

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

This is a global player original podcast.

Good morning, I'm Zing Clay-Essamois.

And I'm Stephen Romo.

Joe and Savannah are on assignment.

Right now on Morning News Now, historic hearing in just a few hours, history will be made in downtown Manhattan.

Former President Trump is said to be arraigned on charges related to that high-profile Hush Money Pro.

We've got full analysis in just a moment.

This is big.

I know we often say that about any drama involving Donald Trump.

And we know there's a lot of it.

But this moment is a kind of history books moment because it's the first time ever that we will see a president, a former president in court on criminal charges.

Just hold on to that thought for one moment.

Donald Trump leaving his Florida home, surrendering himself to the district attorney in New York.

He doesn't yet know the 34 charges that have been levelled at him in this indictment.

He's about to find out.

And we're going to bring you this whole extraordinary 24 hours step by step.

We're going to have an episode now, which you're listening to and we're grateful to you.

There will be an episode recorded in the middle of the night, London time, where Emily and I will be drinking lots of coffee and trying to make sense of a news conference that Donald Trump is due to give back at Mar-a-Lago.

And you will be able to listen to that the moment you wake up tomorrow morning, Wednesday morning, because it will be in your feeds then.

But let's just consider New York today.

In a couple of hours' time, he is going to get in his secret service, Cavalcade, to drive from Trump Tower, the four miles down to Lower Manhattan, to the courthouse, where the secret service are going to hand him over to the court marshals so that he can be read his constitutional rights and find out what the charges are.

This is a man who is a presidential candidate and a criminal suspect.

Welcome to the news agents.

It's John.

It's Emily.

And the drama, I guess, started New York time around 3.30, 3.45, when the solitary plane, Trump Force One, or Air Force One, or whatever you choose to call it, landed at LaGuardia Airport, the kind of domestic airport in New York.

It's a short ride away from Trump Towers.

And it was interesting to see how the Rolling News Network stayed on this shot.

And there was some criticism for them for doing so, because yet again, we were waiting and watching a plane on the tarmac waiting for Donald Trump to emerge.

And Vaughn, we can see the motivator has turned into the entrance to the airport, is approaching the airport.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

The plane is on the tarmac, and unless he stops, it should be very quickly. And yet this time, there was something so different. It wasn't a campaign stop in Iowa or Idaho. It wasn't a big fundraiser dinner. It was a man who was about to walk down the stairs alone, a very solitary, and I'm going to say small figure this time round. No big wave, no adjustment of the tie at the top of the steps, no Melania, his wife by his side, and he sort of tripped down the steps and into his awaiting motor vehicle, a cavalcade. And that was all we saw of him. The thing it reminded me of was when Donald Trump, when he was president during COVID, had launched his first rally post COVID in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And he came back from that. The crowds had not been enormous. The place was half empty, and Donald Trump looked this dishevelled figure as he kind of emerged from Marine One to walk the few steps back into the White House, his heavy overcoat weighing him down, and he looked somehow shrunken. Now Donald Trump has chosen to take with him on Hair Force One, or Trump Force One, or Plain Face, as we would call it. All the key advisors, all the key campaign advisors. Donald Trump is running for 2024, and he is trying to work out. And this is what's going on at the moment in Trump Tower. How do we turn this into a campaign event where we can raise money off the back of it to turbocharge the bid for the presidency? But before he gets to that presidency, he's got to handle himself really well over the next critical 12 hours. And we understand that he's agreed with his legal team to do this in a very controlled way. That's what they want. They want any kind of drama to go away. Just let's hear from one lawyer, his personal attorney, Joe Tecapina. What I hope is that we get in and out of there as quickly as possible, that it's at the end of the day a typical arraignment where we stand before the judge, we say not guilty. He's gearing up for a battle. So that's the idea. We have to see whether Trump goes along with that and does play nicely. But yesterday came a bit of a bolt from the blue. He hired in a new lawyer, a new attorney, Todd Blanche, who comes from one of the most elite New York City law firms, Cadwalader, and he pulled in this guy at the very last moment. Presumably, he thinks Todd Blanche is pretty good at white collar crime, or he does sort of classy stuff a bit better. And so he's added him into the legal team, which I think is an indication that whatever the bluster, whatever the talk of campaigning, financing, and fundraising, he's actually taking this pretty seriously.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

He does not want to get it wrong.

