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 **Meet the Lawyers Set to Defend Donald Trump If He's Indicted**

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 Criminal Law



Emily Saul



Former President Donald Trump has retained a powerhouse defense team to combat any criminal charges that may stem from the ongoing investigation by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office.

The "core squad" is composed of Joe Tacopina, Chad Seigel, and Susan Necheles, Tacopina told the New York Law Journal on Wednesday.

All three are known as accomplished trial lawyers with decades of experience representing high-profile individuals in a wide array of state and federal cases.

Tacopina and Seigel are founding partners at Tacopina, Seigel & DeOreo, and Necheles is a founding partner at Necheles Law.

Tacopina noted the team is also in the process of bringing on a firm that specializes in election law, although he declined to identify the firm until arrangements were finalized.

"Susan is a top-notch criminal lawyer and my partner Chad is as well," said Tacopina, who over 30 years has represented a who's who of celebrities, politicians, judges, musicians and athletes such as Alex Rodriguez and Michael Jackson. "There's a reason people hire me. Look at my track record; the quotes on my website are not from my mother."

Necheles, who most recently represented the Trump Corp. at trial, has her own formidable list of clients, including politicians and the late Genovese crime family underboss Venero "Benny Eggs" Mangano.

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While Trump has many lawyers, this is the core group that will handle any indictment arising from the Manhattan DA’s ongoing grand jury investigation, Tacopina explained.

While the exact charges sought by the DA’s office remain a closely guarded secret, Tacopina said it’s his understanding that prosecutors are seeking an indictment relating solely to payments made to Stephanie Clifford, also known as Stormy Daniels, ahead of the 2016 presidential election.

In the event the case is indicted, Tacopina said the court can expect an early motion from the team arguing selective and targeted prosecution.

“In my 32 years practicing law both as a prosecutor and defense attorney I’ve never seen such an abuse of prosecutorial discretion,” he remarked. “I’m a trial lawyer, I’m not a TV lawyer. I’m going on TV because the client needs me to go on TV. We need to bring awareness to it because it should never have been brought.”

“I’m a nonpartisan litigator,” he added. “I take cases I believe in.”

Tacopina didn’t mince words when it came to Michael Cohen, who facilitated the payment to Clifford and has appeared numerous times before the grand jury.

“If I have the pleasure of ever cross-examining Michael Cohen there will be no meat left on that bone,” he stated.

While the grand jury remained dark on Wednesday, any indictment they hand up would proceed before Manhattan Supreme Court Judge Juan Merchan, a source confirmed

Merchan—who oversaw the Trump Org. trial, and is currently handling the cases of former Trump ally Steve Bannon and We Build the Wall Inc.—was appointed to the bench in 2006 by former Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

The Manhattan DA’s office has repeatedly denied allegations that the ongoing investigation is politically motivated.

“In every prosecution, we follow the law without fear or favor to uncover the truth,” a spokesperson said.

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