NCRI Flash Brief



Assassination Culture:

How Burning Teslas and Killing Billionaires Became a Meme Aesthetic for Political Violence

Introduction

Political violence targeting Donald Trump and Elon Musk is becoming increasingly normalized. Following the July 13, 2024 attempted assassination of President Trump, tolerance - and even advocacy - for political violence appears to have surged, especially among politically left-leaning segments of the population. This pattern builds on a broader trend NCRI identified in two December 2024 reports which analyzed how viral social media narratives were legitimizing political violence, particularly in the aftermath of the UnitedHealthcare CEO's assassination.¹ The reports found widespread justification for lethal violence - including assassination - among younger, highly online, and ideologically left-aligned users. A spillover effect into offline domains is already occurring, as illustrated by a ballot measure recently submitted in California that is macabrely named "the Luigi Mangione Access to Health Care Act."²

A broader "assassination culture" appears to be emerging within segments of the U.S. public on the extreme left, with expanding targets now including figures such as Donald Trump and Elon Musk. NCRI empirically assessed this shift with original survey data and open source intelligence analysis to assess how normalized and justified violence against the administration has become in public discourse. The findings signal a threat to political stability and public safety. Key data points include:

- Muder Justification: 31% and 38% of respondents stated it would be at least somewhat justified to murder Elon Musk and President Trump, respectively.
 - These effects were largely driven by respondents that self-identified as left of center,³ with **48**% and **55**% at least somewhat justifying murder for Elon Musk and President Trump, respectively, indicating significantly higher justification for violence against these figures.
- **Property Destruction**: Nearly 40% of respondents (39.8%) stated it is at least somewhat acceptable (or more) to **destroy a Tesla dealership** in protest.
- Psychological/Ideological Correlations with Assassination Culture: These beliefs are highly correlated with one another, as well as with the justification of the murder of the UnitedHealthcare CEO and hyper-partisan left-wing ideology.
 - This suggests that support for violence is part of a **broader assassination culture**, underpinned by psychological and ideological factors.

¹ In December 2024, NCRI released "<u>Praise for United Healthcare CEO Assassination Goes Viral</u>", outlining the positive response many had online when Luigi Mangione murdered UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. Additionally, <u>"Killing With Applause: Emergent Permission Structures for Murder in the Digital Age</u>", focused on original survey research, analyzing what made respondents more likely to support the assassination of Brian Thompson.

²https://www.newsweek.com/luigi-mangione-inspired-ballot-initiative-targets-health-insurance-denials-2052789 ³ Respondents were asked to classify their political ideology, given the choices; Far Left, Liberal, Slightly Liberal, Middle of the Road, Slightly Conservative, Conservative, Far Right, No Affiliation and Something Else. We defined left of center as those who chose "Far Left", "Liberal", and "Slightly Liberal."

- Online Amplification of Radical Ideation: BlueSky plays a significant and predictive role in amplifying radical ideation.
 - Users are increasingly associating the memeification of Luigi Mangione with calls for political violence against Musk, Trump, and others, reflecting the growing cyber-social presence of assassination culture.

Survey Results

To assess support for political violence, we surveyed 1264 U.S. residents, balanced to reflect Census data on race/ethnicity, gender, age, and education.⁴ Respondents were asked demographic information, political identity, several political and psychological scales, and questions concerning their acceptance of specific forms of political violence. A score of 1 meant that the respondent considered political violence completely unjustified. Scores from 2 to 7 indicated that they believed there was at least some justification for political violence, and, in the case of those choosing 7, that it was completely justified.

The survey revealed several troubling trends. Over half of those who self-identified as left of center (55.2%) reported that if someone murdered Donald Trump, they would be at least somewhat justified (see Figure 1; similar proportions supported murdering Musk and destroying Tesla dealerships). This includes 13% who said this murder would be "Completely Justified." Similarly, nearly half of those who self-identified as left of center said the murder of Elon Musk would be somewhat justified (or greater), with about 9% saying this is "Completely Justified" (see Figure 3). Over ½ of all respondents believe it is at least somewhat acceptable to destroy Tesla dealerships to protest Elon Musk's involvement in the Presidential administration.

