How Trump’s Conviction Could Reshape the Election

0:01

from New York Times I'm Michael Boro this is the [Music]

0:10

daily today how the criminal conviction of Donald Trump will shape the remaining

0:17

months of the presidential race and potentially its outcome my colleagues

0:23

Nate con Maggie hman and Reed Epstein explain

0:28

[Applause]

0:35

it's Monday June [Music]

0:42

3rd hello Nate hello Michael so it's been 3 days since Donald Trump was

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convicted of 34 felony charges and now that the dust is starting to settle it

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feels like we have to turn to the question of its impact on the election

1:00

and you are our resident polling expert at the times and so we want you to frame

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that question with as much data as we possibly can there's always been a sense

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that for a lot of Voters a trump conviction wouldn't change a thing so whose vote according to all the polls

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you conduct and study might this conviction actually influence what's

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that Universe well we haven't yet conducted any polls since the conviction so all of

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this is strictly theoretical but before the conviction even before the trial we

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were asking voters what they would do how they would vote if Donald Trump was

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convicted of a serious crime and when we gave voters that hypothetical a small but still

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meaningful group of Donald Trump supporters told us that they would then

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vote for Joe Biden H how small but meaningful so in our time Sienna Battleground polls in October 7% of

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Donald Trump's supporters said they would vote for Joe Biden if Donald Trump

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was convicted of a felony wow now it's just a hypothetical but 7% is real 7% is

2:14

isn't just real in our era of close elections it's easily decisive the race might not even be close but it's

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important to emphasize and I can't emphasize this enough that asking voters a hypothetical is not a realistic

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simulation of what will actually happen now mhm they didn't even know what trial was about we just put in their face he's

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guilty now what that's not the way it's going to work in the real world right but it shows that a meaningful sliver of

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trump supporters are uncomfortable with the idea of voting for Trump if once he's been convicted of a felony and

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moreover they were even willing to say they support or would support Joe Biden

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they said to the pollster Joe Biden that's a real line for a trump voter to cross I'm hearing you say that this

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could could could could condition be a game

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Cher look I'm not a strategist but the fact that there's the sliver of Voters

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who are repelled by the idea of Donald Trump as a convict means that now that he is a convicted felon how the Biden

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campaign and the Trump campaign handle this issue how they talk about this conviction how they try and exploit it

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could easily be decisive in a close election this November

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[Music] you ready to go Maggie I'm ready to go

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okay so Maggie from what Nate con just told us the election could theoretically

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hinge on how both candidates decide to talk about and campaign around this

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criminal conviction of trump so as a longtime student and observer of Donald

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Trump take us into his emerging strategy for how to approach and if possible

4:01

capitalize on this conviction so let's just start with how he's feeling about

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this which is quite angry we know that this verdict according to several people who have spoken to him has infuriated

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him this is clearly not the outcome he wanted nobody wants to be convicted of a crime right and if you think about it

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Trump has lived in a legal gray area for decades but prior to the last 16 months

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or so he had never been charged with a crime and even though privately he had told people from the outset he expected

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he would get convicted he is a big believer in his own luck and he had really hoped that his winning streak would continue and it did not it did not

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and so this is really hard for him to stomach and to process frankly um but

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even before the verdict it was clear what he was going to do and how he was going to try to spin a guilty verdict so

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from the moment he walked out of the courtroom and into the courthouse hallway where he talked to reporters there this was a disgrace this was a

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rigged trial by a conflicted judge who was corrupt we saw what has become his

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standard Playbook emerge from his genuine Fury here our whole country is being rigged right now this was done by

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the Biden Administration and that was to characterize this outcome as the

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inevitable culmination of a yearslong partisan campaign to weaponize the legal

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system against him mhm and we'll keep fighting we'll fight till the end and we'll win because our country's gone to

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don't and his message is fight against this corrupt system and by fight against

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it his message to voters is elect me again and this message takes lots of

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forms the first is a series of fundraising pitches that are coming fast

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and furiously I just want to read you a few of them Michael I am a political

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prisoner Never Surrender I was convicted in a rigged political Witch Hunt trial I

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did nothing wrong thank you very much everybody and after

