

## Why I changed my Mind about Trump

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A jury on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, found former president Donald J. Trump guilty in a case in which he was charged with 34 counts of falsifying business records in order to conceal an alleged \$130,000 non-disclosure payment to adult-film actress Stormy Daniels. Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg alleged that the payment to Daniels was used to cover up, or commit another crime, namely a conspiracy to *promote or prevent an election* by “unlawful means.” I have attempted to understand the reasoning here, but am lost. Somehow, the judge made the jump to conclude the payment was part of an attempt to influence the 2016 presidential election in which Trump was then a candidate. ‘Election influence’ is such a broad term that it could cover everything from blocking the doors at a polling site to writing letters to a newspaper.

The underlying crime that President Trump was accused of committing, the court ruled, was a violation of New York Election Law section 17-152, which says that “any two or more persons who conspire to promote or prevent the election of any person to a public office by unlawful means ... shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.” Somehow this state misdemeanor became a federal felony. I am now completely befuddled.

Running a large business requires dealing with lawsuits. It is often less costly to pay off the person rather than risk a court trial, which can be very expensive. At the time I was hired for a hospital position, 16 lawsuits against the hospital were pending. In one case, the hospital paid a claimant 5 million dollars rather than go to court. Trump’s business and media contracts required him to effectively deal with negative publicity by payoffs if necessary. A Trump associate claimed that the main reason

Daniels was paid off was to protect his (Trump's) wife. As is common in these cases, Daniels claimed Trump had sex with her; Trump defiantly denied that he did.

David Pecker, former CEO of American Media Inc., described his professional agreement with Trump was to block scandalous stories about Trump. One problem was, as a young man Trump was a strikingly handsome billionaire who had many female suitors. When he became president, some of his ex-girlfriends thought they could cash in on his fame. If jilted by Trump they may have felt a need to embellish their story to justify the common, many-thousands-of dollars-payment for their story. The *National Enquirer* paid a doorman at Trump Tower \$30,000 to block a story about Trump having an illegitimate child, a story that turned out to be false. The court implied that Pecker should have printed these potentially false stories. Realizing that most of the claims were the "he said vs, she said" variety, the paper's owner killed most of the stories, probably hurting the paper's circulation. Furthermore, the *National Enquirer* is not known for printing well-documented, carefully researched, stories.

Several times in the past, when a male Republican ran, or was appointed to a position, some women came out of the closet and claimed inappropriate behavior or worse. Recent examples include Judge Brett Kavanaugh who was appointed in 2018 to fill the position vacated by Justice Anthony Kennedy. Almost immediately Christine Blasey Ford accused Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her in the early 1980s. Soon three other women accused Kavanaugh of sexual misconduct, one of whom later recanted her story. As was also true in Trump's case, none of the accusations were corroborated by eyewitness testimony, and Kavanaugh denied them. Justice Clarence Thomas had very close to the very same experience in 1991.

Liberty University law professor and former Kansas attorney general, Phillip Kline, wrote that the jury instructions by "Judge Juan Merchan has through delay and obfuscation hampered the preparation of the defense in a manner for the jury designed to convict without agreement on what crime was committed, and paved the way to allowing irrelevant evidence tainted by animus towards Trump to convict." Judge Merchan sparked controversy by jury instructions that they didn't need to agree on all elements of an underlying crime that was key to elevating into a felony what would normally be a misdemeanor. The sentencing of the former commander-in-chief is July 11th, four days before the Republican National Convention where Trump will be officially named the Republican Party's nominee for President of the United States.

# The Hunter Biden Political Trial

Meanwhile, Hunter Biden has been charged with lying on a gun registration form and the scheduled two-week trial could cost many thousands of dollars. Because the evidence appears unequivocal, why not use a fine and probation to settle the case. If sentenced to jail, his father will likely pardon him (which he did in November 2024)

The California penalty for shoplifting below 950 dollars is a misdemeanor which is often not punished. We know shoplifting is the doorway to a life of crime, thus the priority must be on real criminals instead of prosecuting Hunter Biden and Donald Trump for a few minor acts possibly due to misunderstanding or ignorance. No one died in either case, nor was anyone robbed. Let reason prevail.

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