

# [***Interview with Donald Trump, Former U.S. President & 2024 Presidential Candidate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5G-3DW1-F072-X2HF-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

PETE HEGSETH, FOX & FRIENDS CO-HOST: Mr. President, welcome to Fox & Friends Weekend.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT AND REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Thank you.

HEGSETH: Thanks for being here. This is your first interview since the verdict. It's been 48 hours. Where's your head at?

TRUMP: Look, you know, I'm fighting for the constitution. I'm fighting for the same thing that you three, I watch you all the time, and same thing that you do, you fight for freedom. You fight for your country. These people are sick. They're sick. They're deranged.

You know, I talk about the enemy on the outside and the enemy from within. So, you have Russia, you have China. But if you have a smart president, you always handle them quite easily actually. We have a lot of advantages. But the enemy from within, they are doing damage to this country. They want to open borders, they want high interest rates, they now want to quadruple your taxes. Quadruple.

You know all my life I watch ***politics***, and it was always like politicians want to lower taxes, not quadruple them. There is a whole sickness going on right now. So, we're doing really well. It was a tough venue. We tried to get out of the venue. We tried to get out of the judge, but we tried to get out of both. Wouldn't even think about it.

So, we had probably maybe the worst area in the whole country for me, you know, in terms of vote. I'm sure if I sat down and explained it to that section of the world, we could probably make progress. But one of the worst sections, and they always bring them in these sections, you know, D.C., there, places where Republicans -- not just me, Republicans get like virtually no votes.

But the good news is that I think we've set a record beyond all records for fundraising. That's like a poll. And another one just came out just before I got in that were six points higher than we were before. So, I don't know if that holds up. I mean, I'm just not sure, but people get it. It's a scam.

And the Republican Party is really -- they've stuck. They stick together in this. They see what's -- it's weaponization of the Justice Department, of the FBI. And, you know, that's all coming out of Washington. You may think it's Bragg. Take a look at who opened the case. I'm not allowed to talk about it because I have a gag order.

I'm probably, I guess, the first presidential nominee and the leader -- leading Crooked Joe by a lot that's not allowed to talk. Maybe they're doing me a big favor. Who knows? But I'm not allowed to talk. I'm gagged. Nobody's ever heard of it.

It's all coming out. It's weaponization, and it's a very dangerous thing. We've never had that in this country. They do have it in other countries, in South American countries. You know a little bit about it, right?

RACHEL CAMPOS-DUFFY, FOX & FRIENDS CO-HOST: Well, that actually leads me to my question. I think for a lot of Americans, what's happened to you feels foreign. Like this has never happened here before.

TRUMP: Yes.

CAMPOS-DUFFY: But for Hispanic Americans, people coming from Latin America, this feels very familiar.

TRUMP: Yes.

CAMPOS-DUFFY: And in those countries, people are imprisoned. You know, instead of going to the ballot box and fighting there, they're on house arrest. They're told they can't run for office. What is your message? And by the way, I think a lot of Hispanic Americans, I hear from them, they're scared about what they see. What's your message to them about what happened to you, and about how scared they are that our country is turning into the countries that they left behind, the corrupt, dysfunctional countries they left behind?

TRUMP: And they are scared. And they're great people, very entrepreneurial, great energy. And as you know, I'm doing very well with them. I mean, beyond anybody. I don't think anybody's ever had polling.

CAMPOS-DUFFY: Do you think this is why, a little bit?

TRUMP: I think a little bit. And they've always liked me, and I've always liked them. You know, I've done well from the beginning. In 2016, I won the entire border along Texas, and they're all, like, 85 percent. And it's been great from the beginning. And now, I'm leading. I think I'm leaning over this guy, this guy that can't put two sentences together that's destroying our country.

Look, he's the worst president in the history of this country. And he's a danger to the country. And you know, they have misinformation. Donald Trump is a threat to democracy. See, it's just words. He doesn't even know what it means. But it's like their slogan. I'm a threat to democracy. I'm the opposite. They're the threat to democracy.

WILL CAIN, FOX & FRIENDS CO-HOST: Mr. President, I want to return to the verdict, and I want to explore something you've said several times already in the conversation. You've referenced these people. I'm sure you've seen the video of Joe Biden when he was asked about the verdict, and he gave sort of a smirk to the camera.

TRUMP: Terrible. Terrible. Remember, Bragg didn't want to do the case. He came out. He said, there's no case. And how can you have a witness like so and so? I'm not allowed to mention the name. Can you believe this? This guy's allowed to have shows, television shows. I'm not allowed to mention the name. It's so unfair.

But regardless, you know, you have to really play the hand that you're dealt. And then you had a jury that was, you know, from a certain persuasion, it would have been hard to do, no matter what. But I did absolutely nothing wrong. I mean, absolutely, think of it.

You know, I hate when they say a bookkeeping, this and that. It's not. It's called -- think of it, expense. I use the word expense, legal expense. I pay a lawyer. He wasn't a fixer. He was a lawyer at the time. I pay a lawyer, and he's a lawyer. It's called legal expense.

A bookkeeper, without ever speaking to me, because she did the right thing, who's been with me for years, marks it down as legal expense, in other words, I paid a legal expense, it's marked down as a legal expense. And they say that's a fraud. What am I going to call it?

