

ABC's *Good Morning America*

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7:00:56 a.m. [TEASE]

12 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Lashing Out; FBI Director Speaks Out]

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Lashing out.

FBI DIRECTOR KASH PATEL: Bring it on. I'll see you in court.

STEPHANOPOULOS: FBI Director Kash Patel speaking out about his \$250 million dollars defamation lawsuit against *The Atlantic*, denying their report that included allegations of excessive drinking.

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7:08:37 a.m.

2 minutes and 22 seconds [31 seconds on SPLC]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: FBI Director Speaks Out on Defamation Suit]

ROBIN ROBERTS: Now to FBI Director Kash Patel speaking about his \$250 million dollars defamation suit against *The Atlantic* magazine and denying charges of improper behavior — behavior in an article it published about him. Chief investigative correspondent Aaron Katersky has that story for us. Good morning Aaron.

AARON KATERSKY: Good morning, Robin. The FBI director defended his job performance and denounced claims about his drinking, saying he's never been drunk at work. This morning, FBI director Kash Patel is taking aim at *The Atlantic*, which published claims of unexplained absences, impulsive decision making, and excessive drinking.

PATEL: I've never been intoxicated on the job and that is why we filed a \$250 million dollar defamation lawsuit. And any one of you that wants to participate, bring it on. I'll see you in court.

KATERSKY: Patel is now suing for defamation and lashing out at reporters.

PATEL: I can say unequivocally that I never listened to the fake news mafia. And as — when they get louder, it just means I'm doing my job.

KATERSKY: *The Atlantic* article said “members of his security detail had difficulty waking Patel because he was seemingly intoxicated.” It also said “a request for ‘breaching equipment’—normally used by SWAT and hostage-rescue teams to quickly gain entry into buildings—was made last year because Patel had been unreachable behind locked doors.” Patel's boss, acting attorney general Todd Blanche, said he had not read the article but disputed its

contents.

ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL TODD BLANCHE: I have a lot of concerns and my concerns are completely around the anonymous reporting that comes forth constantly that — that you know, reporters have an obligation to report and — and they have due diligence that they're supposed to do.

KATERSKY: *The Atlantic* said it stood by its reporting and called Patel's defamation lawsuit meritless. And this morning, House Democrats are demanding answers from Kash Patel, writing in a letter that the allegations of heavy drinking are shocking and indicative of a public emergency.

ROBERTS: And during — it was during a press conference that he made these comments, and it was a press conference to announce federal charges against a prominent civil rights organization?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Civil Rights Group Indicted on Fraud Charges]

KATERSKY: One of the most prominent in the nation. The Justice Department, accusing the Southern Poverty Law Center, Robin, of defrauding donors by secretly paying informants inside the Ku Klux Klan and other extremist groups that it long investigated. The Southern Poverty Law Center said, "we are outraged by the false allegations" and accused the Trump administration of targeting it for political reasons, guys.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Okay, Aaron. Thanks very much.