But Emily, compare and contrast, do you remember the day we sat and did a previous podcast and Rudy Giuliani has got hair dye running down his face and he has surrounded by lawyers who are absolute, I think the technical term is whack jobs, who are there trying to guide him.

And it is crazy.

It's into crazy.

There's nothing wacky about the Four Seasons Gardening Landscape place where they actually held it.

I mean, it was all utterly bonkers.

Now Donald Trump is this time round trying to project a different image that he is taking it seriously, but he is not cowed that this is the due process.

But on truth social, you know, after he got kicked off of Twitter, he set up his own platform.

On truth social, there have been crazy stuff been posted by him about how the judge is biased and I won't get a fair trial on how this is all a political witch hunt and images that his lawyers have persuaded him to take down.

And I think what's going to be fascinating, which will be tomorrow's morning's podcast that we were just talking about, is how does Donald Trump conduct himself when he's at the news conference at Mar-a-Lago?

Because Donald Trump, as we know, shoots from the hip.

And I think it's really interesting that while we're talking about how Donald Trump comports himself to listen to his former attorney general, Bill Barr, talking about how if Donald Trump as the defendant in a trial, if he is going to take the stand, that would be a hugely precarious move.

Generally, I think it's a bad idea to go on the stand and I think it's particularly a bad idea for Trump because he lacks all self-control and it'd be very difficult to prepare him and keep him testifying in a prudent fashion.

Just on that, a very, very close friend of mine in Washington, a corporate lawyer, she deposed Donald Trump in a case when he was opening Trump Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue and there was a row over one of the chefs who didn't want to set up his bespoke restaurant in the place that Trump was suing.

And she was acting for the chef.

Deposes Trump, he did not stop talking.

He ignored the advice of his lawyers and she was just sitting there rubbing her hands underneath the table saying, thank you, you have just completely compromised your own case.

And sure enough, they won because Donald Trump couldn't keep his mouth shut.

I think that's the thing that is going to be absolutely freaking out his legal team today.

And there has been some talk of whether a judge would end up putting a gagging order on Trump, stopping him from talking about the stuff that was going on the court.

I don't think that's going to happen because I think they value the First Amendment, that right to free speech, too much.

But I do think it's going to be interesting to watch his body language and his comportment because the whole thing will start a few hours before the arraignment, if you like, the arrest, the appearance in court.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

And it will start at about 11 o'clock New York time when he has to make his way to the Lower Manhattan District Court.

And what he does there is, I think he gets taken up to, I understood, I heard, the seventh floor, first of all, and there is the process.

He has to give his fingerprints there.

He has to actually meet with the district attorney's office and he will, we think, then be read constitutional rights.

And then the charges will be unsealed and then he's read those.

And this process is absolutely essential because there can never be this presumption of guilt or presumption of a political trial.

So the whole process will be absolutely watertight.

There's been a lot of chat about whether he'll have a mugshot taken and, you know, we've heard, oh, you know, he's going to put it on his mugs and he's going to put it on sweatshirts and the hoodies will be sold at the campaign launches.

But think about what a mugshot is actually used for.

First of all, it's used in the case of a fugitive, right?

And the likelihood of Donald Trump suddenly escaping and not being recognizable in the entire world is so off and so unlikely that it would be, I think, pretty surprising if a mugshot was done or certainly released.

I don't think we will ever get to see that in the court proceedings.

