

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 2, 2019

Dear Mr. Kareem:

I am writing to give you notice that I have made a preliminary decision to suspend your hard pass for 30 days due to your conduct at the press event in the Rose Garden on July 11, 2019. The President is aware of this preliminary decision and concurs. The factual basis for this preliminary decision to suspend your pass is as follows:

As you know, President Trump has provided an extraordinary amount of access to journalists to ask questions. The White House has issued written rules of conduct governing questions at press conferences, but had not previously thought that a set of explicit rules was necessary to govern behavior by members of the press at White House press events. That is because it had previously been a widely shared understanding that (1) members of the press, at all times at White House press events, must act professionally, maintain decorum and order, and obey instructions from White House staff, and (2) disruptive behavior that interferes with the conduct of a press event or is otherwise a breach of professional decorum—including but not limited to taunting other members of the press, White House officials, or guests in an effort to provoke a confrontation—is prohibited. Such basic guidelines for behavior are necessary for orderly press events that are fair to everyone in attendance.

On July 11, 2019, you failed to abide by these basic norms ensuring decorum and order. As several video recordings show,<sup>1</sup> after the conclusion of the President's address in the Rose Garden to invited guests of the White House Social Media Summit, and as the invited guests were leaving, you openly insulted the President's invited guests, stating that "This is a group of people that are eager for demonic possession." One of the President's invited guests, Sebastian Gorka, then asked, "And you're a journalist, right?" In response, you verbally accosted Mr. Gorka in an apparent attempt to escalate your verbal taunts to a physical confrontation, stating "Come on over here and talk to me brother. Or we can go outside and have a long conversation." Mr. Gorka then approached you, asking "Are you threatening me now in the White House? In the Rose Garden? Are you threatening me in the Rose Garden?" You and Mr. Gorka then loudly traded insults nose to nose, and Mr. Gorka left. You did not leave, and instead continued to engage with the President's invited guests. Even after the U.S. Secret Service agent intervened, you continued to engage with and shout at other invited guests. As also recorded on video,<sup>2</sup> after leaving the Rose Garden, you found, approached, and tried to again engage Mr. Gorka, ignoring a White House staffer's repeated directions to leave and instructions that "the press are leaving now." You eventually left after Mr. Gorka rebuffed you by repeatedly telling you that you were "done."

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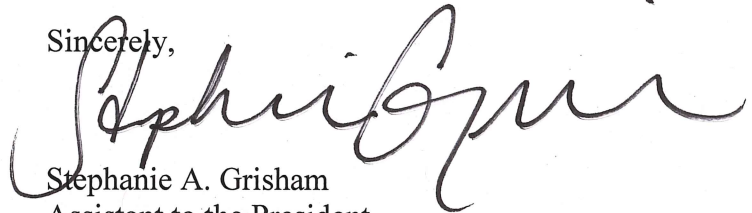
<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=208&v=mNySuQFh2YE;https://twitter.com/Reuters/status/1149445607288950784](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=208&v=mNySuQFh2YE;https://twitter.com/Reuters/status/1149445607288950784).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=208&v=mNySuQFh2YE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=208&v=mNySuQFh2YE).

Your disruptive behavior at the press event in the Rose Garden on July 11, 2019 violated the basic standards governing such events and is, in our preliminary judgment, sufficient factual basis to suspend your hard pass for 30 days. Your gross breach of decorum and disruption of the orderly functioning of a White House press event cannot be tolerated, and we have preliminarily concluded that a 30 day suspension of your hard pass is an appropriate response.

While this is my preliminary decision, we would be pleased to consider any material you would like to submit in response. If you wish to contest this preliminary decision, please submit a written response to me via email by 5:00 PM on Monday, August 5, 2019. If you do not submit a response by that time, this preliminary decision will become final. I am happy to consider that response and any other materials you would like to submit before I make a final decision in this matter. If you choose to make a submission, I will consider your written response and will issue a final determination in writing by 5:00 PM on August 7, 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Steph Grisham', written in a cursive style.

Stephanie A. Grisham  
Assistant to the President  
White House Press Secretary