

BIDEN VOWS TO GUIDE U.S. OUT OF ‘DARKNESS’



ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

“This is not a partisan moment,” Joseph R. Biden Jr. said in closing the Democratic convention. “This must be an American moment.”

Bannon Faces
Fraud Charge
In Wall Project

This article is by Alan Feuer,
William K. Rashbaum and Maggie
Haberman.

Stephen K. Bannon, President Trump’s former adviser and an architect of his 2016 general election campaign, was charged on Thursday with defrauding donors to a private fund-raising effort called We Build the Wall, which was intended to bolster the president’s signature initiative along the Mexican border.

Mr. Bannon, working with a wounded Air Force veteran and a Florida venture capitalist, conspired to cheat hundreds of thousands of donors by falsely promising that their money had been set aside for new sections of wall, according to a federal indictment unsealed in Manhattan.

The fund-raising effort collected more than \$25 million, and prosecutors said Mr. Bannon used nearly \$1 million of it for personal expenses.

Despite the populist aura he tries to project, Mr. Bannon is known to enjoy the high life, and he was arrested at 7:15 a.m. on a \$35 million, 150-foot yacht belonging to one of his business associates, the fugitive Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui, law enforcement officials said.

Working with the Coast Guard, special agents from the United States attorney’s office in Manhattan and federal postal inspectors boarded the yacht off Westbrook, Conn., the officials said. Mr. Bannon, 66, was on deck, drinking coffee and reading a book, when the raid occurred.

The criminal charges, filed a week before Mr. Trump was to accept the Republican nomination for a second term, marked a stark turn of fortune for the flamboyant political strategist. Mr. Bannon first came to prominence when he was in charge of the right-wing

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CASHING IN How Stephen K. Bannon and his business partners monetized causes. PAGE A19

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Despair, Detours and the Fulfillment of a Dream

By MATT FLEGENHEIMER

Joe Biden tells funny stories at funerals and sad ones at campaign stops.

He has been running for president long enough to lose the 1988 Democratic primary as a hard-charging 40-something pushing generational change — and to win the 2020 primary as the white-haired statesman who has steered through sorrow, who can still sniff it out in any room and close in like a pang-seeking missile for the stricken.

“He asked if I was OK and gave me a hug,” a cane-shuffling Iowa man, Brian Peters, said last winter, blinking away tears after pledging his support to Mr. Biden on a characteristically misty post-event rope line. “I told him that I would be.”

Maybe it had to happen this way, friends say, if it was going to happen at all: After nearly a half-century of public life defined most viscerally by the forced commin-

For Biden, Line Blurs
Between Politics and
Personal Losses

gling of politics and personal loss, the tint of the moment at last matches Mr. Biden’s own story: shadowed by despair, sustained by faith — in himself; in God; in the human capacity for resilience, founded or not.

“We all are an accumulation of our life’s experiences,” said Joe Riley, a friend of Mr. Biden’s and the former longtime mayor of Charleston, S.C.

And Joseph Robinette Biden Jr.’s experiences have delivered him here. He has at last captured the Democratic presidential nomination, winning the chance to face President Trump because he is, admirers say, all the things that the incumbent is not: empathetic, dependable, decent.

“Character is on the ballot,” Mr. Biden said in his convention address Thursday evening, inside a quiet hall in Wilmington, Del. “Compassion is on the ballot.”

There is some irony, Democrats concede, in the idea that Mr. Biden prevailed because voters found him comforting and familiar. Through his years in presidential politics, his longevity has generally served to remind his skeptics of all they believe he has gotten wrong: He voted to authorize the use of military force in Iraq and came to regret it. He presided over the committee that subjected Anita Hill to demeaning and invasive questioning in the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for now-Justice Clarence Thomas. He helped craft tough-on-crime legislation that many criminal justice experts now associate with mass incarceration.

In this primary campaign, Mr. Biden, 77, could often appear almost willfully out of step with the

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More in G.O.P. Speak the Language of QAnon

By MATTHEW ROSENBERG
and MAGGIE HABERMAN

Late last month, as the Texas Republican Party was shifting into campaign mode, it unveiled a new slogan, lifting a rallying cry straight from a once-unthinkable source: the internet-driven conspiracy theory known as QAnon.

The new catchphrase, “We Are the Storm,” is an unobvious cue to a group that the F.B.I. has labeled a potential domestic terrorist threat. It is instantly recognizable among QAnon adherents, signaling what they claim is a coming conflagration between President Trump and what they allege, falsely, is a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophile Democrats who seek to dominate America and the world.

The slogan can be found all over social media posts by QAnon followers, and now, too, in emails from the Texas Republican Party and on the T-shirts, hats and sweatshirts that it sells. It has even worked its way into the party’s text message system — a recent email from the party urged readers to “Text STORM2020” for updates.



TOM BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

QAnon recently received verbal support from President Trump.

The Texas Republicans are an unusually visible example of the Republican Party’s dalliance with QAnon, but they are hardly unique. A small but growing number of Republicans — including a heavily favored Republican congressional candidate in Georgia — are donning the QAnon mantle, ushering its adherents in from the

troll-infested fringes of the internet and potentially transforming the wild conspiracy theory into an offline political movement, with supporters running for Congress and flexing their political muscle at the state and local levels.

