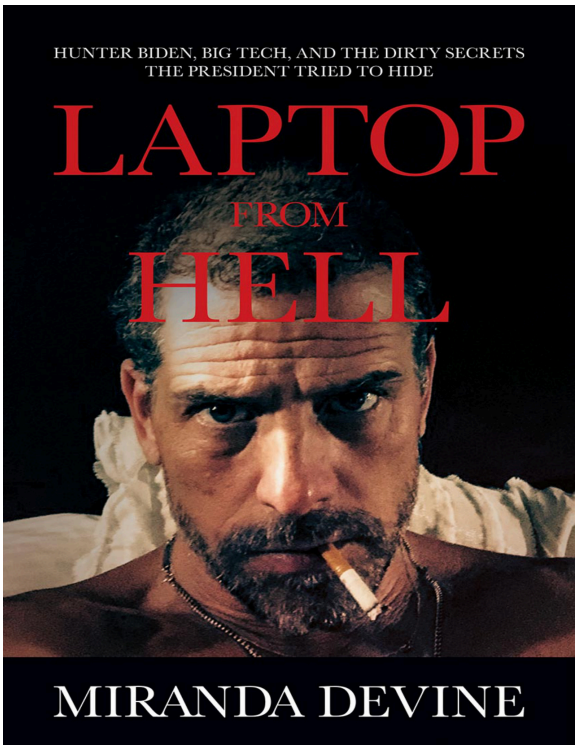


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"Corruption is a cancer, a cancer that eats away at a citizen's faith in democracy.… It saps the collective strength and resolve of a nation. Corruption is just another form of tyranny."

—Joe Biden, Kyiv, Ukraine, 2014

In the spring of 2019, four years after the death of his brother Beau, Hunter Biden was falling apart.

His crack addiction was raging, his wife of twenty-four years had divorced him, his steamy affair with Beau's widow, Hallie, was on the rocks.

A stripper from Arkansas had launched a paternity suit. His business partners were in jail or had vanished, presumed dead. The fortune he had made from foreign oligarchs and Delaware donors was squandered or inaccessible.

He had spent the past year in and out of rehab, flitting between Airbnbs and the Chateau Marmont, unappreciated and disrespected, raging at his family and the world.

In April, his father, former vice president Joe Biden, announced he was running for president.

Two weeks later, Hunter left his laptop at a Mac repair shop in Delaware and never came back.

At its heart, this is the story of a son of political privilege tormented by the defining tragedy of his childhood.

In 1972, when Hunter was two, his mother, Neilia Hunter Biden, took the children on a Christmas shopping expedition near the family's home outside Wilmington, Delaware, when their car was struck by a truck. Neilia and Hunter's baby sister, Ashley, were killed. Hunter and his three-year-old brother, Beau, were injured and spent more than a month in hospital.

Their father, Joe, who always had aspired to lead the sort of sprawling Catholic dynasty embodied by the Kennedy clan, now was living through a Kennedy kind of tragedy.

Only a month earlier, he had won a coveted US Senate race in Delaware, becoming, at thirty, one of the youngest senators in American history.

He couldn't give that up, could he? So, he dried his tears and took the oath of office in the hospital room where his two motherless boys lay, Hunter with head injuries and Beau with a broken leg. Then he left his sons in the care of their aunt Val and went to work in Washington. Most nights he made the three-hour Amtrak commute home to kiss his sleeping children.

"The first memory I have is of lying in a hospital bed next to my brother," said Hunter, in a eulogy at Beau's funeral in 2015.

"I was almost three years old. I remember my brother—one year and one day older than me—holding my hand, staring into my eyes, saying, 'I love you. I love you. I love you.'"

The black and white images of two small, bandaged boys lying in a hospital bed, as their father was sworn in as a US senator in the background, captured a nation's heart. The photos have paid off politically for Biden ever since.

As he rose in politics, the story would be the lead anecdote of every profile, endearing him to voters and defining him as a heroic father figure.

Time and again, the sympathy it elicited helped shield "Quid Pro Joe" from criticism. Ultimately, the terrible blow only made him stronger.

His younger son, however, never would fully recover.

After the funeral mass for the brother he idolized, Hunter would recall in a note to himself: "I went to kneel in the back pew with my Dad…and I said my prayer, and for the first time in my life I prayed to, not just my dead mother and my dead sister, but also to my dead brother, and for the first time in my life I prayed for me.

"I asked, 'please let me be with you, please let me know you love me, please never let me forget, please let me come.'"

Introduction: October Surprise

"Character is on the ballot."
—Joe Biden, February 2020

Less than a month before the 2020 election, I was at home in midtown Manhattan, a few blocks from the *New York Post* newsroom, where I worked as a columnist, when my cell phone pinged at 11:35 p.m.

