



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

# Does Trump have reason to worry about the moral sanction of his voters?



Two-thirds of Americans do not **believe** Donald Trump will behave ethically if re-elected.

That is what they thought before the trial against the former and possible future president began in New York for falsifying books to pay porn actress Stormy Daniels to keep quiet.

Stormy Daniels' explosive **testimony** before the New York jury has once again portrayed Trump as a morally depraved man, a sexual predator, and a man who cheated on his wife shortly after the birth of their son and paid a large sum to hide it.

However, rather than being accused of moral transgressions, Trump is accused of major financial wrongdoing. The evidence will be presented in the following two months, and the court will decide about Trump's release or sentencing based on it.

However, in precisely six months, during the presidential elections—in which he will undoubtedly run as the Republican Party candidate—his morality will be evaluated.

## Two verdicts

Trump is expecting two verdicts in the "hush money" case, which will decide whether he finds himself back in the White House.

The case has weighed on Trump's popularity with voters for six years, ever since Stormy Daniels **told** her juicy version of their intimate encounter at Lake Tahoe in 2006 on "60 Minutes". More than 20 million Americans watched her confession on TV, while the leading actor was already in the White House.

Six months before the elections, Trump still faces the question of whether the moral verdict will affect his election results and whether a prospective verdict for a financial crime regarding his immoral conduct will determine his re-election prospects.

The trial before the court in New York is the

only one of a total of four against Trump that has the prospect of ending before the elections in November.

In this respect, its significance for Trump's campaign is greater than that of the others, despite accusations of far more serious crimes in the other proceedings than falsifying business records and keeping his mistress quiet.

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However, according to current projections of voter sentiment, Trump has little reason to worry about the impact of the court verdict on his election result.

He stands alongside Joe Biden, despite a series of lawsuits threatening years in prison.

But does he have more to worry about than the moral condemnation of Republican voters, which could manifest itself either in their abstention or in a vote against him?

## Trump used to be afraid of moral judgement

Trump is on trial in a New York court, and the main focus of his argument was his fear of political retribution from his supporters prior to the 2016 election.

He knew full well at the time that his pre-election adultery was a high risk and tried to cover it up with hundreds of thousands of dollars, of which Stormy Daniels alone received \$130,000 for her silence in the weeks leading up to the elections.

The cover-up of his immoral actions worked, and he emerged victorious in the presidential election. However, he did it illegally by falsifying business records to justify his

expenditures.

Trump's fear of moral judgement still exists today, but it has taken on a different form now that he is facing legal action and possible punishment for a crime.

In the meantime, Trump has managed to "sell" the narrative to his supporters that the series of charges against him is a political vendetta by the establishment and a witch hunt. In this respect, he has largely mitigated the moral impact of his actions.



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Trump has simply performed "magic" and made his supporters believe that personal immorality has no bearing on their decision to vote for him and send him to the White House. He had the same experience in 2016, when he won the elections.

In the years leading up to his candidacy, conservative Republican voters firmly believed that a candidate who had committed an immoral act in his personal life could not hold office ethically. At the time, less than a third allowed immoral candidates the opportunity to fulfil their public duties ethically.

But Trump's performance in 2016 turned that attitude around, so before the elections, more than two-thirds of evangelistic voters turned a blind eye to their favourite candidate's private immorality and gave him the right to serve as president.

"I'm not in the man's pants. I don't know what

he did when he pulled them down. We're human. We all sin", said one Trump voter when Stormy Daniels' allegations came to light in 2018.

## Moralists will not punish an immoral leader

The lack of moral judgement by devout conservative Republican voters is in part a result of their focus on the legal aspect of Trump's problems.

Many will justify their support for Trump with the fact that "hush money" payments are not illegal. But that is just an excuse in front of their own ethical mirror to accept an exception they would not make on any other occasion.

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For the next four to eight weeks, the ongoing "hush money" trial will serve as a daily reminder of just how thoroughly their political favourite has been undermining the moral standards they have been fervently upholding as a family-oriented people.

But even though they were well aware of Trump's immorality eight years ago, they still put their faith in him to govern the nation. Furthermore, at the time, about 60% of his supporters said that the phrase "moral leader" describes Donald Trump well in his capacity as president.

Given the Republican candidate's present strong approval ratings, it will be difficult for his supporters to hold him accountable this time.