The Criminal Conviction of Hunter Biden

0:02

welcome back we're getting breaking news

0:04

into our Newsroom this morning the jury

0:07

in Delaware has reached a verdict in the

0:09

federal trial for President Joe Biden's

0:11

son Hunter Biden on count one the

0:14

verdict is guilty on count two the

0:17

verdict is guilty and on count three the

0:21

verdict is guilty it is the first time

0:23

in history that the child of a sitting

0:25

president has been convicted of federal

0:28

charges

0:30

from The New York Times I'm Michael

0:32

babbaro this is the

0:34

daily today why a jury found Hunter

0:37

Biden guilty on federal gun charges what

0:41

it will mean for his father and what it

0:44

could do to the presidential race White

0:48

House reporter Katie Rogers is our

0:50

[Music]

0:57

guest it's Wednesday June

1:00

[Music]

1:05

12th Katie I think we have to start by

1:08

just recognizing the extraordinary and

1:11

really improbable situation that we're

1:13

in as of today which is that over the

1:17

past two weeks the former president of

1:20

the United States was found guilty of a

1:22

crime and the son of the current

1:24

president of the United States was found

1:26

guilty of a crime all during a

1:29

presidential race between those two

1:33

presidents it's just kind of Staggering

1:35

it's remarkable I was in a hotel lobby

1:37

next door to the courthouse yesterday

1:39

after the jury went to deliberate and

1:42

happened to glance over at CNN and saw

1:44

former president Trump walking to attend

1:47

a probation appointment and just the

1:50

starkness of that really hit home where

1:53

we're in this moment where the former

1:57

president has a probation officer and

2:00

the president's son is on the precipice

2:02

of being convicted of three felony gun

2:05

charges right and there was never any

2:07

doubt that Trump's case was going to go

2:09

to trial because he made very clear he

2:12

was never going to accept a plea deal

2:14

but I think for a lot of us the hunter

2:16

Biden case has been a more confusing

2:19

legal Saga the last time we talked about

2:21

it on this show Hunter Biden was very

2:24

deep in negotiations with the federal

2:26

government to try to reach a plea deal

2:28

that would avoid a trial and then those

2:30

negotiations collapse so catch us up

2:33

Katie on what happened next and how it

2:36

is we got to this guilty set of verdicts

2:41

right and it's been a real

2:43

[Music]

2:45

Saga you know as a reminder this stems

2:49

back to the administration of President

2:52

Donald Trump at the time the president

2:55

and other Republicans were itching to

2:58

find ways to undercut the candid see of

3:01

Joe Biden and one way to do that is to

3:04

look into the business dealings and life

3:07

of his troubled son Hunter

3:11

Biden so before Donald Trump leaves

3:14

office a federal prosecutor named David

3:16

Weiss has been appointed to look into

3:18

Hunter Biden in a wide investigation

3:21

that is centered around Hunter Biden's

3:27

finances so flash forward to

3:30

almost a year ago exactly Hunter Biden

3:33

and his legal team have reached a deal

3:35

with Weiss on tax charges and also this

3:39

gun charge that would avoid jail time

3:42

and basically avoid the outcome we just

3:44

saw today but when that plea deal gets

3:48

in front of a judge it becomes clear

3:50

that both sides are not in agreement

3:52

about what this deal means particularly

3:55

around the issue of whether or not

3:56

Hunter Biden should face future charges

3:59

the judge sends them back to negotiate

4:02

but hunter Biden's team opts not to do

4:05

that they decide to roll the dice

4:07

essentially challenges Weiss to take

4:09

this thing to

4:10

trial Weiss takes them up on it brings

4:13

the charges and that led to the trial

4:16

that we saw play out in Delaware last

4:19

[Music]

