

The Tactics Elon Musk Uses to Manage His ‘Legion’ of Babies—and Their Mothers

The world’s richest man juggles more than a dozen children and ‘harem drama’ along with running his companies and advising Trump. He recently took a paternity test in a battle with one woman over money and privacy.

by Dana Mattioli

Ashley St. Clair wanted to prove that Elon Musk was the father of her newborn baby. But to ask the billionaire to take a paternity test, the right-wing social-media influencer had to go through Musk’s longtime fixer, Jared Birchall. “I don’t want my son to feel like he’s a secret,” St. Clair told Birchall in a two-hour phone call in December.

Birchall offered St. Clair some advice. His boss was a “very big-hearted, kind and generous person,” he said. But Musk had a different side. When a mother of his child goes “the legal route” in these discussions, “that always, always leads to a worse outcome for that woman than what it would have been otherwise,” Birchall told the 26-year-old. Plus, he said, Musk wasn’t sure the child was his.

It wasn’t the first such conversation for Birchall. His public job is running Musk’s family office, and he recently helped organize Musk’s more than \$250



Ashley St. Clair

million push in support of Donald Trump’s election. Behind the scenes, Birchall also manages the financial and privacy deals Musk wants for the women raising the world’s richest man’s babies.

Musk has had at least 14 children with four

women, including the pop musician Grimes and Shivon Zilis, an executive at his brain computer company Neuralink. Multiple sources close to the tech entrepreneur said they believe the true number of Musk's children is much higher than publicly known.

Musk offered St. Clair \$15 million and \$100,000 a month in support in exchange for her silence about the child, whom they named Romulus. Similar agreements had been negotiated with other mothers of Musk's children, Birchall told St. Clair. The fight with St. Clair over the terms of the deal for their baby has been going on as Musk has assumed one of the most influential roles in the U.S. government.

As a top adviser to President Trump, he has been slashing staff and billions of dollars from the federal government as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency, with massive benefit programs such as Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare in the crosshairs.

Musk's baby-making project is relevant to his ambition for NASA, which he wants to move faster to go to Mars. He said on X that making people multiplanetary is "critical to ensuring the long-term survival of humanity and all life as we know it." In Musk's dark view of the world, civilization is under threat because of

“The timing of the reduction in payments from him are timed with disagreements on testing and gag orders. The only conclusion we can make is that money is being weaponized,” said Dror Bikel, another of St. Clair’s attorneys. St. Clair’s legal fees have exceeded \$240,000, Rosenthal said.”

a declining population. He is driven to correct the historic moment by helping seed the earth with more human beings of high intelligence, according to people familiar with the matter.

His businesses are set up to serve the idea: The main objective of SpaceX is to build a rocket ship capable of getting to Mars, and his other companies, including electric-car maker Tesla, help finance the plan. Musk refers to his offspring as a “legion,” a reference to the ancient military units that could contain thousands of soldiers and were key to extending the reach of the Roman Empire.

During St. Clair's pregnancy, Musk suggested that they bring in other women to have even more of their children faster. “To

reach legion-level before the apocalypse,” he said to St. Clair in a text message viewed by The Wall Street Journal, “we will need to use surrogates.” He has recruited potential mothers on his social-media platform X, according to some of the people.

Musk has used his wealth to buy the silence of some women who have his kids, according to St. Clair as well as other people, text messages and documents reviewed by the Journal.

Nondisclosure clauses are part of some of the payment agreements. If the mothers push back or seek outside counsel, Musk’s advisers, including Birchall, have threatened financial retribution, according to the documents and people.

Birchall described Musk’s expectations to St. Clair: “Privacy and confidentiality is the top of the list in every aspect of his life, every aspect, and his entire world is set up to be, like, a meritocracy.” Benefits flow, he said, when “people do good work.” During the call with Birchall, St. Clair told him she had received outreach from a woman Musk had invited to have his baby. She said she was being caught up in Musk’s “harem drama.”

The details of Musk’s baby mission are only now starting to spill into the public.

Grimes begged Musk in February for help on X when one of their children was having a “medical crisis” because Musk wouldn’t engage with her. Earlier that month, after their 4-year-old son, also called X, had been on national television on his father’s shoulders as he talked about government cuts in the Oval Office, Grimes posted that “he should not be in public like this.”

