



# Spit On, Sworn At, and Undeterred: What It's Like to Own a Cybertruck

**"We were the targets." WIRED spoke to seven Tesla Cybertruck owners about their most controversial purchase and why they're proud to drive it.**

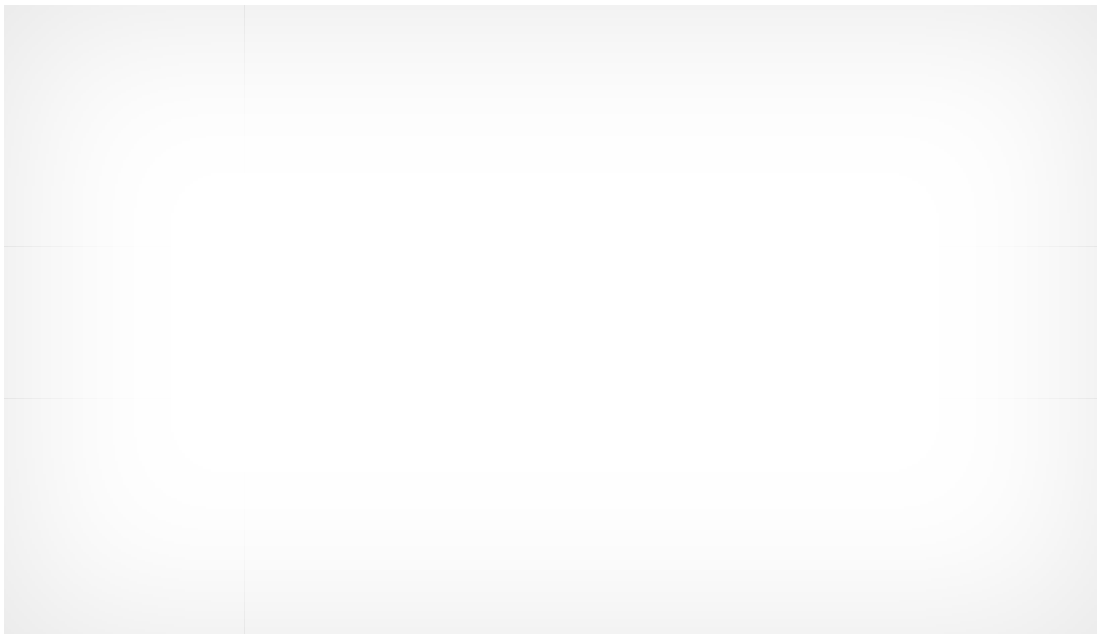


18 | SAVE THIS STORY

**ASIDE FROM A MAGA** hat, there is likely no object that feels more emblematic of US president Donald Trump's return to the White House than the Tesla Cybertruck. The blunt angles and steel doors look futuristic, for sure, but only if the future looks a lot like *RoboCop*. To some, it's a metallic status symbol. To others, it's fascism on wheels. Either way, heads turn.

Cybertruck owners see things differently. "To me, it's just a vehicle that I love," says Andrew Castillo, a stock trader from Los Angeles. "It has no political affiliations at all to me."

ADVERTISEMENT





We're standing in the parking lot of McCormick's Palm Springs Classic Car Auctions. All around us, a dozen Cybertruck owners—and their cars—bake in the 100 degree heat. They've arrived for a meetup organized by Michael Goldman, who runs the 53,000-person Facebook group Cybertruck Owners Only. Though suspicious of the media, they're eager to set the record straight about the car that they love. WIRED is here to learn how it feels to be out in public in such a politically charged vehicle. Has the past year or so changed anyone's minds about owning the truck? Do owners like the attention—or are they adding bumper stickers decrying Elon Musk?

As we're talking, a woman drives by in a small sedan. "Your cars are fucking ugly!" she screams before peeling off. Castillo smiles. "Some people just aren't

The most ambitious, future-defining stories from our favorite writers.

**SIGN UP**

By signing up, you agree to our [user agreement](#) (including [class action waiver and arbitration provisions](#)), and acknowledge our [privacy policy](#).

