Trump attends rape defamation case in New York

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Donald Trump went straight from his victory in the Republican Iowa caucuses to a New York courtroom Tuesday for the start of a defamation trial brought by writer E. Jean Carroll after an earlier jury found he had sexually assaulted her in the 1990s.  
  
  
  
Trump, 77, arrived in the federal court without addressing reporters.  
  
The shocking case, which would likely once have been enough to wreck any politician’s career, has had no visible impact on Trump’s bid to regain the White House — and if anything is boosting the Republican’s standing on the right-wing of his party.  
  
Carroll, 80, is seeking more than $10 million in damages in the civil trial, alleging that Trump defamed her in 2019 when he was president and she had just come out with her allegation, saying she “is not my type.”  
  
This is separate to a civil case last year where another New York jury found Trump liable for sexually assaulting Carroll in a department store dressing room in 1996 and subsequently defaming her in 2022, when he called her a “complete con job.”  
  
In that case, the jury awarded Carroll $5 million in damages.  
  
This is only one of many trials swirling over Trump’s head. He has been indicted in four criminal cases and faces 91 counts on allegations including his attempts to undermine the 2020 election which he lost to Joe Biden, taking stacks of top-secret documents, and business fraud.  
  
Trump has embraced his legal problems as evidence for a conspiracy theory in which a nebulous “deep state” is out to stop him from returning to power.  
  
  
  
– ‘Rape’ finding –  
  
Despite the constant scandal, his fervent base of supporters proved its strength on Monday with an overwhelming victory in the Iowa caucuses to choose the Republican candidate facing Biden in November. And after the New York appearance, he was set to travel to New Hampshire, which holds the nation’s second primary next Tuesday.  
  
Trump has used previous trial appearances to seize the limelight and deliver invective-filled speeches — both outside courthouses and, when allowed to speak by the judge, on the witness stand. He has also used social media posts to issue crude insults against court personnel.  
  
The judge in Tuesday’s trial, Lewis Kaplan, has issued strict instructions to curtail Trump, who will come face-to-face with his accuser for the first time during the case. Carroll says that in 1996 Trump shoved her against the wall of a Manhattan department store dressing room and penetrated her — and the previous civil jury agreed.  
  
Kaplan stated unambiguously that Trump had “sexually abused — indeed, raped — Ms. Carroll” and that the Republican cannot now claim otherwise in court.  
  
Carroll’s lawyers last week urged Kaplan to prevent Trump from making “inadmissible, prejudicial” comments in court.  
  
Last week the former president continued to insist of Carroll that “I never saw this woman in my life.”  
  
“I have no idea who this woman is,” said Trump, who also called her “a wack job” and said the trial was “rigged.”