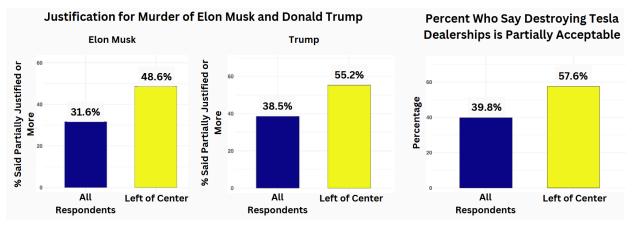
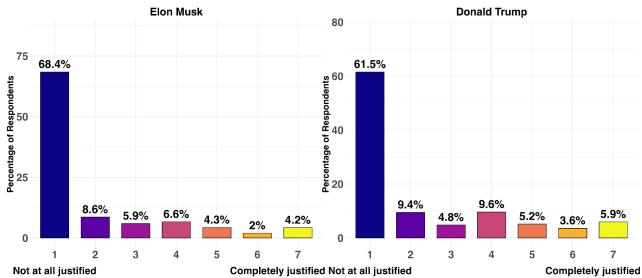


Figure 1: Percent of respondents overall and those self-identifying as left of center who find violence at least somewhat justified. The bar graphs here show the percentage of people in each group selecting scores from 2 to 7 on the scales assessing support for murdering Musk and Trump and destroying Tesla dealerships. Scores

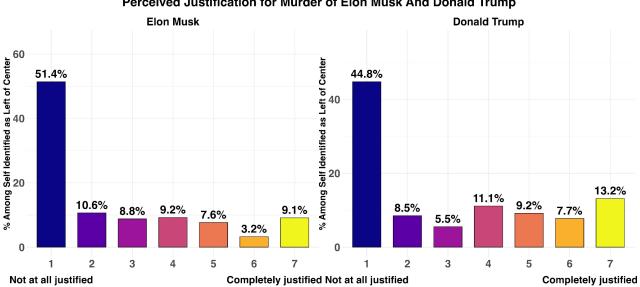
⁴ Using Prime Panels, we collected 2651 respondents. Based on attention checks and those who took the survey in unreasonable amounts of time, we cleaned the dataset down to a final dataset of 1264 responses. Additionally, we weighted the survey using post stratification of the following demographics: race/ethnicity, age, gender, education, and political party. Race/ethnicity, age, gender, and education were balanced based on Census Bureau data, and party identification based on Pew Research.

of 1 were excluded because such scores meant that the respondent considered the respective form of political violence completely unacceptable.



Perceived Justification for Murder of Elon Musk And Donald Trump

Figure 2: Percent of the sample and their varying degrees of justification for murder of Elon Musk and Donald Trump. For both of these questions, a score of 1 meant that the respondent considered the murder of Elon Musk or Donald Trump to be "Not at all justified," while a score of 7 meant the respondent considered the murder of Elon Musk or Donald Trump to be completely justified.



Perceived Justification for Murder of Elon Musk And Donald Trump

Figure 3: Percent identified as left of center and their varying degrees of justification for murder of Elon Musk and Donald Trump. For both of these questions, a score of 1 meant that the respondent considered the murder of Elon Musk or Donald Trump to be "Not at all justified," while a score of 7 meant the respondent considered the murder of Elon Musk or Donald Trump to be completely justified.

We next sought to explore the underlying structure of support for political violence—specifically, whether attitudes justifying actions like assassination or property destruction are isolated opinions or part of a broader ideological framework. Rather than treat support for violence against Elon Musk or Donald Trump as unique cases, we asked a deeper question: Are these beliefs symptoms of a larger, coherent worldview that increasingly tolerates political violence? To quantify potential coherence, we correlated several relevant survey items and scales, which we portray in Figure 4.

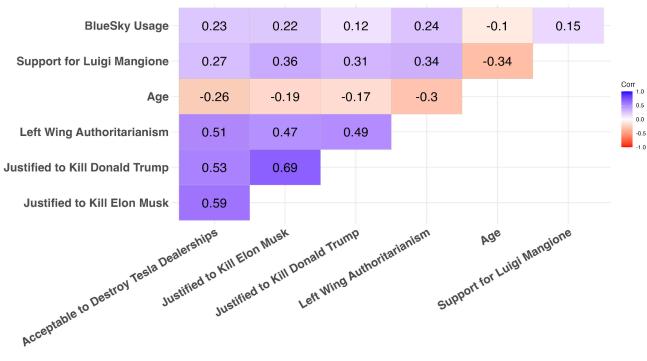




Figure 4. Correlation matrix of political violence attitudes and ideological traits. Left-Wing Authoritarianism, usage of BlueSky, and support for Luigi Mangione are strongly associated with justification of different acts of violence against Tesla, Trump, and Musk. All of these are statistically significant with a p-value below .01.