A person familiar with Musk’s thinking on the agreements with the mothers of his children said that Musk believes it is better to resolve these matters behind closed doors for the safety and security of the child.

‘Make new humans’

Musk has warned that “civilization is going to crumble” if people don’t start having more children, a view popularized as pronatalism in right-wing circles. The pronatalism movement is composed of people concerned about the birthrate and eager to implement policy and cultural solutions to the problem.

Martin Varsavsky, a friend of Musk’s who founded a large chain of in vitro fertilization clinics in the U.S., said he has spoken with Musk about the risks of falling birthrates.

“Without babies there’s no future, every

problem becomes secondary to the problem of not having people on the planet,” said Varsavsky. “Elon believes that a country is not the geography, a country is the people.” Speaking to an audience at an investment conference in Saudi Arabia last year, Musk laid out the urgency of the matter. “I think for most countries, they should view the birthrate as the single biggest problem they need to solve. If you don’t make new humans, there’s no humanity, and all the policies in the world don’t matter,” Musk told the crowd over a live video.

When the interviewer joked that Musk was doing his part to address the issue, the billionaire agreed. “Yes. I am. I mean, you know, you’ve got to walk the talk. So, I do have a lot of kids, and I encourage others to have lots of kids.”

Separately, Musk has said he is concerned about what he called Third World countries having higher birthrates than the U.S. and Europe, a person familiar with the conversation said.

One of the most important ways to change these dynamics, he has repeatedly told people close to him, is for educated people to have more children.

In 2023, he had a meeting in Austin where people he described as Japanese officials asked him to be a sperm donor for a high-

profile woman, according to a text message reviewed by the Journal. “They want me to be a sperm donor. No romance or anything, just sperm,” he texted St. Clair. Musk later told her he gave his sperm to the person who asked for it, without naming the woman.

Special status

Vivian Wilson, one of Musk’s older children from his first wife, Justine Musk, said recently to Teen Vogue that she doesn’t know how many half-siblings she has in her family. Musk is now estranged from Vivian because he refuses to accept her identity as transgender. Justine Musk had six children with Musk, but one child died as a baby.

Grimes, whose legal name is Claire Boucher, has three young children with Musk. She and Musk went through a custody battle but settled in August. Musk offered his sperm to Zilis, and the two have four young children together. Zilis is viewed as a steadying force in Musk’s life and is the most prominent of Musk’s mothers.

“He really wants smart people to have kids, so he encouraged me to,” Zilis told Musk’s biographer Walter Isaacson.

The Yale University graduate was a

founding member of the investment team at Bloomberg Beta, and made Forbes's "30 Under 30" venture capital list in 2015. Zilis also was a board member at OpenAI and worked at Tesla earlier in her career.

Two people close to Musk described her as having "special status," meaning Musk chooses to spend time at her home in Austin as well as bringing her to high-profile public events.

In January, Zilis attended a black tie pre-inauguration candlelit dinner with Musk, and was photographed speaking to Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and his fiancée, Lauren Sánchez. Weeks later, she was alongside Musk for a meeting with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Blair House, the presidential guesthouse across the street from the White House, with two of their children and another of Musk's in tow.

'Pick a name'

While Musk posts sometimes dozens of times a day on X about right-wing politics or his companies, among other things on his mind, he often interacts with lesser-known users. He replies to them and sometimes interacts through direct messages, some of whom he eventually solicits to have his babies, according to people who have viewed the messages.

Cryptocurrency influencer Tiffany Fong was covering disgraced crypto tycoon Sam Bankman-Fried's downfall when Musk started liking and replying to her posts. Musk's interactions ramped up as Fong posted more political content in support of Trump, and Musk followed her last summer.

That sort of attention from Musk on X, where he has 219 million followers, sent droves of followers to Fong, which was a financial boon. More engagement meant more earnings for her as part of a revenue-sharing program for creators on X.

During the height of her interactions with the billionaire owner, Fong earned \$21,000 on the platform in a two-week period in November, according to a screenshot she posted.

That was about when Musk sent her a direct message asking if she was interested in having his child, according to people familiar with the matter. The two had never met in person.

