespeople from the D.C. and Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation all told ABC News they were not aware of any ongoing projects involving Musk.

The U.S. Department of Transportation referred ABC News' inquiry to the White House.

"We have had promising conversations to date, are committed to transformative infrastructure projects, and believe our greatest solutions have often come from the ingenuity and drive of the private sector," a White House spokesperson told ABC News.

Musk, also the CEO of rocket manufacturer SpaceX and electric auto giant Tesla and a cofounder of PayPal, served on the administration's advisory council until Trump pulled out of the Paris climate accords.

His tunnel-digging operation, "The Boring Company" (pun intended), has already broken ground on an underground shaft near his rocket company in California to circumvent gridlock in Los Angeles.

"I find holes in the ground exciting," Musk quipped at an engineering competition in January. "We'll see how far we can get, we're just sort of muddling along."

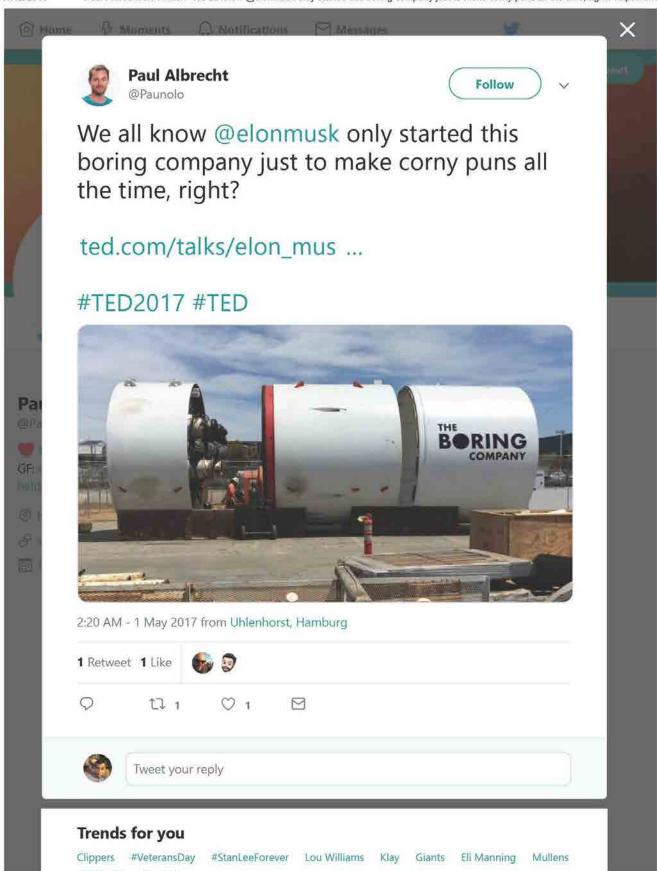
The inimitable entrepreneur first revealed his design for the Hyperloop — a travel pod designed to speed through an underground pneumatic tube at around 800 miles per hour — in 2013.

After completing Hyperloop tunnels in Los Angeles and the Northeastern corridor, he plans to continue digging, with tunnels connecting Los Angeles to San Francisco and a network inside Texas, he suggested on Twitter.

