

CBS Mornings

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7:11:36 a.m.

32 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Political Fallout from Trump's Indictment; Major Garrett on the Impact on 2024, Trump's Candidacy]

MAJOR GARRETT: [Republicans] have to be supportive of the former President, agree with his general narrative that this is political or possibly political. They have to err on that side because if they don't, they will look disloyal to the former President and the Trump movement. And anyone who wants to replace Donald Trump as the Republican nominee wants to maintain good relations with that Trump base of support, so right now, they're sort of frozen in this moment, they have to wait for the indictment. I was sort of surprised to see so many Republicans cast their lot with the former President not knowing what the charges are. They may come to regret that. We'll have to see.

(....)

8:02:47 a.m.

2 minutes and 22 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New York Grand Jury Indicts Trump; Dickerson & Klieman on Political, Legal Implications of Charging Trump]

GAYLE KING: You know, the Democrats say no one is above the law. Let's let the process play out. Republicans say that this is just a witch hunt, legal voodoo. What do you say? What was your reaction when you heard? Are they both right?

JOHN DICKERSON: We don't know because we don't know what's in the indictment. That's -- my first reaction was, let's wait till we actually find out what's in the indictment. Of course, that's a naive thing to say in American politics right now. And that's my second thought, which is that this is an explosive event in a highly volatile time in American politics. When you have elections, you make laws or you enforce laws. There is a system that's in place to keep it from getting violent. But when you're in a volatile moment, it can get violent.

GAYLE KING: Yes.

DICKERSON: And so, everybody has a responsibility, who is in the political process to either add fuel or they've got a question, not a responsibility. Are you adding fuel? Or are you taking fuel away? And what you're saying in this moment when we don't know whether the indictment is a strong indictment or a weak one.

KING: But I've heard so many, even Democrats say privately that is this the case we should go after? Okay. He had a relationship with Stormy Daniels. He may have used money illegally. So what? So what? Who cares? Who cares? What do you say to that, that they said that there are so many things that are so much more important than this case?

DICKERSON: It's up to the prosecutor, and we'll see what the prosecutor did. I mean -- and we'll know. The problem in American politics is all this conversation that takes place in the absence of facts.

KING: Exactly right.

DICKERSON: And the President and his party are doing something smart, which is in the absence of facts, they are rushing in to define what this case is about. We don't know. Donald Trump doesn't know, it's under seal. And the question is, after January 6, where we saw what Donald Trump did when there was an official proceeding that he didn't like.

KING: Yes.

DICKERSON: When you're in his party, are you adding to this volatility, or are you removing it? Kevin McCarthy before the -- after the election, he said that Donald Trump won, that was a lie. Then on January 6th, Kevin McCarthy, now Speaker was terribly frightened by what happened. He saw what happened when you spoke in apocalyptic terms how that could play out, so why now is the Speaker saying that this is an effort by the Manhattan DA to subvert an election, that's speaking in apocalyptic terms about a thing you know nothing about. You know nothing about it because the indictment is sealed. Why after the history of January 6, would you as a public figure add more fuel to the fire? Isn't your obligation when the system is as fragile as it is right now to hold back the fuel?

(....)

8:07:34 a.m.

1 minute and 37 seconds

KING: But, John, let's look at the history. I always like talking to you about history because you are a friggin' encyclopedia. We keep saying that this is uncharted territory, never happened before. Can he be indicted and still be elected President? What does this look like?

DICKERSON: Sure.

KING: What does this mean? The country has been --

DICKERSON: Yes, he can be him. I mean, we've had candidates who have been under indictment who have run for President, they haven't won, but I believe in 2016, I believe Rick Perry, there was an indictment against him for a couple of months, it was waved away quickly, or it went away quickly, but yes, he can go forward, and in fact --

KING: But when you look at this, what do you think, John?

DICKERSON: Well, I think --

KING: I mean, I sit there --

DICKERSON: -- I go back to what I started by saying, which is we are in this volatile moment and leaders have a responsibility to the moment and to the system. If you participate in a system of making laws or participating in elections, you are a steward of that system. You can't be foul it, and then say, oh, wait, but have it applied to me in a clean and pristine way, when I'm participating in it.

BURLESON: Right.

DICKERSON: You are a steward of it, so what is the steward's obligation in this case where we don't really know the facts yet? If the facts come out, and it's a weak case then everybody should say this is a

weak case, and there you are hurting this same system that I've just been banging on about. If it's a strong case, then people should say, you know, this is a strong case within a system where we deal with people and no one is above the law. We just don't know which of those two things it is. So, in the absence of that, if you're a steward of the system, treat the system with respect by withholding judgment until we know what the facts are.

BURLESON: Well said.

RIKKI KLIEMAN: And in fact, if I can just piggyback on that for a second. That also applies to Alvin Bragg. Alvin Bragg is the steward of the system. He believes he has the facts and the law and he went forward accordingly.

DUTHIERS: This has been a substantive discussion.