

Biden's Paranoid Pardons and Leftist Morality

By Victor Davis Hanson

Pardoner-in-Chief Joe Biden has now established two precedents in presidential history.



First, he “pardoned” his own son Hunter.

No prior president has ever tried that shameless act, which is an affront to the entire hallowed notion of “equality under the law.”

Second, he did so in a way that no president has rarely, if ever, pardoned anyone.

Hunter, a convicted federal felon awaiting sentencing, was gifted by his father a blanket exemption from federal prosecution over the entire past decade (2014-2024). Biden thus exempted Hunter from a series of much-discussed past criminal activities and provided further pardons for any federal criminal exposure occurring over the last ten years—*yet to turn up*.

Given the Biden suppression of the justice system and the media's complicity in hiding the Biden family's criminality, it is quite possible that in the next few years, disinterested

prosecutors might finally expose Hunter Biden's long-suppressed, sordid career. And that could mean possible criminal exposure for three generations of Bidens.

Third, in the remaining waning 40 days of his now nonperforming presidency, Biden threatens to establish yet another presidential precedent. He contemplates issuing pardons to a variety of controversial cronies, bureaucrats, and officers—even though none of them have yet been indicted or even are *under federal investigation*.

Worse, Biden completed his shameless trifecta by breaking his serial pledge, voiced at least six times, and most prominently as a 2024 campaign plug, unequivocally *not* to pardon Hunter Biden.

That performance-art braggadocio was serially greeted—by design—with glee in the media.

On spec, the vow supposedly contrasted Biden's "reverence for the rule of law" with a purportedly legally insubordinate Trump.

Biden would put the law above family. Trump, in contrast, was supposedly chronically questioning the morality, fairness, and legality of his own five criminal and civil indictments over the campaign cycle—some of them (i.e., Bragg, Smith, Willis) demonstrably with the full knowledge of, if not coordinated by, the Biden White House.

The Biden Family's Known Unknowns

Yet, why would Biden go out with such brazen, precedent-setting pardons when his own administration, Department of Justice, and the obsequious media for nearly four years have all bragged that the left is the party of principled democracy (e.g., "democracy is on the ballot"), forced into an existential fight against a supposedly "dictator," "fascist," and "Hitlerian" Donald Trump?

Obviously, Hunter Biden might have faced some jail time for deliberate and callous federal tax evasion of millions of dollars of income. Such a conviction would certainly earn the average American incarceration and a crippling fine.

The Biden family's plea that Hunter was "addicted" is a pathetic excuse.

The president expects the American people to believe his lie that a supposedly temporarily non compos mentis Hunter was too drug-addled to remember to pay his taxes but clear enough to shake down millions of dollars in largess for generations of the Biden family syndicate.

We are told no one is ever jailed for feloniously lying on a federal affidavit to buy a handgun, and thus Hunter is a victim of a right-wing witch hunt.

That too is another absurd assertion when the Biden Department of Justice oversaw the prosecution. And it only fulfilled its proper nonpartisan role when an intervening federal judge nullified an unprecedented DOJ sweetheart tax evasion deal, one designed specifically for the presidential son.

Plenty of average Joes also go to jail for knowingly committing federal perjury or deliberately and fraudulently completing a required federal background check.

But the real agenda behind the Hunter pardon, and possible future Biden family pardons to come, involved the current president of the United States.

Hunter's ten-year window of exemption dates back to the last two years of Joe Biden's vice presidency, when his sloppy shakedowns of foreign governments even bothered an embarrassed Obama administration.

By pardoning Hunter, and de facto other Bidens to come, Joe believes that there will be no subpoenaed witness who can testify about the source of the family's some \$20 million gift: where the money came from, what it was for, where it went, and whether anyone fully paid federal and state income taxes on these foreign cash infusions.

In fairness to Joe, he has legitimate worries.

The sheer audacity of the Biden operation was evident—as, for example, when Joe boasted publicly that he got a special Ukrainian prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, fired for looking too

closely into corruption involving Hunter Biden—by withholding U.S. congressionally approved aid.

(Note well: Donald Trump was impeached and tried in the Senate for merely suspending but eventually sending aid to Ukraine, out of legitimate worry that the Bidens had once unduly leveraged taxpayer money to have ensured their then steady revenue streams from Ukraine.)

Proof of the Bidens' shake-down success was apparent in the lavish lifestyles of Joe and Hunter, otherwise inexplicable in light of Joe's federal salary or any legal or consulting expertise evident in Hunter's mostly grimy and grubby career.

Canary-bird Hunter?

But more worrisome might be the thought of an unplugged, unpardoned, and underappreciated Hunter.

As an ordinary citizen facing jail time after January 20, 2025, Hunter would be either one relapse, one plea bargain, or one fit of resentment away from turning state's evidence to avoid years in federal prison—by disclosing the various roles of an apparently insufficiently appreciative Biden family.

Hunter certainly was capable of flipping.

In his laptop texts and email logs, he often voiced resentment of his father, variously and cynically dubbed "the Big Guy" and recipient of "ten percent"—monikers not usually associated with filial affection.