4:28

week and that trial ends up being pretty

4:31

narrowly focused on gun charges just

4:35

remind us what exactly those charges are

4:39

so basically what got Hunter Biden in

4:42

trouble is that during October 2018 he

4:44

goes to a gun store in Wilmington

4:47

Delaware looking to buy a revolver and

4:50

he filled out a form that said at that

4:53

current time he was not an unlawful user

4:55

of drugs and was not addicted to drugs

4:58

and that is one of the disqualifiers

5:00

that gun sellers use to disqualify

5:03

people from purchasing a firearm mhm so

5:06

basically prosecutors are saying that at

5:07

that time Hunter Biden lied to the gun

5:11

dealer on that form lied on the form

5:13

itself and illegally possessed a handgun

5:17

got it they're saying he was in fact a

5:20

drug user at that time exactly okay so

5:24

take us into the trial itself how do

5:25

federal prosecutors go about making

5:28

their case Hunter Biden lied when he

5:32

signed that form right so essentially

5:36

prosecutors have to prove that Hunter

5:40

Biden was addicted and an unlawful user

5:45

of drugs during this period in October

5:48

where he possessed a handgun but

5:51

throughout the trial which was

5:52

interesting and the judge agreed that

5:55

this was the case they repeatedly said

5:57

we do not have to prove that he was

6:00

using on the day he purchased the gun or

6:02

even during the time he had the gun so

6:06

in that sense prosecutors have a really

6:09

wide window of opportunity to

6:12

essentially prove that Hunter Biden was

6:16

a drug addict around this time so

6:20

prosecutors have a lot to work with they

6:22

have documents including text messages

6:25

Bank receipts ATM withdrawals to present

6:28

to the jury but they also have a 2021

6:31

Memoir written by Hunter Biden that

6:34

extensively detailed his drug addiction

6:37

the depths of it and it

6:39

certainly involves a time during which

6:42

he purchased this gun he doesn't talk

6:44

about it in the book but there are

6:47

passages in it in which he recounts

6:50

buying drugs in Wilmington the addiction

6:53

he fell into with other family members

6:56

and Snippets of that Memoir which were

6:59

read in Hunter Biden's voice were piped

7:02

in by prosecutors into that courtroom

7:04

wow so the prosecution starts with a

7:08

pretty serious mountain of problematic

7:11

evidence it would sound like for Hunter

7:13

Biden including his own words

7:15

documenting drug use during the period

7:18

that's at the center of this trial right

7:20

and on top of all this on top of all of

7:23

that evidence they have witnesses who

7:25

were very close to Hunter who detailed

7:29

his drug use and the toll it took on

7:31

them at some points including his

7:34

ex-wife Kathleen bule who was married to

7:36

him for 24 years and recounted on the

7:38

stand periods in which she struggled to

7:41

get him into rehab during which their

7:44

marriage essentially fell apart because

7:45

he was so deep into drug use and also

7:49

infidelity and then probably most

7:52

powerfully they called hi Biden who is

7:55

the Widow of Hunter Biden's older

7:57

brother Bo Biden Bo died in 2015 and

8:01

after that Hunter Biden and hi Biden

8:05

fall into a romantic relationship during

8:08

which she testified that she fell into

8:11

crack cocaine use with him huh so hie

8:15

testifies that Not only was she aware of

8:18

Hunter Biden's drug use but she actually

8:21

descends into drug addiction with him

8:26

exactly so what really came through

8:28

during hi Biden's testimony was the hell

8:33

she sort of described that she was in

8:36

with Hunter Biden as they fell into drug

8:39

addiction she had said they were buying

8:41

pingpong siiz balls of crack cocaine and

8:45

using them together and Hunter would

8:47

disappear for days at a time telling her

8:50

that he was you know quote sleeping on a

8:53

car and smoking crack and eventually you

8:57

know she begins trying to clean out his

9:00

car of drug paraphernalia she stumbles

9:03

upon this handgun that is in a lock boox

9:06

in Hunter Biden's car and as she

9:09

testified and as prosecutors displayed

9:11

in court hi Biden was texting Hunter

9:14

Biden at that time saying I panicked I

9:17

just threw it away he's admonishing her

9:19

for doing that and it just really

9:21

recounts this high drama very messy

9:26

period of time between two people who

9:28

are in the throws of addiction and it is

9:32

all around the time that prosecutors are

9:35

most focused on Kitty as all of this

9:38

testimony is being given and these

9:41

really pretty embarrassing and painful

9:44

details are being aired what is the mood

9:46

like in that courtroom so the mood in

9:50

the courtroom was somber and serious as

9:53

most trials are but it was also surreal

9:57

because for most days of this week-long

10:00

trial Jill Biden the first lady was in

10:03

the front row sitting directly behind

10:06

Hunter Biden H so the first lady of the

10:08

United States keeps her eyes on Hunter

10:12

on the prosecutors on the defense team

10:16

most of the trials she left for one day

10:18

to go to France and she left the

10:20

president's side in France to come back

10:23

to this trial that is the starkest

10:27

illustration to me of the Biden family's

10:30

priorities at one point yesterday in the

10:33

courtroom I counted at least eight

10:35

members of the Biden family Hunter's

10:38

Uncle Jimmy Biden was sitting in the

10:41

front row as was his sister Ashley Biden

10:44

his aunt valer Biden Owens who raised

10:48

him in the first years of his life after

10:50

his mother died was in the front row it

10:53

had become sort of a family affair

11:00

sitting in that courtroom watching the

11:03

bidens watch Hunter Biden on trial was a

11:08

stark reminder that while some of the

11:11

details of Hunter Biden's addiction have

11:13

been startlingly public at times the

11:18

pain faced by the people closest to him

11:21

has largely been private and seeing

11:24

people like hi Biden take the stand and

11:28

Det haale drug use and recount this hell

11:33

she had gone through seeing Kathleen bu

11:35

take the stand and talk about the time

11:38

she tried to get him sober and couldn't

11:40

do it was a real reminder that this

11:45

large very public facing family had

11:48

privately for years been trying to

11:50

outrun this trying to move on from

11:54

it it really did feel

11:57

like this first family's worst moments

12:01

of private pain were now on

12:05

display for public

12:10

consumption we'll be right

12:12

[Music]