*Interviews have been edited and condensed for clarity.*



**Name:** Michael Goldman

**Age:** 37

---

**Cybertruck's nickname:** Beastie

### **What does your wife think about the car?**

When I first got it, my wife really made fun of me for it. She actually made a T-shirt. It says, "It looks like a brick and moves like a beast."

Once she took the kids out in it and we went off-roading and she saw that I was towing my big dump trailers for work and everything else, she was like, "OK, this thing's actually pretty cool. I'm not a fan of the way that it looks, but it's pretty cool and all the features are great."



## What's the craziest interaction you've had with someone while driving the car?

A while back, I went into Whole Foods to drop off an Amazon package. And usually I wear work boots because I do construction. So I go in, and of course a lady in an electric Mustang comes and puts this note on my car. [*It read: "This is an extension of your small dick."*] She doesn't know these cars record 24/7. So it recorded her putting the note on, and when I came out, I saw the note, and naturally I'm looking to see who put the note on my car. And sure as heck she's right there.

So I got out and said to her, "Why'd you feel the need to put a note on my car?" She said, "That's because you're driving this and I'm offended." She called me a Nazi!

So we start talking and she says, "Well, I saw you get out of your truck with your boots, and you're like a big white man. I guess I just assumed because Elon's a Nazi and you fit the profile ..." I stopped her and I was like, "My last name is Goldman, what heritage do you think that is?" She's like, "That's Jewish. My wife is Jewish." I said, "OK, so you just accused me of being a Nazi when I'm a Jew. And you said that your wife was Jewish, so I'm assuming you're gay. Is that a safe assumption?" She said yes, and I said, "OK, so did you ever get profiled anytime in your life for being gay?" And she says, "Yeah, all the time. I hated it." And I was like, "Well, do you realize that you just profiled me based off of the vehicle that I drive and me wearing work boots and being a big white guy as being a Nazi when it's completely something totally different?" And she broke down in tears and apologized. I'm a huge supporter in the gay community out here. So to call me a Nazi homophobe, it just blew my mind.





Tesla Cybertrucks and their owners in Palm Springs, California.

**Name:** Russ Taylor

**Age:** 44

**Location:** Ladera Ranch, Orange County, California

**Job:** Runs a business called Smugglers Runs, which does “postapocalyptic off-road” rallies

### **When did you order your truck?**

When I first saw it come out, [Elon Musk] was like, “Go to Cybertruck.com.” Before he even finished the sentence, I was already there and put in my reservation. I loved just the style, the look, it's totally unique for sure. And obviously there's total polar opposites of people on the design scale, but I loved it. I've always been kind of a cyberpunk, so I fell in love with it right away.



## How do you feel about becoming a political lightning rod?

People occasionally just flip [me] off or whatever, but nobody's come up to me and tried to make a statement about anything. Personally, it's kind of dumb. It's just a vehicle. So it's ironic that it would even become a political statement, but nonetheless it is. *[Editor's note: Taylor was arrested and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding in the January 6 attack on the Capitol. He was later pardoned by President Trump.]*

*Wrap design by SS Customs*





**Names:** Frank and Diane Brabec

**Ages:** Frank, 58; Diane, 63

**Location:** Indio, California

**Jobs:** Frank is a consultant in the health care industry; Diane is a dog mom and former zookeeper

**Cybertruck Nickname:** Computruck

### Did you like the car from the jump?

**Frank:** It took me really about three days to get used to the truck, because it's so different to drive. For one thing, it's the only vehicle [*in the US*] that has a steer-by-wire, meaning there's no physical connection between the wheel and the tires.

and everything—I'm whipping up the 74. It's a sports car.





### What's your favorite thing about it?

**Frank:** We have two Old English sheepdogs, and it's just a huge area back there for them. Right now it's in dog mode, so the air-conditioning blows right on them. It's awesome.

### What reactions do you get from people when you drive it?

**Diane:** We've only been flipped off like three times. Maybe four.

**Frank:** And they all really seem like angry people just in general. I'm just amused because, first of all, little kids flip out. And I've got little toys in the truck, and I give them out, and kids pose in front of [the car] for pictures. People cheer. I've never had people cheer, and I've had some pretty nice cars. For the most part, it's

**Diane:** We just laugh and wave.



**Name:** Jose Reynoso

**Age:** 55

**Location:** Palm Springs, California

**Job:** Small business owner

**Why did you decide to get the car?**

For the marketing. And that's what the truck is used for, for marketing and advertising events. [*Reynoso's car is wrapped in his business logo.*]

We didn't know what was coming, the storm that was coming with Elon. By then I had already spent the money on the truck and accessories and all that. So it was sad to see that.