Fong didn't move forward with Musk because she pictured having children in a more traditional nuclear family, but confided to a few friends about the approach—including St. Clair, whom she knew as another conservative social-media figure—and how she worried that turning

him down could hurt her earnings. Once Musk learned that Fong disclosed the request to others, he chided her for not using discretion, according to the people, and unfollowed her. That contributed to a fall in her engagement, and her earnings declined.

St. Clair and Musk had met earlier, in the spring of 2023, after Musk began interacting with the influencer's posts on X and followed her account. Soon after, they were exchanging direct messages before Musk invited her to visit the social-media platform's San Francisco office, and then the relationship turned romantic.

Musk invited St. Clair, who had been an operations manager at a conservative media company that owns The Babylon Bee, onto his private plane for a trip to Rhode Island where he was visiting one of his sons at college.

The first time they had sex, Musk joked that they should "pick a name" for their future child. He frequently talked to her about having children, she said. It was months later on a New Year's trip to St. Barts, that she told him that she was ovulating. He asked her "what are we waiting for?" and the two conceived their son on that trip, St. Clair said.

Being in his circle brought with it access

to a constant stream of texts, particularly about his growing involvement in Trump's election.

Before Musk publicly supported Trump, he texted her, "I can't be President, but I can help Trump defeat Biden and I will." In one text before Trump picked a running mate, viewed by the Journal, Musk asked St. Clair what she thought about Tulsi Gabbard as a vice presidential candidate, saying that in interviews she says "the right anti-establishment words."

While Musk was in Pennsylvania canvassing for Trump before the election, Musk sent a series of texts about the urgency of winning the state to St. Clair. "In all of history, there has never been a competitive army composed of women. Not even once," he wrote. "Men are made for war. Real men, anyway." He followed up with: "I am in full war mode. Going to the front lines today. Must win PA."

Protecting Elon

In the December phone call, Birchall told St. Clair that his job was to "protect Elon." He told her that he has been happily married to the same woman, but he has "been very involved in family law courts, very extensively" through his work for Musk. "I feel like I've been through, like, three divorces," he said.

Birchall worked in finance before becoming one of the top consiglieres in Musk's orbit. Musk recruited him from Morgan Stanley's private wealth management group, where he was part of a small team managing the businessman's money.

The two men couldn't be more different on the surface: Birchall is a practicing Mormon with a large family who works hard to keep a low profile.

Birchall's formal responsibilities are wide ranging, from disbursing funds for Musk's super PAC to assembling the team that helped Musk take Twitter private. His role as intermediary between Musk and some of the mothers happens in the background.

Musk often has Birchall step in to handle negotiations with the women over arrangements for the pregnancy and financial support after. The arrangements play out in similar ways for the different women, according to a document and people familiar with the matter.

Birchall was involved in acquiring the property for a compound in Austin where Musk imagined the women and his growing number of babies would all live among multiple residences, according to a person familiar with the matter. He is involved in other property deals across Musk's different businesses.

Zilis lives in the gated community with their children, and Musk comes and goes. Musk also attempted to get Grimes to move to the compound, but she refused. Similarly, he tried to get St. Clair to spend some time in Austin "with our kid legion," according to a text he sent her.

Birchall said on the December call with St. Clair the NDAs are necessary. "We have been through way too many issues where, to not sign some agreement associated with handing over 15-plus million dollars is absolutely insane and irresponsible, and because we have dealt with some very unstable, mentally unstable, people that all of a sudden misremember things," he said. He added that his boss "cannot allow people to just go and share his life information. He is the biggest lightning rod on the entire planet."

When Birchall told St. Clair that other mothers signed similar secrecy agreements, she observed that they didn't seem happy. Zilis, Birchall said, "goes in and out of finding contentment" but Grimes wasn't "ever going to find true happiness."

'I want to knock you up again'

Grimes claimed on X that her court battle with Musk over custody of their three children bankrupted her and that she had

“a fraction of [Musk’s] resources (or iq/strategy experience)” to navigate the family court system.

Musk had sued Grimes in 2023 in Texas to establish the “parent-child relationship,” and Grimes countersued in California for primary physical custody.

She alleged that Musk kept one of their children from her for five months and that, during court proceedings, Musk’s team dug up parts of her past to portray her as a bad mother. The two had dated in 2018 before having kids.