12:21

back so Katie with all of that sorted

12:24

testimony we heard from people like

12:26

Hunter Biden's ex-wife and ex-girlfriend

12:29

it feels like the prosecution went a

12:31

pretty long way towards its goal of

12:34

portraying Hunter Biden as somebody

12:36

addicted to drugs so what was the

12:39

defense's strategy once it was their

12:42

turn in this trial so the defense is

12:44

trying to prove that during the time

12:47

Hunter Biden bought that gun in October

12:51

2018 he was not addicted to drugs but in

12:55

fact was working hard at maintaining his

12:59

sobriety and how do they try to prove

13:01

that they make the case that there is no

13:05

proof that prosecutors can find that

13:09

shows that he was actively using when he

13:12

filled out that form or during the 11

13:16

days he had that gun and his attorney

13:19

Abby LOL who is a longtime criminal

13:23

defense attorney in Washington he's a

13:26

very well-known Washington Scandal

13:27

lawyer is doing all all he can to inject

13:31

doubt into this very as prosecutors

13:34

present it open and shut case of Hunter

13:36

Biden's addiction so for instance LOL

13:40

tries to poke holes in the prosecution's

13:43

argument that Hunter Biden would

13:44

frequent a particular 7-Eleven in

13:48

Delaware to buy drugs by saying there's

13:51

no absolute proof through text messages

13:54

through location data or otherwise that

13:57

Hunter was actually in that 7 and buying

13:59

drugs at one point LOL says you don't

14:02

know if he's just there to buy a cup of

14:03

coffee and that is the work of a defense

14:05

attorney to say unless there is hard

14:07

evidence showing him with a dealer that

14:10

could have been for any other reason

14:12

than to buy drugs and Hunter Biden could

14:15

have been or believed himself to be

14:18

sober I'm curious who the defense called

14:20

to the witness stand in their effort to

14:23

try to muddy this picture of Hunter

14:26

Biden as someone addicted to drugs in

14:28

this period so the defense actually most

14:32

notably called Hunter Biden's eldest

14:34

daughter Naomi Biden to the stand and

14:38

they try to use Naomi as a witness who

14:44

understands that her father was by her

14:46

own words hopeful and the best she'd

14:49

seen him in a long time during this

14:51

period of time H but upon

14:55

cross-examination prosecutors pull out

14:57

text messages between Naomi Biden and

15:00

her father that show a different story

15:05

during the time Hunter Biden had this

15:06

gun Naomi Biden is trying to meet up

15:10

with him in New York City and is unable

15:12

to reach him and at one point she tells

15:15

her father she's really sad she can't

15:17

handle this she just misses him and

15:20

wants to hang out with him and

15:22

prosecutors use those Communications to

15:26

establish that in fact this was actually

15:29

not great his own daughter could not

15:31

reach him when they were in the same

15:33

city H so the defense's theoretically

15:35

best witness to this idea that he was

15:38

not a drug addict at this time that he

15:40

might have even been sober or on his way

15:42

to being sober ends up being someone who

15:46

essentially

15:47

confirms the prosecutions claims that

15:50

Hunter Biden is still not okay during

15:53

this period right so by the time Naomi

15:55

Biden leaves the stand walks across the

15:58

room

15:59

and wraps her dad in a hug for about a

16:01

minute it becomes clear that this

16:04

testimony and this cross-examination

16:06

especially did not go the way Hunter

16:09

Biden and his team hoped it would have

16:11

and of course we know that this defense

16:13

strategy didn't work because we now know

16:16

the guilty verdict it seems clear that

16:19

this jury ultimately looks at all this

16:21

evidence and says that while perhaps

16:24

they didn't have a timestamped

16:26

photograph of Hunter Biden you know

16:28

using drugs or being high on drugs the

16:31

day that he bought this gun it very much

16:35

seems from the testimony that the jury

16:37

believed the prosecution's portrayal of

16:39

him as someone very much in the throws

16:43

of drug addiction at the time that he

16:45

bought that gun right and in the end

16:49

drers took only three hours to return a

16:54

guilty verdict right so let's turn to

16:58

the re action to this verdict starting

17:01

with Hunter Biden's father President Joe

17:04

