

# [***Steve Bannon Urges Donald Trump to 'Turn the Guns' on Joe Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWV-WGC1-DY68-10KX-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 780 words

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**Highlight:** Amid his criminal hush money trial, the former president has continued to take aim at Judge Juan Merchan and others involved in the case.

**Body**

Right-wing media personality [*Steve Bannon*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/steve-bannon?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) urged [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on Thursday to "turn the guns" on President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and not focus on Judge Juan Merchan who is overseeing the former president's criminal hush money trial.

Trump and Biden have clinched nominations of the [*Republican*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and Democratic parties, respectively amid this year's presidential election, but a rematch of 2020 is unpopular with voters who routinely tell pollsters that [*they believe neither should get a second term*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trumps-popularity-compared-joe-bidens-presidents-day-1870954?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). Meanwhile, hypothetical general election matchups have generally shown the two in a neck-and-neck race.

Bannon, Trump's former White House chief strategist who was convicted in 2022 of two counts of contempt of [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) for dismissing a subpoena to testify before the House select committee that was tasked with investigating the events of the January 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot, spoke to *The Sun*'s political editor Harry Cole on the British tabloid's *Never Mind the Ballots* ***politics*** show on Thursday.

During the interview, Bannon discussed the 2024 election and Trump's reelection efforts as he campaigns amid his hush money trial, adding that the former president needs to "turn the guns" on Biden instead of focusing on Merchan.

"We're in a very tough part of this campaign right now and President Trump has got to focus, continue to focus that his opponent is Joe Biden. His opponent is not the judge in the court. When he's out of the courtroom he needs to turn the guns on, back on to Biden. I think if we do this and you do it smartly this could be a net positive for the campaign," Bannon said.

Earlier this month, Trump became the first former president in U.S. history to stand trial in a criminal case. Following an investigation by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office, Trump was [*indicted in March 2023*](https://www.newsweek.com/trump-indictment-makes-history-former-president-charged-1788949?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on charges of falsifying business records relating to hush-money paid to adult film star [*Stormy Daniels*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/stormy-daniels?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) during his 2016 presidential campaign. Daniels had alleged she had an affair with Trump in 2006, which he has denied. The former president has pleaded not guilty to all charges and said the case against him is politically motivated.

In March, Merchan [*imposed a gag order on Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/judge-hits-trump-gag-order-stormy-daniels-case-1883801?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), barring him from making public statements about witnesses as well as lawyers and staff in the case and their families. The order excluded Merchan and Bragg, but [*it was later expanded*](https://www.newsweek.com/trump-campaign-rages-after-gag-order-expanded-unconstitutional-1885815?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) to include Merchan and Bragg's families after the former president made [*blistering attacks toward the judge's daughter*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-attacking-judges-daughter-1884827?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), Loren Merchan.

Since the gag order, Trump has continued to take aim at Merchan and others in his case as the prosecution introduced a motion to sanction Trump for social media posts that they say violate his gag order.

In addition, Trump has accused, without evidence, Biden of using the trial to interfere with this year's election, often taking to his Truth Social account to criticize the incumbent president.

"He's going to be very strapped for resources, much like in 2016. It's going to have to be a very smart campaign like we ran in '16, highly targeted to those 25...This is going to come down to 25 counties in seven states in America. He's got to really focus on that," Bannon said about Trump during Thursday's interview.

He added that the election is "going to be a dogfight...Trump's going to win this but, man, it's going to be a fight, a real fight."

*Newsweek* has reached out to Trump's campaign and Biden's campaign via email for comment.

Biden told longtime SiriusXM radio show host Howard Stern [*during an interview on Friday*](https://www.newsweek.com/biden-stern-sirius-interview-women-1894705?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) that he would be "happy" to debate Trump. The former president then responded as he left the New York courtroom on Friday and said, "I've invited Biden to debate. He can do it anytime he wants, including tonight. I'm ready, here we are, I invited him to the courthouse that he has us tied up in."

"I'm ready, willing, and able. And if he wants, I'll do it on Monday night, Tuesday night or Wednesday night," Trump said, later adding, "Just tell me where!"

While Trump has offered to debate Biden anywhere at any time, an actual meeting between the two candidates is unlikely to be that simple. Debates typically come with a set of rules that both participants must agree to before taking part.

Presidential debates traditionally take place with three events in the fall, organized by the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates. However, earlier this month, the Trump campaign urged the debate commission to speed up the schedule and add additional debates beyond the standard three.

Meanwhile, the Biden campaign has concerns about whether Trump will follow debate rules if and when the events take place, Reuters reported on April 14.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2384821/donald-trump.jpg)

**Graphic**

Donald Trump

Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images

Former U.S. President Donald Trump speaks to members of the media during his hush money trial at Manhattan criminal court on April 26, 2024 in New York City. Steve Bannon, right-wing media personality and former White House chief strategist under the Trump administration, urged Trump on Thursday to “turn the guns” on President Joe Biden.

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