

U.S. jury finds Donald Trump sexually abused E Jean Carroll

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E Jean Carroll reacts as she exits the Manhattan Federal Court following the verdict in the civil case against former US President Donald Trump, in New York City, May 9 [Brendan McDermid/Reuters]

New York, May 9 (RHC)-- Donald Trump sexually abused writer E Jean Carroll in the 1990s and then defamed her by branding her a liar, a jury has decided, delivering a legal blow to the former U.S. president as he seeks re-election in 2024.

The verdict was read out in a Manhattan federal court on Tuesday afternoon, just hours after jurors began deliberating following a seven-day civil trial.

Carroll had accused the former U.S. president of sexually assaulting her in a New York City department store in the mid-1990s and then defaming her by dismissing her story -- told in a 2019 memoir -- as a "con job."

The nine-member jury determined on Tuesday that the ex-president did not rape Carroll, but they did find him liable for sexual abuse and defamation, The New York Times, CNN and other U.S. news outlets reported. The jurors awarded the former Elle magazine columnist approximately \$5 million in compensatory and punitive damages. Because this was a civil case, Trump faces no criminal consequences.

His spokesman, Steven Cheung, said on Tuesday that the former president would appeal. That means he will not have to pay the awarded damages so long as the case is on appeal. Trump, who did not attend the New York trial, had dismissed Carroll's allegations as part of an effort to hurt him politically and drum up sales for her 2019 memoir.

His legal team did not present a defense, instead gambling that jurors would find that Carroll had failed to make a persuasive case.

But Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, on Monday said a 2005 Access Hollywood video in which Trump said women let him "grab 'em by the pussy" bolstered the accounts of Carroll and other women who accused Trump of sexual assault.

"He admitted on video to doing exactly the kinds of things that have brought us here to this courtroom," Kaplan said in her closing argument on Monday.

Carroll held hands with her lawyers as the verdict was read on Tuesday. She left the courthouse with Kaplan, smiling and wearing sunglasses, and entered a car without speaking to reporters.

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