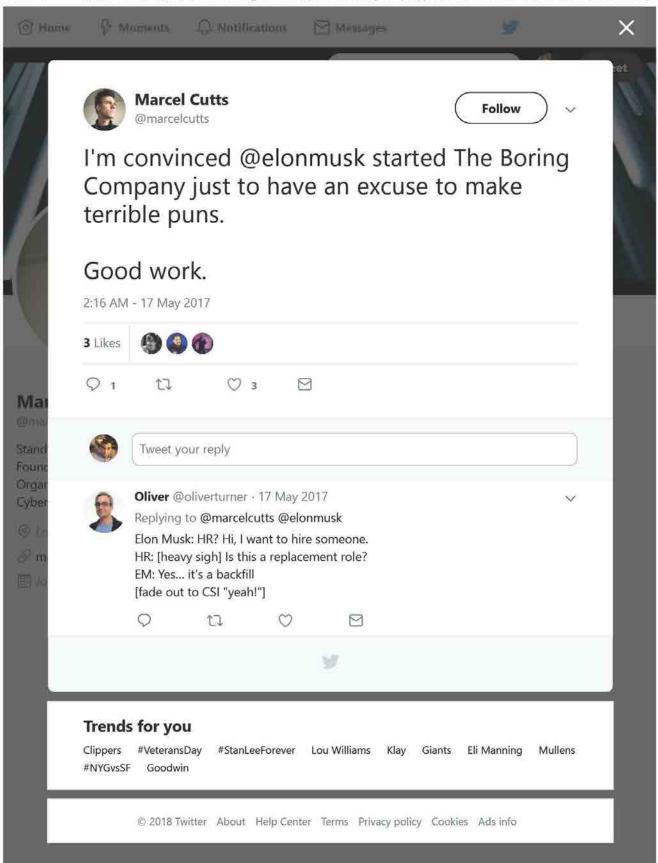
"Still a lot of work needed to receive formal approval, but am optimistic that will occur rapidly," Musk clarified a few hours after posting his first tweet.