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these fundraising pitches it accelerated after the verdict as far as the trial itself it was very unfair he held this

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not really a press conference but gave a statement uh you saw what happened to some of the witnesses that were on our

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side they were literally crucified by this man who looks like an angel but

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he's really a devil he looks so nice and soft uh long statement on Friday morning

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at Trump Tower where he tried to essentially relitigate the case and cast it in his own way legal expense was

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marked down as legal expense think of this this is my this is the crime that I

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committed that I'm supposed to go to jail for 187 years for and say things

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that were not true such as that he faces you know 187 years in prison but this is far beyond me this is bigger than Trump

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this is bigger than me this is bigger than my presidency and I can fix this system that's corrupt and you can trust

7:03

me to take care of it November 5th remember November 5th is the most

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important day in the history of our country thank you very much

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every so Trump's plan is quite clearly not in any way so far to avoid talking

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about what for many people would be legal stain on your record but to talk about it a lot I mean he's holding a

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news conference explicitly to talk about it he's sending out all these fundraising messages referring to it and

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he's going to lean into it in those Communications to basically say that

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thing I always warned you was happening to me and could happen to me that the other side would use the legal system

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against me it's finally happened and the only way that we can overcome this is if

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you make me president and I become the guy sitting a top the entire legal system

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and I can fix it from the inside that's basically the message yes and that has

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consistently been his message Michael we saw Trump run previously on the idea of

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quote I alone can fix it and that really is what he's saying here he is saying

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that the only credible law enforcement is me H that all of these efforts to

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investigate me are tainted they're political they're politicized and you can F this by electing me so how should

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we be thinking about whether this familiar framework kind of on steroids

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now that Trump has actually been convicted is working I know it's early it's basically 72 hours since his

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conviction but because he's been so present in presenting this version of events I wonder how we gauge if it's any

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kind of a success we do have one pretty powerful barometer which is his fundraising he raised an astonishing

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amount of money in a very short amount of time shortly after the conviction was

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announced the websites where he's asking people to donate crashed from so much traffic wow and yet he still managed to

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raise more than $50 million in less than 36 hours I mean that is a little bit

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hard to wrap your head around that's well my math isn't that great but it's

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well more than a million dollars an hour right and look we can't corroborate those numbers until we see the Fe

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reports I think it's important to note that but by all accounts they've raised a ton of money right and we've talked to

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our colleagues about Trump's fundraising disadvantage visive Joe Biden which is

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pretty meaningful it sounds like of all things a conviction a criminal conviction has done more to catch him up

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to Biden than almost anything else in this campaign that's exactly right there is a very real possibility that he will

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if not erase the Gap significantly close the gap that Biden has over him with fundraising in the coming weeks

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but I have to say that so far what you're describing is feeling like a direct

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appeal to the base the faithful to those who are primed to love Trump and to see

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the world as he does a legal system rigged against him it feels less like a

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strategy for reaching out to the you know 7% or so of Voters who as Nate told

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us earlier have told pollsters that a conviction might send them from Trump to

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Biden so how should we think about that it's a really good question Michael I I think that his advisers would rather

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that he doesn't spend so much time retiga the trial details right they let Stormy Daniels testify they let this

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happen they let that happen his strategist are okay with him putting forward a message about how I'm here

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fighting for a system that is being perverted in his telling and his

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advisers think there are enough people even in the middle who are troubled by

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the relative frivolous case here compared to the much weigher ones of January 6th and

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the classified documents case that they think that that could have some appeal

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but the problem is they can't control how Trump is going to talk about this they try and so the question becomes can

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he deliver a focused enough message that could appeal to people who worry about

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how this case came about was it a contortion of the law and who might open to that message in the fall and meantime

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from what I'm seeing Maggie it seems like everyone in the Republican Party seems to be taking their cues from Trump

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and really going all in on this strategy of trying to use this conviction to win

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over voters well they don't even need much of a cue to take Michael they already know what Trump wants them to

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say but yes I mean everybody is pushing it front and center the court system is weaponized it is used to go after

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political opponents and people who work for them I woke up heartbroken for our country because the precedent set is

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that if you don't like somebody's politics you should use the American system of law and order to try and Destroy them you're seeing Marco Rubio

