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HAPPENING NOW: I have dialed in to Judge Dearie's courtroom, and apparently the system has left every single caller unmuted -- so it sounds roughly like midtown at rush hour, but with the added benefit of dozens of people screaming at each other to shut up.

This is truly the soundtrack of my nightmares, people who sound demonically possessed yelling "MUUUUTE" at inhuman decibel levels and getting increasingly furious that no one is listening.

Moral: Never dial in 20 minutes early.

Someone is now piping elevator music into the call after another caller sang America the Beautiful. Another man hypnotically reciting "Trump is a criminal." Since I dialed in, a woman has been shrieking "Mute your phones!" consistently every 10-15 seconds.

UPDATE: The situation has improved from Satanic screaming orgy to earsplitting metallic scraping. Looks like we're almost ready to begin the hearing.

- .@joshgerstein, who is in the courtroom, says there is a concerted effort by the technologists in EDNY to mute the rabble.
- @joshgerstein There appear to be hundreds of people who seem unconcerned that the nationally significant hearing that began 20 minutes ago remains completely inaudible and are just obliviously chattering away, no thought of hanging up.
- @joshgerstein THE DIAL-IN IS WORKING NOW!!!!!! NOBODY CALL IN BECAUSE YOU MIGHT CRASH THE SYSTEM.
- @joshgerstein ... And the hearing has ended. Stay tuned for my hard-hitting roundup of the 90 audible seconds of pleasantries and farewells between the parties and what it means for the Mar-a-Lago investigation.