

Here's what Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said about Donald Trump during his DA campaign

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If Your Time is short

- In the lead-up to his 2021 election to become Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg spoke often about his record, which included litigation against former President Donald Trump. He did not make any campaign promises to indict Trump.
- Bragg's predecessor, Cyrus Vance Jr., in 2019 began investigating the Trump Organization's role in hush money payments.
- Bragg said during his campaign that he would continue his predecessor's investigation and hold Trump "accountable by following the facts where they go."

Former President Donald Trump has framed a New York criminal investigation into his business activities as a politicized effort brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, who Trump says campaigned on taking him down.

"Beginning with the radical left to George Soros-backed prosecutor Alvin Bragg of New York, who campaigned on the fact that he would get President Trump," Trump said in an April 4 speech at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida following his arraignment. "'I'm going to get him, I'm going to get him.' This is a guy campaigning."

Earlier that day, Trump pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. Bragg's office brought the charges against Trump following a grand jury indictment. The case involves a \$130,000 hush money payment in 2016 to adult film actor Stormy Daniels.

Soros did not donate to Bragg's campaign directly, but the liberal billionaire gave \$1 million to a political action committee that supported prosecutors with progressive views on criminal justice, including Bragg. Such views included focusing on proven crime-prevention strategies and prioritizing spending within the criminal justice system on violent offenders.

We reviewed Bragg's campaign record and found that although he often cited his prior prosecutorial experience with respect to Trump and said he was equipped to inherit the DA office's investigation, he made no promises about any case. He said that although he had access to some publicly available information about Trump's activities, he didn't have all the information and wanted to be "fair."

In DA race, candidates were routinely asked about Trump investigation

In June 2019, Bragg, a Democrat, declared his campaign for Manhattan district attorney. Bragg is a former state and federal prosecutor who was raised in Harlem and received his undergraduate and law degree from Harvard University.

About two months after Bragg launched his campaign, then-District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. subpoenaed the Trump Organization, jump-starting the investigation into the company's role in hush money payments.

In February 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Trump must turn over his tax returns — a win for Vance's office. A month later, Vance announced he would not seek reelection. At this point, the investigation into Trump's business dealings was well underway. The Trump investigation's timeline meant Vance's successor would inherit the case. Bragg and the seven other candidates vying for the Democratic nomination were routinely asked to discuss how they would handle the investigation.

In November 2021 — around the time Bragg was elected but before he took office — Vance convened a second grand jury to hear evidence about Trump's business practices. When Bragg was sworn into office Jan. 1, 2022, becoming the first African-American to hold the seat, Vance had not decided whether to indict Trump.

When questioned on the campaign trail about the Trump matter, Bragg routinely cited his past experience as a chief deputy attorney general for New York state. In this role, Bragg oversaw more than 100 lawsuits against Trump administration policies including a travel ban and the administration's attempt to rescind an Obama-era program that prevented the deportation of immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally as children. Bragg also sued the Trump Foundation over its alleged illegal coordination with Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. A judge ordered Trump to pay \$2 million as part of a settlement in that case.

Here's a look at some of Bragg's statements about Trump, made before Bragg became district attorney. Some of them have been shared by Trump and his supporters to suggest bias.

Dec. 13, 2020: "I also sued the Trump administration more than 100 times... So I know that work."



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/KPeMuJZdKns>

The Republican National Convention on April 4 tweeted a clip of Bragg, saying it showed that he "bragged" about suing the Trump administration.

The clip is from a Dec. 13, 2020, primary candidate forum. At about the one-hour mark, Bragg was asked to introduce himself and take questions. Nearly two minutes into his introduction, just before the 1 hour and 12 minute time stamp, Bragg made the following statement. We bolded the portion of the comments that were included in the RNC clip:

"We need a DA on Day One who has this 360-degree experience. **Let's talk about what's waiting for the new DA. The docket. We know there's a Trump investigation. I have investigated Trump and his children and held them accountable for their misconduct with the Trump Foundation. I also sued the Trump administration more than 100 times for (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), the travel ban, separation of children from their families at the border. So I know that work. I know how to follow the facts and hold people in power accountable.**"

Jan. 15, 2021: "I'm ready to go wherever the facts take me."



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/iQLflgGxUrU>

On March 23, Trump posted a one-minute video on Truth Social showing a clipped interview from Bragg's 2021 campaign. It was spliced from a roughly 18-minute radio interview recorded Jan. 15, 2021, with WQHT "Hot 97" radio hosts Ebro Darden and Peter Rosenberg. Here's the portion of that original interview that involved Trump, starting at about 42 seconds into the video. The bolded portions show what appeared in the Truth Social clip:

Darden: "One of the things leading into this vote for the Manhattan district attorney's office, I know a lot of people are wondering, whoever has this job, **are they going to convict Donald Trump?**"

Bragg: "That is the number one issue we know he's investigating. And what I'll say is I'm the only, I was the first to announce against Cy Vance. I, too, have a lot of issues, which is why I decided to run.

"I'm the candidate in the race who has the experience with Donald Trump. I was the chief deputy in the attorney general's office. We sued the Trump administration over 100 times, for the Muslim travel ban, for family separation at the border, for shenanigans with the census. So, I know how to litigate with him. I also led the team that did the Trump Foundation case. So, I'm ready to go wherever the facts take me, and to inherit that case. And I think it'd be hard to argue with the fact that that'd be the most important, most high-profile case, and I've seen him up front and seen the lawlessness that he could do."

