

*CNN News Central*

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8 minutes

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking Overnight; Federal Judge Says Trump Press Ban Likely Violates First Amendment]

KATE BOLDUAN: Overnight, a new ruling. A federal judge now says that the Trump administration must allow CNN, MS NOW, and *Politico* full access to the White House while the legal battle over President Trump's press ban plays out. The judge writing in this order that the President's ban likely violated the First Amendment. That the President's own comments prove they have been barred from the White House in retaliation for their coverage. The judge also undercut the administration's national security claims around all of this, writing that there's "no evidence in the record that President Trump made the decision to revoke the plaintiffs' hard passes on national security grounds from the get-go, nor at any time has he directly stated that national security was the reason for his decision." Now, the attorney representing CNN and the other outlets involved responded to the order overnight this way. "When the President issued his ban on the free press, he blatantly and explicitly violated due process and the First Amendment. Since then, the President has repeatedly, candidly and consistently admitted in public that he banned our clients from the White House to punish reporting he doesn't like, and to try to force journalists to cover him in ways he prefers." Joining me right now is chairman and editor-in-chief of CNN Worldwide, Mark Thompson, also known as my boss. It's good to see you.

MARK THOMPSON: Kate, good morning. Good morning, Kate. Right.

BOLDUAN: Yes, exactly. Good — thank you for — thanks for coming in. So, with this order, it's a longer-term — it's a longer-term solution. It is a longer-term order coming from this judge. And really, for the first time, saying that he — that the President — this ban likely violated the First Amendment. What's your reaction?

THOMPSON: So, it's not the end of the matter.

BOLDUAN: Right.

THOMPSON: I mean, sooner or later there might be a trial, but I think it's a really big boost. The judge essentially saying our complaint is likely to succeed, as you said. But behind that, it's the judge saying that our complaint, that our fundamental rights to cover the President properly inside the White House and the rest of it, were violated and that we're likely to prevail in the final trial. So, to me, it's a vote of confidence in free speech and our right, not really so much for ourselves, but on behalf of the public everywhere and on behalf of, by the way, all the people who are subscribers to the TV pool, which we're a part of, to hear their political leader held to

account by the — by the press, in ways that no politician always loves, by the way. That fundamental defense of that takes a step forward, yeah.

BOLDUAN: I have had many conversations where — and it gets to what you were just speaking about, which is, this isn't about CNN. It is, but it is much — it is much bigger. It is about the public's access to ask tough questions, and to the commander in chief, the president of the United States, and it is then — it just represents kind of, I'll just acknowledge it, this strange moment. It is not every day that I'm interviewing my boss on air.

THOMPSON: Yes.

BOLDUAN: It is, you know, not every day that CNN and other outlets is —

THOMPSON: I'm just downstairs.

BOLDUAN: We can do it all the time?

THOMPSON: You can invite me whenever you want.

BOLDUAN: A regular segment?

THOMPSON: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

BOLDUAN: It's not every day that CNN and other outlets are the news, rather than just are forced to be the news rather than report the news.

THOMPSON: Sure. And we don't — we don't want to be the news.

BOLDUAN: Right.

THOMPSON: But I think the other thing I want to point to is, we've had great support from the other news organizations.

BOLDUAN: Yes.

THOMPSON: I mean over — this goes beyond politics. It goes beyond ideology or different perspectives. In 2009, the Obama administration attempted to ban Fox from a series of interviews with a Treasury official. CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, all supported Fox in that instance. We support each other because we know that this can be something which happens with governments of the left, governments of the right, governments of the center. By the way, I've been an editor-in-chief over many years on the other side of the Atlantic. It happens there. It happens across the political spectrum. And on these occasions, the press has to stand together to defend our rights on behalf of the public.

BOLDUAN: Talk about that — just that. I mean, you ran the BBC. You've led *The New York Times*. You have — you've seen a lot. How do you describe this moment that we're in?