The correlation matrix reveals that support for political violence—including property destruction and assassination—is not expressed in isolation, but as part of a tightly interconnected belief system. Those who justify the murder of Elon Musk or Donald Trump are also more likely to support Luigi Mangione's killing of Brian Thompson (r = .36 and .31, respectively). This pattern suggests a broader worldview in which violence is seen as a legitimate political response—not just a reaction to individual figures. Central to this belief system is Left-Wing Authoritarianism (LWA), characterized by moral absolutism, punitive attitudes toward ideological opponents, and a willingness to use coercion for progressive aims.⁵ LWA strongly correlates with support for both assassinations (r = .47 for Musk, r = .49 for Trump), support for Mangione (r = .34), and endorsement of destroying Tesla dealerships (r = .51). Furthermore, support for the three types of political violence we assessed (murdering Trump and Musk, destroying Tesla dealerships) were highly correlated with one another (r = .53 to .69). These results point to a structured ideological framework—what we term

⁵ We use the brief 13-item measure of Left-Wing Authoritarianism by Costello and Patrick (2021): https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35767681/

assassination culture—in which revolutionary action is valorized, particularly when directed at symbols of wealth, power, or conservative politics.

We next sought to move beyond correlations and identify which factors best predict support for political violence. While associations reveal structure, a multivariate model allows us to assess the unique contribution of each variable—clarifying which psychological and ideological traits **predict** justification for violent action when considered together. In our multivariate models, we sought to predict justification for the murder of Donald Trump and Elon Musk, plus a model that predicts the belief that "Destroying a Tesla Dealership" in protest is acceptable. In order to control for all factors and predict these outcomes, we used the following as independent variables: age, gender, race/ethnicity, education levels, party identification, political ideology, social media usage, and a psychological scale, Locus of Control.⁶

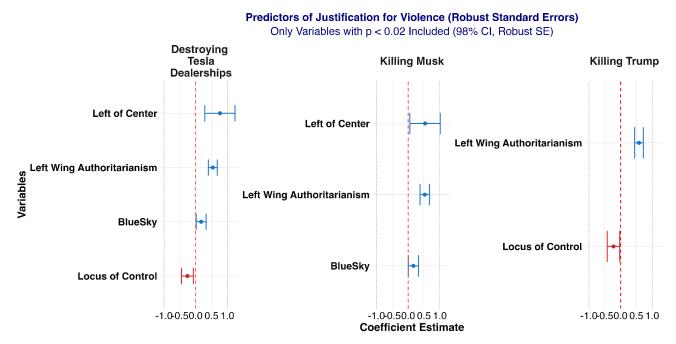


Figure 5. Three multivariate regression analyses on the predictors for justification for murder of Musk/Trump and the acceptability of destroying Tesla dealerships.⁷ Being left of center⁸ and authoritarian emerged as a key predictor of all models, use of Blue Sky and external locus of control were common predictors as well. All variables shown here were statistically significant, with p-values less than .02.

⁶ A higher score on the Locus of Control scale (Iles-Caven et al., 2020) indicates that one has a higher external locus of control, meaning that they ascribe less control to themselves and more to forces outside themselves. In the multivariate model, there is an inverse relationship between locus of control and justification for the murder of Donald Trump, revealing that a belief that outside forces control one's life is predictive of justification for the murder of Donald Trump.

⁷ All coefficients shown in the body of the paper are unstandardized. See the Appendix for both the unstandardized and standardized coefficients.

⁸ For the breakdown of political ideology, we divided the 9 options into three groups: "Left of Center," "Right of Center," and "Middle of the Road/Other." See the Appendix for the models with the original political ideology variable with all choices kept as the respondents saw them.

The regression analysis reveals that support for assassinating Elon Musk⁹ is driven by a clear set of ideological and psychological factors. The strongest predictors are far-left political identity¹⁰ and Left-Wing Authoritarianism (LWA)—suggesting this justification of violence is underpinned by politics and ideology. Time spent on BlueSky also emerged as a significant predictor suggesting a role for the cyber social domain in justification of violence, a trend that mirrors NCRI's earlier findings on Luigi Mangione.¹¹ Finally, external locus of control—the belief that one's outcomes are shaped by outside forces—was linked to greater support for violence, suggesting that feelings of powerlessness may fuel justification for extreme action. These findings confirm that assassination culture is not random or reactive, but structured, ideological, and amplified in specific digital environments.