Chief among the party’s QAnon promoters is Mr. Trump himself.

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Accepting Nomination, He Rebukes Trump
and Pledges to ‘Draw on the Best of Us’

By ALEXANDER BURNS and KATIE GLUECK

Joseph R. Biden Jr. accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday night, beginning a general-election challenge to President Trump that Democrats have cast as a rescue mission for a country equally besieged by a crippling pandemic and a White House defined by incompetence, racism and abuse of power.

Speaking before a row of flags in his home state of Delaware, Mr. Biden urged Americans to have faith that they could “overcome this season of darkness,” and pledged that he would seek to bridge the country’s political divisions in ways Mr. Trump had not.

“The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long — too much anger, too much fear, too much division,” Mr. Biden said. “Here and now, I give you my word: If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness.”

Mr. Biden’s appearance was an emphatic closing argument in a four-day virtual convention in which Democrats presented a broad coalition of women, young people and racial minorities while

going to unusual lengths to welcome Republicans and independent voters seeking relief from the tumult of the Trump era.

The former vice president alluded to that outreach, saying that while he is a Democratic candidate, he will be “an American president.” And in an implicit contrast with Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden said he would “work hard for those who didn’t support me.”

“This is not a partisan moment,” he said. “This must be an American moment.”

The party has offered Mr. Biden, 77, less as a traditional partisan standard-bearer than as a comforting national healer, capable of restoring normalcy and calm to the United States and returning its federal government to working order. He has campaigned as an apostle of personal decency and political conciliation, and as a transitional figure who would take on some of the worst American crises — not just the coronavirus outbreak but also economic inequality, climate change and gun violence — before handing off power to another generation.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

After Four Nights in Spotlight,
Democrats Point It at Trump

By JONATHAN MARTIN and SHANE GOLDMACHER

As the newly minted leader of the Democratic Party, Joseph R. Biden used his acceptance speech on Thursday night to lay out an unusually personal message for the fall campaign, linking his heart-rending biography of setback and recovery to the lives of Americans hoping for their own rebound in a season of hardships.

But looming over Mr. Biden’s long-sought presidential nomination was the ever-present shadow of another man who’s poised to dominate the final 10 weeks of the campaign and use his considerable megaphone to drown out Mr. Biden’s pitch: Donald J. Trump.

The president, who spent the day attacking Mr. Biden in the

swing state of Pennsylvania, has been the greatest unifying force at the Democratic convention, given that loathing him is the one thing that everyone in the fractious party can agree on.

Mr. Biden and the Democrats spent the week prosecuting arguments against him on Covid-19, unemployment, health care, child care, climate change, foreign policy and his fundamental fitness for the presidency — attacks that only presaged a fall campaign that, even when it features Mr. Biden, will be aimed entirely at drawing contrasts with Mr. Trump.

“He’ll wake up every day believing the job is all about him, never about you,” Mr. Biden said

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As Top Putin Foe Is Hospitalized,
Suspensions of Poison in His Tea

By ANDREW HIGGINS

MOSCOW — Booked on an early morning flight back to Moscow, Aleksei A. Navalny began his day with a rushed breakfast — just a cup of tea in a plastic cup — at the airport in the Siberian city of Tomsk. Soon after his flight took off Thursday, he rushed to the toilet feeling violently ill.

Just a few hundred miles into its nearly 2,000-mile flight, the plane made an emergency landing, and Mr. Navalny, Russia’s most prominent opposition leader, groaning in agony before losing consciousness, was taken on a gurney to an ambulance waiting on the tarmac.

Mr. Navalny’s spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, who was traveling with him, announced on Twitter that he had been poisoned, probably by something put in his tea at the airport’s Vienna Café. Mr. Navalny, who has often described President Vladimir V. Putin as the leader of a “party of crooks and thieves,” had traveled to Siberia to help organize opposition candidates ahead of local elections next



Aleksei A. Navalny, on Thursday in a video on social media.

month. Doctors at the No. 1 Clinical Hospital in Omsk, the Siberian city where the plane made its emergency landing, initially said that Mr. Navalny was on a ventilator in serious condition. It later reported that his condition, though still grave, had stabilized.

As alarm that Mr. Navalny might die receded, speculation of foul play escalated, particularly after his personal physician and

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Many Schools Lack a Nurse
Less than 40 percent of the nation’s schools had a full-time nurse before the pandemic. There has been no national effort to hire more, leaving one nurse for every 1,800 students. PAGE A6

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New York City released data that includes 1.5 million antibody test results reported to the city’s Department of Health, and shows which neighborhoods suffered the most. PAGE A5

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Ron Rivera, the first-year coach of the Washington Football Team, plans to work during treatment. PAGE B8



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Bruce Pascoe, above, wants to use his writing to revive the Aboriginal community in Australia. PAGE C12

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Carl Craig, a leading figure in Detroit techno, has turned part of Dia Beacon into a phantasmal nightclub. PAGE C1

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Rotaries, traffic circles, whatever you call them, are often unnerving to American drivers. But familiarity eases the fear. Wheels. PAGE B3



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