Tesla's flying car is tone deaf garbage

By VIVIAN GAGE
Associate Opinion Editor

On Oct. 15, industrialist and CEO of Tesla and SpaceX Elon Musk made a bold promise to a crowd at the SpaceX rocket development and testing facility in McGregor, Texas.

"What you see with your eyes you will not believe," he said.

And Musk was right. I truly could not believe what I was watching: a group of people enthusiastically cheering as a morally corrupt loser unveiled an invention that helps absolutely no one.

Musk was introducing Tesla's second-edition Roadster, which he claims will be the last manually drivable car the company ever builds. The Roadster, "an expertly crafted extra-terrestrial vehicle," according to the Tesla website, was put on display with a flashy demonstration that was livestreamed for all to see.

In one of the hardest videos I've ever had the displeasure of watching, Musk claimed that this car was something "that you haven't seen in any movie," and is "better than any James Bond car." What kind of car could possibly do all that? One that flies, of course.

During the demo, the Roadster, which was being remotely controlled, drove up a ramp that curled over so the vehicle was temporarily hanging upside down. The car then flew off the ramp and flipped 180 degrees midair, landing on its wheels theatrically, as air shot out from cold gas thrusters attached to the bottom and sides of the vehicle. In a second demonstration, the car performed a "kickflip," lifting itself into the air over Tesla's entire five-car fleet and doing a barrel roll simultaneously.

The Roadster was able to accomplish all this with the help of suction fans on the bottom of the vehicle. These fans pull air out from beneath the vehicle with an incredible amount of force and provide enough suction to hold the vehicle upside down, even when it's not moving.

The 10 air nozzles placed around the car, which allow the car to "fly," were borrowed from SpaceX, and they "use compressed air from a special tank to push the car up or sideways," according to Mashable. Tesla also claimed that this new sports car could go from zero to 60 mph in less than a second, which is unheard of.

While Musk's aura disturbed me through the screen, even I have to admit that the display was pretty cool at first glance. It honestly felt like something straight out of a sci-fi movie.

The only problem? This display wasn't a movie. It was real life, made using real money, to create a real waste of time and resources. A "flying car," which in actuality can only lift itself up and flip around, is nothing short of a billionaire's little play project that came to him in a wet dream.

The car isn't scheduled to go into production until 2028, and all buyers can do currently is put down a reservation for the performance and thrust models of the car, costing $50,000 and $250,000 respectively. That cost is just for a reservation, mind you. According to the Tesla website, the version with rockets is an unknown price and can be acquired through "invite only."

According to CBS, "Tesla's website notes that the planned flying model is not approved for public road use," and it probably won't ever be.

"You know I'm not necessarily sure it's legal in all jurisdictions. But there will be such a car that someone can own," Musk said during his presentation.

According to InsideEVs, this is an important distinction because you can already legally buy an electric vehicle with a suction system for use on a private track. However, making one legal to drive on public roads is a whole different hurdle. If having a suction system isn't legal on public roads, I can't imagine flying will ever be.

To put it simply, this "flying car" is a toy for the ultra-rich that can only be driven,

