

BORIS JOHNSON: This was a machine-gun mob-style hit job on Trump. It was nakedly political - and will make his victory more likely, not less

[Boris Johnson](#) 13:28 EDT 31 May 2024



By Boris Johnson

Whaaat??? How can anyone survive that? By all the laws of politics the Trump campaign should today be a smoking ruin.

He's a felon. He's a criminal – and he is the first president in US history to be convicted of such ostensibly serious offences.

Every time that jury foreman pronounced the word 'Guilty' in the Manhattan court on Thursday, he should by all normal logic have been dealing a death-blow to [Donald Trump](#)'s hopes of regaining the [White House](#).

He said it not just once but 34 times. This was no ordinary political assassination. This was a machine-gun mob-style hit-job on Trump.



© POOL/AFP via Getty Images

This was no ordinary political assassination, writes Boris Johnson. This was a machine-gun mob-style hit-job on Donald Trump, pictured yesterday

When the news flashed up on the world's screens, there were commentators in studios everywhere whose voices audibly trembled with excitement. For a brief intoxicating moment it was as if they truly believed they had got him.

It looked as though the great global coalition of fastidious anti-Trumpies had finally found the bazooka big enough to penetrate the pachydermous Presidential front-runner.

As Trump left the courtroom, we were invited to contemplate a parade of delirious images: Trump in handcuffs, Trump doing the perp walk to the cells; Trump in an orange jump suit; Trump meeting retribution in the showers of some appalling penitentiary.

My Oh My, they hugged themselves. It was all too magnificent. You could tell by the sheer size of the GUILTY headlines in the Left-liberal media –

the breathless awe of the TV reporters – that they viewed this as a truly seismic moment, a once-in-a-generation political event.

It was HISTORIC, they all said. HISTORIC. Because there was now a real chance that Trump could actually be incarcerated – at the crucial moment in the Presidential election, when he is nailed on as the Republican candidate.

Surely no one would vote for a convicted felon – let alone one who might actually begin his term of office in the New York correctional facility in Sing Sing. Surely this was the end of his poll lead, they said.

Surely this was the end of his run altogether...

[Read More](#)

[**BORIS JOHNSON: The Tesla ride with my wife and baby around the hair-raising roads of Los Angeles that convinced me driverless cars ARE the future**](#)



And then the first poll appeared.

To the evident amazement of the pundits it appeared that most voters were indifferent to the verdict – by quite a large majority. But at least in the poll I saw there was an astonishing 15 per cent who were now *more* likely to vote for him, after the conviction, than they were before.

Again, you look at that kind of polling data, and you say, Whaaat? Week after week Trump has been [forced to sit in that Manhattan court room](#). He has been subjected to all sorts of indignities and embarrassments, not least the unnecessarily extended and lubricious testimony of porn star Stormy Daniels.

He has now been found guilty on all counts – and yet more than one in six of all voters now says they are *more* likely to vote for him. What is going on?

I suppose Trump's critics will say that his supporters have been brainwashed. The Left will say that his Teflon invulnerability is just evidence of the way he has corrupted politics.

They will say that the Trumpies are mad, wrong, flat-earthers and Roswell believers. Well, I disagree.

As it happens, I sympathise with the Trump supporters in their view of this trial, and its verdict. I didn't like what happened in Washington on Jan 6 2021 when rioters stormed the Capitol. I believe that Trump should have conceded to Joe Biden immediately.

But in the end the American Constitution worked, and there was a peaceful and timely transition of power from one administration to the next.

Insofar as there is any attempt to corrupt the democratic political process, to me it is in the attempts of his enemies to use lawfare – cases like this one – to keep Donald Trump off the ballot, and to deprive the American people of the chance to vote for him.

That is why those 34 guilty counts have done nothing – so far – to shift the dial, and I doubt very much that they will.

The American people have looked at this case, and in spite of all the

portentous claims about its HISTORIC importance, they have concluded that it was, by and large, a load of stunted-up old nonsense.



Then prime minister Boris Johnson meets then US president Donald Trump at the UN in 2019

The issue was not whether Stormy Daniels was telling the truth about her relations with Trump, or how much she was paid to keep quiet. The issue was whether there was any reliable evidence that Trump knew that the payments necessitated some dodgy accounting in one of his businesses.

Whatever else it showed, the trial revealed that there was almost zero such evidence – except for the testimony of a proven liar called Michael Cohen. The New York prosecutors were mysteriously able to winkle Cohen out of prison – where he was doing time for other crimes – and persuade him to testify against Trump.

It was nakedly political. It was completely artificial. The Democrat prosecutors thought they were being so clever: tripping Trump up over

this technicality – like collaring Al Capone for tax evasion, they probably told themselves.

Except that everyone with any common sense can see what I consider their real motives, how they were combing the rule book for stuff to use against Trump, how they went trawling for witnesses to testify against him, no matter how tainted or how biased.

The vast mass of American voters could see what I believe was really happening: that the liberal elites were just appalled at Trump's continuing popularity and his ability to connect with voters – and they were using anything they could find to derail his campaign.

That is why the anti-Trump lawfare is backfiring, and I believe Senator Lindsey Graham is right when he says it will do more to strengthen Trump than to harm him.

The Left-liberal lawyers have been immensely foolish. They have been using the very techniques – confected legal proceedings – that are used by tyrannical governments around the world to keep their opponents tied up and unable to contest elections.



New Yorkers who oppose Trump take to the streets in Manhattan to celebrate his conviction

It is one of the oldest tricks in the anti-democratic handbook. If you can't defeat a candidate at the ballot box, get the lawyers on to it and paper him or her with writs.

When we see this happening in Africa, or in Russia, we denounce it as authoritarian and corrupt.

Well, the American people have looked at it, and decided that the methods and the motives are fundamentally the same.

Whatever his detractors may say, I believe that Donald Trump – at his best – could offer the world the strong, confident leadership that it needs.

On the most important geo-strategic issue of our time, the freedom of Ukraine, he has the energy and coherence to ensure we get the right answer: the defeat of Putin, and a clear message to the world, especially

China, that aggression does not pay.

If you look dispassionately at his time in office, both on the domestic and international front, it was far more successful than his Left-wing critics allow. They should not be using legal tricks like this to prevent him from receiving the judgment that really matters – the verdict of the people.

Whatever they may claim now, that is exactly what his opponents were hoping these cases would achieve. More fool them.

By pursuing these cases, they have helped to make his victory more likely, not less.