Well, I was in New York when his chief financial officer from the Trump Organization, Alan Weisselberg, was charged and he was cuffed.

He was handcuffed as he did what's called the perp walk.

Now, how can you possibly justify the idea that you're going to cuff Donald Trump when he's probably got 40 secret service agents around him?

He ain't going nowhere.

He's not going to make a run for it.

So I think that the courts as well have to be acutely sensitive.

It's not just about how Donald Trump comports himself.

It's about how the New York legal system comports itself.

Because if they screw it up, then they feed into all the poll evidence that suggests that a huge majority of Republicans think this is a political stitch up.

I mean, just imagine that court scene.

We won't, sadly, get to see it with cameras or with video footage because we know that the judge, Juan Machan, won't be allowing cameras or video or anything inside the courtroom.

He will allow some press to have photos outside.

But just imagine you've got a former president in the courtroom and his entire secret service behind him.

It's sort of unimaginable.

And just a word about the judge, because obviously we've heard from Trump already saying, he hates me.

It's a witch hunt.

There's no way I'm going to get a fair trial.

This guy is quite interesting.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

Columbian born originally worked his way through law school, washing dishes and waiting tables just to pay the bills, to get to where he was.

But his lawyers, Trump's lawyers, are saying, we trust this guy.

He's absolutely fair.

They're not going to make the mistake of getting on the wrong side of the judge before they've even started.

Because the lawyers know full well that this is a legal battle and Donald Trump sees things as a political and PR battle and the lawyers are trying to prevail upon him.

This is serious.

In a moment, we'll be talking about how strong this case is and what it might say about future legal jeopardy.

That's all coming up.

This is the news agents.

If you were hoping for a quiet few days in you this week, probably not going to happen.

The security is unbelievable given today's events, 37,000 police officers are on duty.

The area around Trump Tower is completely sealed off.

But that is as nothing compared to lower Manhattan, where there are crush barriers around four blocks to stop crowds gathering.

There are going to be demonstrations, but so far from what we've seen, what is remarkable about them is just how unremarkable they seem in the sense that the crowds are tiny.

Not many people have turned up, but we know Donald Trump can pull a crowd.

And so there has been a warning to his supporters to behave themselves if they do want to protest.

This is the New York Mayor, Eric Adams.

While there may be some rabble rousers thinking about coming to our city tomorrow, a message is clear and simple, control yourselves.

New York City is our home, not a playground for your misplaced anger.

Now far be it from us to call anyone specifically a rabble rouser, and I'm sure Eric Adams didn't have anyone particularly in mind.

I can't think that you're going to go with this.

It just so happens, coincidentally, that one of Trump's staunchest supporters, Marjorie Taylor Green, the congresswoman from Georgia's 14th district, she who spoke not long ago of a Rothschild conspiracy of Jewish space-laves as dominating the earth, amongst other things. She anyway, has set up camp, a sort of supporter's camp, in a park just opposite the Manhattan Court.

And she is hoping to, we think, attract a crowd of people who are coming from all over to show their vocal support for the former president.

This is what she said just a couple of days ago when she was speaking at a fundraiser.

I'm also going to tell you right now, Trump will win, and he will beat Alvin Bragg, and he will beat the left in every single punch they throw at him.

And I want you to know that, yes, and I'll tell you why, they are nothing but a bunch of liars.

Just like Joe Biden is a liar, so is this Alvin Bragg.

So Alvin Bragg, who she is banging on about there, is the district attorney for New York who has brought the charges.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

And of course, as Emily was explaining, Donald Trump will be up before the judge, not the district attorney, when he appears for his arraignment in a few hours time.

You can also hear her saying that Trump will beat the rap, he's going to win, and Alvin Bragg is going to lose this, and they're all a bunch of liars, and there's nothing to see here at all.

That's her analysis of the legal case, even though we don't quite know what the detail of it is yet.

Yeah, I mean, we still to see the charges, but I do think it's right to recognise that this could be a really big legal hurdle for Alvin Bragg.