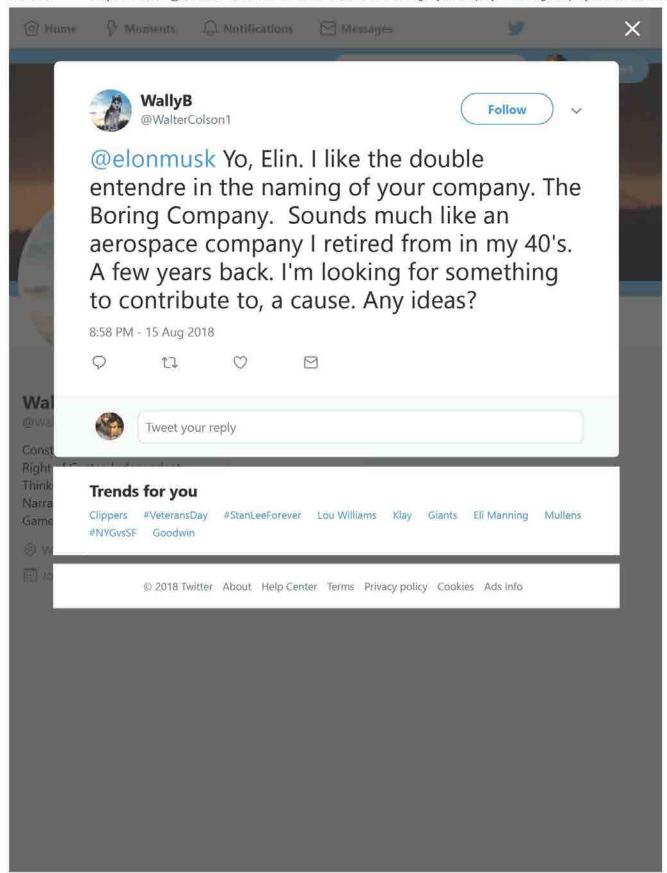








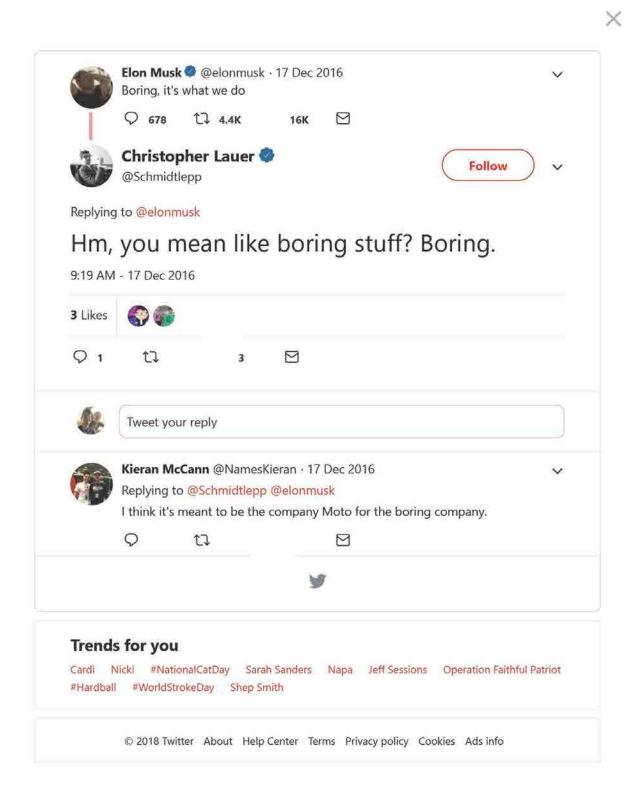






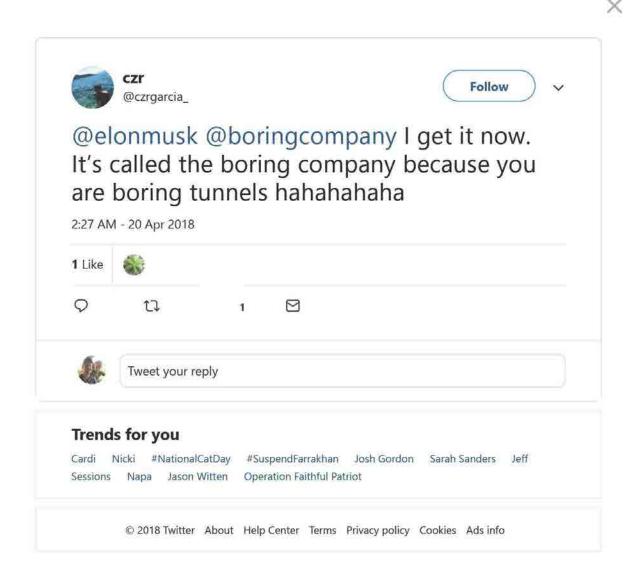
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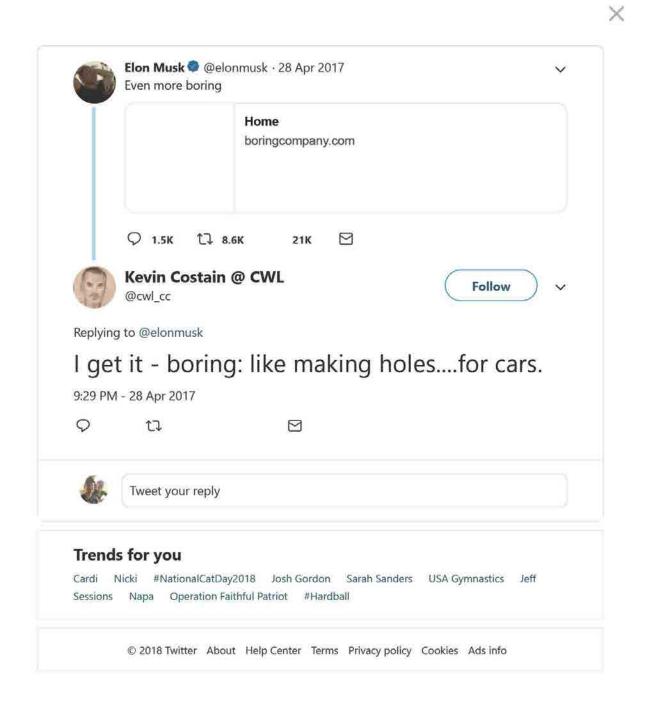