Rudy Giuliani's lawyer, Bob Costello, had sent a text message from his Long Island home: "I have been asked to send you a small taste of evidence that I have quite legally, that you might have an interest in," he wrote.

"I have approximately 40,000 emails, at least a thousand text messages and hundreds of photographs and videos involving the subject….

"The story is more about the emails, but the photos set the tone."

What followed were three startling images.

The first showed Hunter Biden, then aged forty-seven, still handsome but haggard, in bed, lighting what appeared to be a crack pipe.

Another showed Hunter asleep with the unlit pipe in his mouth.

The last photo was a half-naked selfie of Hunter in a bathroom mirror, showing a fresh tattoo across his tanned upper back, still covered in plastic wrap, long angry markings as if a tiger had clawed his flesh.

In fact, Hunter had just had the entire map of the Finger Lakes in upstate New York etched into his back. This was the place where his late mother, Neilia, had grown up, where he had forged some of his happiest childhood memories, during long summers with his maternal grandparents, the Scotch Presbyterian Hunters, at their cottage on Owasco Lake.

Hunter felt such a connection to the area that he named his various ill-fated companies after local landmarks, such as Owasco, Seneca, and Skaneateles.

The photographs were prima facie evidence that Costello and Giuliani had in their possession an extraordinary trove of material that already may have

exposed the son of the man who would become president to blackmail and extortion by America's enemies.

Giuliani was a valuable source of information if you were a journalist in New York. The irrepressible seventy-six-year-old former mayor had the inside story on everything from the city's criminal history to the current mood in the Oval Office.

Once a crusading young DA for the Southern District of New York who took down the Mob in the 1980s, then the crime-busting mayor who cleaned up New York in the 1990s, he had mellowed into the eccentric, scotch-swilling consigliere for President Donald Trump.

Giuliani had been sent a copy of the contents of Hunter Biden's laptop by the owner of the Mac repair shop in Delaware where it had been abandoned.

The material will "blow your mind," said the former mayor.

Photographs of Hunter's rampant drug use and explicit homemade pornography were all over the laptop. But the real news value lay in the corporate documents, bank transfers, and emails detailing a vast international influence-peddling scheme, sanctioned by the world's most despotic regimes—and implicating "Honest Joe" Biden himself.

It would provide a window onto the corruption that is Washington's original sin, as conducted on a global scale by one of its most skilled and calculating practitioners.

The sordid secret vices of a son of political privilege were an incongruous backdrop to the monumental oil and gas deals Hunter was mixed up in around the world, a drug-addled neophyte bumbling through geopolitical minefields, with the Secret Service in tow.

Hunter's encounters with cutthroat oligarchs in Monte Carlo, Lake Como, Hong Kong, and Shanghai are documented in rich detail on his laptop. It takes us from a billionaire's beach villa in Acapulco to the desolate oil fields of Kazakhstan, from a judo competition in Budapest with Vladimir Putin to dinner in Beijing with Xi Jinping.

A Chinese tycoon cooks Hunter dinner in his new $50 million Manhattan penthouse, a Ukrainian oligarch takes him to his fishing shack in Norway. Beautiful Russian escorts and thieving drug dealers float through his self-

imposed exile on Sunset Boulevard amid slapstick scenes as crack-head Hunter comes unstuck and his hapless Uncle Jim Biden rides in to the rescue.

Text messages chronicling the disintegration of Hunter's love affair with his brother's widow are laced with flashbacks to the pain of a troubled childhood.

Eye-popping financial windfalls are shaded by the grim fate of business partners who wind up floating in the Yangtze. It's a life of greed and luxury in a shadowy world of kleptocrat oligarchs that law enforcement can't touch.

Despite his secret debaucheries, Hunter was acutely aware of what he brought to the table: access to his powerful father.

This was the Biden family business, involving the president's brothers as well as Hunter, and it is documented in minute detail in the eleven-gigabyte trove. Over nine years from 2010 to 2019, the laptop shadows Joe's life as the globe-trotting vice president of the Obama administration, the favor-trading senator from Delaware who would go on to become leader of the free world.

The laptop also puts the lie to President Biden's repeated claims that he knew nothing about his son's shady business ventures in China, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Russia, and beyond.

Five days after Costello's late-night call, on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, the *New York Post* published the first of a series of front-page bombshells, written by Emma-Jo Morris and Gabrielle Fonrouge, culled from the contents of Hunter's laptop.

The story, headlined "Biden's Secret Emails," revealed a bombshell 2015 email indicating that Joe, as vice president, had met in Washington with a high-ranking representative of the corrupt Ukrainian energy company that was paying his junkie son a million dollars a year to sit on its board.

Eight months after the meeting, Joe flew to Kyiv and threatened to withhold $1 billion in US aid unless the Ukrainian government fired its top prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, who was pursuing Burisma for corruption at the time.

The email was news, in anyone's language.

