

Tesla tumbles as new exits raise fresh concerns

September 7 2018, by John Biers



Tesla shares faced fresh pressure after news of the departure of the electric automaker's chief accounting officer and a bizarre interview with CEO Elon Musk

Shares of Tesla Motors tumbled Friday as a pair of executive departures

raised fresh concerns for the electric automaker already in turmoil over the erratic behavior of its mercurial chief executive Elon Musk.

Tesla shares sank 7.0 percent to \$26.34 in mid-morning trading after chief accounting officer Dave Morton announced his exit after only a month on the job, citing the [company](#)'s frenetic pace.

Separately, human resources chief Gabrielle Toledano told Bloomberg she planned to exit the company, not returning from a leave of absence.

Morton's departure further roiled the company which has been under heightened scrutiny since Musk's chaotic announcement on August 7 on Twitter that he was considering taking Tesla private, a plan that was reversed two weeks later.

The ill-fated effort has prompted a US securities investigation and a class-action lawsuit alleging Musk was trying to punish investors who bet against the company.

Morton's brief tenure with the company coincided with the aborted go-private push.

"Since I joined Tesla on August 6th, the level of public attention placed on the company, as well as the pace within the company, have exceeded my expectations," Morton said in a securities filing.

"As a result, this caused me to reconsider my future. I want to be clear that I believe strongly in Tesla, its mission, and its future prospects, and I have no disagreements with Tesla's leadership or its financial reporting."



Tesla CEO Elon Musk appeared to be smoking a marijuana-and-tobacco concoction during a podcast interview, the latest in a string of actions raising concerns over his management

Turning heads in podcast

Musk, meanwhile, turned heads with a more than two hour podcast interview with comedian Joe Rogan in which he drank whiskey and appeared to try a marijuana-and-tobacco cigarette proffered by the comedian as he mused about artificial intelligence and colonizing space.

At one point, Musk described the constant barrage of ideas in his mind as being "like a "never-ending explosion," and said he wondered as a young boy whether he might be insane because it didn't seem to happen

to other people.

The appearance was the latest unorthodox move by Musk, who has often surprised investors with brash and unpredictable behavior as Tesla has sought to live up to lofty manufacturing targets for its Model 3 electric car.

Long a polarizing figure because of his swashbuckling style, Musk's champions see him as an entrepreneurial genius with the potential to remake the transportation system, while his detractors see him as an egotistical blowhard whose outsized promises have driven unjustified gains in the company's values.

Especially bizarre moments involving the Tesla chief of late include disparaging remarks about a Briton who helped save boys trapped in a cave in Thailand and the abrupt shutdown of Wall Street analyst questions during a contentious earnings conference call this spring.

In August, Musk told the New York Times he was exhausted from too much work and difficulty sleeping in an interview that sharpened questions about his mental stability. Some observers have said Tesla could be helped with a strong number-two executive, but Friday's departures create additional gaps in Tesla's ranks.

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Citation: Tesla tumbles as new exits raise fresh concerns (2018, September 7) retrieved 22 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-tesla-exits-fresh.html>

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