

NBC's *Today*

04/21/23

7:00:57 a.m. [TEASE]

18 seconds [0:10 on Hunter]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: He's Running]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Hunter Biden Investigation]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: He's running. President Biden set to launch his re-election campaign in a matter of days. The details behind the rollout straight ahead, as new details on Hunter Biden's legal troubles emerge. What we're now learning about the criminal investigation and the potential whistleblower who says the case has been mishandled.

(...)

7:08:49 a.m.

3 minutes and 27 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Details on Hunter Biden Investigation]

HODA KOTB: Meantime, there are developments this morning in the investigation surrounding President Biden's son, Hunter. New details on the possible criminal charges he could face and the FBI [sic] agent who's now seeking whistleblower protection. NBC's senior Washington correspondent Hallie Jackson has the latest on that story. Hi, Hallie, good morning.

HALLIE JACKSON: Hey, Hoda, good morning to you. I'm told the process is moving forward with that career IRS agent with some members of Congress in conversations with his attorney about the whistleblower protections he wants. Some lawmakers want to know what the agent has to say as we're learning about the potential charges hunter Biden could face. New reaction this morning to the allegation the President's son is getting preferential treatment with the allegations against him, with an IRS special agent sending a letter to Congress, asking for whistleblower protection for his work in a "high profile" case. His attorney won't confirm which one, but a source familiar with the matter tells NBC News it is the Hunter Biden investigation.

MARK LYTLE: He's somebody who would really regret if he just stayed silent and did nothing. And so, he doesn't want to live his life that way.

JACKSON [TO LYTLE]: Why should people believe that your client is not motivated by political considerations in coming forward here?

LYTLE: In terms of credibility, he's willing to be cross-examined. He's willing to be tested. He has documents that support some of the assertions he wants to make.

JACKSON: The agent has allegedly seen clear conflicts of interest and preferential treatment and

politics improperly infecting decisions. NBC News has learned federal prosecutors have considered potential criminal charges against the President's son: three tax crimes and a charge related to a gun purchase, according to two sources familiar with the matter. Hunter Biden has said a review would show he handled his affairs “legally and appropriately.” No charges brought. Last month the attorney general making his pledge about the case overseen by a Trump-appointed U.S. Attorney in Delaware.

ATTORNEY GENERAL MERRICK MERRICK GARLAND [on 03/01/23]: He’s not restricted in his investigation in any way.

JACKSON: Republicans taking aim at the Biden administration.

SENATOR MARSHA BLACKBURN (R-TN): We surely are curious to see if this is being slow-walked.

JACKSON: No comment from the Justice Department or the IRS, but the White House says the President is keeping an appropriate distance.

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: He believes in the rule of law. He believes in the independence of the Justice Department.

JACKSON: Hunter Biden raising his public profile recently even in the face of GOP led investigations against him. In Ireland with his father this month.

JOE BIDEN: I'm proud of you.

JACKSON: Hunter Biden's attorney telling NBC News, “it appears this agent has committed a crime” by sharing private information “and had denied my client protections that are his right.”

KOTB: Hallie, let's talk about the timing here. Do we know why the agent is coming forward right now?

JACKSON: That's a good question, Hoda, especially considering multiple sources are telling our team at NBC News that the bulk of the work was done about a year ago. So, right, why now, why this moment? The agent's attorney told me that he had seen testimony pretty recently from a senior political appointee that contradicted what the agent felt was actually happening in the case. Now, he wouldn't confirm who the official is. For legal reasons, there's a lot that they say has to be pretty cryptic on this. It is worth noting that the testimony from Attorney General Merrick Garland that we just showed you where he said the U.S. Attorney overseeing the case is not restricted in any way, happened about a month ago, Hoda.

KOTB: Alright, Hallie Jackson for us there — Capitol Hill. Hallie, thanks.