


'Guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty'

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"A disgrace": Trump decried "a rigged trial by a conflicted judge" after he was convicted.

But could Trump still be the next US president? Critics fear that the former president's criminal conviction will not prevent his return to the White House.

What's happening?

Twelve jurors enter a courthouse in New York. Opposite them sits Donald Trump, the former president of the United States. He is on trial for 34 counts of falsifying business records.

The judge asks the foreman to read out the verdict. In a clear voice, he announces that the former president is guilty. According to one witness, "the air in the courtroom turned to stone".

Donald Trump paid \$130,000 to a former adult actress, Stormy Daniels, in the run-up to the 2016 election. The payment was made to keep her relationship with Trump a secret. Lawyers argued that the former president falsely recorded this money as "legal expenses".

Find out more

Many of Trump's critics hope this scandal will sink his career. "I do think it will have an impact and damage him as a candidate," claims Ariel Hill-Davis, co-founder of a Republic pressure group trying to move the party away from Trump.

However, there is no law against someone with a criminal record running for president and some people think the scandal might mean Trump attracts more votes.

Some people say

"Love him or hate him, no one has been able to figure out Donald Trump."

Ronald Kessler (1943 –), American journalist and historian

The judge can award up to four years in prison for each offence, but most legal experts expect a fine.

Polls suggest that Trump is neck and neck with his Democratic rival, President Joe Biden.

He is also facing three more criminal trials, but none of these is set to begin before 5 November, when Americans vote for their next president.

But could Trump still be the next US president?

Some say

Yes! New York is a Democratic state and the prosecutors were very critical of Trump. Turning the courts into a political weapon will only increase support for the former president.

Others think

No! Republicans are traditionally the party of law and order and supporters will struggle to vote for a convicted criminal as their next head of state.

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - How do you feel about Donald Trump, and why?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Have any convicted criminals ever run for president before?

What do you think?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot know for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine that a Trump supporter from the US is visiting your school. What questions would you ask them?

5. Express

What do others believe? - In groups, come up with two reasons why convicted felons should not be allowed to run for president, and two reasons why they should be allowed.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine that Donald Trump is elected president on 5 November. Write a short account of what you think will happen in America.