But soon after the *Post*'s story broke online, social media censored it. Facebook announced it had throttled the story's reach. Twitter locked the *Post*'s

account for two weeks, then admitted after the election that it had made a mistake.

It was a chilling exercise of raw political power by an unaccountable Big Tech—the term given to the oligopoly of global corporations that dominate the information technology industry.

The coordinated censorship of America's oldest newspaper, with the fourth largest circulation in the nation, amounted to election interference.

It was a historic moment that rang alarm bells around the world and would harden resolve on Capitol Hill to rein in the power of the social media giants.

Polls suggest that if the full story of the Bidens' international influence-peddling scheme had been told before the election it could have changed votes in crucial marginal seats and possibly flipped the result.



I have authenticated material on the laptop by interviewing, on background, several recipients of Hunter's emails and messages. A collection of documents obtained from Hunter's former business partner Tony Bobulinski, including WhatsApp messages with Hunter and Jim Biden, crossmatches with material on the laptop.

Overseas payments into bank accounts linked to Hunter and his associates, which were detailed by the Senate Republican inquiry into Hunter, provided additional context to bank statements and tax documents on the laptop. Filling in the gaps were confidential "suspicious activity reports" that banks are required to flag to the Treasury Department.

Another point of light came from investigative journalists Peter Schweizer and Matthew Tyrmand who shared with me some of the material they were given by one of Hunter's jailed former business partners, Bevan Cooney.

Corroborated from multiple angles, Hunter's laptop tells an alarming story of the national interest sold out for personal gain at the highest level, in particular to Communist China, our greatest strategic foe.

The conclusion is inescapable. The president cannot extricate his family's moneymaking schemes from America's foreign policy imperatives.

—New York, June 2021

Chapter

1

A Knock at the Door

"He is the smartest man I know."
—President Joe Biden on Hunter, CBS News, 2020

Hunter Biden was in the sixth week of a crack cocaine bender at the Chateau Marmont in May 2018, paying hookers and dealers to service him around the clock in an $820 a night garden cottage by the hotel pool, a few steps from the bungalow where John Belushi had died thirty-six years earlier from a heroin speedball.

He was flush with cash, having wound up his business with the Chinese energy company CEFC after the sudden disappearance in Shanghai in March of his billionaire partner, chairman Ye Jianming, and the arrest at JFK airport four months earlier of Patrick Ho, another Chinese partner who would end up in jail for paying bribes to African presidents at the United Nations.

Hunter's playboy lifestyle at the time included a $650-per-day Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder from Legends Car Rentals, which he drove around town until his Porsche 911 was delivered by a valet driver from where he'd left it in a parking lot at Dulles airport in Washington, DC.

The legendary Chateau Marmont, on Sunset Strip in Hollywood, was an oasis of celebrity discretion and distressed décor, where Hunter liked to retreat after financial windfalls and relationship breakdowns.

He indulged his appetites in the style of Pan, the lecherous half-man, half-goat, chaser of nymphs, symbol of lust from Greek mythology, whose image features in the hotel logo.

He learned to cook crack over the four-burner stove in the tiny cottage kitchen, as he recounts in his memoir, weighing the white rocks in baggies on "Cheech and Chong" scales and photographing them.

He would call escorts with Eastern European names to make house calls: "Hi, This is Rob. I'm staying at Chateau Marmont. Are you available now?"

Day after day he smoked crack, drank vodka, made porn videos. One time he balanced a line of M&Ms on his erect penis and took photographs of it.

He would periodically move out of the Chateau for a few days to another hotel nearby, The Jeremy or La Peer.

But wherever he went, crisis followed "Johnny Drama," as his sister-in-law turned lover, Hallie, used to describe Hunter to friends behind his back.

One overcast spring day in L.A., Hunter is catching up on porn. He spends $1,000 from one of his Wells Fargo debit cards to top up his account on the sex-cam site STREAMRAY, where women with names such as PerfectTits and SamanthaSquirt take off their clothes and writhe around live on camera for money.

Annoyingly, Wells Fargo keeps sending alerts saying he's tripped his credit card limit of $65,000.

He's not been answering his phone, but the bills are piling up and Uncle Jim Biden and wife, Sara, keep hassling him for money. They resend their May invoice of $82,500, for "monthly retainer for international business development."

Hunter emails Edward Prewitt, his Wells Fargo wealth adviser: "Please Wire $99,000 to Jim Biden's account today please and please transfer $75,000 to me."

That should keep everyone off his back for a while.

Now Hunter is fuming as he pores over last month's transactions at the Cathay Bank's New York branch for one of his firms, Hudson West III, into which $5 million of Chinese money had been funneled before Ho's arrest the previous year.

Hunter squints at the bank statement. The balance shows $1 million in a money market account and $520,000 in a checking account. But what is this $2 million debit from March 16?