# Trump Legal Drama: Defense Challenges Cohen's Credibility in Hush-Money Trial



### Trump Legal Drama: Defense Hits Back at Cohen in Hush-Money Trial

**New York, May 16, 2024** – The hush-money trial for former President Donald Trump witnessed heated cross-examination on Thursday. Michael D. Cohen, Trump's former personal lawyer and key witness, testified regarding a series of steps he took to silence Stormy Daniels, a porn star, during Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. Cohen claimed he had discussed the payoff with Trump through Keith Schiller, Trump's bodyguard.

Defense attorney Todd Blanche sought to dismantle Cohen’s credibility, suggesting Cohen's testimony, which includes claims of a phone conversation with Trump about the payoff, was fabricated. The defense referenced text messages Cohen sent regarding prank calls from a teenager to question the authenticity of his account.

Blanche confronted Cohen with past inconsistent statements, including his 2018 guilty plea for tax charges and whether he sought a presidential pardon, to portray him as dishonest. Cohen admitted he had discussed a pardon with his lawyers, contradicting earlier statements.

During the trial, Trump, observed with a mix of detachment and engagement, reacted notably when Cohen discussed past communications and confrontations with the media. Trump’s reaction displayed heightened interest, particularly when discussions pointed towards Cohen's interactions with reporters.

Judge Juan Merchan indicated the trial might conclude soon, with potential summations on Tuesday. The defense has hinted at calling additional witnesses and has not yet decided whether Trump will testify.

**Key Players and Proceedings**
- **Michael Cohen**: Testified he organized and discussed hush-money payments with Trump, claiming calls were substantial to the investigation.
- **Todd Blanche**: Focused on demonstrating Cohen's history of deceit to undermine his credibility.
- **Donald Trump**: Displayed varying levels of engagement during the trial, especially during discussions of media interactions.

As the trial nears its conclusion, the credibility of Cohen as the prosecution's star witness remains pivotal, with implications for Trump's potential sentencing and broader political future.