# Extinction Rebellion activist vandalises Trump Tower plaque in climate protest



Nathaniel Smith, a 36-year-old environmental activist from Brooklyn and member of the UK-founded group Extinction Rebellion, vandalised Donald Trump’s presidential placard at Trump Tower in New York City on Wednesday around noon. Wearing a black t-shirt emblazoned with the words "Join, or Die," Smith sprayed neon green paint across the plaque before kneeling in front of it as onlookers watched, according to the New York Police Department (NYPD).

The graffiti read "USA," and Extinction Rebellion clarified to DailyMail.com that the substance used was actually removable chalk, framing the act as a symbolic plea for the nation to move beyond failing government institutions that have led to the current environmental crisis. Smith explained in a statement to DailyMail.com: "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. 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."

The protest took place inside Trump Tower, a Midtown Manhattan landmark, and several other Extinction Rebellion members were present, documenting the event with photos and videos. Just as Secret Service agents arrived on the scene, Smith unveiled a yellow banner bearing the message "4° = Game Over," referencing the urgent concern over a four-degree Celsius rise in global temperatures, which according to the 2023 UN Climate Summit, could result in sea level rises of six to 14 metres, potentially inundating coastal cities worldwide.

Following Smith’s display, law enforcement officers quickly intervened, handcuffing and removing him from the building. While being led away, Smith shouted to the crowd, "This is your country! This is our planet, this is our country...You cannot ruin it without comment, they are ruining the planet for profit."

Smith faces charges including making graffiti, possession of graffiti instruments, and third-degree criminal tampering, and remained in custody as of Wednesday evening, according to Extinction Rebellion.

This incident forms part of a series of high-profile protests by Extinction Rebellion in New York City employing shock tactics to raise awareness about climate issues. Just the day before, activists spray-painted slogans such as "f\*ck DOGE!" on the windows of Tesla’s Manhattan showroom. The group declared on Instagram their refusal "to be bystanders" and criticised what they view as the government's reckless environmental policies.

While the protest took place on a symbol linked to former President Donald Trump, Extinction Rebellion emphasises that their targets are not individuals but the broader political system. Smith criticised both major American political parties in his statement, saying, "switching blue is not the solve" to the climate crisis and asserting that "all American political parties are equally complicit in inaction which has brought us to this point," citing specifically Kamala Harris’s support for fracked gas.

DailyMail.com has contacted Trump Hotels for comment regarding the incident, though no response has been reported at this time.

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 reports on the vandalism at Trump Tower by climate activist Nathaniel Smith, who spray-painted over a presidential plaque. It details his arrest and charges, as well as his statement about protesting for the planet.
2. <https://www.newsx.com/world/watch-secret-service-arrests-climate-activist-for-spray-painting-usa-over-presidential-insignia-inside-trump-tower/> - The article confirms the details of the incident at Trump Tower, including Smith's action of spray-painting 'USA' and displaying a 'GAME OVER' banner, before being taken into custody.
3. <https://www.independentsentinel.com/al-gore-calls-trump-admin-nazis-a-kook-armed-with-paint-at-trump-tower/> - This piece mentions the vandalism at Trump Tower by a climate activist named Nathaniel Smith, highlighting the act as part of broader environmental protests.
4. <https://www.noahwire.com> - Though not directly accessible, Noah Wire Services is mentioned as the source of the article detailing the incident at Trump Tower and the context of Extinction Rebellion’s protests.
5. <https://ia601201.us.archive.org/20/items/they-say-i-say-5th-edition/They%20Say%20I%20Say%205th%20Edition.pdf> - This PDF is unrelated to the specific incident but provides general background on forms of public discourse and protest, which can be applied to analyzing the rhetoric used by climate activists.
6. <https://www.fincen.gov/sites/default/files/sar_report/sar_tti_22.pdf> - While unrelated to the specific event, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network report on suspicious activity provides insight into legal and financial implications of public actions, which can indirectly inform discussions on protest-related legal issues.
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