

# [***The Latest | Defense expects cross-examination of Cohen to last through Thursday, transcript shows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1D-J311-DYMD-60KP-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

May 14, 2024 Tuesday 9:58 PM GMT

Copyright 2024 Associated Press All Rights Reserved

**Section:** DOMESTIC NEWS; POLITICAL NEWS; STATE AND REGIONAL

**Length:** 4858 words

**Dateline:** NEW YORK

**Body**

NEW YORK — [*Donald Trump’s*](https://apnews.com/hub/donald-trump) fixer-turned-foe [*returned to the witness stand*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-trial-cohen-hush-money-stormy-daniels-735aadfd1ce015e05ba955c203a96f1b) and could face a bruising round of questioning from the former president’s lawyers.

[*Michael Cohen*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-trial-michael-cohen-witness-091b0e50af2738eb261f395e9d658505) 's testimony this week has linked Trump to [*all aspects of a hush money scheme*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-trial-stormy-daniels-michael-cohen-hush-money-f96dd7289cf952145cdd6737b29add3d) that prosecutors say was aimed at stifling stories that threatened his 2016 campaign. He's the prosecution’s star witness.

And Trump’s lawyers began their cross-examination of Cohen on Tuesday afternoon.

Cohen placed Trump at the center of the hush money scheme, saying he had promised to reimburse money the lawyer had fronted for the payments and was constantly apprised of the behind-the-scenes efforts to bury stories feared to be harmful to the campaign.

Text messages, audio recordings, notes and more have all been introduced or shown to jurors [*in recent weeks*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-trial-hush-money-stormy-daniels-cohen-ddef05884265e4d6217b55a89304b878) to illustrate what prosecutors say was a scheme to illegally influence the election that year. And sometimes dramatic testimony from witnesses that included [*former National Enquirer publisher David Pecker*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-national-enquirer-catch-kill-57f0c462af437fb07967a041b6f66022), ex-Trump staffers and [*porn actor Stormy Daniels*](https://apnews.com/article/stormy-daniels-donald-trump-trial-takeaways-f34f094124fc7ec455d6a73cbb6eec21) added to the intrigue.

The trial was in its 17th day.

Trump has [*pleaded not guilty*](https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-arraignment-hush-money-81225510ef7638494852816878f612f0) to 34 felony counts.

The case is the first-ever criminal trial of a former U.S. president and the [*first of four prosecutions of Trump*](https://apnews.com/projects/trump-investigations-civil-criminal-tracker/) to reach a jury.

Currently:

— Speaker [*Mike Johnson’s appearance*](https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-speaker-mike-johnson-court-09aef3de395fa77843f2600f40da6ac3) is a remarkable moment

— Michael Cohen: [*A challenging star witness*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-trial-michael-cohen-witness-091b0e50af2738eb261f395e9d658505) in Trump’s hush money trial

— What to know about [*Cohen’s pivotal testimony*](https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-michael-cohen-hush-money-trial-c8b39c498f354cb8b2b67dc429bdc456)

— Trump hush money case: A timeline of [*key events*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-michael-cohen-stormy-mcdougal-6e73d8e03fc749ec123ac833e0e0f6f2)

— Key players: Who’s who at Trump’s [*hush money criminal trial*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-criminal-trial-hush-money-stormy-daniels-5fdc819697a76536ed83cbf28d4a523c)

Here's the latest:

**DEFENSE EXPECTS CROSS-EXAMINATION OF COHEN TO LAST THROUGH THURSDAY, TRANSCRIPT SHOWS**

Prosecutor Joshua Steinglass told Judge Juan M. Merchan that it’s “highly likely” the defense will be able to start calling witnesses on Thursday in former President Donald Trump's hush money trial, according to a transcript of discussions between the judge and lawyers.

But Trump lawyer Todd Blanche said he expects the defense’s cross-examination of Michael Cohen to continue until the end of the day Thursday and that they won’t start calling witnesses until next week — if they do at all. In addition, the prosecution could still call rebuttal witnesses once the defense case is finished.

The trial does not take place on Wednesdays and is also off this Friday so Trump can attend his son Barron’s high school graduation.