Assassination Culture on Social Media

The matrix of opinions feeding into assassination culture that were highlighted in the survey data are also manifested in recent social media chatter. A series of queries we ran on BlueSky containing mentions of Trump, Musk, and various formulations of Luigi Mangione produced over 200K results and over 2M engagements. Four spikes in chatter can be observed on the time series graph below, namely 1) the arrest and initial virality of Mangione in December 2024; 2) the Presidential Inauguration on January 20th, 2025; 3) a viral @libsoftiktok post¹² highlighting an assassination threat that received 50M impressions and sparked robust cross-platform chatter; and 4) a sustained increase over the course of March 2025. Below, recent examples of target chatter on BlueSky testify to how mentions of Luigi Mangione are being used as a coded callsign to make allusions to or even calls to action for political violence.

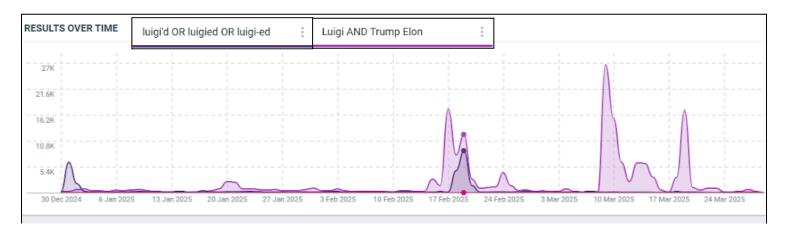
RESU	LTS			
l luig luig	gi AND Trump Elo i-ing OR luigiing i'd OR luigied OR ngione'd OR man	OR luiging luigi-ed	17	73.3K ■ 834 36K 641
0	43.3K	86.7K	130K	173.3K

NGA	GEMENT			
luigi luigi	i AND Trump Ele -ing OR luigiing Id OR luigied OR gione'd OR man	OR luiging luigi-ed		1.6M ■ 6.1K 76.1K 2.3K
0	393.2K	786.4K	1.2M	1.6M

⁹ Musk is used as an example here, but we also produced regression analysis for the justification of the murder of Donald Trump, which reveals similar findings (see Appendix).

¹⁰ To include self-identified political ideology in the model, we treated it as a factor variable, setting "Middle of the Road" as the reference category. This means the model compares all other political groups to people who identify as "Middle of the Road." The p-values tell us whether each group is statistically different from this baseline, while the model coefficients show the direction and strength of that difference. In this analysis, individuals who identify as Left of Center are consistently more likely–compared to "Middle of the Road" respondents–to justify the killings of both Trump and Musk. ¹¹https://networkcontagion.us/reports/12-18-24-killing-with-applause-emergent-permission-structures-for-murder-in-the-di gital-age/

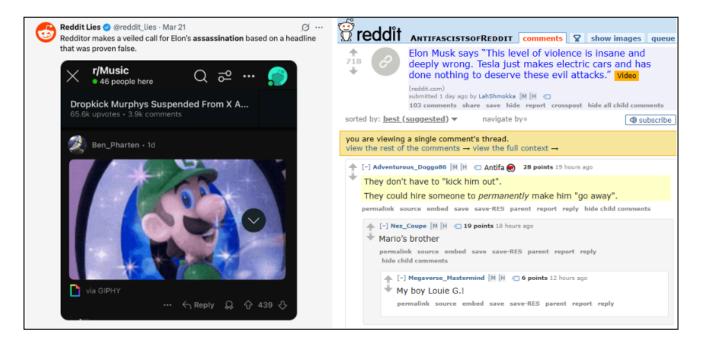
¹² https://x.com/libsoftiktok/status/1891307729144217919





Though the survey results indicate that time spent on BlueSky is a significant predictor in justification of violence, robust chatter on other platforms illustrates how assassination culture is trending across internet culture more broadly. A case in point is Reddit, which according to reporting has stepped up moderation efforts in a yet-unsuccessful attempt to clamp down on posts and communities that are either glorifying or even making concrete calls for acts of political violence.¹³ Nonetheless, dedicated subreddits such as r/FreeLuigi (37K members) and r/LuigiMangioneJustice (14K members) continue to host robust, if not increasingly coded, discussions that are reflective of a broader online assassination culture.