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and JD Vance who are two top vice presidential picks talking about the verdict and talking about it in very

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derisive terms and what it might mean for the future the entire argument of this case is that Donald Trump should go

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to prison because an employee of his filled out paperwork this is disgraceful you believe and

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you're seeing Governors talk about it you're seeing local lawmakers talking about it you're seeing the house Speaker

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talk about it you are seeing everybody talk about it right he is the leader of the Republican party and instead of cleaving them away from him it's moving

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them closer and he has just tightened his grip whether that is something durable in a general election where most

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voters are going to vote about how candidates impact their own lives and how policies impact their own lives we

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just don't know but they are very much putting this front and center for the time being I want to talk about that for

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just a minute because we've long understood that Republican officials at very high levels are willing to mimic

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whatever Trump is saying after the Access Hollywood Video for example in 2016 during the impeachments but this

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feels different we're now seeing members of the United States Senate for example

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Vance and Rubio embracing a message of outright lawlessness you know this is

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supposedly the party of Law and Order so it's surprising not just to see them

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embracing a convicted felon in Donald Trump but embracing him at the very

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moment when he is saying to the world this is stupid this is rigged this doesn't make any sense I just don't

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think we've ever really seen that before in American politics

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Michael I'm going to go ahead and disagree a bit with your premise I don't think there is anything surprising about

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this because Donald Trump has so thoroughly remade the Republican party where what he wants it to be is what

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everyone does and we have seen this over the course of many many years so what he's asking of these people is no

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different than what he asked of them during the first impeachment or the second impeachment or when he was

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indicted in this case it is defend me defend me defend me and there is no

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exception made now that he has actually been convicted because Republicans don't believe this was a legitimate trial so

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this is not an intellectually hard leap for them to make he has over the years remade the

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Republican party this party of Law and Order into the party of when it comes to the Law whatever Donald Trump says

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correct instead of it once upon a time being the party of Law and Order where this kind of conduct would be shunned

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where say when Richard Nixon was in office and con vinced to leave because of what he was facing in terms of

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possibly being Ed and not putting his party through that Donald Trump is going to put his party through that every single time and they will happily go

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through it with him at this point well to that point there are it would seem two possibilities for how this all plays

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out one is that Trump's conviction strategy what we've been talking about here it works because he hasn't just

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remade the Republican Party In His Image he's remade the entire country's expectations about what a president can

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or can't be the other possibil is that this approach is just wrong and

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while Republicans are going to line up behind Trump because of it average Americans swing voters especially won't

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and this will end up just recreating the Republican party's problems from the

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last election the 2022 midterms when Trump's Renegade Outlaw approach his

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insistence that the election was stolen his defense of riots at the US capital on January 6 ended up costing the

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Republican Party so many congressional elections that could be happening because of Trump's message right now all

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over again in this presidential race that's exactly right because again we

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just don't know which way this is going to play so much of this is going to depend on how a narrow group of Voters

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view this in a handful of states and if there are enough people who can be persuaded by him that this really was an

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unfair thing that happened to him and evidence of a corrupted and corroded system then maybe it will work but if

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all Trump does is keep reminding people that he has engaged in conduct that other presidents have not that could be

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a problem for him right some of this depends Michael on

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what Democrats decide to do broadly and we just don't know the answer to that yet Democrats so far are very clearly

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conflicted about how to handle this Donald Trump is not not conflicted at all

17:01

well Maggie thank you very much Michael thank [Music]

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you after the break my colleague Reed Epstein takes us inside that Democratic

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conflict we'll be right back

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read you cover the Biden campaign for the times we just talked to Maggie about

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how Donald Trump is trying to turn this negative a conviction into a positive by

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basically deciding to talk about it non-stop which is a risky strategy in theory Democrats have a simpler task

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here which is to figure out what to do with a kind of political gift their

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opponent leading in the polls having been convicted of 34 crimes but Maggie's final words to us were that Democrats

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were conflicted about how to handle this suggesting that it is more complicated

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than it may seem so my question to you is is it and should it be

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complicated well it usually is a good thing when your opponent is convicted of

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felonies during a campaign that right in the campaign handbook that is generally

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seen as a plus however we are living in the year 2024 President Biden is running