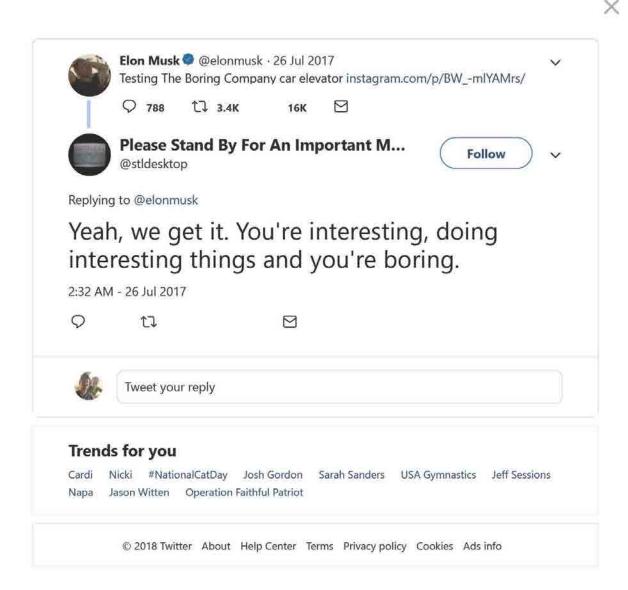


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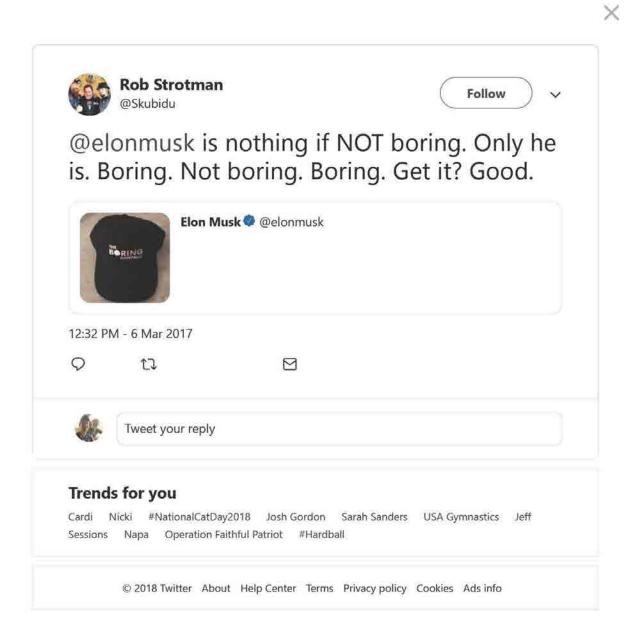


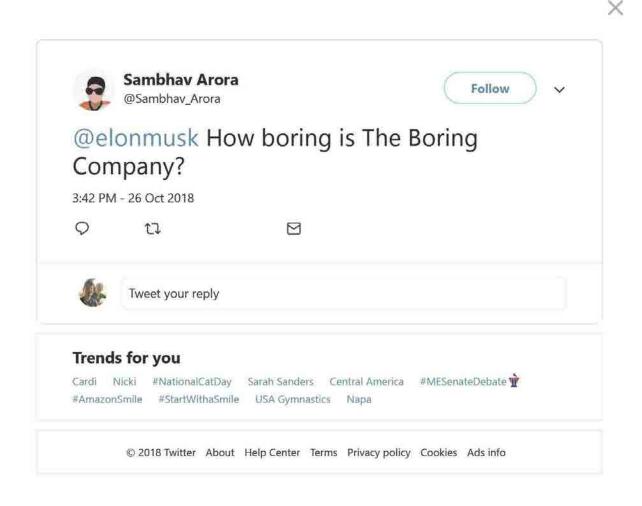


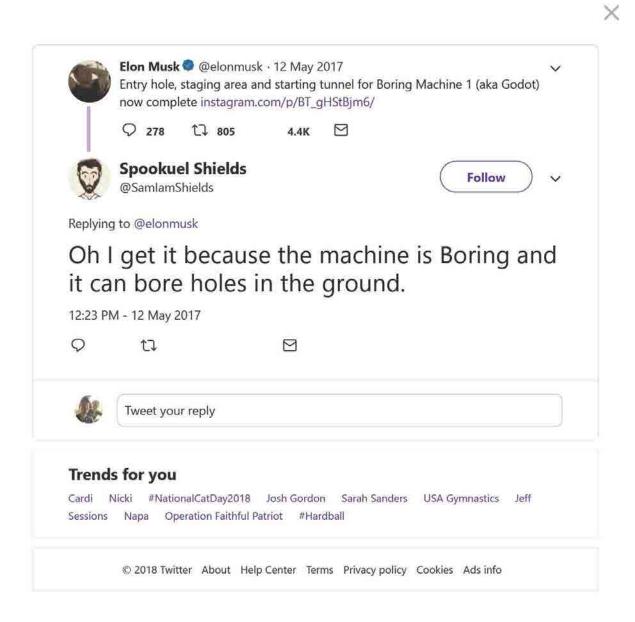
















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Elon Musk's Boring Machine Has Begun Tunneling: "No more waiting for Godot"

