

# Everyone Has Trump's Phone Number Now

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Washington's hottest commodity is a 10-digit number that can swing financial markets, drive the news, and shift policy—but only if the timing is right.

The White House has received reports in recent weeks that President Trump's personal phone number has been offered for sale to deep-pocketed interests seeking influence, two administration officials told us. "It's honestly just wild," one of them said. "I've heard of CEOs offering money for his number. I've heard of crypto bros offering cryptocurrency for it." Journalists have taken to horse-trading among themselves, offering the contact information of other world leaders—or sometimes even dozens of bold-faced names—just to get the most important one saved into their phones. "It's out of control," said the second official, who, like others we spoke with for this story, requested anonymity to talk frankly on the issue. "It's like a wrecking ball."

No one foresaw this at the start of Trump's second term, when the [number was closely held](#) by the president's friends and a handful of journalists who used it sparingly. So many people now call Trump on his private iPhone that his advisers have stopped trying to keep track. Sometimes in meetings, he will leave his phone face up, allowing staff to gawk at the flashing notifications of incoming or missed calls that pile up on his screen. Only some of them are from numbers that have been saved in the device. "It is literally call after reporter call," the first official said. "It is just boom, boom, boom."

The incoming calls get particularly intense after a journalist successfully catches the president and then publishes [a mini-scoop](#) on what he says. It's like flashing a Bat-Signal: Trump may be idle and chatty. Assignment editors suddenly ask: If it is so easy for the competition to get a scoop, why can't their reporters do the same, and stat? Network correspondents scramble to one-up each other. "Ten reporters will call in a matter of two hours," the second official told us.

The scrum for fleeting—and often conflicting—presidential utterances has made it difficult for the government to [sell a clear story](#) to the American people. Yet Trump's advisers have no plans to intervene. "He enjoys it," that official continued. "He knows how to handle the press." When we asked the White House press office about the president's phone, the spokesperson Anna Kelly told us in a statement: "President Trump is the most transparent and accessible president in history. The press can't get enough of Trump, and they know it."

Before Trump turned Twitter into a campaign megaphone, his chosen medium of communication was the landline phone in his Fifth Avenue office. He bragged in his 1987 book, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, that most days involved more than 50 phone calls, some more than 100. He was, in many ways, just "Don from Queens," a classic drive-time-radio caller with grievances and opinions and business to transact. But then he became president of the United States, and after two foreign interventions in as many months, the norms that once kept reporters from calling have fallen away. "Everybody learned in Trump 1.0 that he was going to work his phone and talk to whoever he felt like talking to, thank you very much," Chris Whipple, a journalist who is working on a book about [presidential-campaign managers](#), told us. "This is just his modus operandi, and it's now Trump unshackled."

[Read: The secret history of Trump's private cellphone](#)

Since the United States first attacked Iran two weeks ago, Trump has answered more than three dozen phone calls from journalists representing at least a dozen outlets, including ABC News, *Axios*, CBS News, CNN, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, Israel's Channel 14, Fox News, MS NOW, NBC News, *The New York Times*, the *New York Post*, *Politico*, *The Times of Israel*, *The Washington Post*, and, yes, *The Atlantic*. A journalist from *The Washington Reporter*, a small conservative outlet, has repeatedly called, and the administration officials say Substack authors have started to call, forcing White House staff to look up names they don't recognize.

One fear in the West Wing: that someone will give Trump bad information, or sell him on a conspiracy theory, provoking a reaction aides will have to clean up. Another concern: that the president will waste his time responding to meaningless trifles that distract from the arguments that the White House wants to make. Reporters have asked in recent calls for Trump's opinion on his son-in-law Jared Kushner, and whether his decision to launch a massive air attack on Iran would win him the Nobel Peace Prize. "I don't know," the president responded to that last question, from the *Washington Examiner* on Thursday. "I'm not interested in it."

“Believe it or not, you can just call the president,” the *Politico* reporter Sophia Cai explained in a December [Instagram video](#) that ended with her crowdsourcing questions for the commander in chief. “What should I ask him next?”

Early last year, even as Trump’s cellphone number began to more widely circulate, calling the president was a privilege and a flex—the sort of move that lent routine stories a bit more buzz and offered instant street cred for White House reporters (*I just got off the phone with the president of the United States!*). The White House team would privately tell reporters they were not happy with the direct line, and vaguely warn that if the phone number was used too often, there could be a cost. But Trump made the rules, and Trump liked the calls. [World leaders, lobbyists, and executives](#) relished the connection to the president, if they were lucky enough to land his personal number. The prime minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese, was roundly mocked in his home country when he said in a campaign debate last year that you can’t just call the president’s cellphone: “I’m not sure he has a mobile phone,” he asserted, incorrectly.