Rosenberg: **"And you believe it should happen?"**

Bragg: **"I believe we have to hold him accountable.** I haven't seen all the facts beyond the public, but I've litigated with him and so I'm prepared to go where the facts take me once I see them, and hold him accountable."

Rosenberg then asked another question before the conversation returned to Trump.

Darden: "You said leading you where the facts may lead you with regard to dealing with Donald Trump. From what you know today, and I know you're being careful with your words because you're running for office so I respect that. ... But I know as a voter and taxpayer, all I know is some of the things that I've seen would have put me in jail. So, how is it not going to put someone at his level in jail? Now I know the answer is he's an old white man and he's got a lot of money and he was just coming out of the office of the president but that doesn't sit well with me as a citizen of the United States and as a resident of this area."

Bragg: "You're right, I am being careful, not just because I am running for office but because every case still has to be judged by the facts and I don't know all the facts. Right? And so I've been doing this for 20 years and I want to be fair. But with that said, there's a lot that's out there publicly. I look at what the attorney general is looking at as a civil case, which could become a criminal case at the Manhattan DA's office. Where on the one hand he's saying, 'Hey look, this piece of land is worth a dollar when I want to go pay taxes on it, but when I want to go get a loan, all of a sudden, it's worth a million.' That —"

Darden: "That's public information that he did that."

Bragg: "And so I'm saying, that's why I'm focused on that. That kind of conduct right there could definitely be the basis for a case. I've done a mortgage fraud case, I've gone to trial. I've done a tax fraud case. That kind of conduct right there is deeply troubling and that's what I'm thinking about when I say holding him accountable."

"So, yeah, you are right, we got two standards of justice. Harvey Weinstein. Jeffrey Epstein. Being a rich old white man has allowed you to evade accountability in Manhattan. That includes Trump and his children — they were engaged in fraud in a SoHo real estate deal with his children. So, you are right, we have two standards of justice. I grew up in the second standard in Harlem. I know all about it."

"And you're right, I am being a little careful because I don't want to prejudge and then I get into office and then the first motion I get from the Trump team is I got to recuse myself because I have prejudged the facts. But you're right, there's a lot out there in the public domain that is so troubling and I say that not just as someone who is watching it but as someone who's done these kinds of cases, someone who has litigated with Donald Trump about fraud and, by the way, and won. Right? We held him accountable in the Trump Foundation case. My office did the Trump University case. **So I have seen a pattern of**

lawlessness over 20 years and so I am inclined to believe all I have seen in the public domain and believe that there's a path forward there to make the case."

(One note: Despite Darden's word choice, it's important to note that district attorneys do not convict people. Judges and juries wield that power.)

March 17, 2021: "What I've seen in the public domain is deeply troubling, this misvaluation of assets to me sounds like the basis of a case that can be criminal."

Watch Video At: https://youtu.be/_dlvMp6NMsw

In a 30-minute online interview with Manhattan Neighborhood Network and online news organization Gotham Gazette on March 17, 2021, Gotham Gazette Executive Editor Ben Max asked Bragg about Trump.

Max, around the 28-minute mark: "From what you've seen so far, just generally speaking, do you think that Donald Trump as a private citizen should see action from the Manhattan district attorney's office to pursue criminal charges?"

Bragg: "I will hold him accountable by following the facts where they go. What I've seen in the public domain is deeply troubling, this misvaluation of assets to me sounds like the basis of a case that can be criminal. And, as you said, I need to be judicious, as someone who may inherit this case. But what I can say is you look at my record of not just white-collar crimes generally, but specifically with Donald Trump and people can have confidence that I'm going to go where the facts take me."

May 14, 2021: "I can't comment on something I might inherit directly."



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/PxD2o13bY04>

In an interview with Black News Channel on May 14, 2021, host Yodit Tewelde said to Bragg, "Newspaper reports today say we could expect to see an indictment to be handed down against Donald Trump soon. Any thoughts on how you would handle such a high-profile case?"

Bragg responded, "I can't comment on something I might inherit directly and I don't know any more than what your viewers (have heard) from the public, but what I can say is, "In all these things, look to what I have done."

Bragg then spoke again about his record of litigation against Trump.

July 5, 2021: "Is the next person capable? I think that's a fair question and one that we can answer and one that I've answered, by just pointing at my experience."

In a July 5, 2021, story for WABC in New York, Bragg was interviewed by political reporter Dave Evans. At the time, Bragg's only remaining primary challenger had conceded defeat and Bragg, a Democrat, was heavily favored to win the seat against a Republican challenger.

Evans noted that Bragg would inherit the Trump investigation.

"Today, Bragg did not want to talk much about Trump, but he wanted to assure voters that he knows what he's doing," Evans said.

"Is the next person capable?" Bragg said in the story. "I think that's a fair question and one that we can answer and one that I've answered, by just pointing at my experience. But without talking about, you know, what we don't know, which is where this headed, the facts that aren't in the public domain."

"You can't talk about that?" Evans asked.

"I can't talk about that," Bragg responded.

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