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On Wednesday, Elon Musk announced that The Boring Company's first machine, whimsically named "Godot" after the play Waiting for Godot, has begun work in Los Angeles.

"It has begun boring and just completed the first segment of tunnel in L.A.".

The Boring Company intends to revolutionize city transit with a system of underground tunnels.

If all goes as Musk plans, the tunnels will eventually be used for metro rail, hyperloop, and personal cars, the latter of which will be lowered into the tunnels on futuristic sleds that will transport the vehicles at 125 miles per hour.

Musk announced the name of this first machine last month, tweeting, "Naming theme for tunnel boring machines will be poems & plays." He's really relishing the pun opportunities with this company; "Boring" was apparently just the beginning.

Godot is "a few hundred feet long" and bores at a worse-than-sluggish pace: Last month Musk said that it moves 14 times slower than the company's pet snail, Gary.

Summary Source | FAQ | Feedback | Top keywords: tunnel*1 bores*2 Godot*3 Musk*4 Company*5

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- ♠ TechnoYogi 1 point 1 year ago
- So it's devolved to a joke then?

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BUSINESS

Elon Musk has an idea to fix traffic, but it's really 'boring'



Yes lat CEO Elon Music listens as President-elect Consist Trump speaks during a meeting with technology industry leaders at Trump Tower in New York, Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2018, (AP Phote/Evan Vucci)

By SAMANTHA BUSH | sabush@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley Tribune PUBLISHED: December 19, 2016 at 3:53 pm | UPDATED: September 6, 2017 at 4:41 am

9 COMMENTS

Elon Musk, spaceship/uitra-last-train/autonomous automobile wunderkind had a stroke of genius over the weekend.

But it ended up being a really boring idea.

ADVERTISING

It sounds furnity, sure, but Musk seems to be serious. After all, this is the guy who wants to transport people via pneumatic tube and colonize Mars within this century.

He even changed his Twitter bio to include his tunneling idea.

Of course, Musk's Twitter followers had some fun with his puns.

Even the spoof Twitter account "Bored Eign Musk," which sends goofy tweets along the lines of what Eign Musk might be thinking if he were bored, got in on the fun.



Because it's Twitter, a new hashtag for Musk's hypothetical company was born.

There was no shortage of people who want to help Musk with his boring endeavors. Many offered up critique of his ideas and some brought their own plans to the discussion.

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Tags: Elon Musk, SpaceX, Traffic, transportation



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Samantha Bush

Samantha is social media director for the Southern California News Group. She oversees social media strategy for each of the 11 properties, including each brand's presence on Facebook, Twitter and Snapchar. She most enjoys trying out new social media platforms and covering events live using all the social tools she can think of: It's usually her on SNO's Facebook Use videos. When she's not working, look for her huddled over a sewing marking, and harves of the whole of the same state.

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ENTREPRENEURS

For \$20, you could win a tour of Elon Musk's Boring Company tunnels under Los Angeles

Catherine Clifford | 10:45 AM ET Fri, 15 Dec 2017



Getty Images Elon Musk



Everyone who buys or has bought a \$20 hat for The Boring Company, billionaire tech titan Elon Musk's traffic-busting tunneling venture, will be entered into a contest to win a tour of the tunnels under Los Angeles, according to the man himself.

"10 hat aficionados, in appreciation for their exquisite taste in millinery, will be picked at random to tour the LA tunnel & drive boring machine," Musk said Thursday via his personal Twitter account.



