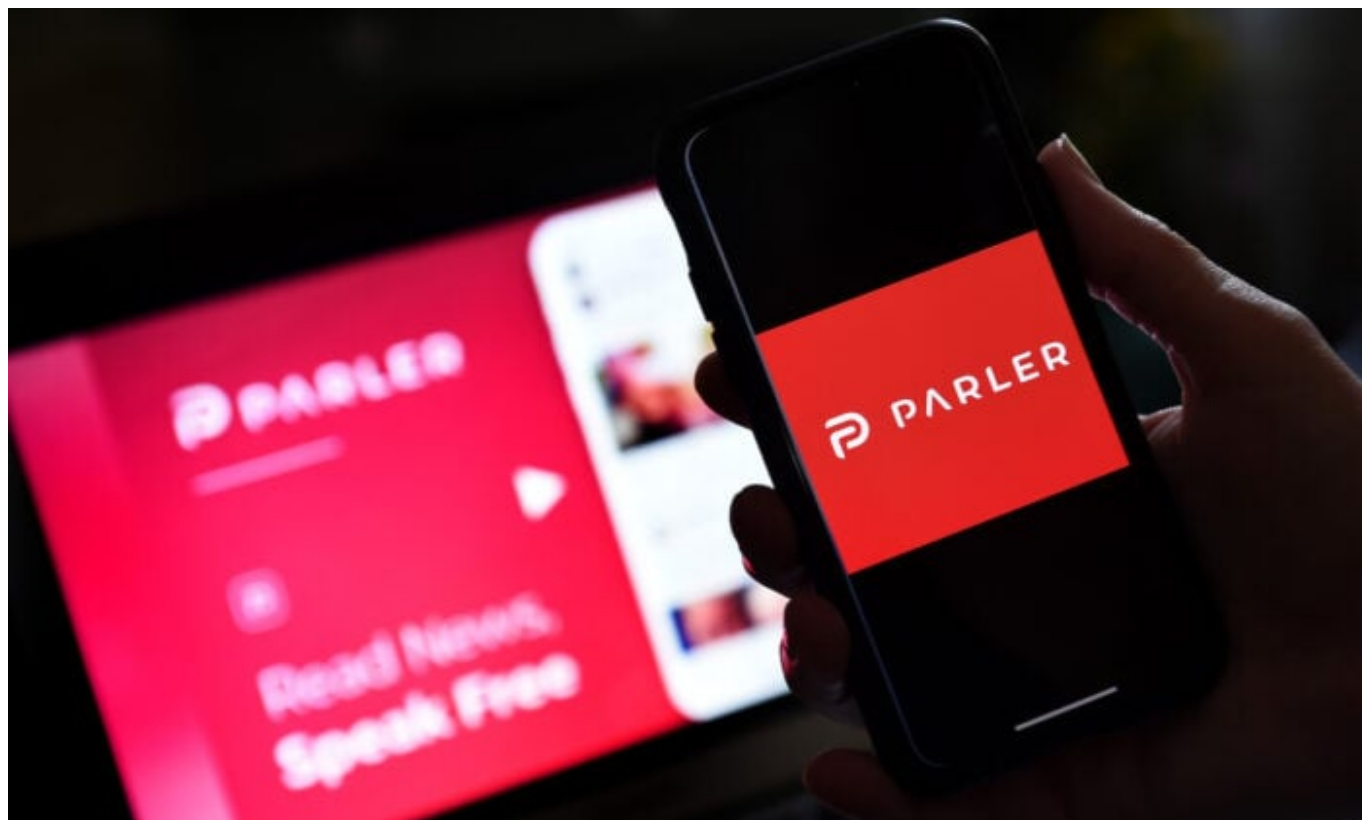


Owning a Social Media Company: New Status Symbol or Something More?



by Roger L. Simon

It used to be owning a super yacht or your own private island, but today, it seems if you're really rich, you want your own social media company.

[Elon Musk](#) has been engaged in buying [Twitter](#) for the better part of a year—or is it two?

Now, Parler has announced that it's being bought by none other than "Ye" (aka [Kanye West](#)).

That second sale—predicted to close by the end of 2022—should go more swimmingly because Parler's current CEO is George Farmer. Farmer, a Brit, is married to Candace Owens, a good

friend of Ye's.

