

# [***Takeaways from the day a jury was selected to decide Donald Trump's fate in the hush money trial***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTY-3D91-JBSS-S001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

New York (CNN) &#8212; Jury selection in [*Donald Trump's hush money business fraud case*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/trump-hush-money-trial-04-18-24/index.html) began Thursday looking like the task of finding 12 jurors had run aground.

Two of the seven initial jurors who were seated Tuesday were excused. Judge Juan Merchan's hopes to begin the trial on Monday with opening arguments appeared to be dwindling fast.

By the end of the day, the jury in the first criminal trial of a former president in US history had been seated. Only five alternates are left to be selected on Friday.

It's also clear the trial will be a bumpy one. The Manhattan district attorney's office, for instance, said it won't let the defense know who its first witnesses are to prevent Trump from posting on social media about them.

A hearing over what prosecutors can say about Trump's legal history is also likely on Friday.

Here are the takeaways from Thursday's topsy-turvy jury selection in Trump's criminal trial:

From drama to solved: 'We have our jury'

Once Trump's attorneys and the district attorney's office used up their 10 peremptory strikes to remove jurors, things moved quickly.

The judge rejected Trump's challenges to remove jurors for cause because they had expressed negative opinions about Trump, telling the former president's attorneys that not liking his persona was not enough.

The seated jury includes seven men and five women. The new jurors empaneled Thursday include an investment banker, a security engineer, a retired wealth manager, a speech therapist and a physical therapist.

The jury pool was quickly whittled down from a second panel of 96 Thursday morning, after nearly 50 prospective jurors said they did not feel they could be fair and impartial and another nine said they had other conflicts.

Compared to Tuesday, there were fewer jurors who had a change of heart once they began reading the questionnaire in the courtroom - just one of the initial 18 jurors was dismissed during that process on Thursday. (Court was dark on Wednesday.)

Perhaps one reason: The second pool of jurors knew that Trump was the defendant on Tuesday, giving them time to think about being on the panel. The first panel of 96 jurors had to say whether they thought they could be fair just minutes after walking into the courtroom, seeing Trump as the defendant and hearing the judge explain the case and the jury's role.

At least a couple jurors on Trump's panel said they aren't a fan

Trump's legal team ran out of peremptory challenges to remove a couple jurors who voiced negative opinions of the former president and his ***politics***.

One woman who will eventually decide Trump's fate called him selfish and self-serving.

Juror 11 was seated on the jury after Merchan denied Trump's challenge to the juror for cause. Trump's lawyers argued she should be dismissed because she said she does not like Trump's "persona."

"I don't like his persona," she said. "I don't like some of my coworkers, but I don't try to sabotage their work."

"He just seems very selfish and self-serving so I don't really appreciate that in any public servant, so I don't know him as a person, so I don't know how he is in terms of his integrity," she added. "It's just not my cup of tea."

In denying Trump's challenge, Merchan said it's not enough that she doesn't like his persona because she said she was certain she could set that aside to be fair and impartial.

On Thursday afternoon, jurors were generally more open about their opinions of Trump. Many said they don't like his ***politics*** or some of his behavior in public but felt they could see past that to be a fair and impartial juror.

Another juror said she doesn't agree with some of his ***politics***, and when it was a frequent topic of conversation with friends and family when he was president, some negative opinions of Trump were floated.

When asked by Trump's attorney Susan Necheles if she'd feel pressured by others to convict Trump, she said, "Not at all." She said she would make sure not to talk about the case with anybody.

There is one juror who follows Trump on social media and has read quotes from his book the "Art of the Deal."

He's an investment banker who has a master's degree. He said during voir dire that he follows Michael Cohen on Twitter and he's followed Trump since he became president, "Generally because it was a news item when he would put a tweet out so good to be aware of that."

Trump's lawyers successfully petitioned Merchan to remove one woman who was questioned about several strongly worded anti-Trump social media posts. The defense lawyers used Trump's last few peremptory strikes to remove a woman who had slept at Necheles' home - Merchan denied a challenge for cause for that panelist.

There were some bumps with the jury, likely not the last

Thursday morning highlighted how unpredictable the jury in a high-profile trial can be, especially in an unprecedented case that involves a former president. Thursday's court session began with one of the seven jurors who had been empaneled Tuesday returning to ask to be dismissed from the jury.

The juror, No. 2, an oncology nurse and native New Yorker, came in and said that she had concerns that "aspects of my identity" have been made public after having friends, colleagues and family conveying to her that she had been identified as a potential juror.

Merchan excused her without objections. The judge then directed the media not to mention physical appearances that could identify jurors. He complained specifically that there were reports that one of the jurors who was selected had an Irish accent.

"We just lost" what would have been a good juror for the case, Merchan said.

He also told the media not to report on two questions on the questionnaire that all prospective jurors are being asked: Their current and former employers.

Later, a second juror who had been seated was excused after prosecutors notified the court that during their research they found information about the juror showing that he was arrested in the 1990s for tearing down political advertisements.

DA's office won't tell Trump which witnesses they will call

At the end of the day, Trump's attorney Todd Blanche asked the district attorney's office to share the first three witnesses they plan to call, noting that opening arguments and the first witness testimony could begin as soon as Monday.

The district attorney's office refused. Assistant District Attorney Josh Steinglass acknowledged that courtesy is often extended. But because Trump has been posting on social media about their witnesses, he said with a shrug, "We're not telling him who the witnesses are."

Merchan said he couldn't fault prosecutors for that. Trump visibly shook his head over the exchange.

Blanche then proposed that he would assure the district attorneys' office that Trump would not post about the witnesses if they shared their witness list.

"I don't think you can make that representation," Merchan responded.

Blanche continued to protest, but Merchan said he would not order them to turn over their witnesses. "They're not required to," he said.

The tactic from the district attorney's office means that not only will Trump's team be in the dark about upcoming witnesses, the DA's office could also choose to keep the identities of witnesses in the wings from the public, too - meaning it's possible witnesses become a surprise on a daily basis.

We're on track to start opening arguments Monday

Friday, there are 22 prospective jurors who have yet to go through the questionnaire process from the second panel. Merchan will begin with them to try to fill out a slate of five additional alternate jurors, although the judge noted he may change that number.

Trump's attorneys and the district attorney's office also will get additional peremptory challenges for the alternate jurors. Neither used a challenge for the first alternate chosen on Thursday.

If jury selection wraps up quickly enough Friday, Merchan said he will hold what's called a Sandoval hearing Friday afternoon, where they will discuss what in Trump's legal history can be used to try to impeach him if he chooses to testify.

Prosecutors say in filings they'll ask the former president about the recent verdicts against him, including the recent civil fraud trial and the E. Jean Carroll defamation case.

But if a sufficient number of alternates cannot be chosen out of the 22, Merchan has teed up an additional panel of 96 jurors, who were sworn in Thursday and told to return on Friday - that's likely the final pool of people who will make up the Trump hush money trial jury.

On Thursday, the downtown Manhattan courtroom was noticeably cold - Trump commented on it to reporters as he left and his attorney even asked if the temperature could be raised. Merchan noted the temperature in the courtroom - perhaps in more ways than one - as the prospective jurors in the case filed in on Thursday.

"I want to apologize that it's chilly in here," Merchan said. "We're trying to do the best we can to control the temperature, but it's one extreme or the other."

By Jeremy Herb, Lauren del Valle and Kara Scannell, CNN

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