# Environmental protester arrested for defacing Trump Tower plaque in climate warning



Nathaniel Smith, a 36-year-old environmental protester from Brooklyn, was arrested on Wednesday around noon after defacing former President Donald Trump’s presidential placard at Trump Tower in Midtown Manhattan. The incident occurred when Smith, a member of the UK-founded global environmental group Extinction Rebellion, sprayed neon green paint across the plaque, marking a bold act of protest against what he and his group describe as government failure on climate change.

Smith wore a black t-shirt emblazoned with the slogan “Join, or Die” as he calmly sprayed the word “USA” onto the 45th president’s placard. Spectators watched as Smith knelt in front of the vandalised symbol before being approached and handcuffed by Secret Service agents and NYPD officers. He was then escorted out of the building.

Extinction Rebellion told DailyMail.com that the spray paint used was “removable chalk” and characterised Smith’s graffiti as “a plea for the country to transcend the failing government institutions that brought the country to the current point of climate collapse.” Smith issued a statement explaining his motivations: “I did this because I am an American. It is my duty to stand up for my country, and my Earth, when a government becomes destructive of our right to Life."

He further criticised Donald Trump and what he described as a regime serving private interests across political parties, saying: “Donald Trump and the regime of private interests he works for – who donate equally to each party – are destructive of your inalienable right to Life.”

Just before his arrest, Smith unfurled a yellow banner bearing the message “4° = Game Over” along with Extinction Rebellion’s logo. This refers to warnings issued at the 2023 UN Climate Summit regarding the potentially catastrophic effects of a four-degree Celsius global temperature rise, which could cause sea levels to rise by six to 14 metres over several centuries, threatening coastal cities worldwide.

Smith was charged by the NYPD with making graffiti, possession of graffiti instruments, and criminal tampering in the third degree. As of Wednesday evening, he remained in custody.

The protest was part of Extinction Rebellion's continuing campaign of high-profile, disruptive actions designed to draw attention to the climate crisis and governmental inaction. The group has made it clear that their protests target political figures broadly when they fail to address environmental issues adequately, rather than singling out any one individual.

In reference to the broader political landscape, Smith stated, “switching blue is not the solve” to the climate crisis, asserting that “all American political parties are equally complicit in inaction which has brought us to this point.” He also criticised Vice President Kamala Harris’s climate policies, describing her platform as supporting “fracked gas, much deadlier than regular.”

Other Extinction Rebellion activists were present inside Trump Tower as Smith acted, documenting the protest through photos and videos. The group also staged another recent demonstration on Tuesday, spraying phrases including “f\*ck DOGE!” on the windows of Tesla’s Manhattan showroom, signalling their opposition to what they describe as reckless government behaviour.

The Daily Mail has contacted Trump Hotels for comment regarding Wednesday’s incident.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://wfin.com/fox-national-news/climate-activist-vandalizes-presidential-insignia-inside-trump-tower-ruining-the-planet-for-profit/> - This article corroborates the arrest of Nathaniel Smith at Trump Tower for defacing the presidential insignia, highlighting his environmental activism.
2. <https://www.newsx.com/world/watch-secret-service-arrests-climate-activist-for-spray-painting-usa-over-presidential-insignia-inside-trump-tower/> - This report provides details of Nathaniel Smith's protest, including the spray-painting of 'USA' over the presidential insignia, and his subsequent arrest by Secret Service agents.
3. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/> - Although not directly related to the specific incident, this UN webpage provides context on global climate change efforts, aligning with Extinction Rebellion's broader anti-climate change agenda.
4. <https://extinctionrebellion.uk/> - This is the official website of Extinction Rebellion, providing background information on their environmental activism and campaigns.
5. <https://www.nypd.gov/> - The NYPD website can provide general information about recent arrests and charges related to Nathaniel Smith's incident, as he was charged by the NYPD.
6. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/copenhagen-accomplishments/Paris-Agreement> - This webpage discusses global climate agreements and efforts, aligning with Nathaniel Smith's references to climate change and governmental inaction.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14641209/climate-change-protestors-trump-tower-deface-presidential-placard.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data