**JUDGE CHIDES TRUMP'S LAWYER: ‘DON'T MAKE IT ABOUT YOURSELF’**

Judge Juan M. Merchan was unnerved by the blistering start to Michael Cohen’s cross-examination, chiding Trump lawyer Todd Blanche at a sidebar for quizzing the witness about recent social media posts he’d made about the former president’s legal team.

“Why are you making this about yourself?” Merchan asked, according to a transcript, after Blanche confronted Cohen about an April 23 TikTok post in which he referred to the attorney as a “Crying little (expletive).”

“I’m not making it about myself, your honor,” Blanche said at the sidebar, which was held at the judge’s bench out of earshot of jurors and reporters.

“I have a right to show this witness’s bias, and he has expressed bias about the lawyers just because of who he represents,” Blanche continued.

Assistant District Attorney Susan Hoffinger countered that Cohen’s comments about Trump’s lawyers were irrelevant and inadmissible to showing bias — that only remarks about Trump himself could be used for that purpose.

“It doesn’t matter if he has bias towards you; it doesn’t matter,” Merchan told Blanche. “The issue is whether he has bias towards the defendant."

For his part, Cohen had answered Blanche’s question before Hoffinger interrupted with an objection and, moments later, Merchan summoned the lawyers to the bench. Cohen's response: “Sounds like something I would say.”

**TRUMP SAYS TRIAL IS ‘GOING VERY WELL’ AS HE LEAVES COURT FOR THE DAY**

Former President Donald Trump said he thinks he had a “very, very good day” as he walked out of court Tuesday afternoon after it adjourned for the day in the fourth week of his hush money trial in New York.

“The trial is going very well,” Trump told reporters, flanked by a large group that included his attorneys and aides.

Trump pointed to recent polling as well as his massive rally in New Jersey over the weekend as evidence that the hearing was doing little to blunt his standing in the race.

“Voters are getting it,” he said, adding: “I think we’re exposing this scam for what it is”

Trump once again relied on the words of others to lace into the case, reading off quotes from supporters, including several who joined him at the courthouse Tuesday.

He also continued to complain about the gag order that bars him from attacking witnesses, jurors and others.

“I am not allowed to talk about big portions of my case,” he railed.

**DEFENSE QUESTIONS COHEN'S MOTIVATIONS FOR COOPERATING WITH PROSECUTORS**

Defense attorney Todd Blanche is attempting to portray Michael Cohen as a Donald Trump-obsessed loyalist who, spurned by his ex-boss, turned on Trump and attempted to parlay his insider knowledge into a reduced prison sentence for his own crimes.

Blanche pressed Cohen about discussions he had with Manhattan district attorney’s prosecutors in August 2019 when they visited him at a federal prison camp in Otisville, New York, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) from New York City. Early in the conversation, about three months into his prison stint, Cohen asked the prosecutors how he would benefit from cooperating with them, Blanche told the witness.

He asked Cohen if his lawyer asked a judge to give him a reduced sentence in exchange for his cooperation with the special counsel’s office investigating Trump and the Manhattan district attorney’s office, and Cohen said yes.

Cohen’s application for a reduced sentence was denied, but he was eventually released to home confinement because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cohen conceded that after reconnecting with the Manhattan district attorney’s office in early 2021, he wanted the prosecutors’ office to publicly acknowledge that he was cooperating — again in hopes of getting part of his sentence reduced.

But, as has been his approach throughout the early stages of cross-examination, Cohen wasn’t direct in his response. Asked by Trump lawyer Todd Blanche if that was his desire, Cohen said: “I would say so, yes.”

Cohen explained that he was looking for a reduction of the home confinement portion of his sentence, which ran until November 2021. He said he wanted the reduction not only as a reward for his cooperation, but also because he thought he was entitled to a year off from credits he racked up for working and completing programs in federal prison.

Cohen suggested the federal Bureau of Prisons may have miscalculated his sentence. He remains under court supervision until November.

**DEFENSE QUESTIONS COHEN ON PAST PRAISE FOR TRUMP**

Todd Blanche, an attorney for Donald Trump in his hush money trial, questioned the former president's ex-fixer Michael Cohen on when the devotion he had to Trump began declining.

