

*CBS Mornings*

07/28/26

7:09:58 a.m.

2 minutes and 42 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Tapes Reveal Biden's Handling of Classified Docs]

NATALIE MORALES: For the first time, we're hearing former President Joe Biden discuss classified documents in his possession before he was elected in 2020. Newly released recordings offer a revealing look at the former president as he worked on a memoir. Weijia Jiang is at the White House with more. Weijia, good morning.

WEIJIA JIANG: Natalie, good morning to you and to everybody. CBS News was first to obtain about two and a half hours of the roughly 70 hours of recording conversations between Biden and his ghostwriter. For years, Biden fought to keep them private, but the Justice Department has now released them after a long legal battle.

JOE BIDEN [on 02/16/17]: Some of this may be classified, so be careful.

JIANG: The newly released audio recordings reveal that, in 2016 and 2017 as then-former Vice President Biden was writing a memoir, he told his ghostwriter Mark Zwonitzer on several occasions he had classified documents in his possession. Biden said this in reference to volumes of notes he kept in his home.

BIDEN [on 02/16/17]: I just found all the classified stuff downstairs.

JIANG: Biden would later publicly criticize President Trump for his handling of classified material after classified documents were discovered at Mar-a-Lago.

BIDEN [from 09/18/22]: How that could possibly happen, how anyone could be that irresponsible?

JIANG: The Biden tapes were first referenced by Special Counsel Robert Hur in a 2024 report that summarized Hur's investigation of Biden's handling of classified materials after classified documents were found in Biden's home and private office. As part of the probe, Hur interviewed Biden in 2022 and ultimately did not recommend charges, in part arguing the jury would not convict, likely viewing Biden as "a sympathetic, well-meaning elderly man with a poor memory." Hur described Biden in these older audio recordings as exhibiting "diminished faculties."

BIDEN: What was I going to ask you? Something else — um, oh, gosh. I — I can't think what it is.

JIANG: President Biden had previously denied sharing classified information. A spokesman told us: "President Biden's conversations for a book a decade ago that discussed his late son are

private and were provided to the Department of Justice on the express condition they stay that way. Reversing course and making them public is just the latest example of this administration weaponizing the DOJ for political retribution,” Vlad.

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Weijia, thank you very much.