Biden right so minutes after the verdict

17:07

is announced and the first lady walks

17:10

out of the courthouse holding Hunter

17:12

Biden's hand the president releases a

17:15

statement reiterating his support for

17:17

his son how proud he is of what he

17:21

called seeing someone you love come out

17:23

of the other side of an addiction like

17:25

this but also he says he is going to

17:28

accept the out come of the trial last

17:31

week he was asked if he would pardon

17:33

Hunter Biden and President Biden said no

17:37

so to me that's drawing a clear line of

17:40

being a supportive father who backs his

17:44

son no matter what and a president who

17:47

is not going to overreach and pardon

17:51

someone who was just convicted in a

17:53

court of law right and that

17:55

simultaneously seemed to be President

17:57

Biden drawing a contrast with former

17:59

president Trump right so in an election

18:03

that has been all about drawing a

18:05

character contrast with Donald Trump the

18:08

statement itself strikes a contrast with

18:11

Donald Trump who has railed against the

18:13

outcome of his own trial has essentially

18:16

lashed out at every aspect of this legal

18:18

process President Biden by contrast has

18:23

quietly accepted the outcome and

18:26

continued to say that he will keep

18:28

embracing his

18:29

son since you raised it the question of

18:33

this conviction and the election I think

18:36

is going to be on many people's minds

18:38

how does the conviction of the incumbent

18:42

president's son on gun charges

18:46

potentially impact the course of this

18:49

election well at the very least a

18:52

conviction of the president's

18:54

Son shows that there were consequences

18:57

in a legal trial that had some serious

19:01

weight to them all along Republicans

19:03

have alleged that you know the Biden L

19:06

justice department was going to let the

19:09

president's son off easy so the fact

19:13

that Hunter Biden was convicted takes

19:16

some of the steam out of the Republican

19:18

argument that he would get some sort of

19:20

sweetheart deal or be treated more

19:22

favorably than Donald Trump would have

19:24

been during his own hush money trial

19:28

that said Republicans will use this and

19:31

Donald Trump will use this to bolster

19:34

this idea that the bidens are a crime

19:37

family that corruption runs through the

19:40

family and in fact Hunter Biden is going

19:43

to stand trial later this summer on tax

19:46

evasion charges and Republicans are

19:48

certainly hoping to In the Heat of a

19:51

campaign season attack the bidens again

19:55

on the grounds that the bidens can't be

19:57

trusted essentially I would expect to

19:59

hear more of that in a drum beat as this

20:01

campaign goes on Kitty I'm curious in a

20:04

country that's ravaged by a drug

20:06

epidemic is it possible that this

20:09

conviction and watching Joe Biden reach

20:12

out to his son and this family go

20:14

through what it's gone through might not

20:17

just be something that doesn't hurt

20:19

Biden and this admittedly gets kind of

20:21

complicated and cynical when it comes to

20:22

politics but potentially makes Biden

20:25

more relatable to some voters and in

20:27

some sense

20:29

is a political

20:31

virtue I think there's a lot of Truth to

20:34

that and Americans have showed in polls

20:37

that what they see of Joe Biden is a

20:39

father supporting his son and that's not

20:43

a political calculation on Joe Biden's

20:45

part I think if you know anything about

20:48

the president his relationship with his

20:51

kids it was forged out of great tragedy

20:54

at the beginning of President Biden's

20:55

career and they're extremely close

20:58

because of that and they're incredibly

21:01

loyal to each other because of that and

21:03

you just see that play out through the

21:05

presidency you're seeing it play out

21:07

today the president rearranged his

21:09

schedule really quickly after the

21:11

verdict to go fly home to Wilmington to

21:13

see his son met Hunter Biden on the

21:16

tarmac and gave him a hug so there is

21:19

that cynical part of you that thinks

21:23

this is a play for sympathy or a play

21:25

for Americans to see this family in a

21:29

different way but also several of those

21:33

jurors had family members who suffer

21:36

from addiction most Americans know

21:39

somebody or are related to someone who