I mean, he's definitely taken it on the nose here.

And he has got to try and find a way of saying a business records forgery case, which this is all really related to.

It's about a business, you know, impropriety has then become something that is not just a misdemeanor, but a felony, a serious criminal charge, a crime.

And basically he's taking Trump's business accounts and kind of really putting it on steroids and making it into a campaign finance violation charge.

And one of the problems, just to take you through the difficulty is federal law, Trump's state law.

And this case has already been through federal law.

They decided not to pursue this.

The last time when Michael Cohen was incarcerated, Trump's former lawyer, they didn't take Trump then.

And so Trump's team could turn around and say, you had the chance to do this.

You had the chance, Fed's investigated this.

You had the chance to bring this in when it was potentially a federal crime.

You can't just turn this into a state crime and expect to get away with it.

So I think there will be a really interesting moment when you'll want the legal brains on this to say, has Alvin Bragg managed to make the case convincingly?

Well, the phrase you keep hearing used is that Alvin Bragg has overreached.

He has overreached what he can do with this.

Now we haven't seen the detail of the charges yet.

And so what you could expect the Trump legal team to do is to put a motion for dismissal that the case is just abandoned, that it doesn't go any further on constitutional grounds that you've just set out.

If that happens, I was hearing from someone at the weekend, and I thought what they said was fascinating, who said, and this is the sunny upside for Donald Trump, that if this case founders, then it will give Donald Trump antibodies in future legal cases that could be brought.

Just as we kind of talk about, you catch COVID the first time around and it gives you antibodies and makes you more resistant should something else come along.

And that is the argument that the Trump people see as a potential upside from all of this, that Bragg has gone too soon, too quick, doesn't have the legal case.

If one case falls, it will be so much easier in Trump land to say any other subsequent case, this is just more of the political witch hunt and take people away from the detail

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

of what may be coming.

Okay.

So you've done the sunny upside, I'm going to do the rainy downside for Trump's team, which is that we know there are other investigations, other inquiries going on at the moment.

And the special counsel, Jack Smith, is right now looking at what happened to those secret documents, those government documents that were stashed in Mar-a-Lago.

And the thing he's looking at right now is obstruction.

Is the government, this current government, being misled by Trump's lawyers?

You'll remember what happened there.

They said, have you got the documents?

Trump said, no, we haven't.

Or rather, Trump's lawyer said, no, we haven't.

Then they found a whole stash of documents.

So if special counsel Jack Smith wants to pursue this as a case of obstruction, it is possible that he could also indict and it is possible that he could actually bring a trial on that charge before this one ever gets off the ground.

So there is a lot of stuff going on.

Yes, as Omar and the wire said, when you come for the king, you best not miss.

So they have to get this right and they have to get this watertight.

But if they do, it may just lead to other indictments on other charges, which are, let's say, substantially grander, and bigger, and fundamentally carry more weight with the public.

Listen, what you've just said about the documents, top secret documents that were being kept at Mar-a-Lago, the Washington Post has got some really important reporting on that today, talking about how Donald Trump's valet has testified that the former president ordered him to move boxes, an account corroborated by surveillance footage, and that that is completely of a different order.

If you had federal government and the FBI saying, we need those documents back and Donald Trump is ordering people to move them and hide them.

And also the suggestion as well that, I mean, we can talk a lot about Trump's lawyers and Donald Trump, my God, has he had some lawyers in his time.

But one of the lawyers involved in this particular case was also told to go and lie to the authorities allegedly.

And that has sacrificed client privilege so that that lawyer has had to testify as well.

So Donald Trump faces a whole bucket of potential serious trouble on that investigation.

And of course, our favorite one, the 511,780 votes in Georgia.

Yeah.

I mean, there is a sense where you've just mended one crack in the wall and there's another crack in another bit of wall and then there's another crack in the wall behind you.