¹³ https://gizmodo.com/reddit-is-cracking-down-on-luigi-mangione-content-2000576229

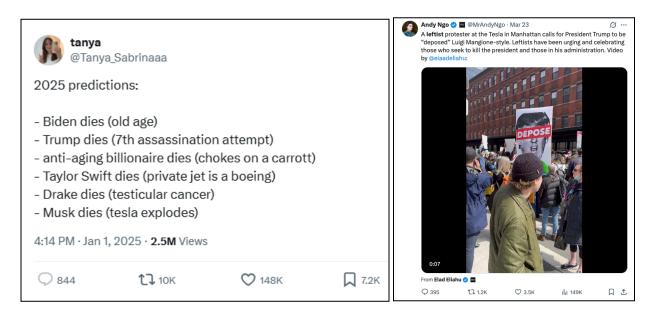


Beyond the use of Luigi Mangione as a memeified symbol of political violence, some users have even made explicit calls for acts of violence against Trump, Musk, and government institutions. Some of these threats explicitly echo the "Deny, Defend, Depose" mantra inscribed by Mangione on the shell casing that killed Brian Thompson.

kindaalrightiguess 😋 [score hidden] 5 hours ago
r is muck always has his kid on his shoulders to deter grassy knoll enthusiasts
link source embed unsave save-RES parent report reply subscribe-rev hide child comments
-] Puffycatkibble 😋 [score hidden] 34 minutes ago
f you ask me 1 potential future Musk is a worthy sacrifice for the betterment of the world.
ermalink source embed save save-RES parent report reply subscribe-rev
1

	Clairenator OP • 1d ago • Edited 1d ago
	I'm organizing a group right now and packing my gun*.
	Ape together strong.
	Edit- *bringing my daily carry pistol. Not my entire collection.
	Edit 2- I bring my daily carry pistol any time I go more than 5 mins down the road. A DC road trip would have a longer travel time, therefore I will bring my pistol. That is my right as an American.
Θ	
	kekehippo • 1d ago
	Perhaps by chance that saying you're armed and marching on DC on reddit isn't the smartest statement to share on the internet.
	\bigcirc \bigcirc 582 \bigcirc \bigcirc Reply \bigcirc Award \rightleftharpoons Share \cdots
	Clairenator OP • 1d ago
	It's time. It's a class war.
	Deny. Defend. Depose.
	⊖

X has also been witness to viral discussion around political violence that has generated tens of millions of views and, on a qualitative level, served as a catalyst for public opinion–both against and in favor of–extreme acts against figures such as Trump, Musk, and Tesla.



This sample of social media chatter illustrates how the opinions measured in our survey results manifest in online discussion that are contributing to a broader contagion of justification for and memeification of extreme acts of political violence targeting Trump, Musk, Tesla, and symbols of political and economic power more generally. Capturing a quantitative metric for this phenomenon on social media remains a challenge due to a number of factors including platform moderation, intentional obfuscation, and use of coded language by users to avoid detection. That said, the examples presented herein illustrate how the assassination culture described in our survey results manifests in an increasingly gamified and memeified online discourse.

Discussion

The data reveal a structured endorsement of political violence targeting figures like Donald Trump and Elon Musk. These attitudes are not fringe—they reflect an emergent assassination culture, grounded in far-left authoritarianism and increasingly normalized in digital discourse.

Cyber-social platforms—particularly BlueSky—play a strong predictive role in amplifying this culture. References to Luigi Mangione now function as coded endorsements of political violence, cloaked in irony, memeification, and plausible deniability. In these ecosystems, violence is not just justified—it is stylized, gamified, and embedded within a broader ideological narrative. Combined with psychological drivers such as external locus of control, these dynamics create a permissive environment in which users feel morally licensed to advocate or celebrate extreme acts.

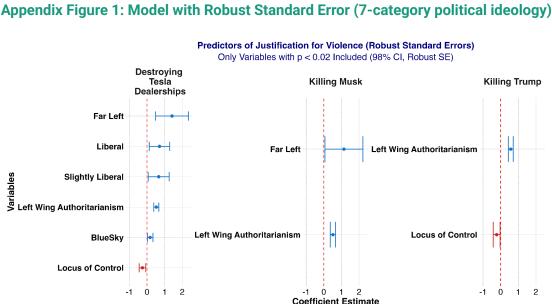
These findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. Self-reported attitudes do not necessarily reflect actual behavior, and though we sought simplicity in survey design, minor framing differences in survey or question design can alter responses and margins of error. The brief's exclusive focus on violence targeting right-leaning figures was driven by recent high-profile incidents and did not address the significance of threats of violence directed at left-leaning figures. However, the Appendix also reports results from surveys assessing support for political violence in the abstract (e.g., targeting "political leaders" rather than specific people) and also finds significantly more support among respondents identifying as Democrats than as Republicans. We caution that current differences in Democratic support for violence may serve as a response to loss of federal power, a claim buttressed by our models which show external locus of control as a key predictor. We also note that support for assassination still shows a concerning, if not as-large, prevalence among Republican respondents.

