

Trump formally arrested and arraigned in south Florida court

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Ex-president Donald Trump turned himself in to federal courthouse in Miami Tuesday, where he was formally arrested, booked and arraigned before federal judge Jonathan Goodman on 37 felony counts, 31 of them relating to his refusal to return top secret intelligence documents he had taken from the White House on his way out in January 2021.

The arraignment took less than an hour, during which Trump said nothing. The charges were read out, and his attorneys entered not guilty pleas on his behalf. He was represented by a Florida attorney, Christopher Kise, and Todd Blanche, who is also representing him in the case brought in Manhattan on state charges of fraud, relating to hush money payments to pornographic film actress Stormy Daniels.

Special Counsel Jack Smith was in the trial audience, but he did not participate in the arraignment. The special counsel's office did not oppose Trump's release on his own recognizance. Judge Goodman insisted on only one condition for Trump's release, that he agree not to discuss the case with Walt Nauta, his valet and co-defendant, and several other witnesses to be identified later by the prosecution. In the case of the valet, the condition is completely unenforceable, since he spends most of each day with Trump.

The arraignment was a formality that did not even set the parameters for the stages in the legal proceedings that will follow. Press reports said that the next step would be discovery, in which the prosecution would turn over to the defense the material which is the basis of its case. This will be followed by the presentation of motions from defense and prosecution before Federal District Judge Aileen Cannon, who will handle the case from now on, including any trial.

Cannon was appointed to the bench by Trump. Last year she issued a series of pro-Trump rulings in initial

litigation that followed the FBI raid on the Mar-a-Lago estate seeking to recover classified documents that the ex-president was still withholding. These rulings were overturned by the appeals court for the 11th circuit, one of the most conservative.

Despite Trump's repeated appeals on his own social media platform for supporters to come to the Miami federal courthouse where the arraignment was scheduled for 3 p.m., only a few hundred people turned out, outnumbered by the police who had been deployed in reserve in anticipation of a considerably larger crowd.

The pro-Trump crowd included publicity seekers, one carrying a pig's head on a pike, others carrying signs denouncing Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who is competing with Trump for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. There were supporters of white supremacist Nick Fuentes, and at least one Proud Boy, although it appears that the fascist militia groups had made a decision not to attend the rally.

On Sunday, Trump appeared on the WABC radio program where he was interviewed by longtime political crony Roger Stone. He reiterated his appeal to protest outside the courthouse. "We need strength in our country now," he told Stone. "And they have to go out, and they have to protest peacefully. They have to go out."

For the most part, however, they did not.

After leaving the courthouse, Trump visited a well-known Cuban restaurant, Versailles, where a small crowd of supporters awaited him. Then he went to the airport, boarding his private jet to fly to his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, where he addressed a group of millionaire financial supporters on Tuesday night.

Trump and his most rabid political supporters have stepped up their fascistic threats against both Justice

Department officials and leading Democrats. On Monday Trump described special counsel Jack Smith as a “deranged lunatic.” And he declared that if he won the 2024 election he would appoint a special prosecutor to investigate President Joe Biden and his family.

Kari Lake, the defeated Republican candidate for governor in Arizona, said that if prosecutors “want to get to President Trump,” they would “have to go through me, and 75 million Americans just like me. And most of us are card-carrying members of the NRA.”

Entirely lost in the official and media presentation of the case against Trump is that he is being charged only for his offenses against the national security apparatus, in seizing and refusing to return documents containing information about US nuclear weapons systems and US military preparations to invade other countries and overthrow their governments.

Trump’s actions in attempting to overthrow the US Constitution and overturn the 2020 election have so far gone unpunished, although Smith is in charge of the federal investigation into the events of January 6, 2021. And there is not a hint of bringing Trump to justice on his vast crimes against the American people, from his persecution of immigrants and refugees to his encouragement of police violence and his open attempts to mobilize the military against democratic rights, as when he sought to declare martial law in response to the mass protests against the police murder of George Floyd.



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