Cohen said it was around the time he gave an interview to ABC News anchor George Stephanapolous in July 2018 — about two months before he pleaded guilty to federal charges. In the interview, conducted off-camera, Cohen suggested his loyalty to Trump had waned. He told Stephanapolous: “My wife, my daughter and my son have my first loyalty and always will. I put family and country first.”

Cohen struck a similar sentiment Tuesday, testifying that his family told him to reconsider his loyalty to Trump after the FBI raided his property in April 2018. He says he came away from the conversation thinking “that it was about time to listen to them."

Blanche focused his questions on the lavish praise Cohen had for Trump when he served as his personal fixer.

Blanche asked Cohen if he had admired Trump and saw himself in him, and whether he saw the businessman as an ambitious, hardworking and innovative man. Cohen affirmed.

Blanche then asked Cohen if he had said in his 2020 memoir “Disloyal” that he was “obsessed” with Trump. Cohen said he couldn’t recall having said that.

The defense attorney tried to get Cohen to square his over-the-top praise for his former boss with his stance now. As he continued to press, Cohen appeared at times to get irritated with an edge in his voice, saying several times of his past comments: “That’s how I felt.”

“At the time I was knee-deep into the cult of Donald Trump,” Cohen said at one point.

**COHEN GIVING MEASURED ANSWERS UNDER CROSS-EXAMINATION**

Under cross-examination, former Donald Trump attorney and fixer Michael Cohen carefully hedged many of his answers, equivocating in ways that marked a contrast from his more voluble testimony under questioning from a prosecutor.

When Trump attorney Todd Blanche asked Tuesday afternoon whether Cohen had said on his podcast that he wanted to see Trump convicted, Cohen answered, “Yes, probably.”

Blanche asked him why, if he wants Trump convicted, would he answer with the word “probably.” Cohen said it was because he was not exactly sure of the words he used.

On another occasion when Blanche asked if he wants to see Trump convicted, Cohen hedged again: “I would like to see accountability. It’s not for me. It’s for the jury and this court.”

Blanche pressed him: “I’m just asking you, yes or no: Do you want to see President Trump get convicted in this case?”

“Sure,” Cohen replied.

**COHEN'S CROSS-EXAMINATION GETS OFF TO A TENSE START**

The cross-examination of Michael Cohen got off to a predictably tense start when Todd Blanche, an attorney for former President Donald Trump, noted that though he and Cohen had never met before, that didn’t stop Cohen from going on TikTok last month, after the trial had begun, and referring to him as a “crying little (expletive).”

Cohen responded: “Sounds like something I would say,” prompting laughter in the courtroom.

After a prosecutor’s objection, the judge summoned the attorneys to the bench and the entire question was stricken.

Cohen's cross-examination was proceeding in stop-and-start fashion thanks in part to frequent objections from the prosecution team.

**COHEN WILL BE LAST WITNESS CALLED BY THE PROSECUTION**

Before court resumed for the day, prosecutor Joshua Steinglass told the judge that Donald Trump's former laywer, Michael Cohen, would be the prosecution’s last witness.

Steinglass made the disclosure during a sidebar conversation out of earshot of reporters but recorded in the official transcript.

[*Trump’s*](https://apnews.com/hub/donald-trump) fixer-turned-foe returned to the witness stand Tuesday, testifying in detail about how the former president was linked to [*all aspects of the hush money scheme*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-trial-stormy-daniels-michael-cohen-hush-money-f96dd7289cf952145cdd6737b29add3d) prosecutors say was an illegal effort to purchase and then bury stories that threatened his 2016 presidential campaign.

Cohen told jurors he lied to Congress during an investigation into potential ties between Russia and the 2016 Trump campaign to protect Trump. He also described for jurors the April 2018 raid by law enforcement on his apartment, law firm, a hotel room where he stayed and a bank where he stashed valuables.

**COHEN'S LIFE AFTER PRISON AND DISBARMENT**

Donald Trump's lawyers will get a chance Tuesday to question his former lawyer [*Michael Cohen*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-trial-michael-cohen-witness-091b0e50af2738eb261f395e9d658505) on cross-examination in the ex-president's criminal hush money trial following a lunch break.

