

In The Court Of Trump [B2]

Tra discendenti, fedelissimi e yes-men, la Casa Bianca è sempre più simile a una corte. Tutti al servizio di re Donald Trump.

The legitimacy of the monarchies of the past was rooted as much in the use of force and an alleged divine mandate as in ceremony and performance, with strong hierarchies and complex codes and rituals. The Trump presidency replicates many of the dynamics of a dynastic court, where everything gravitates around a single figure who prizes loyalty above all else.

BLOOD TIES AND YES-MEN

The President's inner circle is, unsurprisingly, composed largely of blood relations; of Trump's five children, the three eldest — Don Jr., Ivanka and Eric — and their spouses have held official roles or benefited from their proximity to power in their private ventures (or both). The court intrigues become much more volatile when it comes to the second circle of influence, composed of trusted appointees and other yes-men. Among them, Vice-President J. D. Vance is the courtier per excellence. Once a fierce critic of Trump, whom he called "America's Hitler", Vance made a dramatic U-turn and publicly expressed regret for his remarks. As a token of mercy, but also persuaded of Vance's appeal to working-class Midwestern voters, Trump selected him as his 2024 running mate. If constitutional term limits hold, Vance would be the logical name for the Republican nomination in 2028. So far, however, his most memorable contribution to American politics has been acting like the bully's sidekick during the scolding of Ukraine's prime minister Volodymyr Zelensky in front of the world media in an Oval Office meeting in February 2025.

THE WORLD'S RICHEST MAN

Looking from the outside now is Elon Musk, the world's richest person, who had Trump's ear but eventually lost his favour. After spending \$44 billion to acquire X and turning it into Trump's primary propaganda machine, Musk was appointed head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a short-lived initiative aimed at cutting federal spending. He failed miserably after just four months. At the time of writing, however, they have fallen out bitterly, with Musk even posting on X that Trump's name features on the mysterious list of clients of convicted and deceased sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. It is impossible to predict what will come next in the Trump-Musk affair. The latest development is Musk announcing the foundation of a new political party and Trump insinuating that Musk should be deported to South Africa. Still, no one can rule out another reconciliation if it serves their interests, followed, perhaps, by yet another falling out in perpetuity.

KINGS AND QUEENS

Today, there are some thirty kings and queens as heads of state worldwide, but only six of them — such as those in Saudi Arabia, Brunei, or Oman — actually rule. The complexion of Trump's second administration is increasingly resembling one of these royal courts, where influence and favour, not meritocracy, are the currency of power, and where the ultimate goal is not the common good but the perpetuation of the dynasty and the preservation of the privileges of the few.

LADY MELANIA

The role of FLOTUS is not formally defined, but much like the consorts in royal courts of old, it is largely ceremonial and representative. However, since 1798 there have been first ladies that have transcended the traditional duties as official hostess for White House events and state dinners. Most notably, Hillary Clinton and Eleanor Roosevelt, who, among other achievements, helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

as US representative to the United Nations. So far, Melania Trump's **tenure** as First Lady has more often **made the headlines** for her fashion choices than for her charitable work or public statements. Born in Slovenia in 1970, Melania began modelling at sixteen, working in Milan and Paris before moving to New York in her mid-twenties. She met Donald Trump (twenty-four years her senior) at a party in 1998, and after a brief breakup, they reunited and married in 2005. A year later, she gave birth to their son, Barron, and became a US citizen. Elegant and enigmatic, in 2017 she **delayed** her move to the White House — it is said that she stays in a separate bedroom — by several months to allow Barron to finish the school year. Her low public profile and her cool, sometimes **detached demeanour** have **sparked** speculation. Some try to decipher her every gesture and expression as signs of discomfort, invoking the trope of the **damsel in distress** or the princess trapped in a tower waiting to be saved. Is she just focused on her role as a mother and wife or is her silence a sign of complicity in her husband's politics and conduct? Why is she **unwilling** — or maybe afraid — to **speak up?**

THE TRUMP DYNASTY

The Trump dynasty began not with Donald, but with his father, Fred Trump, the son of German immigrants who built a real estate empire in New York during the mid-20th century. Donald, the fourth of five **siblings**, inherited and expanded the family brand, and has five children from three different mothers. The firstborn, Donald Jr. (1977), has cultivated a network of deals among conservative-aligned media and **venture capital** firms, and in January 2025 he travelled to Greenland "as a tourist" to support his father's interest in acquiring the territory. Eric (1984) has so far stayed out of Washington politics but has recently **hinted at** a 2028 **presidential run**, calling politics "an easy path" for him. He also works in the Trump Organization and has been heavily involved in Trump Coin, a controversial but **wildly** popular crypto **currency** among MAGA loyalists. Eric's wife, Lara, was senior campaign advisor for Trump during the 2016 and 2020 elections and served as **co-chair** of the Republican National Committee in 2024. She is now reportedly considering to run for a **seat** in the Senate for North Carolina, with Donald

Trump calling her his “first choice.” Ivanka Trump (1981) was the director of the Office of Economic Initiatives and Entrepreneurship during her father’s first administration, and was considered one of Trump’s closest advisors. However, it is perhaps her husband, Jared Kushner, the most powerful member of the extended family, who has been the subject of media allegations of [**crony capitalism**](#). Kushner served as a senior advisor to the President during Trump’s first term, overseeing key issues such as Middle East peace negotiations, criminal justice reform and the Covid-19 response. After leaving office, he launched a [**private equity firm**](#), which received a \$2 billion investment from Saudi Arabia’s [**sovereign wealth fund**](#), [**raising concerns**](#) about conflicts of interest.

Glossary

- **deceased** = defunto
- **FLOTUS** = sigla di First Lady of the United States
- **tenure** = incarico
- **unwilling** = riluttante, restia
- **crony capitalism** = capitalismo clientelare
- **U-turn** = inversione di marcia
- **failed miserably** = fallire miseramente
- **have fallen out** = litigare
- **rule out** = escludere
- **draft** = elaborare, redigere
- **private equity firm** = società di investimenti privata
- **sovereign wealth fund** = fondo sovrano
- **running mate** = compagno di candidatura, vice
- **complexion** = aspetto
- **currency** = valuta
- **delayed** = ritardare
- **demeanour** = atteggiamento
- **speak up** = esprimersi, farsi sentire
- **co-chair** = co-presidente
- **If constitutional term limits hold** = se si rispettano i termini costituzionali
- **courtier** = cortigiano
- **appointed** = nominare
- **hostess** = padrona di casa
- **damsel in distress** = damigella in pericolo
- **raising concerns** = sollevare preoccupazioni
- **blood relations** = legami di sangue
- **alleged** = presunto
- **yes-men** = leccapiedi, che dicono sempre sì
- **token of mercy** = gesto di misericordia
- **scolding** = ramanzina
- **duties** = doveri
- **detached** = distante

- **sparked** = provocare
- **rooted as much in** = basarsi
- **bully's sidekick** = la spalla del bullo
- **venture capital** = capitale di rischio
- **presidential run** = candidatura a presidente
- **wildly** = estremamente
- **trusted appointees** = incaricati fidati
- **ventures** = imprese
- **regret** = rammarico
- **short-lived** = breve, effimera
- **bitterly** = amaramente
- **hinted at** = insinuare
- **seat** = posto
- **prizes** = premiare
- **had Trump's ear** = essere in confidenza con qualcuno, essere benvoluto da qualcuno
- **features** = essere presente
- **made the headlines** = fare notizia
- **siblings** = fratelli e sorelle
- **inner circle** = cerchia ristretta