

America's First Convicted Felon President: Trump's Legal Cases

Written By Maya Jen

Donald Trump has once again made history, but not just by becoming the second president in U.S. history to serve two nonconsecutive terms (thanks, Grover Cleveland). He's also the first criminal defendant to be elected to the country's highest office. With a host of ongoing criminal cases against him, Trump's return to the White House raises critical questions regarding the intersection of law, politics, and presidential power. What happens to his current slew of criminal cases?

New York Hush Money Trial

In May, Trump was unanimously convicted on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up hush money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels. These payments were allegedly designed to prevent a damaging sex scandal during the final months of the 2016 presidential campaign. Michael Cohen, Trump's then-personal attorney, facilitated the \$130,000 payment, which prosecutors argued amounted to an illegal attempt to influence the election. Although this New York criminal case was the only one to go to trial, Trump ultimately delayed his sentencing from Sept. 18 to Nov. 26, arguing that it would unfairly influence the presidential race. Since his re-election, this sentencing has been further delayed.

As presidential pardon power does not extend to state cases, Trump cannot pardon himself of already convicted charges, which means convictions will remain. In light of Hunter Biden's recent pardon, Trump's lawyers urged for his case to be dropped altogether, claiming that just like Hunter Biden, Trump's case was also "selectively, and unfairly, prosecuted."