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PREMIUM POLITICS

## Who Is Alvin Bragg? What You Need to Know About the Manhattan DA Who Indicted Trump



Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg speaks at a press conference after the sentencing hearing of the Trump Organization at the New York Supreme Court in New York on Jan. 13, 2023. (Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images)



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March 31, 2023 Updated: April 1, 2023



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Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg convened a New York grand jury earlier this year, which voted on Thursday to indict former President Donald Trump for allegations linked to a business records investigation related to a “hush money” payment to adult entertainment actress Stormy Daniels in 2016.

“This evening we contacted Mr. Trump’s attorney to coordinate his surrender ... for arraignment on a Supreme Court indictment, which remains under seal,” a spokesperson from Bragg’s office said in a statement, [The Epoch Times](#) reported. “Guidance will be provided when the arraignment date is selected.”

Trump is the first-ever U.S. president to face criminal charges.

The former president is accused of making a \$130,000 payment to Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, in exchange for her silence on an alleged sexual encounter with her. Trump has consistently denied having any extramarital relationship with the woman.

Joe Tacopina, Trump’s lawyer, told [The Epoch Times](#) that the former president is expected to be in New York City next week for arraignment. Tacopina suggested that April 4 could be the date of his arraignment.

## Grew Up in Harlem

Bragg, who took office in 2022, won the Democratic primary and then the general election in November 2021, making him Manhattan’s first black district attorney. New York City has five elected DAs—one for each borough.

He is the fourth elected Manhattan DA in the last 80 years. He was preceded by DA Cyrus Vance Jr., who retired at the end of 2021 after 12 years.

The 49-year-old grew up in Harlem, according to his official [biography](#). He earned his B.A. from Harvard University and his J.D. at Harvard Law School.

Bragg has spent more than two decades working in the criminal justice system.

Before becoming DA, Bragg served as an Assistant Attorney General for the state of New York and as an assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

During his campaign, Bragg made promises to indict Trump, and when he took office, he inherited a yearslong grand jury investigation of the alleged payment to Daniels during his 2016 presidential campaign.



District attorney candidate Alvin Bragg speaks during a Get Out the Vote rally at A. Philip Randolph Square in Harlem in New York City on Nov. 1, 2021. (Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images)

Trump was implicated by his former attorney Michael Cohen as part of a plea deal. In 2018, Cohen was sentenced to prison and ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine after pleading guilty to eight counts, including criminal tax evasion and campaign finance violations. Under Vance, the case stalled. The Federal Election Commission also looked into the matter but dropped its investigation.

But after taking office, Bragg had concerns about the strength of the case against Trump, leading to the resignation of two lead investigators.

Earlier this year, Bragg convened a new grand jury and proceeded with the case.

## High-Profile Cases

Bragg, who describes himself as a white-collar prosecutor, has been involved in a number of high-profile cases.

Since becoming DA, he announced an indictment against Trump's former strategist Steve Bannon who is accused of defrauding donors in a fundraising scheme to build the wall along the southern border.



Steve Bannon, former advisor to former President Donald Trump, arrives at the office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg in New York City on Sept. 8, 2022. (Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images)

He was also involved in two cases against the Trump Organization.

Allen Weisselberg, chief financial officer for the Trump Organization and the Trump Payroll Corp., was charged under Vance, Bragg's predecessor. The companies were charged with tax fraud and accused of reducing payroll liability from executive salaries through untaxed bonuses and millions in luxury perks.

Weisselberg pleaded guilty to the charges. He was sentenced to five months in jail and agreed to testify against the Trump companies.

Bragg oversaw the case against the Trump Organization, which was found guilty late last year. The Trump Organization and Trump Payroll Corp. were fined \$810,000 and \$800,000, respectively. Trump, who denied involvement, was not personally charged in the case.

Bragg also represented the family of Eric Garner, who died after being placed in a chokehold by a police officer in 2014.

## **Bragg's Campaign Backed by Soros?**

Billionaire George Soros, 92, founder of Open Society Foundations, is known for putting millions of dollars behind liberal prosecutors and political candidates but has claimed no connection to Bragg.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis called out Bragg as being "Soros-backed" in response to Bragg's announcement of the indictment against Trump. Many Republicans, including Trump, have concurred with DeSantis.

"The weaponization of the legal system to advance a political agenda turns the rule of law on its head. It is un-American," DeSantis wrote on Twitter. "The Soros-backed Manhattan District Attorney has consistently bent the law to downgrade felonies and to excuse criminal misconduct. Yet, now he is stretching the law to target a political opponent," he said.

"Florida will not assist in an extradition request given the questionable circumstances at issue with this Soros-backed Manhattan prosecutor and his political agenda."



Hungarian-born U.S. investor and left-wing political philanthropist George Soros looks on after having delivered a speech on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 23, 2020. (Fabrice Coffrini/AFP/Getty Images)

When Soros was asked about his connection to Bragg, he denied contributing to the prosecutor's campaign, adding that he did not know him.

"As for Alvin Bragg, as a matter of fact I did not contribute to his campaign and I don't know him," Soros wrote in a [Twitter exchange](#) with Semafor journalist Steve Clemons. "I think some on the right would rather focus on far-fetched conspiracy theories than on the serious charges against the former president."

Soros also pointed to his op-ed in [The Wall Street Journal](#) titled "Why I Support Reform Prosecutors," which he said explains why he has donated to "reform-minded" prosecutors.

In May 2021, Soros donated \$1 million to the Color of Change PAC, according to [Open Secrets](#).

During the same period, the Color of Change PAC [endorsed](#) and spent money backing Bragg's campaign.

## What Else?

After taking office, Bragg issued a “Day 1 Memo – FACT SHEET” with a list of his policy changes, including not charging people with resisting arrest for a non-criminal offense, fare evasion, prostitution, and other misdemeanor offenses. ([pdf](#))

New York City police unions have accused him of being soft on crime.

“Criminals know that @ManhattanDA will bend over backwards to protect them, not law-abiding New Yorkers,” the Police Benevolent Association wrote on Twitter last summer, [CBS News](#) reported.

Paul DiGiacomo, president of the Detectives Endowment Association, has described Bragg as “[a pro-criminal politician](#).”

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