The gist of Hunter's referents was that Joe got his utility bills paid and was subsidized by Hunter, who in return felt he was privately underappreciated and overcharged by the supposedly legit members of the family as their wayward and embarrassing, though hard-working, bagman.

That pique was no fiction.

Hunter's plea-bargaining attorneys once threatened to call President Joe Biden into court to testify on Hunter's behalf. The veiled subtext was a threat to put the president on record

in a federal trial as vouching for his son and thus likely denying when cross-examined by the judge whether Joe himself had ever received foreign cash (i.e., Joe's checks labeled as "loan repayments" or seen as "gifts" or undisclosed but routed through Hunter or a Biden sibling).

What was Hunter's brief career as a straw-snorting "artist" about in the earlier days of the Biden presidency—if not to bring down to earth the haughty first couple?

Why would the profligate son, now under global scrutiny, seemingly shake down would-be quid pro quo Biden donors to buy his teenaged, paint-by-the-numbers "art"—sometimes painted by blowing paint via a straw, as perhaps a not-so-subtle reminder to the family of his earlier snorting antics?

Joe Biden was only two months into his presidency when Hunter published his tell-all book. It graphically recalled his drug- and sex-filled escapades and was met with great fanfare by obsequious liberal critics who noted his supposed "raw" honesty. Yet if a son will seduce his own deceased brother's widow and mother of his own nephew and niece, and then cajole her to indulge in his own addictive crack cocaine use, then he has demonstrated that family fealty is a mere abstraction if not a bad joke.

Pardoning such a miscreant for ten years of yet uncovered misadventures is a veritable insurance policy that Hunter—who knows all the Biden family business secrets—would not plea-bargain away his family's so-far successful avoidance of criminal accountability.

Just the Latest Assault on Democracy

How do we locate this latest assault on democracy in the left's wider narrative that Biden and company 'saved' democracy from a tyrannical Donald Trump?

The answer is not difficult.

This unprecedented pardon is not aberrant. It is characteristic of the left's recent contempt for the rule of

law. And it is consistent with its own brazen violation of constitutional customs and norms that it so often projects onto its opponents.

The left's warped *modus operandi*, remember, is to brand Trump such a menace that his intellectual and moral superiors are entitled to trample on any law or custom necessary to eliminate such an existential 'threat to democracy.'

So, at the end of the Biden presidency, what is the Biden-Obama-era "democracy dies in darkness" legacy?

Just ponder the following questions.

Who soiled the FBI and the DOJ to fabricate Russian collusion to undermine a 2016 oppositional presidential opponent?

Who hired a has-been British spy to fabricate a smear dossier and leak it to the media to destroy a candidate?

Who rounded up "51 intelligence authorities" to lie on the eve of an election about the authenticity of Hunter's laptop, then already verified and in the possession of the FBI?

Who tasked the FBI to partner with social media to censure and suppress verified news stories about the laptop's authenticity deemed incriminating to the Biden campaign?

Who impeached a president over a phone call as soon as it recaptured the House of Representatives?

Who envisioned removing a major-party candidate from sixteen state ballots to undermine the election of an opponent?

Who orchestrated a SWAT raid on the home of an ex-president and presidential candidate over an ongoing archival dispute concerning the proper storage of presidential papers?

Who coordinated the lawfare to empower a special counsel to *indict* Donald Trump, to consult with a partisan Georgia prosecutor to *indict* Donald Trump, and to dispatch a federal prosecutor to join a local Manhattan prosecutor

to *indict* Donald Trump, previously on the staff of yet another New York state attorney general who *indicted* Donald Trump?

Who advocated packing the Supreme Court?

Who sought to end the Electoral College?

Who wanted to create two new blue states to win four new senators?

Who wanted to demolish the filibuster—depending on whether it held a Senate majority?

Who radically changed American balloting, rendering, in most states, the historic Election Day to a mere construct of as little as 30 percent of the electorate voting?

Pardons as Incrimination

The final irony?

Biden may well pardon a variety of cronies who will not be indicted by the Trump Department of Justice, but who, by acceptance of such exemption, will remind the American people of their culpability if not criminality.

Anthony Fauci likely lied under oath about his role in subsidizing illicit and undeniable gain-of-function virology research in communist China.

Gen. Mark Milley clearly violated his oath of office as an *advisor* to the president by improperly breaking, and inserting himself into, the chain of command by ordering theater and unit commanders first to report directly to himself in supposed existential crises rather than to the Secretary of Defense.

Most Americans would deem it actionable for a chairman of the Joint Chiefs to stealthily contact his Chinese communist, People's Liberation Army counterpart in order to warn him about the supposedly unstable nature of his own president and commander-in-chief and thus to assure the Chinese that

American officers would nullify any presidential directives that they themselves diagnosed as improper.

What did intelligence and investigative bureaucratic grandees John Brennan, James Clapper, and Andrew McCabe—all current media-paid consultants—all have in common? They admittedly lied either under congressional oath or to federal investigators and did so with complete exemption.

The list of the culpable could be expanded.

But it will *not* be Donald Trump—who refused to investigate, much less seek to indict, Hillary Clinton for destroying federally subpoenaed communications and devices—who will remind the American people of what past zealots did to their nation.

Instead, it may be Joe Biden himself and any who accept his envisioned self-incriminating pardons.

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