It's possible that they all come tumbling down or it's possible that actually the stars align and they all lead to the same place.

Now we're going to have a lot more from Trump himself.

He's the one person you haven't heard from in this episode.

And that's because, frankly, we haven't heard from him at all over the last 24 hours.

It's been absolute silence.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

But we have been looking a little bit at the polling since the indictment. Well some of the polling is very much as you would expect in hyperpolarized America. So a CNN poll found that 94% of Democrats think it's right that an indictment is being brought against the president. Only 6% think it's wrong. And you can more or less flip those figures for Republicans. So I think it's like 21% of Republicans think it is justified, 79% think it isn't. One overall poll, and polling in America has not got the greatest track record for accuracy, says that, but among all Americans, 60% think it is fair that an indictment proceed against him. There's also the question of money. Because whenever you're looking at polling or popularity or campaigning, you are never far from looking at money in America. And one of the things that we've heard a lot about over the last 48, what comes after that? 72? That's the one. Hours. Is how much money Trump has raised? Should we just count it in days? After two days comes three days. Three days, four days. Stop talking about hours. It makes you sound weird. Anyway, he's raised a lot of money. We know Trump raised something like \$4 million or \$7 million between the indictment and the next two or three days. And everyone was flashing this around as a really massive signal that he was still top of the pops until I read this article that showed actually Biden in the month of August raised nearly \$400 million. So put that in context. It is quite easy, it seems, for American presidents or former presidents to raise a lot of millions very quickly. Don't get too carried away on the sums that Trump has just raised. Because in the grand scheme of things, we've seen bigger. And across America, there is no shortage of support for Donald Trump. I mean, people who think that his popularity has waned, it's gone down a bit. But what is remarkable is just how rock solid among a sizable chunk of America, Donald Trump is still seen as the saviour, the new messiah, the hope for the country and everything about it. And outside Mar-a-Lago, you find plenty of rich characters who want to extol the virtues of their man. Donald Trump already knows, I love him, I'll give my life for him because he will give his life to us.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

Because you know how we know?

Because he is.

That's right.

He's doing it right now.

People who were up all night on election night all saw those numbers change right in front of our eyes.

Do you really think that these charges are going to go through?

Do you really think that they're going to take President Trump out of the running for president because of some old horse-based story?

No.

I don't believe that for a second.

No, I'm going to vote for President Trump.

He is going to run and nothing's going to stop him from doing that.

So what have we learned from that, that Trump's base really love him?

We knew that.

I guess the question is, how big that base now is?

How big is the Trump Rump?

Because if the base got two votes each, yeah, they love him even more than they did.

The question is, what is all this noise and all this chaos?

What is that doing to most, let's say, normal Americans?

What are they feeling now about this man as they head into the 2024 presidential year?

All that to come.

This is the news agents.

Welcome back.

So we've tried to give you a bit of a timeline on the way we think today unfolds.

So after he's been read his constitutional rights, there will be the appearance before the judge where he will be charged.

And it's not the trial, of course.

The trial would have to come a lot further down the road, but Donald Trump will be charged and it's a pretty straightforward matter in and out of court in 10 or 15 minutes.

And then we think he's getting back in his motorcade with his Secret Service squad out to LaGuardia Airport on the suburbs of New York on the plane back to Mar-a-Lago into the ballroom at Mar-a-Lago where he is going to give a press conference.

Now the earliest we reckon that will be UK time is about one o'clock in the morning, which is when I am next going to see Emily Maitlis because we're coming back in to watch that news conference and bring you a news agent special edition for breakfast time tomorrow.

Yeah, with our own motor cavalcade, which will be roaring across London, stopping the red lights.

Blues and twos.

No red lights.

We're just going to go sweeping you.

Go back into the studio and be here for you when you wake up.

See you then.

Bye-bye.

## [Transcript] The News Agents / The People v Donald Trump - Part 1

Bye.

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