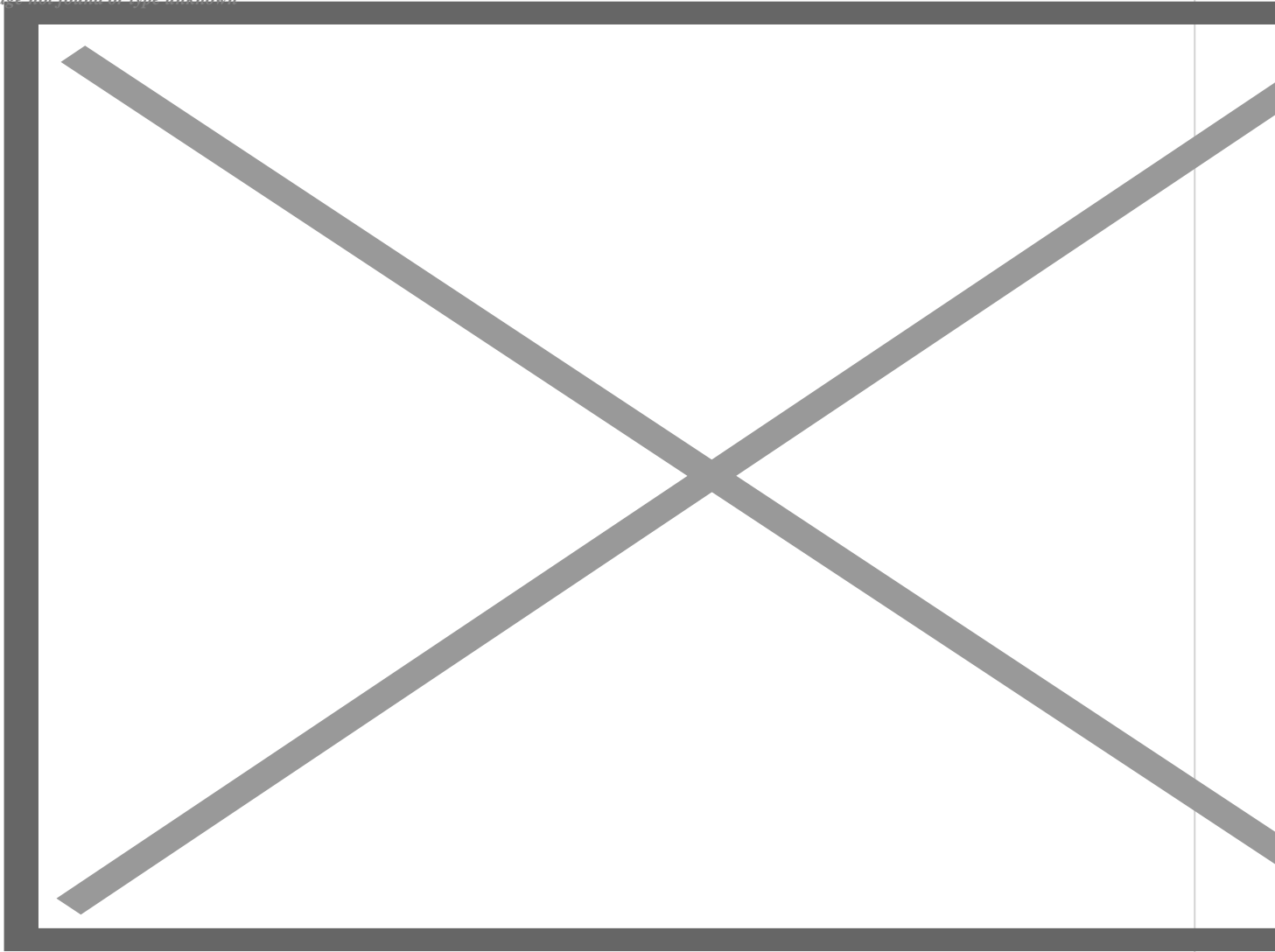


Trump ready to issue 100 pardons on last day in office

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Washington, January 18 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump is finalizing the details on one of his last acts as president when he will pardon or commute the sentences of more than 100 people before he leaves the White House.

CNN says the pardons and commutations will come Tuesday, his final full day in office while the Washington Post reports it could be Monday or Tuesday. This latest batch of pardons and commutations is expected to include a mix of people, including “white collar criminals, high-profile rappers, and others,” according to CNN.

Trump met on Sunday with his daughter Ivanka and his son in law, Jared Kushner, to finalize the details of the pardons, according to the Post. Trump is personally involved in the details of the pardons and those who know him say it makes sense considering that he’s likely to take clemency actions that could benefit him once he’s no longer president.

“Everything is a transaction. He likes pardons because it is unilateral. And he likes doing favors for people he thinks will owe him,” a source told CNN. Earlier, the New York Times had reported that Trump allies were making lots of money lobbying for pardons.

Trump had been expected to divide his last clemency actions in two with one group expected at the end of last week and the final one on Tuesday. But everything had to be pushed back. At first, it was because Trump was obsessed with trying to prove baseless claims of election fraud. And then after the Capitol riot, Trump was distracted amid accusations that he incited the insurrection.

Over the last few days, Trump seems to have been focused on whether he should issue preemptive pardons to his adult children and maybe even to himself. For now, it doesn’t seem like he’ll go through with it but everyone cautions that, as always, Trump is unpredictable and things could change.

White House officials have warned Trump against pardoning himself. Some have questioned whether the move would even be constitutional. But beyond that question, allies of the president have also said an attempt to self-pardon could anger Republicans in the Senate and could amount to an admission of guilt that could play a role in the impeachment trial as well as any other civil litigation.

Trump allies have also warned the president against pardoning anyone involved in the Capitol riot. It is still unclear whether Trump will grant clemency to former campaign adviser Stephen Bannon or to his personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani.

Dr. Salomon Melgen, a prominent eye doctor from Palm Beach, Florida, who is in prison after being convicted on dozens of counts of health care fraud, is currently expected to be included in the clemency list, three sources familiar tell CNN.

Melgen, who is noteworthy for being the co-conspirator in a since-dismissed corruption case against Democratic New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, was sentenced to 17 years for health care fraud in 2018. While his name surprised some Trump allies given the President's attitude toward Menendez, Melgen is seen as a wealthy and influential figure in south Florida. The corruption case against Menendez and Melgen was dropped by the Justice Department in January 2018.

Inside the White House, there has been a scramble to petition for pardons on behalf of allies and advocacy groups and names could be added and taken off up until the last minute, sources say.

CNN previously reported there has been a crush of pardon requests during Trump's final days in office from allies, lobbyists and others hoping to cash in on their loyalty to Trump. The New York Times reported Sunday some of those people were getting paid tens of thousands of dollars to lobby on behalf of felons hoping for pardons.



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