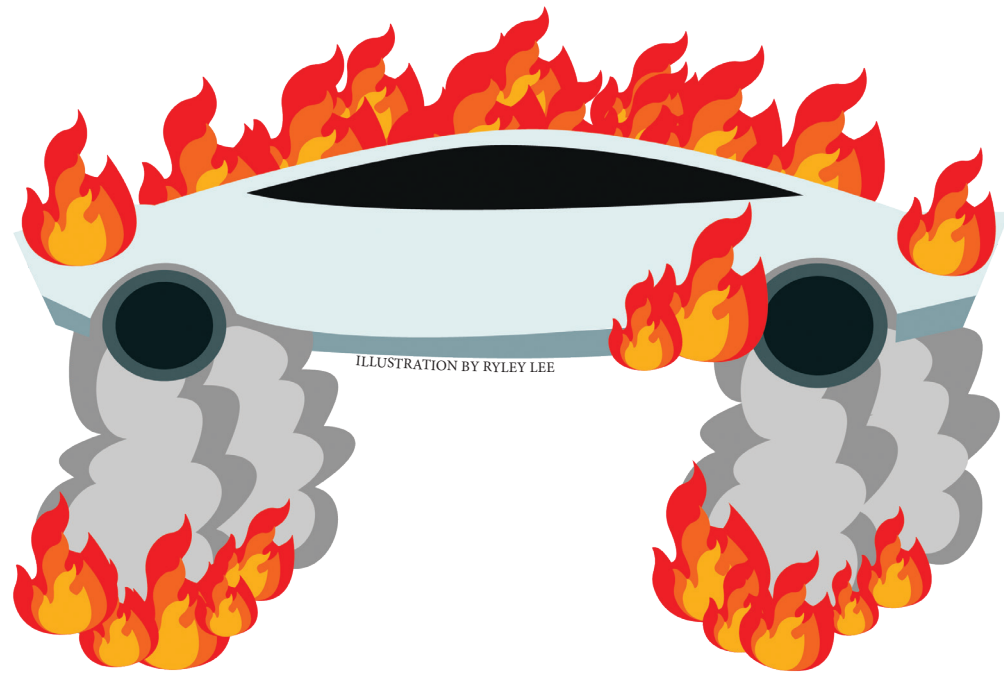

ILLUSTRATION BY RYLEY LEE

or flown, on private tracks if it becomes available at all. From where I'm sitting, it is yet another of Musk's attempts to try and convince us all he is a genius, and possibly distract us from his horrendous posture.

Moreover, the creation is simply tone-deaf. It feels like a slap in the face to Americans who are struggling to hold onto jobs and pay for groceries as the rich grow richer and the wealth gap widens. It feels cruel to tease an idea of the future that looks like it came straight out of "The Jetsons," when the average American will never get their hands on such technology in their lifetime.

The new Roadster is stupid, and it reinforces the idea that the rich can do whatever they want while avoiding accountability.

Inevitably, I am sure some people who can put their morals aside are ecstatic about the vehicle. Internet personality David Doberick, for example, pre-ordered the Founders edition of the Roadster for $250,000 around eight years ago with a bunch of other optimistic Tesla lovers. He was at the demonstration, excitedly vlogging the reveal which was nearly a decade in the making, happy to ignore Musk's wrongdoings to watch his new car do tricks.

Never mind the DOGE debacle that included major cuts to the foreign aid agency USAID and the Education Department. Or Musk's Nazi salute, or his encouraging hate speech on X and targeting the LGBTQIA+ community. Let's not forget his becoming the largest single political donor in modern American history (because that's not corrupt at all), or his biotech company Neuralink subjecting animals, including monkeys and pigs, to often deadly brain experiments. And how could I leave out the horrible work conditions Tesla employees have to endure.

All those little slip-ups can be forgiven if he can make a flying car, though, right?

Well, not to me. Ethical billionaires don't exist, and the world's richest man definitely doesn't deserve any praise for using his money to take credit for egotistical inventions. For all I care, the Roadster can fly straight to hell.

Jack Skellington is an undeniable Thanksgiving icon

By MICHAEL MCGRAIL
Staff Writer

"The Nightmare Before Christmas" is a 1993 stop-motion animated film that follows Jack Skellington, the feared "Pumpkin King of Halloween," as he attempts to (somewhat) peacefully take control of his new favorite holiday: Christmas. While the movie is highly regarded as a masterwork in animation, its multi-holiday-based plot leaves the movie as the source of much controversy regarding one simple thing: when to watch it.

"The Nightmare Before Christmas," or TNBC for short, is directed by filmmaker and animator Henry Selick, the same man behind "Coraline," and is based on a poem written by the infamously eerie filmmaker Tim Burton. Most of the film's characters are designed to look uncanny, unabashedly gunning for a spooky atmosphere straight from the get-go. These aspects of the film's mise-en-scene are what lead most moviegoers astray, as they refuse to separate the intentionally eerie aesthetic of TNBC from the actual plot.

Countless think that, due to the film's creepy visuals and main setting of Halloween Town, its ideal watch time is mid-to-late October. They see it as a perfect way to set a spooky mood for Halloween. Others posit that the movie's themes of love and merriment, paired with its climax being set on Christmas Eve, make it far more of a Christmastime tale.