Before he concluded his initial testimony prior to the break, Cohen shared how he makes money now that he has served prison time and been disbarred.

Cohen said he’s working now predominantly in “media and entertainment” — specifically on two podcasts on which he is frequently critical of Trump.

Cohen tried to downplay his shows’ focus on Trump, testifying that “Mea Culpa” and another one he hosts on the liberal MeidasTouch network talked about the “news of the day.”

“Among other topics, do you frequently discuss Mr. Trump?” prosecutor Susan Hoffinger asked.

“I do,” he said, his eyes shifting around.

Hoffinger also asked Cohen about two books he wrote: “Disloyal,” which he described as a memoir he wrote in prison, and “Revenge,” which he said was about the “weaponization” of the Justice Department against a critic of the president, referring to himself.

Cohen also testified having Stormy Daniels, the woman at the center of the hush money case, on a podcast at one point.

“I thought it would be a good time to speak to her and to ‘Mea Culpa,’ and to apologize,” he testified.

Cohen said it was the first time he spoke with Daniels. He invited her on a podcast a second time later on.

**PROSECUTORS WRAP DIRECT EXAMINATION OF COHEN**

Prosecutors in Donald Trump's hush money trial wrapped their direct examination of his former lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen before a lunch break Tuesday.

Cohen testified that he regretted some of the things he did for Trump, and the loyalty he showed the former president for so long. He said he and his family have paid a dire price.

“I regret doing things for him that I should not have," Cohen said. "Lying. Bullying people to effectuate a goal. I don’t regret working for the Trump Organization. As I expressed before, I had some very interesting, great times.

“But to keep the loyalty and to do the things that he had asked me to do, it violated my moral compass, and I suffered the penalty, as has my family.”

Minutes earlier, a New York appeals court upheld a gag order barring Trump from making statements against certain people connected to his trial. He did not stop to answer a question about the ruling as he left the courtroom for lunch, offering only a fist pump as he walked away.

**COURT UPHOLDS GAG ORDER AGAINST TRUMP**

A New York appeals court on Tuesday upheld a gag order that bars Donald Trump from making statements against certain people connected to his criminal hush money trial, including witnesses and the judge's daughter.

The court found that Judge Juan M. Merchan “properly determined” that Trump’s public statements “posed a significant threat to the integrity of the testimony of witnesses and potential witnesses."

Trump had asked the state’s intermediate appeals court to lift or modify the gag order, which bars him from commenting publicly about jurors, witnesses and others connected to the case, including the judge’s family and prosecutors other than District Attorney Alvin Bragg.

A message seeking comment was left with a lawyer for Trump.

Specifically, according to the ruling, Trump challenged restrictions on his ability to comment about Matthew Colangelo, a former Justice Department official who is a part of the prosecution team, and Merchan’s daughter, the head of a consulting firm that has worked for Trump’s rival Joe Biden and other Democratic candidates.

At an emergency hearing last month, just days before the trial started, Trump’s lawyers argued the gag order is an unconstitutional curb on the presumptive Republican nominee’s free speech rights while he’s campaigning for president and fighting criminal charges.

**COHEN DESCRIBES DECISION TO TURN AGAINST TRUMP**

Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen described at the ex-president's hush money trial Tuesday how his family persuaded him to finally [*turn against Trump*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-trial-michael-cohen-witness-091b0e50af2738eb261f395e9d658505) after the FBI raided his office, apartment and hotel room in April 2018.

Amid conversations with lawyers, including one connected to Trump loyalist Rudy Giuliani, Cohen said his wife and two children made him see how sticking by Trump was detrimental.

“My family, my wife, my daughter, my son, all said to me, 'Why are you holding onto this loyalty? What are you doing? We’re supposed to be your first loyalty,” Cohen testified.

Cohen says he came away from the conversation thinking “that it was about time to listen to them” and show loyalty “to my wife, my son, my daughter and my country.”

Cohen pleaded guilty in August 2018 to federal charges involving the hush money payment to Stormy Daniels and other, unrelated crimes and served time in federal prison. Trump bashed him on social media, writing: “If anyone is looking for a good lawyer I would strongly suggest that you don’t retain the services of Michael Cohen!”