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for re-election and he has a very complicated relationship with Donald

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Trump's legal problems he has from the beginning vowed to not discuss them he

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has essentially ordered the White House and his campaign staff to stay away from

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any discussions of kind of what the indictments would mean for his own

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political future and the presidential campaign and why would that be he does not want to be seen as pulling the

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strings or the man responsible for Trump being indicted when he ran for president

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in 2020 you may remember he ran on a return to normal and one of the tenants

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of that was an independent justice department that would make decisions without influence from the White House

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but Reed importantly this case that we're talking about and this conviction is not a federal case it is a local

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Manhattan Criminal prosecution that has resulted in a conviction so what has

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Biden's relationship been to that has that decree of don't talk about Trump's

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legal problems because I am president and I oversee the Department of Justice has that applied to this case it has for

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the most part held in this case the Biden campaign has had a couple of sort

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of jokey asides referencing the Manhattan case if you remember when they

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made their offer to have a debate Biden said that he would do it on Wednesdays because that was when Trump was free

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from The Trial but for the most part Biden has stayed pretty mute about the whole thing and then on Thursday

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afternoon when the verdict came in everyone in the universe that I report about was anxious and ready to see if it

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would change the Biden campaign's posture toward Donald Trump's legal

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issues M and what we learned in the minutes after the verdict was delivered was that

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they were staying the course essentially that they issued a press release that said essentially the only way to keep

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Donald Trump out of the White House is at The Ballot Box and the next day Biden himself gives a press conference at the

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White House good afternoon before I begin my remarks I just want to say a few words about what

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happened yesterday in New York City he spoke about Trump verdict the jury the

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judicial process the jury heard five weeks of evidence five weeks after

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careful deliberation the jury reached a unanimous verdict they found Donald Trump guilty

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on all 34 felony counts and as far as Trump himself Biden is pretty restrained

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and it's Reckless it's dangerous it's irresponsible for anyone to say this was

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rigged just because they don't like the verdict he talks about how Reckless it

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is for anybody to cast doubt upon the

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judicial system and the process through which Trump was convicted but he doesn't

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get into the specifics of Trump's case nor does he dwell on Trump's new status

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as a convicted felon the JM should be respected and we should never allow

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anyone to tear it down in all told he was done talking about Trump's case in a little less than two minutes this feels

22:02

like a moment to pause on for just a moment because at the precise time that

22:07

Trump becomes a convicted felon 34 times over and he is blasting out fundraising

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emails and saying I'm a political prisoner the Biden Campaign which is

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behind in the polls and is suddenly presented with in theory an opportunity to genuinely shake up this race those

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are rare opportunities in a campaign like this the Biden campaign barely

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touches it they did not go in on it full boore the way that if the positions were

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reversed you would expect Republicans to attack Biden on right if and we we don't

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need to imagine what that would look like all you have to do is look at how they have responded and reacted to the

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president's son Hunter Biden being indicted on criminal charges himself they have attacked cter Biden they have

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suggested that his alleged crimes are the responsibility of his father they have branded them both part of a a Biden

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crime family and all this comes as Hunter Biden is scheduled to begin his own trial on Monday making it all but

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certain that Republicans will continue to use that trial as fodder to attack

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President Biden and other Democrats we I wonder what the rest of the democratic party is thinking and

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saying about this very restrained Biden approach to Trump's

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conviction well the minute the verdict came in my colleague Nick Nas and I began calling all manner of Democrats

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Senators congressmen State party chairs strategists on on on and what we heard

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from in the end was a party that really was ready to go on the attack we heard

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from Democrats like Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts who said the

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contrast in the campaign needs to be between a man of lies and Chaos versus a guy who's trying to make the country

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work for everyone we heard from beta oor the Texas Democrat who ran for president

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against Biden against Biden who said it's the obligation of every Democrat to

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remind every voter that Donald Trump is now a convicted felon and just how unprecedented this

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is we heard from members of Congress we heard from state legislators we heard

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from County and State party chairs and there is essentially no one who thinks

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that it shouldn't be part of the push that the party at large is making in

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terms of telling voters about Donald Trump that they want the words convicted

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felon to be included in every sentence that has the word Donald Trump in it