While both notions hold merit in their own right, I would not go as far as to say either makes sense as the definitively correct time to view TNBC. Taking into account all the information within the plot of the movie, the correct watch time is, without a shadow of a doubt, Thanksgiving.

Almost the entirety of TNBC's plot takes place between Halloween and Christmas, kicking off with a musical number Oct. 31 and resolving its plot Dec. 25. This leaves the bulk of the movie's events happening over November, focusing primarily on the bridge in time between the two holidays rather than either one specifically.

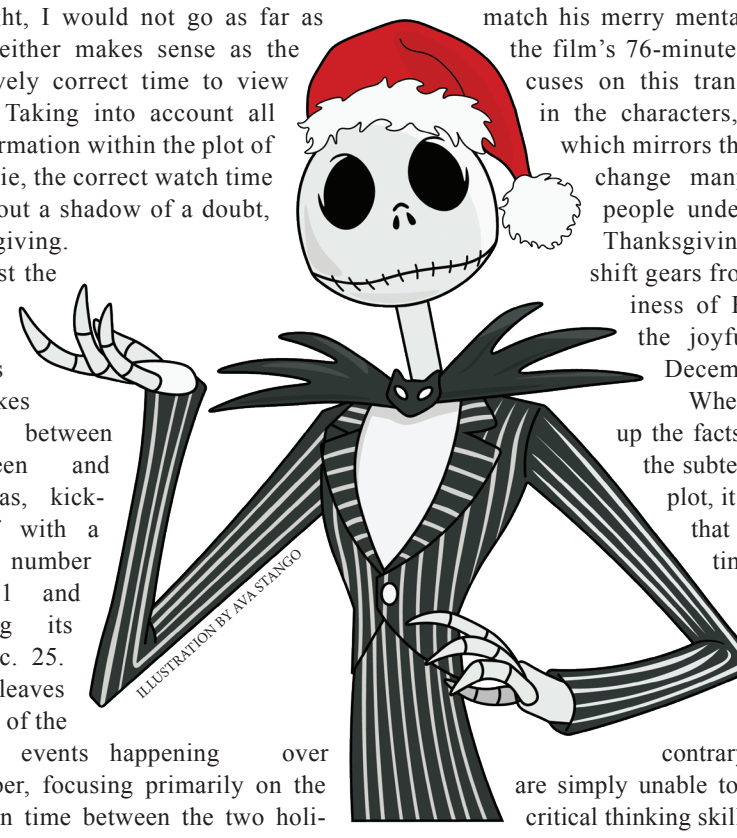

ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO

As the plot unfolds and Skellington begins spreading Christmas cheer, we see the ghoulish residents of Halloween Town slowly shift their spine-chilling ways to match his merry mentality. Most of the film's 76-minute runtime focuses on this transition period in the characters, a transition which mirrors the begrudging change many real-world people undertake around Thanksgiving in order to shift gears from the spookiness of Halloween to the joyful nature of December holidays.

When stacking up the facts presented in the subtext of TNBC's plot, it is undeniable that the optimal time to watch the film is Thanksgiving. Those who think contrary to this fact are simply unable to engage their critical thinking skills.

Most viewers simply watch the movie's plot unfold without utilizing rational thought, allowing the stimuli of the holly-jolly whimsy present within Santa's Christmas Village or the spookiness of Halloween Town to overpower any form of intelligence they may have had going into their watch. If you actually take the time to power on your brain for more than two seconds while watching Skellington's antics, the advantages of watching the film on Thanksgiving become obvious.

What's more, anyone claiming that TNBC is a film to be watched only during Christmas or Halloween is, quite frankly, a selfish prick. Christmas already has hundreds of movies to watch to get in the holiday spirit, ranging from the simple, heartwarming atmosphere of "The Santa Clause" to the hilarity of "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." Halloween has every horror movie to ever exist in its arsenal, giving it debatably even more films to boast than Christmas. What does Thanksgiving have? "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving?" "Free Bird?" It's just not fair.

"The Nightmare Before Christmas" is definitively a Thanksgiving film. Nobody can deny the subtextual theme present within its plot, or the timeline of its events laid out in plain detail. Nobody, that is, but a fool.