Conclusion

This report points to disturbingly high levels of support for political violence, particularly targeting President Donald Trump and Elon Musk. Across survey responses, nearly one-third of respondents—and a significantly higher share of left-leaning respondents—expressed some degree of justification for acts of lethal violence.

Unless political and cultural leadership explicitly confronts and condemns this trend, NCRI assesses a growing probability of real-world escalation. Given the current economic volatility and institutional distrust, the online normalization of political violence may increasingly translate into offline action.

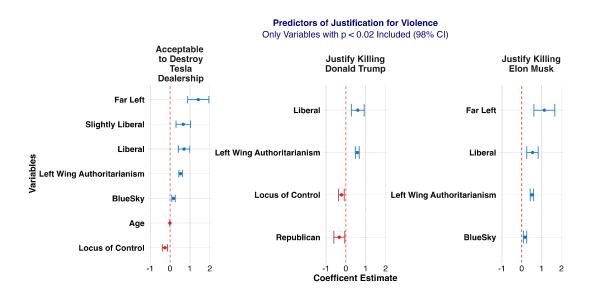
Taken together, the findings underscore the erosion of democratic norms and the growing acceptability of political violence in American discourse, particularly among ideologically extreme communities online. Continued monitoring and broader measurement efforts are urgently needed.

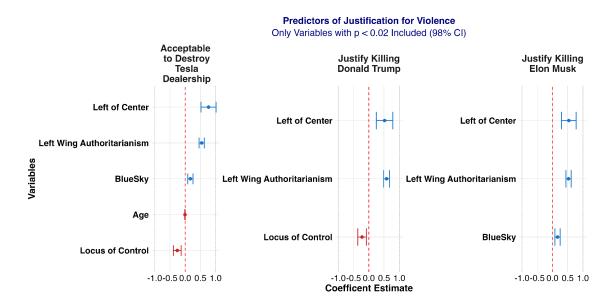


Appendix Figure 1: Model with Robust Standard Error (7-category political ideology)

Appendix

Appendix Figure 2: Models without Robust Standard Errors (7-category political ideology)





Appendix Figure 3: Models without Robust Standard Errors (3-category political ideology)

Appendix Table 1:	Regressio	on Results	for Predict	ing Killing	Elon Musl	κ, Killing Τι	rump, Dest	troying Tes	sla
Dealerships, With 3-Category Political Ideology (Standardized and Unstandardized)									
Term	Kill	Kill	Destroy	Kill	Kill	Destroy	Robust	Robust	Robust
	Musk	Trump	Tesla	Musk	Trump	Tesla	SE: Kill	SE: Kill	SE:
				(Standa	(Standa	(Standa	Musk	Trump	Destroy
				rdized)	rdized)	rdized)			Tesla
(Intercept)	0.4783	1.3015	1.6123	NA	NA	NA	0.478	1.302	1.612
	39	28	60						
Social Media	0.0192	0.0216	0.0091	0.0384	0.0381	0.0170	0.019	0.022	0.009
Use	99	30	26	45	201	10			
Left Wing	0.5253	0.5823	0.5406	0.3684	0.3613	0.3548	0.525	0.582	0.541
Authoritarianism	76	34	80	59	079	03			
Gender: Male	0.0572	-0.1259	-0.0771	0.0172	-0.0335	-0.0217	0.057	-0.126	-0.077
	25	02	64	45	661	58			
Gender: Other	0.6638	0.6796	0.1717	0.0296	0.0268	0.0071	0.664	0.680	0.172
	78	41	45	85	849	85			
Age	-0.0019	0.0011	-0.0074	-0.0195	0.0108	-0.0715	-0.002	0.001	-0.007
	09	95	57	65	397	26			
Locus Of Control	-0.1072	-0.2237	-0.2614	-0.0467	-0.0863	-0.1067	-0.107	-0.224	-0.261
	32	85	74	95	967	67			