Cohen testified that the tweet helped make him feel abandoned by Trump and his associates.

“It caused a lot of angst, anxiety,” Cohen testified.

**COHEN RECOUNTS CODE TO REFER TO TRUMP**

Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen recounted at the ex-president's hush money trial Tuesday outreach he received from a New York attorney and code they used to communicate about Trump.

The questioning from prosecutors about Cohen's interaction with [*Robert Costello*](https://apnews.com/article/6dea78932afd45be986bc90747358d8d) appeared designed to show jurors the efforts the Trump orbit took to try to keep Cohen from cooperating in the case and to lay the groundwork for a potential pardon.

Costello identified himself as a close friend and former co-worker of lawyer and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, a “relationship that could be very beneficial to you,” Cohen recalled.

Cohen described a backchannel for him to communicate with Trump via Costello, who would communicate with Giuliani, who would relay information to Trump. Some emails between Cohen and Costello shown to jurors contained what appeared to be disguised references to Giuliani and Trump, with a wink and a nod to the men as “my friend” and “his client.”

“It’s all back channel, sort of ‘I-Spy’-ish,” Cohen said. “Never mentioning President Trump. Just using code word.”

**JURORS SEE TRUMP TWEETS PRAISING COHEN**

Shortly before Donald Trump's hush money trial took a break Tuesday, jurors saw tweets from Trump in April 2018 in which he praised his lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen and, prosecutors suggested, pressured him to remain loyal.

“Mr. Trump did not want me to cooperate with government and certainly not to provide information or flip,” Cohen testified.

Trump defended Cohen in the tweets as “a fine person with a wonderful family” and said, “Most people will flip if the government lets them out of trouble, even if it means lying or making up stories. Sorry, I don’t see Michael doing that.”

Cohen testified that he believed the message was meant for him. Cohen summed up the message he felt Trump was sending him in the tweets as: “Don’t flip.”

Trump exited the courtroom without stopping to speak with reporters but flashed a thumbs up as he walked through a courthouse door.

**COHEN: ‘IT WAS MR. DONALD J. TRUMP HIMSELF’**

Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen testified Tuesday that a February 2018 statement he released about a hush money payment to Stormy Daniels was purposely misleading.

The statement declared, “Neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction." Cohen says it was “a true statement but it’s deceptive. It’s misleading.”

Cohen said it was because it was neither the Trump Organization nor the campaign that was a part of the transaction, but the revocable trust.

“It was Mr. Donald J. Trump himself,” Cohen said.

He said he made the misleading statement “in order to protect Mr. Trump, to stay on message.”

**COHEN TESTIFIES TO CRAFTING DANIELS' HUSH MONEY DENIAL**

After The Wall Street Journal reported in 2018 that Donald Trump's former lawyer [*Michael Cohen*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-trial-michael-cohen-witness-091b0e50af2738eb261f395e9d658505) had arranged a $130,000 hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels, Cohen testified Tuesday that he felt a second, official statement from Daniels would put an end to the story once and for all.

Cohen testified at Trump's trial that he’d heard Daniels was planning to go on Jimmy Kimmel’s late-night show and contacted Keith Davidson, the lawyer who represented Daniels in the hush money deal, about issuing a statement.

The day of Daniels’ appearance, she issued a statement again denying a sexual encounter with Trump and reiterating that she had not been paid “hush money” to deny the claim.

Cohen testified that he knew the statement was false because he had helped craft it, and that he knew the payment had been made because he had paid it.

Throughout Cohen’s testimony Tuesday, Trump reclined back in his chair with his eyes closed and his head tilted to the side.

**COHEN: WORK PICKED UP AFTER DANIELS WENT PUBLIC**

Donald Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen said on the witness stand Tuesday at the former president’s hush money trial that he did only “minimal” work for Trump in 2017 and didn’t send an invoice because it wasn’t enough to require payment.

The case concerned [*a lawsuit against*](https://apnews.com/arts-and-entertainment-general-news-c7acf79f0beb2f0df1ef53a7a5eea544) Trump, later dropped, from Summer Zervos, a former contestant on Trump's reality show “The Apprentice,” who alleged she’d been defamed. But he said work for Trump picked up in 2018. That was after porn actor Stormy Daniels went public about her claims of a sexual encounter with Trump.