### **What was sad?**

Well, for the CEO of a company that makes a product that a lot of Americans buy and use on a daily basis to put us in the middle of everything because of his controversies. Because when everything was going on, we were the targets. We saw wives and kids being harassed and affected by strangers just because we were driving a Tesla. There was so much hate coming in. So it was shocking, and it was hard to describe and just fear. But thankfully that went by. And among all that, there's a lot of love.

### **So why isn't it your daily driver?**

Well, I renovate homes. And I noticed that people, especially with the big controversy, my clients probably don't want to see a vehicle like that with such high controversy come in and be a part of their experience.



**Name:** Andrew Castillo

**Age:** 40

**Location:** Los Angeles

**Job:** Stock trader

**When did you get your truck?**

I'd preordered the Cybertruck when it was first announced. Then they released the rendering three months later, and I saw the way it looked and I'm like, nope, cancel. Ugly. I'm not driving that thing around.

building the excitement after that.

### **How do you feel about it now?**

Oh, I love it. Now, everything else to me—and I'm not talking down on anybody else's stuff, I still love a lot of other vehicles out there—but everything else, to me, those soft lines and everything, it all kind of blends together. And the Cybertruck obviously stands out. I mean, we take the trailer out a lot, and I can go to a campground and there's 50 kids that come out: "Cybertruck, Cybertruck, Cybertruck." I carry little toys inside the frunk so I can pass them out and give them to kids, and they love it. It's a lot of fun.

### **Anything you don't like about it?**

I can't really see the front out of the windshield because it's so long.

### **What's the Cybertruck community like?**

When I had my Bentley and I met other people with Bentleys or Rolls-Royces, it was exclusive. They were a little standoffish to other people with other vehicles. I've learned that with Cybertruck owners, it's like, "Hey, you want to see it? Come on. You want to test drive? Come on." They're more inclusive.

### **What's the biggest reaction you've gotten from someone while driving it?**

A couple of months ago, I think it was in Idaho, my son and I stopped at this place where they had a bunch of bears. It was almost infested with bears; it was kind of gross. This person literally drove through the grass, through the bears, and cut off the other cars and was behind me following me out. And I'm like, dude, who the heck is this?

like, "Cybertruck Cybertruck!" And I'm like, oh, OK. You guys are cool. The mom was like, "My son loves Cybertrucks. He's autistic, and he's watching Cybertrucks on his iPad right now." So he got inside, it was hot, my son was in the backseat, and the air conditioner was on in the truck. We were standing outside, and it was *hot*. And I just remember not rushing the kid, just letting him have his fun. We're literally out there for two hours. That was one of the good moments.