Birchall featured prominently in Musk’s fight with Grimes, acting as a go-between for various negotiations between the musician and Musk. Birchall was also present in the Austin courtroom during their court fight. The case has been resolved and is now sealed. Grimes and Musk alternate weeks with the children, according to people familiar with the matter. St. Clair had a front-row seat to the custody battle, since she was dating Musk at the time and he updated her on the deliberations.

A year later, she was in her own fight with Musk.

After becoming pregnant with their son, St. Clair and Musk’s relationship progressed

with Musk sending her flowers on her birthday and Mother’s Day. St. Clair’s toddler from a prior relationship had playdates with Musk’s young children, and she and the toddler met Musk’s mother, Maye.

At one point St. Clair had a custom-made black “Make America Great Again” hat with Gothic style font made for Musk, a twist on the bright red cap. Musk wore it everywhere, even referencing it in stump speeches for Trump during the election. In November, Musk responded to a selfie she texted him saying: “I want to knock you up again.”

While she was pregnant, Musk had urged her to deliver the baby via caesarean section and told her he didn’t want the child to be circumcised. (Musk has posted on X that vaginal births limit brain size and that C-sections allow for larger brains.) St. Clair is Jewish and circumcisions are an important ritual in the religion, and she decided against a C-section. He told her she should have 10 babies, and they debated the child’s middle name.

Once she became visibly pregnant, she mostly stayed inside her apartment so the pregnancy wouldn’t become public, she said. During her pregnancy, Musk instructed Birchall to send St. Clair \$2 million for expenses, she said, with

half of that amount structured as a loan, according to a text message viewed by the Journal. She used the funds in part to pay for security, which came to more than \$100,000 a month, she said.

When she was in the hospital being induced for labor in September, Birchall texted her about leaving Musk's name off the birth certificate, according to texts viewed by the Journal. Shortly before, she had hired an attorney, something Birchall had warned her not to do.

She complied with the request to not name Musk on the birth certificate. Not long after the birth, Birchall pushed St. Clair to sign documents keeping the father of the baby and details regarding her relationship with Musk secret in return for financial support. The offer was a one-time fee of \$15 million for a home and living expenses, plus an additional \$100,000 a month until the baby turned 21.

Musk told her by text it was dangerous to reveal his relationship to the baby, describing himself as the "#2 after Trump for assassination." He added that "only the paranoid survive."

But she didn't sign. The agreement prevented her from speaking about Musk in relation to the child or disparaging him, but didn't bar Musk from speaking negatively

about her if he wanted. St. Clair would have to pay back the \$15 million lump sum if she broke the agreement.

One of the main sticking points, she said, was that it would make her son feel illegitimate. The agreement didn't provide support for their child if he became gravely ill or a trust fund or life insurance if Musk died before the child turned 21. The agreement would also not have an allotment for security expenses.

She also wanted a paternity test. Courts in New York, where St. Clair lives, require the test to sanction child-support agreements, said Karen B. Rosenthal, one of St. Clair's attorneys.

A few times, St. Clair tried to hash things out directly with the billionaire, but she said he ignored her texts. In February, when she learned of a tabloid preparing a story about their relationship, she decided to front-run it and posted about it on X, making everything public for the first time, she said.

"Five months ago, I welcomed a new baby into the world. Elon Musk is the father," she wrote. "I have not previously disclosed this to protect our child's privacy and safety, but in recent days it has become clear that tabloid media intends to do so, regardless of the harm it will cause."

Four days after the post, Musk eliminated the \$15 million fee offer. Then, as they went to court to discuss paternity testing and Musk's request for a gag order, he lowered the financial offer further, dropping her support to \$40,000 a month, just as her legal fees were set to balloon in the fight.

On Thursday, the Journal contacted Musk for comment for this article. On Friday, St. Clair didn't receive her scheduled child support payment from Musk, she said. Late on Tuesday, she said Musk's team sent her \$20,000, halving her stipend again.

"The timing of the reduction in payments from him are timed with disagreements on testing and gag orders. The only conclusion we can make is that money is being weaponized," said Dror Bikel, another of St. Clair's attorneys. St. Clair's legal fees have exceeded \$240,000, Rosenthal said.

The case is working its way through the New York Supreme Court, which ordered that Musk take the paternity test.

On Friday, the results came back. A report from Labcorp stated that the "Probability of Paternity" was 99.9999%. ■