21:41

suffers from this it's an incredibly

21:44

Universal problem that Americans deal

21:47

with and for the president of the United

21:48

States to be dealing with the Fallout of

21:51

that is relatable Katie I think it makes

21:55

sense to end this conversation where we

21:57

began which is is grappling with the

22:00

fact of these two criminal convictions

22:03

not just of Hunter Biden but of Hunter

22:05

Biden and Donald

22:07

Trump when Hunter Biden was convicted it

22:10

it struck me at least that if we're

22:13

being really honest with ourselves both

22:16

Donald Trump and Hunter Biden would

22:18

probably never have been put on trial

22:21

for these particular charges a gun

22:24

charge in the case of hun Biden a hush

22:26

money payment in the case of of Donald

22:29

Trump had they not been president or

22:32

been the president's son right that just

22:34

feels like an objective reality Trump

22:37

came into the crosshairs of a democratic

22:39

district attorney Hunter Biden came into

22:41

the crosshairs of a trump appointed us

22:44

attorney right and so what does all of

22:47

this say about the way that our legal

22:50

system is now interacting with our

22:54

political system well essentially we've

22:58

entered an era where politicians are

23:01

trying to use the legal system to their

23:03

benefit and where the courts are going

23:05

to feel more pressure to carry out their

23:09

[Music]

23:10

wishes and you know to be clear that

23:13

doesn't mean all of these cases are

23:16

without Merit or are going to be without

23:18

Merit but they're now going to be

23:20

carried out in this environment where

23:23

politics at the very least will be the

23:24

backdrop or at the most will be a major

23:28

factor

23:28

so to me it's looking a bit like it's

23:31

the price of admission to presidential

23:36

politics and as we're seeing with future

23:39

cases against Hunter Biden and Donald

23:41

Trump this is clearly a phenomenon

23:44

Americans are going to have to keep

23:47

grappling with right their politicians

23:49

and even their politicians children on

23:52

trial exactly

23:56

[Music]

24:04

well Katie thank you very much we

24:06

appreciate it thanks for having

24:08

[Laughter]

24:12

me Hunter Biden is likely to be

24:14

sentenced in the next few months he

24:16

faces up to 25 years in prison but

24:20

because he is a firsttime nonviolent

24:23

offender the judge in the case may

24:26

choose a more lenient punishment

24:31

[Music]

24:38

we'll be right

24:41

[Music]

24:46

back here's what else you need to know

24:49

today in secret recordings made last

24:52

week Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alo

24:55

told a woman posing as a conservative

24:58

Catholic that compromise in America

25:01

between the left and the right might be

25:04

impossible only one side or the other

25:07

one side or the other is going to win

25:09

because there are differences on

25:12

fundamental things that really can't be

25:14

compromise it's not like we're going to

25:16

split the difference now at another

25:18

Point Alo told the woman who in real

25:21

life is a liberal activist that he

25:23

agreed with her claim that the United

25:26

States must return to a place of

25:29

godliness people in this country who

25:31

believe in God have got to keep fighting

25:33

for that to return our country to a

25:36

place of of godliness oh I agree with

25:39

you I agree with you the unguarded

25:42

remarks made at an annual dinner

25:44

attended by Supreme Court Justices

25:47

reinforces alito's reputation as a

25:49

committed social conservative intend on

25:53

safeguarding the place of Christianity

25:55

in American life and they are likely to

25:58

intensify questions about Al's

26:01

impartiality Alo is already Under Fire

26:04

for allowing two flags associated with

26:07

the January 6th riots at the US capital

26:10

to fly over his Homes at various times

26:13

following the 2020

26:16

election today's episode was produced by

26:19

Shannon Lyn Stella tan and will Ved it

26:22

was edited by Devin Taylor contains

26:25

original music by Dan Powell Mary and

26:28

ano and Alicia B and was engineered by

26:31

Alysa Moxley our theme music is by Jim

26:34

runberg and Ben Lansford of

26:39

[Music]

26:42

wonderly that's it for the daily I'm

26:45

Michael Boro see you tomorrow

26:48

[Music]

English (auto-generated)