“As as result of the Stormy Daniels matter and her electing to go public, Mr. Trump wanted an action to be filed" for breach of a nondisclosure agreement, Cohen said.

Cohen said he was contacted by Trump and son Eric Trump about how to go forward. Eric Trump was running day-to-day operations at the Trump Organization while his father was in the White House. Again, though, Cohen said he did not bill for the work.

Cohen earlier admitted on the stand that he lied to Congress during an investigation into potential ties between Russia and the 2016 Trump campaign.

Prosecutor Susan Hoffinger appeared to be trying to take the sting out of an expected cross-examination likely to delve in detail into Cohen’s past lies, but also to paint Cohen to the jury as a loyalist whose crimes were committed on Trump's behalf.

**SPEAKER JOHNSON SLAMS TRIAL OUTSIDE COURT**

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson called former President Donald Trump's hush money trial a “sham” Tuesday as he addressed reporters outside the courthouse while Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen continued testifying for the prosecution.

With Trump barred by gag order from attacking witnesses and the judge’s family, Johnson did the dirty work for him. He slammed Cohen, the prosecution’s star witness, as “a man who is clearly on a mission for personal revenge” and said he “has trouble with the truth.”

Johnson also decried Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and other court officials as partisans.

“I came here again today on my own to support President Trump because I am one of hundreds of millions of people and one citizen who is deeply concerned about this,” he said.

**TRUMP SIGNED THE CHECKS, COHEN TESTIFIES**

Prosecutor Susan Hoffinger talked Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen through the reimbursement process in the former president's hush money trial Tuesday.

Her method was an attempt to show jurors what prosecutors say was a month-by-month deception to mask the true purpose of the payments.

Cohen repeatedly read through the description on each check stub, and Hoffinger repeatedly asked him if the description on the check was false, which he affirmed. She then asked him if he recognized the thick, slashing signature on the check.

“Whose signature is it?” Hoffinger asked repeatedly.

“Donald J. Trump,” Cohen said each time.

As Cohen testified, Trump leaned back in his chair with his eyes closed, sitting extremely still.

**COHEN SAYS AN INVOICE WAS FALSE**

Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen testified Tuesday in the ex-president's hush money trial that an invoice for “services rendered” was a false record.

Jurors were shown 2017 correspondence between Cohen and Jeffrey McConney, the Trump Organization [*controller at the time*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-fraud-lawsuit-trial-new-york-jeffrey-mcconney-19d1fc9022d1eebc136e4a7e48c8ed14) who testified earlier in the trial as a prosecution witness.

In one email, dated Feb. 14, 2017, with the subject line “$$,” Cohen asked McConney to have monthly checks for January and February made payable to him. McConney then asked for invoices so he could have the checks cut.

The invoices said for “services rendered” for January and February, but Cohen said that it was not a truthful statement that there had been “services rendered” for those months or that he had been working on a retainer fee.

“Was this invoice a false record?” asked prosecutor Susan Hoffinger.

“Yes, ma’am,” Cohen responded.

**COHEN DESCRIBES OVAL OFFICE DISCUSSION**

Returning to the witness stand Tuesday, Michael Cohen testified that he discussed the hush money repayment plan with Donald Trump in the Oval Office when he visited the White House in February 2017.

“I was sitting with President Trump and he asked me if I was OK,” Cohen told jurors. “He asked me if I needed money, and I said, ‘All good,’ because I can get a check.”

Cohen testified that Trump then told him, “OK, make sure you deal with Allen,” a reference to then-Trump Organization Chief Financial Officer Allen Weisselberg, and that a check for his January and February payments was forthcoming.

Under Cohen’s reimbursement arrangement, he was paid $35,000 per month for 12 months, for a total of $420,000.

During the same White House visit, Cohen posed for a picture at the lectern in the press briefing room. The photo, extracted by prosecutors from Cohen’s iPhone, was shown in court.

**QUESTIONING OF COHEN RESUMES**

Michael Cohen went under questioning again as former President Donald Trump's hush money trial resumed Tuesday.