**Name:** Landon Castillo

**Age:** 8

**Location:** Los Angeles

**What do you like about the car?**

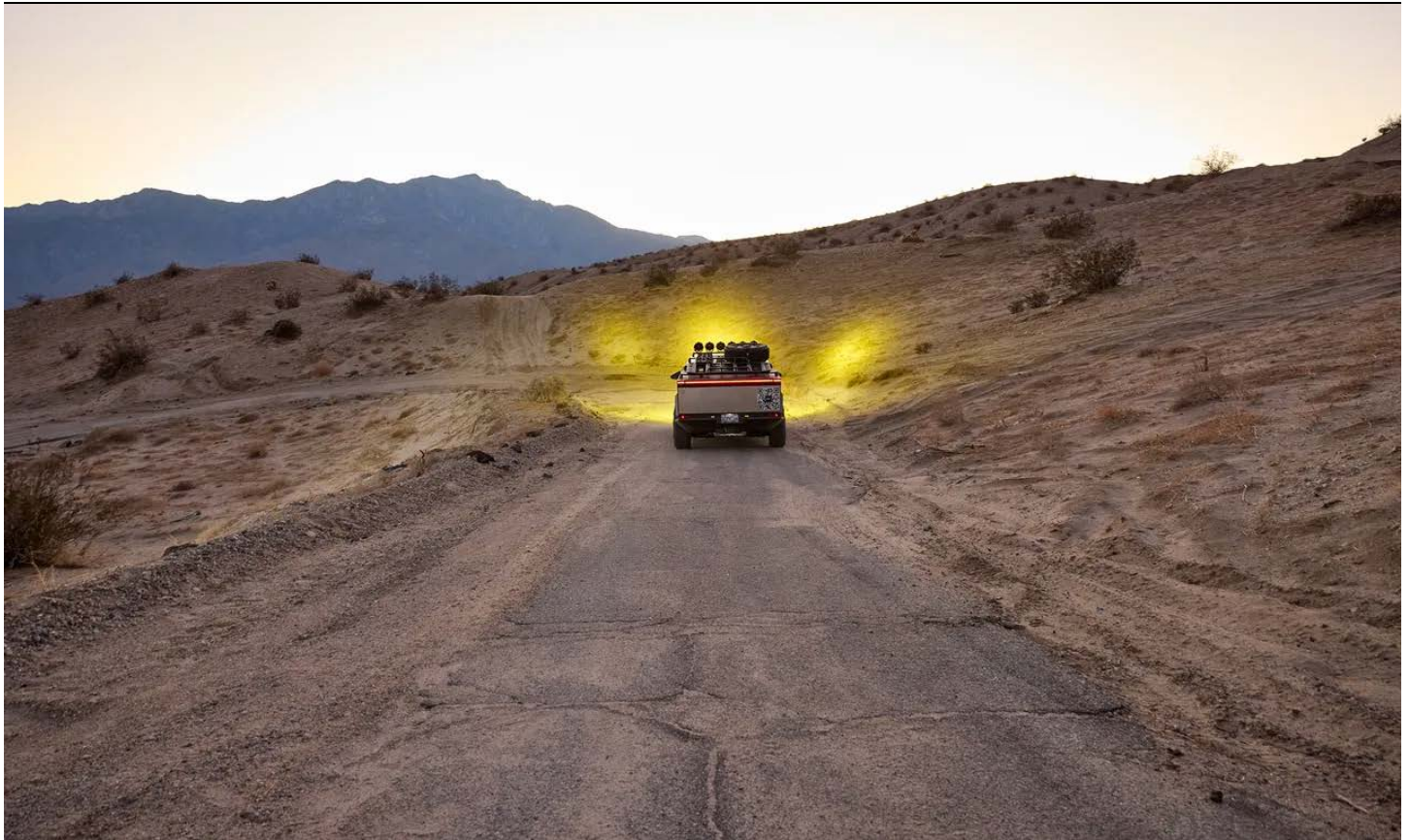
## Are you a fan of Elon Musk?

Yeah.

## Do you get a big reaction from other kids when you drive the mini Cybertruck?

Yeah.





**Name:** Roger Davis

**Age:** Not given

**Location:** San Diego

**Job:** Entrepreneur

### **What do you like about the truck?**

What I love about the truck is just how it's so polarizing. The shape of it, the body of it, the manufacturing technique with the body panels and everything. I just love that it's completely outside of the box.

### **And are you married?**

I was married, but I'm not married anymore. Women don't like the vehicle.

**In July, Tesla rolled out a software update to integrate Grok into many of its vehicles. Do you use it?**

## What's the craziest experience you've had in the car?

In June of this year, I wanted to put the truck through its paces. The Rubicon is a very famous, 22-mile off-road trail, and it usually takes two to three days. We decided to try to be the first EV truck and Cybertruck to cross the Rubicon. We built out the truck, I think we spent about \$50,000 kitting out the car, and then we went.

So three days into the trip, we were only 5 miles into the trail. It was way more difficult than I could have ever imagined. On the third day, we were coming down Big Sluice, which is probably the hardest part of the trail. And we had just finished and I was in the vehicle by myself, and I was driving along a little stream, and all of a sudden through the trees I felt the light hit me. And I'm going to call it a miracle, because it was. Imagine if you're flush, like how your face blushes, but over my whole body. And then I just felt the presence of God and a deep peace and love. It really broke me down. It really reset my life at that point, is what it did.