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12:24 PM - Dec 14, 2017

23.4K 3,215 people are talking about this

Musk, who is also CEO of electric car maker Tesla and aerospace company SpaceX, became frustrated with the traffic in Los Angeles and decided he would start digging tunnels underneath the roads to provide a faster transportation alternative. He called his new tunneling venture The Boring Company (pun Intended) and has been selling promotional hats for his company like hotcakes.

First made available for sale in October, Musk has sold more than 35,000 hats, according to his most recent update on Twitter.





That means Musk has made more than \$700,000 pedaling hats. In a humorous nod to the success of the sale, the tech exec changed his Twitter bio to "hat salesman." He has said he is going to sell 50,000 hats, which would be \$1 million worth of merchandise.

To increase your chances of winning the tour the tunnel in Los Angeles, you can buy more Boring Company hats, according to Musk.



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Elon Musk Is In The Business Of Bad Puns, To Start 'Boring' Company And Eliminate Traffic















Tuesday, December 20, 2016 7:20 AM UTC

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Traffic is a problem that it seems everyone has to deal with, even super-rich CEOs like Elon Musk. Apparently having had enough of those hours behind noisy cars that hardly move, the Tesla Motors CEO is planning on starting what everyone is picking up on as a "boring" company. Bad pun aside, the purpose seems to be to create underground freeways to minimize traffic.

Musk first made his interest in building more tunnels known back in January, during the first phase of the Hyperloop Pod Competition, Futurism reports. At that time, the multi-CEO said that it would be wonderful if people built more tunnels in order to lighten the traffic problem that is becoming worse as population explodes.

Recently, Musk Tweeted out his intention to start a company that will literally bore into the ground and create the tunnels that no one else seems to be making. He even followed up his initial Tweets by saying that he will be creating "The Boring Company," which is as bad of a pun as it can get.

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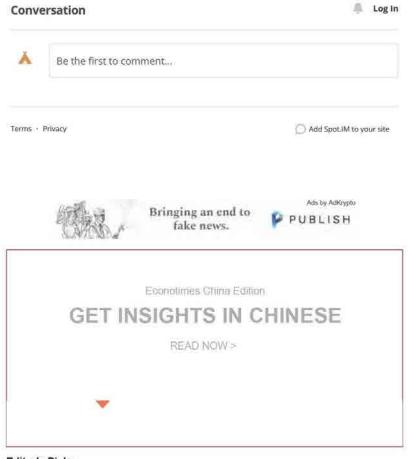
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Now, looking at these Tweets, one would be forgiven for thinking that it's just a mix of jokes and comments of frustration brought out by heavy traffic. However, Musk is not just some juvenile teenager who posts things without thinking. In fact, the tech figure has a reputation for actually following through on some wildly crazy ideas, TechCrunch notes.

Then again, this doesn't remove the possibility that he is just trolling everyone, as he has been known to do. After all, Musk has a relatively unfiltered Twitter account and it has hosted some troll-ish online behavior in the past.

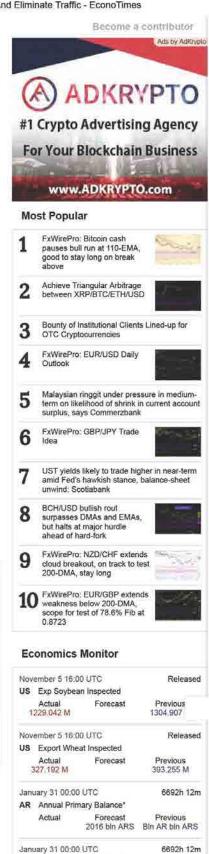
In the event that the billionaire is serious, however, it's going to be another controversial move in the eyes of Wall Street. The talking heads have never been big fans of Musk's habit of setting really lofty goals.



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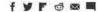


CAR INDUSTRY

Elon Musk names first boring machine after boring play

OK, that's not entirely true -- the play is only boring if you take it at face value.