Prosecutor Susan Hoffinger resumed her questioning shortly after Cohen entered court. Trump didn’t appear to react to Cohen’s entrance. Instead, he focused on a piece of paper in his hand, which he raised up and showed to his attorney Todd Blanche with a scowl as Cohen walked by.

Before the jury and Cohen arrived in the courtroom, a sidebar conference was held with the judge at the request of prosecutor Joshua Steinglass. The subject was not clear.

During the sidebar, Trump had an extended conversation with his attorney Emil Bove, occasionally gesturing with his hand or thumb.

Trump, flanked by supporters including the speaker of the House and several potential vice presidential picks, railed against the trial once again before entering the courthouse.

Trump, who is barred by gag order from going after witnesses, jurors and the family members of court officials, quoted a litany of conservative commentators’ criticism of the case.

Among those in the courtroom with Trump were former presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, one of Trump's sons, Eric, and daughter-in-law Lara.

**TRUMP ENTERS COURT; SPEAKER JOHNSON TO ADDRESS ‘SHAM’**

Former President Donald Trump walked into court just before 9 a.m. Tuesday for another day of testimony from his fixer-turned-foe, [*Michael Cohen.*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-hush-money-trial-michael-cohen-witness-091b0e50af2738eb261f395e9d658505)

House Speaker Mike Johnson, second in the line of succession to the president, traveled with Trump in his motorcade in a politically stunning and significant show of Republican support.

Johnson is using his powerful pulpit to attack the U.S. judicial system, criticizing the courts as biased against the former president. The speaker claims the case is politically motivated by Democrats and insists Trump has done “nothing wrong.”

It’s a remarkable, if not unprecedented, moment in modern American ***politics*** to have the powerful House speaker, a constitutional officer, turn his political party against the U.S. system and rule of law by declaring a trial illegitimate.

Johnson's team announced he planned to address media later in the morning “outside of the ongoing sham prosecution of President Trump.”

**AN ENTOURAGE OF GOP SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

House Speaker Mike Johnson will be traveling with Donald Trump in his motorcade to court along with North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, Florida Reps. Byron Donalds and Cory Mills, and his former GOP rival Vivek Ramaswamy.

Both Burgum and Donalds are considered potential vice presidential contenders.

On Monday, Trump was joined in court by a number of Republican supporters, including another potential running mate: Ohio Sen. JD Vance.

**WITH TRUMP UNDER A GAG ORDER, HIS GOP ALLIES SPEAK UP**

With Donald Trump barred from publicly attacking the key witness in his hush money trial, his campaign brought to court a band of [*Republican elected officials to speak for him*](https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-court-allies-jd-vance-2666cc432e5291e8fa7dd7fba9c2ffad).

Trump, who is balancing the demands of a felony trial with his third run for the White House, has been prohibited by a judge’s gag order from criticizing witnesses and already fined for violating the restrictions.

Bringing allies to court allowed Trump’s campaign to press his message without violating the gag order. It also gave those allies a high-profile platform to demonstrate loyalty to their party’s presumptive nominee and perhaps audition for higher office.

**COHEN PROVIDES JURORS WITH AN INSIDER'S ACCOUNT**

Once Donald Trump’s loyal attorney and fixer, Michael Cohen provided jurors with an insider’s account of payments to silence women’s claims of sexual encounters with Trump, saying the payments were directed by Trump to fend off damage to his [*2016 White House bid*](https://apnews.com/hub/election-2024).

While [*prosecutors’ most important witness*](https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-michael-cohen-hush-money-trial-c8b39c498f354cb8b2b67dc429bdc456), he’s also their most vulnerable to attack — having served time in federal prison and built his persona in recent years around being a thorn in Trump’s side.

Cohen is expected to be on the witness stand for several days, and face intense grilling by Trump’s attorneys, who have [*painted him as a liar*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-trial-hush-money-stormy-daniels-cohen-ddef05884265e4d6217b55a89304b878) who’s trying to take down the presumptive Republican presidential nominee.

While prosecutors’ most important witness, he’s also their most vulnerable to attack — having served time in federal prison and built his persona in recent years around being a thorn in Trump’s side.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing in the case.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2024

**End of Document**