

What life is like for Paul Manafort in jail

By Katelyn Polantz
CNN, June 16, 2018



(CNN) — Just before dusk on Friday, a white van pulled into Northern Neck Regional Jail, a green-roofed, low-slung building about three miles from the bank of the Rappahannock River in Virginia.

Inside the van sat former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort.

The white van had left the federal courthouse in downtown Washington, DC, with Manafort inside three hours earlier.

In the federal system, there is no mugshot nor perp walk. If he's found guilty and sent to prison for the amount of time prosecutors hope, the 69-year-old man may never be seen outside again.

Manafort was last seen wearing a navy pinstripe suit, crisp white shirt and burgundy tie in [a federal courtroom in DC on Friday](#), the same courtroom he's appeared in almost a dozen times since his arrest in October. He had lived for the last eight months in his Alexandria, Virginia, condo under house arrest -- a circumstance so confined and uncomfortable, a doctor wrote to the judge regarding his conditions.

But court marshals had to follow the judge's order after a tense proceeding Friday morning. They took Manafort's belt, wallet and tie minutes after he was ordered into custody, leaving the man who once spent \$130,000 at a clothing store in Beverly Hills without the comforts he'd entered the building wearing.

Then, Manafort disappeared. Suddenly under custody of the US Marshals Service, Manafort was taken into the back halls and basement of the courthouse along Pennsylvania Avenue. His attorneys, wife and family friends had left the premises, and the more than 100 journalists, photographers, lawyers and spectators had long dissipated. Manafort stayed within that fortress-like building for more than five hours, unable to stride out on his own accord to the waiting Range Rover he'd relied on before.

Northern Neck Regional Jail in Warsaw, Virginia, has him now—his name's listed among upwards of 500 people they're holding.

His housing unit listed on the jail's website: "VIP." He was the only inmate at the jail with that housing unit description as of Saturday.

The legal reason he's there is listed as a vague "federal statute" offense, according to the jail's online list of inmates. Manafort is technically there for witness tampering; he awaits his two trials in July and September after a federal judge revoked his bail for allegedly committing a crime since his arrest. He will still be tried for the offense. He has maintained his innocence in the face of 25 criminal charges that range from obstruction of justice and conspiracy, to foreign lobbying registration violations and bank fraud. (A spokesman for Manafort declined to comment for this story.)

Manafort not the first big-name inmate

This is not the type of offense that fills up this jail.

Northern Neck Regional Jail in Warsaw, Virginia, [opened in 1995](#) and is primarily owned and used by the Virginia counties that surround it. That means much of the crimes represent a cross-section of local incidents, like drug offenses, thefts and assaults.

The federal government rents space for inmates. One architecture companies' [overview of the place](#) says it's a building "in harmony with its rural surroundings" -- but with a maximum security perimeter.

The jail isn't overcrowded and houses few homeless people, according to a [state study two years ago on mental health in Virginia's jails](#). The jail also had no reports of inmate aggression toward other inmates in the month used for the study's snapshot.

Yet the jail has had its fair share of high-profile inmates and incidents. Michael Vick, the former NFL quarterback sent to prison for a dogfighting conspiracy, stayed in a [dorm-sized cell with a toilet, shower and sink for two months](#) in late 2007, according to descriptions published by ESPN The Magazine. And the R&B singer Chris Brown waited inside Northern Neck for his misdemeanor assault trial in 2014, which he ultimately avoided by pleading guilty.

Like many jails, it has faced [wrongful death](#) and [injury lawsuits](#) in recent years and has had [inmates commit suicide](#), according to local news reports.

The [jail's Facebook page](#) (yes, it has one, though it may not be officially sanctioned) listed an aggregate 2.1 out of 5 stars in its review section before Manafort's arrival. Among the one-star reviews, one person said the "inmates are treated worse than livestock." Another says this: "We're all utterly miserable in this hell hole!"

[Inmate no. 45343](#)

Family and friends have visiting privileges for one hour once a week. If several commenters online are to be believed, Manafort will be receiving letters from strangers.

This jail, of all jails in the area, was the best for Manafort at this time, the US Marshals determined.

Typically, the DC federal court where he so often appears keeps its jailed defendants not far away in the DC jail. That environ, with a population more prone to violent crime and homelessness, was too risky for a man like Manafort, who at one time was touted as the steady hand needed for Donald Trump's campaign only to flame out under a crush of news stories and other pressure 144 days after his hiring. Since his departure from the campaign, countless stories have chronicled his alleged misdeeds, especially those involving millions of dollars, a cushy lifestyle and contacts with Russians and Ukrainians.

A small pool of angered critics swarmed his court arrivals and exits in recent months with chants of "lock him up" and "traitor." One man always brings a Russian flag, which he has occasionally thrown at Manafort.

It will take Manafort's handful of attorneys in DC two hours by car to meet with their client as they prepare for trial.

Inmate number 45343 will wear a jail-issued jumpsuit for hearings with a judge. When he appears before a jury, he will be allowed to wear clothes that family members bring him.

"He's going to be identified by a number, maybe by his last name. No one is really kind in a jail," said a DC-based attorney who's represented people in Northern Neck and has consulted for clients about the Russia investigation. Until now, "When he went to Starbucks, they said good morning."

If Manafort pleads guilty to white-collar crime or a jury determines him so, a federal prison or prison camp could await him. That's much different — inmates are sorted into low- to high-security facilities based on their crimes and histories.

But until his trial, Manafort's days will fall into a forced routine, as described on a private website that [chronicles the nation's jails](#). Wake up early, roll call, breakfast. Participate in school or a work program. Lunch, roll call, work. Evenings in your cell or in a common pod with a TV. Repeat.