



X Marks the Grift?

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Most of the calumnies against Elon Musk come from people who are either envious or completely unaware of the basic principles of economics. [Or both.](#)

That being said, not everyone “in my camp” admires or defends the South African-American tech magnate. On Sunday, Eric Peters — “the libertarian car guy” — [published](#), on his website, “Xcrement Is Just That (and more).”

“I have written a number of articles critical of Elon Musk’s ‘free speech’ social media grift,” Mr. Peters asserts, “which I say is just that because it isn’t free. . . .”

Since I pay nothing for X, I was surprised. What?

Peters is “assuming you want more than a few people to know you’ve spoken.” That’s how he put it. “You must pay

a recurrent fee for what is styled ‘reach.’ Even then, your ‘reach’ is subject to being limited via completely obscure parameters known only to Elon and his algorithm.”

And the complaint is . . . ?

The Twitterverse prior to Elon’s acquisition of the platform, asserted, with some perspicacity, that “freedom of speech is not freedom of reach.” The “freedom of reach” part was nothing other than “freedom of the press” — and the technological and business platforms that make up “the press” have never been “free of price.” Someone must pay for getting ideas out there far and wide.

Yet Mr. Peters seems to think that “Free ought to mean not just without cost but *open*. As in everyone can use it and no one is limited in any way from using it. Xcrement does not work like that.”

Well, the telephone system in days of yore was indeed open to everyone, but that did not mean “free.” And if you wanted to make a long-distance call, you had to pay the phone company.

While old-time telephony isn’t equivalent to modern-day social media, the parallel is close enough to show that this specific case against Elon is without merit.

Still, I wouldn’t call it excrement.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.