**Names:** Shawn Hyman and Nannette Vaglica

---

**Jobs:** Shawn sells window coverings; Nannette is a branch manager for a credit union

**What do you like about the Cybertruck?**

**Shawn:** Well, there's the quietness.

**Nannette:** It's a different feeling than a gas car.

**Shawn:** The way it rides. The instant—

**Nannette:** There's no shifting. You know? So it's just super smooth.

**Shawn:** Instant power.

**Nannette:** Instant power.

**Shawn:** Instant torque.





## How big a factor was Elon Musk in your decision to buy the car?

**Shawn:** Well, I've been a huge fan of Elon Musk for years. I mean, with what he's done with SpaceX ...

**Nannette:** I just think he's a brilliant mind.

**Shawn:** He is. He's an incredibly intelligent man, and he seems to push the right buttons most of the time. I didn't have a problem with his politics, anyway. I don't care about that, because that's just a sideline. That's not what he *does*. I mean, he's running these corporations, and he's building some really neat stuff. Even Tesla's basically just going to be a technology company that builds cars.





**Name:** Alex Ferguson

## **Job:** Cybertruck wrapper

### **How did you get into wrapping Cybertrucks?**

When Tesla announced this vehicle was going to come out, I went in and I bought all the domain variations of “wrapping Cybertrucks.”

### **How has it been, business-wise?**

I believe I've wrapped the most in the country. I've done over 400.

### **What's the most popular design?**

A lot of people really like space designs. So even with the back of this truck, it's got a black hole. It's usually Tesla fans or space fans or engineering people. So that's what we try to go for now. But yeah, we've done a lot of really cool space ones that people love.







*Featured location courtesy of McCormick's Palm Springs Classic Car Auctions*

## You Might Also Like ...

- **In your inbox:** Our [biggest stories](#), handpicked for you each day
- Meet the guys betting big on [AI gambling agents](#)
- **Big Story:** The baby died. [Whose fault is it?](#)
- [I hate my AI friend](#)
- **Livestream replay:** [WIRED's AI Power Summit](#)

~~See some of our best coverage of business and Elon Musk at Wired. One has previously~~  
managing editor of Platformer and a senior reporter at The Verge. ... [Read More](#)

DIRECTOR, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

TOPICS   TESLA   ELON MUSK   POLITICS   CARS

## Get *The Big Story* in Your Inbox

The most ambitious, future-defining stories from our favorite writers.

**SIGN UP**

By signing up, you agree to our [user agreement](#) (including [class action waiver and arbitration provisions](#)), and acknowledge our [privacy policy](#).

[READ MORE](#)



## The Tesla Model Y and Model 3 Standard Are Cheaper—but Still Not Cheap

The electric vehicle tax credit is gone, and Tesla's new, more affordable models don't quite close the gap.