Here we must confess our own complicity: We first called the president while reporting our [June Atlantic cover story](#) on Trump’s return to power. He had agreed to an interview with us, then abruptly canceled via an angry Truth Social post. So we called him, chatted for roughly 20 minutes, and then got invited into the Oval Office, after all, for a second, longer interview. We’ve since called him occasionally after major news breaks, like when [he first struck Iran](#) last summer, when [he captured Venezuela’s leader](#), and when he more recently [waged war with Iran](#). And, if we’re being honest, we will obviously call him again.

Such is the demand for Trump’s digits that fellow reporters have asked us to share them. We were recently approached by another journalist who offered to trade more than two dozen cellphone numbers of significant stature for the one number of most significant stature. (We declined.) One person we talked with has heard that the going rate for this sort of swap is a one-to-one trade for another major world leader. (Sorry, president of Liechtenstein.) In some ways, it was Trump’s foreign-policy adventurism that unofficially launched the most intense feeding frenzy, at least among journalists. Those moments, after the first explosions go off in an international capital, are naturally times of maximum global suspense, when any presidential utterance makes news. *The New York Times* placed an early-morning phone call after the operation to capture Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela. (“It was a brilliant operation, actually.”) *The Washington Post* got the first call in after the latest strikes on Iran. (“All I want is freedom for the people.”)

[Read: Trump isn’t even trying to sell this war](#)

Trump’s decision to avoid holding a press conference in the days after launching a war with Iran made his phone a singular source of information, as the world tried to understand what he was doing. His first reported interview that Saturday was at 4 a.m.; his last came just before 11 p.m. Trump’s inconsistent answers created quite a bit of confusion that seemed to lead to more calls. He told *Axios* on the first day that he could end the war “in two or three days.” He told *The New York Times* the next day “we intended four or five weeks.” When CBS News reached him by phone Monday afternoon, more than a week after the bombs began dropping, he declared that “the war is very complete, pretty much,” dramatically moving the price of oil and U.S. stock markets.

Just hours later, he offered a qualification during a traditional news conference at his private golf club in Doral, Florida, when a reporter asked which was more accurate: his comments to CBS News or his defense secretary’s claim that the war was just beginning? “Well, I think you can say both,” Trump responded.

The phone calls, unlike formal news conferences, happen in the heat of a moment, in response to a particular question, from a particular reporter, with a particular goal, under particular time pressure, because the president can end the conversation at any moment. *Brief* seems to be the most frequent descriptor attached to these calls, most of which last just a few minutes, rarely more than 10. Top White House officials are often frustrated because these quick reactions lack context or thought but can be treated with nearly the same gravity as [a sit-down interview](#) in the Oval Office. “You are talking to someone on the fly, who is yip-yapping or chitchatting,” one of the officials told us.

Access to the president depends on his mood and schedule. “There have been days when he has not taken any calls, and he has hung up on people,” one of the officials said. As of now, Trump’s aides say there is no indication that the president is annoyed by the constant calls—and, therefore, there are no plans to change the number. The White House also has no solution to the constant spread of the number, including through suspected horse-trading and black-market sales among influence brokers.

Once upon a time, there were fewer media companies and they each carefully planned their outreach to the Oval Office, often having their anointed bureau chief or top correspondent handle all interview requests. Now that looks more like a free-for-all. At least four correspondents for Fox News cited phone interviews with Trump in the 10 days after the first attack on Iran. Three different people from NBC News called in the first week. The ABC News

correspondent Jonathan Karl, who has long had a phone relationship with Trump, reported three calls in the first week by himself, and two of his colleagues have also nabbed phone time. At CNN, both Dana Bash and Jake Tapper got Trump on the phone earlier this month.

[Read: Six days of war, 10 rationales](#)

Few of these interviews have led to a lasting impact on the nation's understanding of the war. Even some journalists have begun outright mocking the trend, after markets moved following Trump's comment that the war was "complete, pretty much." "Every boy's dream," David Weigel, who covers politics for *Semafor*, wrote on X. "Getting some market-moving info from the president. Not ACCURATE info but let's not get greedy here." What is not ephemeral is the abiding belief that just about anyone, anywhere, can get the president on the phone if they're sufficiently enterprising.

Earlier this week, at a coffee shop in downtown Washington, D.C., one of us ran into a Democratic operative, who waved us over to chat. After we apologetically gestured to our AirPods—the universal signal for *I can't talk right now*—the operative didn't miss a beat. "With Trump?!"

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