

Judge bans Trump from posting statements about court staff in New York civil fraud trial

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3 October 2023

On the second day of the New York civil trial of Donald Trump, his two sons and the Trump Organization for committing business records fraud, Judge Arthur Engoron issued an order barring parties in the case from posting information online about his staff.

Justice Engoron of the state Supreme Court in Manhattan is presiding without a jury in the \$250 million lawsuit brought against the former US president by New York Attorney General Letitia James. The state attorney general has accused the Trumps and their businesses of engaging in decades of fraud aimed at inflating their net worth in order to gain access to favorable credit terms and otherwise increase their profits.

The judge issued his ban in response to a post by Donald Trump on his Truth Social platform earlier in the day. The post, which included a photo of court clerk Allison Greenfield alongside Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, claimed that Greenfield was the Democratic senator's girlfriend and included a link to the clerk's private Instagram profile.

It said: "Schumer's girlfriend, Alison R. Greenfield, is running this case against me. How disgraceful! This case should be dismissed immediately!!"

Trump has used the trial as a staging ground for repeated statements to the press and on his social media platform denouncing the judge, Attorney General James and the Democrats in a manner designed to incite his fascist supporters and intimidate and frighten court staff and witnesses. On Monday he accused the judge of "election interference" and suggested that he be criminally prosecuted, an open threat given that he is the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024.

Following an extended lunch break, Judge Engoron

directed his comments to Donald Trump and his legal team and said, "Personal attacks on members of my court staff are unacceptable and inappropriate. Consider this statement a gag order forbidding all parties from posting, emailing or speaking publicly about any of my staff."

According to a report by CBS News, "At about 1 p.m., the courtroom cleared for its usual lunch break. Minutes later, after reporters and other members of the public were shepherded out, attorneys for both sides returned to the courtroom. Reporters were barred from reentering for about 15 minutes. Soon after Trump and his attorneys left, the post about Greenfield disappeared from his website."

The CBS News report continued: "Greenfield has been by Engoron's side during nearly every hearing in the case for years, and is often given the opportunity to question lawyers on his behalf. She has had at times heated exchanges with members of Trump's legal team over intricacies of New York law. She has not yet questioned lawyers during the trial."

Although Judge Engoron did not explain it, legal experts have said that if Trump violates the order he can be fined as much as \$1,000 or be held in jail for up to 30 days. The court is clearly concerned over Trump's incessant public attacks on the judge as "deranged" and "a highly politicized Democrat."

This was but the latest example of the descent of the US ruling establishment into outright gangsterism and criminality. It is part of the breakdown of American bourgeois democracy impacting all three branches of the government.

Judge Engoron's order took place on the same day that a revolt by a group of far-right Republican supporters of Trump successfully ousted Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy from office, the first such

removal in US history. It also coincided with the arraignment of President Biden's son Hunter Biden on illegal gun possession charges in a Wilmington, Delaware federal court.

Trump is lashing out in all directions against his prosecution in at least six additional cases. These include four criminal cases—the classified documents case in Florida federal court; the attempted election coup case in Washington, D.C. federal court; the election racketeering case in Georgia state court; and the Stormy Daniels hush money case in New York state court. He also faces civil charges of defamation of retired writer E. Jean Carroll in New York state court and a federal class action suit in which he and his children are accused of promoting a pyramid scheme.

The prosecutor in two federal cases, Special Counsel Jack Smith, has requested that US District Judge Tanya Chutkan impose a protective order limiting what Trump can say about the case related to attempts to overturn the 2020 election. Referring to his posts on Truth Social, prosecutors said Trump was making “inflammatory public statements” to influence potential jurors and intimidate witnesses.

Special Counsel Smith asked for a “narrowly tailored” order barring Trump from making statements “regarding the identity, testimony, or credibility of prospective witnesses,” and “about any party, witness, attorney, court personnel, or potential jurors that are disparaging and inflammatory, or intimidating.” Smith cited one post by Trump that said, “If you go after me, I’m coming after you!” Judge Chutkan has yet to rule on the request.

Trump's attorneys have called the request “nothing more than an obvious attempt by the Biden administration to unlawfully silence its most prominent political opponent.”

The second day of the New York civil fraud trial resumed in the afternoon on Tuesday with testimony from accountant Donald Bender of the accounting firm Mazars, which handled the books of Trump and the Trump Organization for more than 30 years.

Bender resumed his year-by-year explanation of Trump's financial records. Trump lead attorney Christopher Kise objected to many of the documents shown, arguing that the relevant statute of limitations prohibited evidence from before either 2014 or 2016.

Judge Engoron overruled those objections, having

found on Monday that material prior to 2014 is admissible. Prosecution attorney Kevin Wallace told the judge that the state intends to tie the earlier documents to loans that matured later within the statute of limitations.

The state attorney general is seeking to bar Trump and his sons from ever conducting business in the state of New York, and the Trump Organization, which they control, from engaging in real estate transactions for five years. Ivanka Trump, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump are codefendants with their father.



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