AARIAN MARSHALL

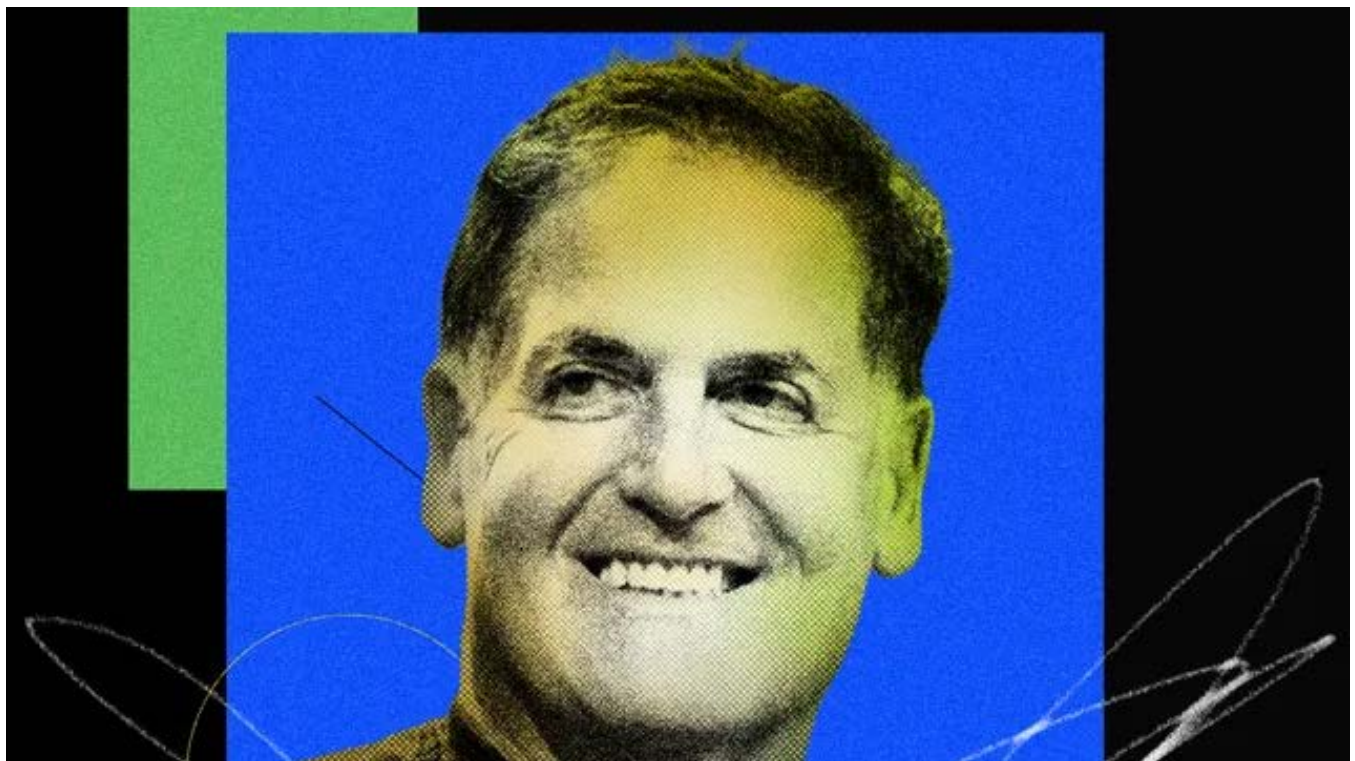




## A New Road Safety Group Targets Self-Driving Cars

A Tesla Takedown alum has launched a campaign for stricter regulation of autonomous vehicles in the US.

AARIAN MARSHALL



The billionaire investor campaigned for Kamala Harris, but thinks tech execs have a "moral imperative" to play nice with the president. Why? It's good business.

KATIE DRUMMOND



### The Story of DOGE, as Told by Federal Workers

WIRED spoke with more than 200 federal workers in dozens of agencies to learn what happened as the Department of Government Efficiency tore through their offices.

AARIAN MARSHALL





### Patreon CEO Jack Conte Wants You to Get Off of Your Phone

The man who cofounded Patreon is tired of influencers making content to get clicks. He'd rather creators earn lifelong fans—and he has a plan for that.

KATIE DRUMMOND



### New Rules Could Force Tesla to Redesign Its Door Handles. That's Harder Than It Sounds

Proposed regulations in China would mean the end of flush handles on car doors, with precious little time to roll out the changes.

AARIAN MARSHALL





### WIRED Roundup: Groyers Are Going Mainstream

On today's episode of *Uncanny Valley*, we cover everything from what exactly the DHS is doing with Americans' DNA, to the rising influence of Nick Fuentes.

JAKE LAHUT



### How China Is Hoping to Attract Tech Talent

In this episode of *Uncanny Valley*, we uncover how America's new \$100,000 H-1B golden visa has thrown tech workers and their employers into chaos.

LAUREN GOODE



## Tech Billionaires Already Captured the White House. They Still Want to Be Kings

From Montenegro to Northern California, the tech elite dream of building cities where they make the rules. Is this, finally, their moment?

VITTORIA ELLIOTT



---

The increasingly tight links between far-right groups in the US and Europe were on full display at the Rebels Across the Pond conference in Ireland.

DAVID GILBERT



## The New Power of Far-Right Influencers

In this episode of *Uncanny Valley*, we discuss the impacts of antifa's designation as a domestic terrorist group as author Mark Bray faces new harassment from the far-right.

MICHAEL CALORE

