



MUSK ABRUPTLY CANCELS 'THE DON LEMON SHOW' ON X AFTER HE SITS FOR THE PROGRAM'S FIRST INTERVIEW - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Elon Musk abruptly canceled "The Don Lemon Show" on his social media network X after the former CNN anchor recorded an interview with the billionaire for its as-yet unaired first episode.

Musk owns X, formerly known as Twitter, and frequently proclaims himself a "free speech absolutist." In a post on X, the San Francisco-based company said only that after careful consideration, it "decided not to enter into a commercial partnership with the show." It added that Lemon's show "is welcome to publish its content on X, without censorship, as we believe in providing a platform for creators to scale their work and connect with new communities."

In a video posted to X, Lemon declared that "Elon Musk is mad at me" and said he will be airing his interview with the Tesla CEO on YouTube and via podcast on Monday.

Lemon didn't go into specifics about the source of Musk's alleged unhappiness, but wrote, "Throughout our conversation, I kept reiterating to him that although it was tense at times, I thought it was good for people to see and hear our exchange and that they would learn from our conversation."

"But apparently free speech absolutism doesn't apply when it comes to questions about him from people like me," he added.

In a later CNN discussion with Lemon on Monday, anchor Erin Burnett played clips of his Musk interview in which the Tesla and SpaceX CEO grew testy when asked about content moderation and the spread of hate speech on the X platform.

In the clip, Lemon asked Musk if he believed that he and his social platform held any responsibility to moderate hate speech on X. He singled out the spread of the "great replacement theory," a racist belief that, in its most extreme form, falsely contends that Jews are behind a plot to diminish the influence of white people in the U.S.

Musk replied sharply that he doesn't have to answer questions from reporters. "The only reason I'm in this interview is because you're on the X platform and you asked for it," he said. "Otherwise I would not be doing this interview." When Lemon followed up with a question about the criticism Musk has faced over the issue of hate speech, the CEO replied, "I'm criticized constantly. I could care less."

X announced in January a "new content partnership" with Lemon for the show, saying it would post 30 minute episodes three times a week on subjects including politics, culture, sports and entertainment. That deal was part of the struggling platform's efforts to bolster its

content offerings and attract advertisers. X also announced shows hosted by former member of Congress Tulsi Gabbard and sports radio host Jim Rome.

Lemon was fired by CNN last year after a 17-year run with the network. His ouster came a little over two months after he apologized for on-air comments about then-Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley not being in "her prime" that he made during his short run as a morning show host.

