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Every now and then, the old lie, "Martin Eberhard founded Tesla, Elon Musk stole it from him!" crops up.

Facts matter, so let's break down the actual timeline.

'94: Musk does a summer internship developing advanced capacitors in hopes of being able to use them for EVs.

'94: AC Propulsion (Gage, Cocconi) release the first version of the AC-150 powertrain.

'94: Musk founds Zip2 along with Kimbal and Greg Kouri. Musk's investment was the PC.

Fall, '94: Musk moves to California to attend Stanford for postgraduate physics studies, but immediately drops out due to the internet boom and the rising success of his company Zip2.

'97: Gage starts tzero construction. Cocconi further develops the powertrain.

'97: Eberhard and Tarpenning cofound NuvoMedia, an e-book company

Spring '98: Straubel receives BS in Energy Systems Engineering from Stanford

Feb. '99: Compaq purchases Zip2 for $305M. Elon earns $22M.

Nov '99: Musk founds https://t.co/FaUDDd5T0X.

Jan '00: Gemstar-TV acquires NuvoMedia from Eberhard and Tarpenning for $187M, making them likewise wealthy.

Mar '00: * Straubel receives M.S. in Energy Engineering from Stanford. * https://t.co/FaUDDd5T0X merges with Confinity to form PayPal. * The dotcom bubble peaks.

Feb '02: * Musk travels to Russia looking to buy an ICBM to launch a mini-greenhouse to Mars, to inspire greater spending for NASA. Leaves empty-handed.

Disillusioned, he starts preparing to establish his own rocket company instead. * GM starts crushing recalled EV1s

Oct '02: * Ebay buys PayPal for $1,5B; Musk earns $165M. * Post-dotcom dip bottoms out.

Mar '03: Steve Casner, a coworker of Eberhard‘s, is Gage‘s neighbor. Introduces them. Eberhard decides to fund the conversion of the tzero to li-ion.

Apr '03: * Eberhard, hoping to commercialize the tzero, comes up with the name „Tesla Motors“ while at Disneyland‘s Blue Bayou restaurant. * Tarpenning registers https://t.co/XTPGOkTou5

May '03: Straubel starts working on the EV7 „long-range EV partnership“ with Stanford. Likewise inspired by the tzero, gets ACP (Gage, Cocconi) to agree to supply a new li-ion powertrain for it

Jun '03: Eberhard and Tarpenning incorporate Tesla Motors to pursue the tzero.

Sep '03: *Converted tzero wins the Michelin Challenge Bibendum. * Eberhard is upset to learn that AC Propulsion (Gage and Cocconi) have no plans to build more tzeros, but instead are thinking about converting the Scion xB to a "Scion eBox" * Wright joins as Tesla's third employee

Oct '03: Musk is invited to lunch by Harold Rosen, brother of the Compaq chair who bought Zip2 from Musk. Straubel is with, and tells Musk about the exciting developments at ACP.

Musk follows up with the meeting with a donation to Straubel‘s EV7 project as well as writing: "Will give AC Propulsion a call. This is really cool stuff and I think we are finally nearing the point where electric cars are a viable option."

Nov '03: Musk tries to convince ACP first to build him a prototype converted sports car, then later, to partner with him making them. ACP refuses. They want to make conversion Scion "eBox" cars. Musk thinks this is a daft idea, that nobody would pay so much money for a Scion.

Nov '03: Eberhard and Gage go to the LA Auto Show. Eberhard starts talking up Lotus reps about the idea of converting an Elise. Borrows the tzero for three months, driving it around to woo investors.

Feb '04: Musk tells ACP that he‘s moving forward on his EV project with or without them. Says he wants to use a Noble as the chassis. ACP again refuses. But Gage adds: „We are working independently with two companies, one in Europe and one in California both of which want to...

design and build such a car. Both companies are in start-up mode. One will soon be shopping a business plan for funding, I do not know the funding status of the other company. Would you be interested in participating with one of those companies as well as with AC Propulsion?“

Feb '04: Musk meets Eberhard & Wright. Finds a shell of a company with no tech, no offices, and without even the trademark to its own name – but with a business plans and ongoing contacts with Lotus. After some discussion agrees to take part. Becomes its fourth employee/founder.

Feb '04: Series A funding closes, with Musk investing $6,35M (~98%) and Eberhard $75k (~1%). Articles of incorporation copied over from SpaceX to save money
Designer of the SpaceX logo designs the Tesla logo
Musk becomes chairman, Eberhard remains CEO.

Mar '04: Tesla acquires the rights to the trademark Tesla Motors from Brad Siewart, who doesn't want to sell. Takes months and ultimately requires sending someone to sit on his doorstep to get him to talk to them. Nearly had to switch to the backup name, Faraday.

May '04: Straubel joins Tesla as its fifth and final cofounder.

Feb '06: Musk leads the Series B round ($13M), adding Valor Investment Partners to the team

Mar '06: First Falcon 1 launch; engine failure at T+33s.

Jun '06: Musk co-leads the third investment round ($40M), along with Technology Partners

Jul '06: Roadster unveiled to the public

Mar '07: Second Falcon 1 launch; failed due to harmonic oscillation at T+5m leading to engine shutdown at T+7:30

May '07: Tesla leads its fourth (intended to be final) funding round, $45M

May '07: Based on rumours within the company, Musk starts to question Eberhard‘s claims in his business plan that the cars will only cost $65k to produce. Eberhard assures him that while the initial...

cost will be higher, after the first 100 cars, the unit cost will be down to $65k. Eberhard assures the board that the car will be in production by September.

Jul '07: A new investor doing an audit of Tesla‘s supply chain finds that the unit cost of the Roadster after the...

first 100 cars will actually be $120k, nearly double what Eberhard claimed. Within months, the materials cost estimates alone will rise to $140k. The audit also determines that not a single system on the car will be ready by September. This leaves Tesla on the hook for...

purchase penalties in the contract with Lotus negotiated by Eberhard.

The board loses confidence in Eberhard. He is forced to step down as CEO; becomes „President of Technology“. Marks becomes interim CEO.

Oct '07: Tesla receives contract from Daimler to produce a Smart EV powertrains.

Nov '07: The board discovers that Eberhard has been hiding negative information from them (including reportedly stating, in response to higher costs: "If this is true, you and I are both fired.").

Dec: '07: The board unanimously agrees – including a member appointed by Eberhard himself – that he should be fired. The board considers filing suit against Eberhard, but decides it the PR damage would not be worth it.

Drori replaces Marks as CEO.

Jan '08: * Tarpenning leaves Tesla * The auto crisis of '08-'10 starts * Drori initiates a performance review and fires a number of early people involved in the development project. Overall workforce cut 10%.

Feb '08: First Roadster delivery

Aug '08: Third Falcon 1 launch; failed due to residual thrust causing a collision between the first and second stages.

Oct '08: Musk replaces Drori as CEO; lays off 25% of the company. Drori becomes vice chairman.

Dec '08: * Musk leads a fifth funding round ($40M) to save the company. Musk has now invested $70M, and the company has delivered 147 cars. * Drori leaves the company.

Mar '09: Daimler buys a <10% stake in Tesla for $50M, reportedly saving the company.

Apr '09: Chrysler goes bankrupt

May '09: GM goes bankrupt

Jun '09: Tesla receives a $465M DOE loan as part of the Advanced Vehicles Manufacturing Program, for engineering and production of the Model S (it would layer repay this early in May 2013)

Aug '09: * First commercial payload launched by SpaceX * Tesla has its first profitable month, thanks to improved margins on the Roadster