BlueSky	0.1654	-0.0060	0.1700	0.0993	-0.0032	0.0955	0.165	-0.006	0.170
	89	91	53	51	352	25			
Republican	-0.1108	-0.2970	-0.2335	-0.0311	-0.0738	-0.0614	-0.111	-0.297	-0.234
	45	26	58	64	792	42			
Democrat	-0.1555	0.1562	-0.1521	-0.0420	0.0374	-0.0385	-0.156	0.156	-0.152
	67	44	94	99	064	37			
Black	-0.3064	-0.2795	0.0311	-0.0627	-0.0506	0.0059	-0.306	-0.280	0.031
	28	98	85	94	889	80			
Hispanic/Latino	0.0753	-0.0772	0.2242	0.0159	-0.0144	0.0443	0.075	-0.077	0.224
	94	12	12	24	278	12			
Ethnicity/Race:	-0.1460	-0.2122	-0.1684	-0.0199	-0.0256	-0.0215	-0.146	-0.212	-0.168
Other	52	88	61	76	872	59			
White	-0.2324	-0.4096	-0.3406	-0.0685	-0.1068	-0.0939	-0.232	-0.410	-0.341
	60	85	54	24	393	59			
Left of Center	0.5359	0.5171	0.7647	0.1348	0.1151	0.1800	0.536	0.517	0.765
	20	23	64	35	018	35			
Right of Center	0.0127	-0.0038	0.2473	0.0034	-0.0009	0.0636	0.013	-0.004	0.247
	06	73	44	92	417	09			
Graduate School	0.0431	0.0263	-0.0621	0.0075	0.0040	-0.0101	0.043	0.026	-0.062
	39	95	97	53	883	89			
HS or Less	-0.0276	0.1263	0.0170	-0.0078	0.0316	0.0045	-0.028	0.126	0.017
	23	91	80	15	345	21			
Some College	-0.0677	0.0199	-0.0287	-0.0198	0.0051	-0.0078	-0.068	0.020	-0.029
	75	39	48	60	689	82			

Appendix Table 2: Model Fit Statistics for Appendix Table 1 Regression									
Outcome	Adj. R ²	F-Statistic	Residual Std.	p-value					
Variable			Error						
Kill Elon Musk	0.251	24.55	1.436	< 2.2e-16					
Kill Elon Musk	0.272	27.20	1.601	< 2.2e-16					
Destroy Tesla	0.322	34.35	1.460	< 2.2e-16					
Dealerships									

Appendix Table 3: Regression Results for Predicting Killing Elon Musk, Killing Trump, Destroying Tesla Dealerships, With 7-Category Political Ideology (Standardized and Unstandardized)

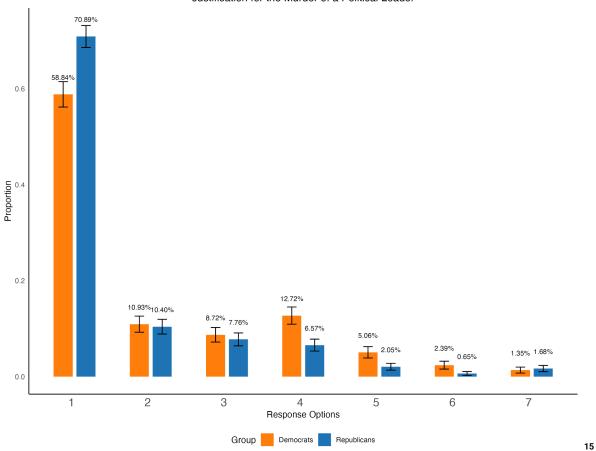
-	-	-		` 	1	Γ_	, 	Γ	Γ
Term	Kill	Kill	Destroy	Kill	Kill	Destroy	Robust	Robust	Robust
	Musk	Trump	Tesla	Musk	Trump	Tesla	SE: Kill	SE: Kill	SE:
				(Standa	(Standa	(Standa	Musk	Trump	Destroy
				rdized)	rdized)	rdized)			Tesla
(Intercept)	0.5556	1.4684	1.6631	NA	NA	NA	0.556	1.468	1.663
	19	720	92						
Social Media	0.0205	0.0201	0.0095	0.0408	0.0354	0.0177	0.021	0.020	0.010
Use	14	399	15	66	935	35			
Left Wing	0.5147	0.5742	0.5287	0.3609	0.3562	0.3469	0.515	0.574	0.529
Authoritarianism	20	060	39	86	649	67			
Male	0.0538	-0.1286	-0.0911	0.0162	-0.0342	-0.0256	0.054	-0.129	-0.091
	03	252	40	14	921	99			
Gender: Other	0.4244	0.6065	-0.0575	0.0189	0.0239	-0.0024	0.424	0.607	-0.058
	77	856	31	80	950	07			
Age	-0.0017	0.0004	-0.0073	-0.0183	0.0041	-0.0705	-0.002	0.000	-0.007
	94	522	55	94	007	48			
Locus of Control	-0.1083	-0.2248	-0.2602	-0.0472	-0.0868	-0.1062	-0.108	-0.225	-0.260
	80	322	78	97	008	78			
BlueSky	0.1644	-0.0146	0.1747	0.0987	-0.0077	0.0981	0.164	-0.015	0.175
	31	633	72	16	879	75			
Republican	-0.1197	-0.3328	-0.2277	-0.0336	-0.0827	-0.0599	-0.120	-0.333 .	-0.228
	39	534	66	65	905	18			
Democrat	-0.1697	0.1289	-0.1533	-0.0459	0.0308	-0.0388	-0.170	0.129	-0.153
	18	627	83	29	750	39			
Black	-0.3289	-0.3081	-0.0069	-0.0674	-0.0558	-0.0013	-0.329	-0.308	-0.007
	21	974	40	04	737	31			
Hispanic/Latino	0.0665	-0.0844	0.2225	0.0140	-0.0157	0.0439	0.067	-0.084	0.223
	40	369	63	55	779	86			
Ethnicity: Other	-0.1650	-0.2246	-0.2039	-0.0225	-0.0271	-0.0261	-0.165	-0.225	-0.204
	41	942	55	73	883	02			
White	-0.2700	-0.4335	-0.3817	-0.0796	-0.1130	-0.1052	-0.270	-0.434	-0.382
	82	072	02	14	518	80			
Conservative	0.0114	0.0248	0.2998	0.0026	0.0050	0.0645	0.011	0.025	0.300
	78	120	08	41	504	43			
Far Left	1.1403	0.5481	1.4210	0.1126	0.0478	0.1313	1.140	0.548	1.421
	63	757	73	30	979	27			
Far Right	0.0287	-0.0023	0.4995	0.0021	-0.0001	0.0356	0.029	-0.002	0.500
-	98	318	52	98	574	72			

