# Former President Trump's Manhattan trial over hush money payment nears conclusion



Former President Donald Trump’s criminal trial, centered around a hush-money payment to adult film actress Stormy Daniels, is nearing its conclusion in Manhattan. At the crux of the case is Michael Cohen, Trump’s former lawyer, who testified that Trump instructed him to pay Daniels $130,000 before the 2016 election to silence her about an alleged affair. Cohen further claimed Trump approved and repaid the sum, disguised as legal fees, leading to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records.

Cohen’s testimony detailed his coordination of the payment and subsequent reimbursement scheme involving the Trump Organization, with Trump’s alleged personal approval. The defense team, led by Todd Blanche, sought to undermine Cohen’s credibility by highlighting his history of perjury and motivations against Trump. The trial has seen notable witness appearances including Stormy Daniels and key Trump associates, amidst significant public and media interest.

As the trial progresses, prominent Republicans, such as House Speaker Mike Johnson and vice-presidential hopefuls, have publicly supported Trump. Judge Juan Merchan has indicated that closing arguments could begin as soon as Tuesday, after which the jury will deliberate. Trump’s fate remains uncertain, with outcomes ranging from a mistrial to varying degrees of conviction. The trial's impact on Trump’s 2024 presidential campaign remains to be seen, as current polling shows minimal change in voter support. The proceedings are set against a backdrop of pop culture and political theatrics, generating extensive media coverage.