Owens, a conservative commentator, recently arrived at a Paris fashion show with the billionaire/rapper/fashion designer wearing matching "White Lives Matter" T-shirts, their appearance dominating the media for a bit on Tucker Carlson's show and elsewhere.

Conservatives generally applauded, but then Ye made several rather anti-Semitic statements on Tucker's show and worse on Twitter, as if all Jews were greedy music industry executives.

This is roughly comparable to saying all blacks are like the leaders of "Black Lives Matter," a group that Ye rightly criticizes for economically exploiting "white liberals" and keeping the money for themselves, not needy blacks—all this while engaging in anti-white bigotry.

West also added some miss-mash about blacks being the real Jews, about which I have little to say other than to quote a title from the Italian playwright [Luigi Pirandello](#), "Right You Are—If You Think You Are."

This all must have been embarrassing to Owens, who nevertheless denied there was anti-Semitism in Ye's remarks, and to her employer Ben Shapiro of *The Daily Wire*, who acknowledged the anti-Semitism but declined to take any action based on it.

Owens and Shapiro (of all people) preferred to ignore remarks like Kanye's giving permission to thousands, or is it millions, of young blacks worldwide to hold similar views, even making those views cool. Business is business, after all.

For Farmer's part, he declared the social app "[needs Ye in many ways](#)." on "Mornings with Maria [Bartirromo]" on Oct. 17.

Many excuse Ye's intermittent but still ill-considered prejudice by his bipolar diagnosis. Musk has diagnosed himself

with that same illness.

That's a little easy. These men are clearly creative, but the roll call is long with that diagnosis, including names far more illustrious than Kanye and Elon are ever likely to be (Beethoven, Mozart, Lincoln, Churchill, and Einstein, among others).

Many people have elements of the bipolar; we used to call it moodiness. That doesn't give you the right to be a bigot.

All that notwithstanding, the outspoken goal of both Musk and West is to have both Twitter and Parler be bastions of First Amendment free expression with no cancellation.

I thought Parler already was that, but no matter. Twitter is well-known for its cancel-culturing proclivities, even before the platform's notorious censorship of the *N.Y. Post* Hunter Biden revelations that may have thrown a presidential election.

But is free speech the entirety of what is going on? Is that the sole motivation for these men?

Twitter, Parler, TikTok, Instagram, and, of course, Facebook and Google and all the other social media are far more than just conveyors of information or misinformation, as the case may be.

They are literally the biggest sales devices ever designed worldwide.

And in case you haven't noticed, and I'm reasonably certain you have, Elon and Ye are businessmen, two of the more successful extant.

Owning social media companies will only enhance their businesses, whether they be electric cars (irrespective of whether they are a [good idea](#)), trendy shoes, or whatever else they come up with while still controlling those companies.

They will also be slipping in their world views with their products, even if their venues are “free speech zones.” They will also have more access for their views than regular users.

As the journalist [A.J. Liebling](#) wrote in 1960, “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.”

Musk and now West—with Zuckerberg, the Google/Alphabet co-founders, and some others—have positioned themselves to be the greatest robber barons of all time, dwarfing Morgan, Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, and Carnegie in their ever-mutating global influence.

These are also people who think they are doing good, which makes them more dangerous. Google, the most powerful of all, as many remember, had its original slogan as “Don’t be evil,” before they were caught doing business, actually colluding, with the Chinese Communist Party.

I wonder what they think of themselves now as their search engine becomes more biased by the day, with conservative sources rarely visible on the front page. They probably barely notice.

Years ago (2016), I used a quote from a Rogers & Hammerstein musical for the epigraph [of a book I wrote](#):

“There’s nothing so bad for a woman as a man who thinks he’s good.”

I was being metaphorical, of course. I didn’t mean just women. But we have to watch purported good guys Kanye and Elon even as we applaud their pledges to maintain free speech zones.

We already have such zones in TRUTHSocial (thanks to Donald Trump and Devin Nunes) and GETTR (thanks to Jason Miller), though not in the old Twitter, nor certainly on Facebook and Instagram. TikTok is Chinese territory.

If Twitter really changes and Parler maintains its stance and grows under Ye's celebrity, free speech may approach a majority in social media.

That's an improvement. The more, as they say, the merrier.

But, judging from what it has done to our youth, I remain unconvinced that social media in general should exist.

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