Did you ever see a ledger? Do you ever study accounting? The line's like about an inch long and an eighth of an inch wide. You can't write the story. But there is no story. If you pay a legal expense and you write it down as a legal expense, and then they indict you and they go to a grand jury, and they don't use Bob Costello's testimony, you know, they use almost none of it. They didn't want him before the grand jury because he's very persuasive. This judge didn't want him to talk. They shouldn't have allowed certain people to testify. It was totally wrong that they did that.

So, everyone tells me this is the easiest case they've ever seen to overturn, but they don't care because they want it to last until after the election. Now, the only problem they have is that so far my poll numbers have gone up. You explain this to me, because I don't -- Pete maybe can explain it. Maybe Will. I don't know. Maybe Will can. They're smart in Texas, right?

But the poll numbers have gone up substantially. I don't know if that's going to remain that way.

CAIN: You changed your tone at some point during the trial, I would say maybe a bit more hopeful in the beginning, and then towards the end you said something to the effect of even Mother Teresa couldn't be acquitted in this venue. Was there a moment in the trial that you felt like it turned or you saw that it was heading in a certain direction?

TRUMP: Well, when you object to something, your lawyers object, good lawyers, professional lawyers, good records, nice people, you know. And I've had a lot of lawyers that weren't nice. And sometimes you're better off that way. These are really fine people. They'd object. Not accepted. Not accepted. Not accepted.

When the government, meaning the D.A., Bragg, when he said something, all right, good, that's fine. Go ahead. More, more, more. But the main thing is this, this was turned down by the Southern District. This is over years. This could have been brought seven years ago. You know, they tried to rush it because they wanted it before the election. But this could have been brought seven years ago, but they didn't have any attention.

A case like this has never been brought before, and there's never been a case where a state has gone after federal election. In other words, that's for a federal. That's for like the Southern District to go. Southern District turned it down. We got clearance from the FEC, Federal Election Commission, clearance. They're suing, saying we violated a thing, but they gave us clearance.

But the charge was written -- I mean, it was like a weird charge. You'd have a little of this, a little of that, do a little of this, throw a little, mix it up.

HEGSETH: You set the arraignment date for four days before the RNC.

TRUMP: Yes, well, that's part of the game.

HEGSETH: It is. Some have suggested you could appeal straight to the Supreme Court because of the special nature of this case. When it comes to the legal maze that you're still facing and they could -- the judge could decide to say, hey, house arrest or even jail.

TRUMP: It could.

HEGSETH: How do you face what that could be?

TRUMP: I'm OK with it. I saw one of my lawyers the other day on television saying, oh, no, you don't want to do that to the president. I said, don't, you know, don't beg for anything. It's just the way it is.

Think of it. They have all my books. You know, they went to -- for five years they sued me getting my tax returns, right? At the end of five years, they got them. The Supreme Court actually gave it to them. That was the end of it. That was it. They never found anything. They hired the best accounting firms. I had a pure gold firm. They call it a gold rated firm. I don't know what's that supposed to be, who knows. But with all that stuff.

For years, you heard about my tax --

CAMPOS-DUFFY: They never looked into the Clinton Foundation.

TRUMP: And they never found it. They never went all the way with the Clinton Foundation. They never went all the way with the Clinton Foundation, which is sort of interesting, isn't it? But -- so, that could happen. I don't know that the public would stand it. You know, I don't -- I'm not sure the public would stand for it with --

HEGSETH: You're saying (INAUDIBLE) house arrest, you're --

TRUMP: I think it would be tough for the public to take. You know, at a certain point, there's a breaking point.

CAIN: People ask you, why do you do this? How can you do this? I mean, not to mention the rally after rally, the energy. But maybe the question isn't how do you do this over and over? But how does your family do this? All the obstacles? You know, these are things you care about. Your ambitions for the country. What about everybody around you?

TRUMP: So, I think in many ways it's tougher on them than it is on me. They're good people, all of them, everyone, everyone. I have a wonderful wife who has to listen to this stuff all the time. They do that for this reason. They do that. All these salacious names that they put in of these people. And I'm not even allowed to defend myself because of a gag order.

Think of it. But they put this stuff in to create havoc. These are bad people. I know everything they're doing. I know every move they make. I get it, but a lot of people don't. But it's tougher -- I think it's probably -- in many ways, it's tougher on my family than it is in me.

HEGSETH: How's Melania doing?

TRUMP: She's fine. But I think it's very hard for her. I mean, she's fine. But it's -- you know, she has to read all this crap.

CAIN: What about Barron? People started to focus on Barron recently.

TRUMP: He's amazing, actually, in a certain way. You know, he's tall, good looking guy. He's a very good student. And he's applied to colleges and gets into everywhere he goes. You know, he's very sought after from the standpoint. He's a very smart guy. He's a very tall guy. But he's -- and he's a great kid. He's cool. He's pretty cool. I'll tell you.

You know, it's very interesting, though. College is -- you know, six months ago you look at a college and you sort of want a certain college and then you see all of these colleges are rioting.

CAMPOS-DUFFY: Yes, yes.

TRUMP: And maybe you want to go to a different kind of a college because there's plenty of colleges that we also like that are different and they don't riot.

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