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this sounds like leading Democrats saying to Biden do more lean into this

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moment play with this conviction right and the reason they

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want that is that this conviction has the potential to reach the sort of Voters who are not paying attention to

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the news we know that Joe Biden is weakest among people who don't read newspapers who don't follow television

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news and these are the sort of people who won't pay attention to some speech that Biden gives on a policy topic but

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they're going to hear that Trump was convicted and Democrats think it's important important to make sure that

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that gets baked in to how people feel about Donald Trump especially people who

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consume very little news I mean all of that seems to potentially point to the idea that

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President Biden In This Moment being as conflicted as he is about how to handle

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this conviction and as a result being subtle and not figuring out how to

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really push on it might be squandering his last real

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opportunity to fundamentally change a race that according to almost all the major

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polls he's behind in and is in real danger of losing it may be too soon to

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say that he's squandering this because Trump was convicted on Thursday he's still convicted today he'll be convicted

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next week and so they have not foreclosed on the idea that they will

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not lean into this they just aren't doing it right now but they are running shorter on time every

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day to make up that ground that you talked about right trailing in the polls and

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so it's too soon to say that they're squandering this particular opportunity

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but it's not too soon to say that they've spent a lot of time not making up ground against Donald Trump right and

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at the moment it sure looks like the candidate in the lead in this race and with the most in theory to lose from

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this conviction has the most robust plan for trying to capitalize it and that's

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Donald Trump and Joe Biden who would seem to have the most to gain from this conviction seems very inclined to

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underplay it be subtle about it not make it a centerpiece of his candidacy and that's genuinely I think for a lot of

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people going to be surprising well there may be one other way to think about this and that's that

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the Biden campaign thinks that they're playing this just the right way every

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day that Donald Trump talks about how unfair the conviction was and how unfair

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the trial was Joe Biden's campaign thinks that that's helpful for them

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because Donald Trump is not talking about inflation or the Border or issues

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that are acutely bad for Joe Biden to have at the center of the nation's political discussion and so Joe Biden

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and his campaign are happy to have Trump do 30 minute press conferences where he

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Rants and Raves about the judge and the trial and the rules and the jury

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instruction and all those things that they think make this campaign about

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Trump himself and not about him saying things to some of these

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these infrequent and lwi information voters that the Biden campaign thinks

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will decide the election if those people were hearing Trump talk about inflation in the border and how Joe Biden has not

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performed well on those two issues I think the Biden campaign would be sort of much more worried than if Trump is

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talking about the [Music]

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trial right you're saying there's a world where the Biden campaign sees Trump's strategy of talking about this

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case non-stop as helping not necessarily him but them but them if Trump was

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convicted and said that's over I'm going to talk about the border and the economy I I think the Biden people would be a

29:04

lot more worried we read thank you very much we

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appreciate it thank you [Music]

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Michael we'll be right

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back here's what else you need to know today in a detailed speech on Friday

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President Biden endorsed a plan to end the war in Gaza that would lead to a

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permanent ceasefire the phased release of all Israeli hostages held by Hamas

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and the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from Gaza the speech was an attempt by

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Biden to pressure Israel's leader Benjamin Netanyahu into accepting the proposal but two members of netanyahu's

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far-right Coalition immediately rejected the plan threatening to quit his government if he accepts it and

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Netanyahu himself expressed reservations saying that Israel had not yet completed

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the job of destroying Hamas and the African National Congress

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the party that freed South Africa from apartheid and has held power there since

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1994 has lost its political Monopoly over the country in the latest election

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the party received only 40% of the vote far less than it got in the last

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election analysts said that high unemployment shortages of electricity

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and rampant crime caused thec its once unbreakable support to stay in power the

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party must now Cobble together a coalition government with its [Music]

30:54

Rivals today's episode was produced by Rachel quer AA chur v m z and Diana win

31:02

it was edited by Devin Taylor contains original music by Marian Lozano Pat

31:08

mccusker and Alicia bitu and was engineered by Chris Wood our theme music

31:14

is by Jim brunberg and Ben Lark of [Music]

31:21

[Applause] wonderly that's it for the daily I'm

31:29

Michael buaro see you tomorrow