THOMPSON: Well, I mean, I think the first thing is the politicians are, I think, you know, in human terms, it's very understandable, and they're killing themselves to do their jobs, and constantly they're bombarded by questions, many of which, to them, understandably, feel irritating, annoying, negative, and all the rest of it. It's us doing our jobs, and back through the ages, presidents — Thomas Jefferson was a passionate supporter — I mean, you know, significantly responsible for the First Amendment to the Constitution — passionate supporter to the end of free speech. He was driven mad by the press, the actual press, and talked about how much he hated the press. That's very typical. So, to me, it's one of those things you have to be vigilant all the time about. There's always a risk that a government of any political hue, particularly when they're in — under some political pressure —

BOLDUAN: Mmhmm.

THOMPSON: — they just lose their patience. But unfortunately, when they — when that happens, fundamental rights begin to get pushed away. And we know there's a road there which — if governments were allowed to go down — is very dangerous. Dangerous, not just for the press, but for democracy and a free society.

BOLDUAN: I think it was Thom Tillis who said, and I keep remembering it, he said, you know what to do with a question you don't like is give a good answer. And that's, you know, ask the questions, give the answers. That's what it kind of comes down to.

THOMPSON: Yes. And we should be grateful, you know, I mean, grateful to president and all of their colleagues in the White House when they do help us —

BOLDUAN: Yes.

THOMPSON: — even when it feels like it's really annoying. We should be grateful to all the politicians who come on CNN and other broadcast outlets and talk to them, the print — the text media as well, the newspapers. Even when it's a difficult moment. I mean, there's a kind of quiet courage involved in that, and a kind of civic mindedness which we should always recognize and be grateful for.

BOLDUAN: Talk about the need to be vigilant because this road isn't yet over. What do expect —

THOMPSON: No, no. Well, I mean, and, of course, you know, you know, we note — I mean we're going to cooperate with it and try and understand it. But there's now talk of a DOJ antitrust investigation against CNN and other broadcasters. We have to be, I think, so grateful for when things work well, but ever vigilant and always prepared to fight and to go on fighting. I mean, this topic is one we're never going to back down from, and no matter how many court cases, investigations, court appearances and all the expense that that entails, we will fight this one to the end.

BOLDUAN: It's good to see you, Mark. I'll see you later.

THOMPSON: Thanks, Kate. Thank you. Thank you.

BOLDUAN: Thank you so much.

THOMPSON: Thank you. Thank you.

BOLDUAN: We'll be right back.

[CNN AD]

[KAITLIN COLLINS SILHOUETTE]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and cannot be limited without being lost." — Thomas Jefferson]

[ANDERSON COOPER GETTING READY FOR AC360]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: "The press is one of the cornerstones of liberty." — Calvin Coolidge]

[KAITLAN COLLINS ON-SCREEN IN CONTROL ROOM]

[KRISTEN HOLMES STARING]

[MANU RAJU ON THE HILL]

[ERIN BURNETT IN HELICOPTER]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: "We need an independent media to hold people like me to account." — George W. Bush]

[THREE SHOT — JAKE TAPPER, DAVID CULVER, CLARISSA WARD]

[BESTY KLEIN ON-AIR]

[AYANNA TREENE ON-AIR]

[FRED FLEITGEN IN FRONT OF FIRE]

[HANAKO MONTGOMERY IN NEPAL]

[OMAR JIMENEZ AT PROTEST]

[JAKE TAPPER ON-AIR]

[ABBY PHILLIP ON-AIR]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: "A government without a tough and vibrant media of all sorts is not an option for the United States of America" — Barack Obama]

[KAITLAN COLLINS WALKING INTO WHITE HOUSE]

[BETSY KLEIN WALKING INTO CNN OFFICES AT THE WHITE HOUSE]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: “Freedom of the press is, and must always be, above politics.” — Ronald Reagan]

[KAITLAN COLLINS QUESTIONING TRUMP]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Freedom of the Press is not optional.]

[WOLF BLITZER ON-AIR]

[KASIE HUNT HEADSHOT]

[SARA SIDNER ON-AIR]

[LAURA COATES HEADSHOT]

[PAMELA BROWN HEADSHOT]

[DANA BASH ON-AIR]

[JAKE TAPPER ON-AIR]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Follow the facts.]

[KAITLAN COLLINS RAISING HAND AT BRIEFING]

[CNN LOGO]