Liberal	0.5430	0.5979	0.7059	0.1108	0.1079	0.1347	0.543	0.598	0.706
	76	596	84	18	466	95			
No Affiliation	-0.0651	-0.1509	0.1003	-0.0136	-0.0280	0.0197	-0.065	-0.151	0.100
	13	057	00	98	850	43			
Slightly	-0.0321	-0.1773	0.1145	-0.0058	-0.0285	0.0195	-0.032	-0.177	0.115
Conservative	98	023	06	62	577	06			
Slightly Liberal	0.2673	0.2011	0.6647	0.0397	0.0264	0.0924	0.267	0.201	0.665
	25	448	61	48	587	84			
Something Else	0.0808	-0.2730	-0.2570	0.0084	-0.0253	-0.0251	0.081	-0.273	-0.257
(political	98	736	91	72	010	93			
affiliation)									
Graduate School	0.0665	0.0459	-0.0348	0.0116	0.0071	-0.0057	0.067	0.046	-0.035
	05	794	88	44	217	15			
HS or Less	-0.0234	0.1454	0.0102	-0.0066	0.0363	0.0027	-0.023	0.145	0.010
	04	263	27	21	988	07			
Some College	-0.0594	0.0269	-0.0219	-0.0174	0.0069	-0.0060	-0.059	0.027	-0.022
	34	385	94	16	833	30			

Appendix Table 4: Model Fit Statistics for Appendix Table 2 Regression								
Outcome	Adj. R ²	F-Statistic	Residual Std.	p-value				
Variable			Error					
Kill Musk	0.2532	18.84	1.434	< 2.2e-16				
Kill Trump	0.272	20.66	1.601	< 2.2e-16				
Destroy Tesla	0.325	26.34	1.457	< 2.2e-16				
Dealerships								

This next figure shows results of an NCRI national survey (n=1233) asking "How justified or not justified would someone be if they killed a powerful political leader?" Summing over all responses except 1 ("not at all justified"), high levels of both Republicans (29%) and Democrats (41%) indicated that it is at least somewhat justified. These findings indicate that there is 41% more support for justifying assassination (at least somewhat) among Democrats than Republicans, but this finding should be interpreted with caution. Elections have been shown to be associated with heightened polarization for months following results and such sentiments may be prone to change.¹⁴

¹⁴ Fasching, N., Iyengar, S., Lelkes, Y., & Westwood, S. J. (2024). Persistent polarization: The unexpected durability of political animosity around US elections. *Science Advances*, *10*(36), eadm9198. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adm9198.



Justification for the Murder of a Political Leader

¹⁵ This data is based off a follow up to the original survey discussed above. Using Prime Panels, we collected 2200 respondents. Based on attention checks and those who took the survey in unreasonable amounts of time, we cleaned the dataset down to a final dataset of 1233 responses. Additionally, we weighted the survey using post stratification of the following demographics: race/ethnicity, age, gender, education, and political party. Race/ethnicity, age, gender, and education were balanced based on Census Bureau data, and party identification based on Pew Research.