

# [***Takeaways from the second day of jury selection in Trump's hush money trial***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTH-8G61-DY7V-G017-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

April 16, 2024 Tuesday 11:26 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1437 words

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**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Seven jurors were placed Tuesday on the panel that will decide former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45)'s guilt or innocence in the [*New York hush money case*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/trump-hush-money-trial-04-16-24/h_c13c229f187905bb8458c3d4db6c41d3), a process that has highlighted how difficult - and often contentious - it will be to pick a full jury.

Trump's lawyers dug through prospective jurors' social media posts to try to root out those with an anti-Trump bias from getting on the jury, even questioning several of them about their posts as the defense team asked to remove them from the jury for cause.

That process prompted [*Judge Juan Merchan*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/15/politics/juan-merchan-judge-nyc/index.html) to sternly admonish Trump for his conduct toward the first juror questioned about her social media. It was a swift warning that he would not tolerate any attempts to intimidate jurors - an issue that did not come up the rest of the day but will surely linger over the criminal trial, the first of a former US president.

The courtroom is dark on Wednesday - as is expected for the duration of the expected six-week trial - but jury selection will resume on Thursday with a new panel of 96 prospective jurors who could end up on the panel.

Here are the takeaways from day 2 of the Trump hush money trial:

We have (more than half) a jury

So far four men and three women have been selected to serve on the jury that will ultimately consider 34 counts of falsifying business records against Trump.

A man originally from Ireland who works in sales in New York City was appointed as the jury foreperson, who essentially serves as the panel spokesperson.

Five of the seven have a college degree or higher education. Two men on the panel are lawyers.

All but one juror empaneled Tuesday indicated that they're aware Trump is facing charges in other criminal cases. The woman was the only one of the 18 jurors questioned who said she wasn't aware of the other charges.

None of them shared particularly strong views about Trump or ***politics***.

Trump's lawyers scrutinize jurors' social media

When the attorneys finished questioning the first 18 jurors in a process known as voir dire, both sides were given the chance to ask the judge to dismiss jurors for cause.

Having jurors removed for cause is an important part of the process because each side is allowed to strike 10 jurors in total for any reason, in what are known as peremptory challenges. Jurors struck for cause by the judge do not count against those 10.

Trump's side asked the judge to remove five jurors for cause, pointing to alleged anti-Trump social media posts and trying to argue that the jurors were unfairly biased against the former president.

While the jurors in this case are anonymous to the public, the lawyers were given the identities of the first panel of 96 prospective jurors on Monday. That gave Trump's team the chance to mine their public social media postings to be ready for their challenges to the judge.

When the former president's attorney Todd Blanche was questioning the jurors, he asked them one-by-one what they thought of Trump, outside of the case. He then tried to argue before the judge that many of the jurors' answers that they didn't have an opinion of Trump did not align with their social media.

Merchan was generally skeptical, but he did agree on two counts that the jurors should be struck. One man had posted "lock him up"on Facebook while Trump was president.

As for the three jurors Merchan did not strike: Trump's side used its peremptory challenges to remove all of them anyway. After Tuesday, both Trump's team and the district attorney's office have four peremptory challenges remaining each.

Trump gets admonished (again)

Trump's courtroom conduct got him once again - briefly - in hot water with a judge.

Trump was admonished for his conduct when Merchan brought in one of the jurors individually to discuss her social media posts raised by Trump's team, in which she videotaped celebrations in New York after [*Joe Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/joe-biden) won the 2020 election.

"I very, very strongly believe that regardless of my thoughts about anyone or anything political, feelings or convictions, that the job of a juror is to understand the facts of a trial and to be the judge of those facts," the juror said.

After the juror left the courtroom, the judge admonished Trump, saying he was was audibly speaking and gesturing in the direction of the juror.

"Mr. Blanche, while the juror was at the podium, maybe 12 feet from your client, your client was audibly uttering something, I don't know exactly what he was uttering, he was audibly gesturing, speaking in the direction of the juror. I won't tolerate that," Merchan told Trump's attorney, raising his voice. "I will not have any jurors intimidated in this courtroom. I want to make that crystal clear."

"Yes, your honor," Blanche responded, before a brief exchange with Trump.

The moment passed without any further discussion, and the judge did not raise concerns about Trump's conduct when more jurors were brought in individually.

But it's a moment worth noting, as the judge has already [*expanded his gag order*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/01/politics/manhattan-district-attorney-trump-judge-gag-order/index.html) in the case barring Trump from speaking about witnesses, as well as family and staff of the district attorney's office and the court.

And the district attorney is asking the judge next week to sanction Trump for violating that gag order, with $1,000 fines and a warning that future violations could result in imprisonment.

That hearing is next Tuesday, potentially just after the trial is underway.

Prosecutors focus on case with jurors, while Trump lawyers focus on Trump

The voir dire process, where the lawyers from both sides got 30 minutes to question potential jurors, previewed how the two sides are approaching the jury pool - and ultimately, the jury in the case.

Assistant District Attorney Joshua Steinglass walked the jurors through the case, while signaling how prosecutors will appeal to the jury at trial, noting that not all witnesses will remember events in the past the same and that witnesses might remember small details differently.

"Can you be realistic and not hold witnesses to unrealistic standards?" he asked the jury pool, asking any to say if they can't accept that.

He said outright some witnesses "have some edge," describing them as a tabloid publisher, an adult film star and said Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen was convicted of federal crimes, including lying to Congress.

Steinglass asked jurors whether they would be able to approach the testimony from a convicted felon with an open mind.

He also noted that witnesses have written books, made podcasts and participated in documentaries.

He made the point that while jurors can consider all this in assessing a credibility of the witness, it's not the only thing they should consider.

"The question really is, as I keep saying, can you wait until you hear not only the witness testimony but the rest of the evidence of the case" before deciding whether to believe something, Steinglass asked.

Blanche, meanwhile, spent nearly all of his time focused on how jurors view Trump. He asked jurors if they had favorable or unfavorable views of the former president.

One man went back-and-forth with Blanche repeatedly, while largely refusing to share his views on Trump, saying his views don't matter in a courtroom and that he could compartmentalize.

"I'll say I'm a Democrat, so there you go, but I walk in there and he's a defendant and that's all he is," the juror said.

The juror was later struck for cause by the judge on a challenge from Trump's team over his social media posts.

Jury selection could end - maybe - by the end of the week

One of the things Merchan has emphasized this week is that the court schedule is fluid. But the judge is hoping to wrap up jury selection this week.

After swearing in the seven jurors Tuesday, Merchan told them he hopes they can return next Monday for opening statements - but he emphasized that the schedule could always change and the court would be in touch.

He then swore in a new panel of 96 jurors Tuesday afternoon before dismissing them for the day, saving time logistically before they return Thursday morning.

Those jurors will go through the same process that's played out over the past two days with the first panel of 96 jurors. The new panel will be asked if they think they cannot be impartial or if they have a conflict, and then undergo questioning first from the judge and then the lawyers on both sides.

There's no guarantee that will get us to a full jury of 12 jurors, plus six expected alternates: Only seven were selected out of the first panel of 96.

By Jeremy Herb and Lauren del Valle, CNN

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**Load-Date:** May 16, 2024

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