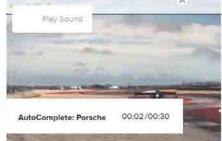
BY ANDREW KROK | MAY 11, 2017 7 47 AM PDT





Elon Musk has a thing for weird names. His SpaceX drone ships, for example, are named "Just Read the Instructions" and "Of Course I Still Love You." Literature buffs may be pleased to learn the name of Musk's first tunneling machine.

Musk announced that the name of <u>The Boring Company's</u> first machine would be named Godot, after the title character in Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot." Musk, a fan of the occasional corny joke,



made sure to slip a proper dad joke into the tweet announcing the machine's name.



On the surface, "Waiting for Godot" sounds just as boring as the company that's borrowing its name. Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for a man named Godot to show up, and -- spoiler alert, if you can spoil a 64-year-old play -- he never does. Hey, at least the casting is cost-effective, right?

And in that skim-the-surface sense, the name fits. Vladimir and Estragon are stuck waiting for Godot to show up, and Musk's tunneling is currently limited to the SpaceX parking lot, since it's not exactly legal for him to just carve tunnels under major metropolitan areas for funsies.

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Dig a little deeper (ha!) into the play and Musk's project, and you can find threads of absurdity, especially as it relates to life and the purpose thereof. There's certainly some absurdity to be found in the idea of digging giant tunnels under cities to relieve transportation issues. In fact, most of Musk's creations to date have been about humanity, its current direction and ideas about its future, so there's a whole bunch of existentialism floating around here.

It's about forging our own paths and not leaving things up to some imaginary idea of fate, and that's exactly what Elon is up to. However, unlike Beckett's play, we won't be waiting for Godot forever — it's here, even if it's limited to Elon Musk's parking lot for now.



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INNOVATION . Published October 30, 2017

Elon Musk releases first image of Boring Company's 'freeway' under LA

By Chris Ciaccia, | Fox News



Elon Musk takes to twitter to reveal the Model 3 (Reuters)

Tech luminary Elon Musk finally gave the world its first look at what The Boring Company has been up to.

The billionaire posted on a picture on Twitter on Saturday evening showing the tunnel dug by The Boring Company, an infrastructure company he founded. The goal of The Boring Company (a play on words), is to build a series of underground tunnels that can transport cars and help alleviate traffic.





Picture of The Boring Company LA tunnel taken yesterday 4:30 PM - Oct 28, 2017

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Musk is starting with a route to Los Angeles, from SpaceX's headquarters in Hawthorne, throughout the rest of the city, one which is considered the most congested in the continental U.S.

ELON MUSK SHOWS OFF BORING COMPANY ELEVATOR FOR THE FIRST TIME

In 2016, Drivers in LA spent on average 81 hours in traffic, according to a story in The Los Angeles Times, which obtained the survey from data company Inrix.

In a separate tweet, Musk added that that the tunnel is 500 feet so far, but should be "2 miles long in three or four months and hopefully stretch the whole 405 N-S corridor from [Los Angeles International Airport] LAX to the 101 in a year or so."





500 ft so far. Should be 2 miles long in three or four months and hopefully stretch the whole 405 N-S corridor from LAX to the 101 in a year or so.

4:36 PM - Oct 28, 2017

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In August, The Boring Company received approval by the city of Hawthorne (a city in southwestern Los Angeles County) to build the tunnel. The tunnel operates using electric skates, so that cars can move along swiftly.

In July, Musk showed off the elevator that would take cars from the congested roads to the underground network of tunnels,

In addition to the tunnel under LA, The Boring Company is also looking to have tunnels in other cities, including one stretching from Baltimore to New York (stopping in Washington and Philadelphia), as well as Chicago and other U.S. cities.

Elon Musk releases first image of Boring Company's 'freeway' under LA | Fox News



Just received verbal govt approval for The Boring Company to build an underground NY-Phil-Balt-DC Hyperloop. NY-DC in 29 mins.

10:09 AM - Jul 20, 2017

197K 77.3K people are talking about this

In addition to being CEO of The Boring Company, Musk is also the CEO of electric vehicle company Tesla, space exploration company SpaceX. He also co-founded artificial intelligence specialists Neuralink and OpenAI.

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