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## News

# Did White House, FBI, or DOJ 'Confirm' Authenticity of Ashley Biden's Diary?

Plenty of evidence and reporting suggests it is likely real, but that doesn't mean the government has publicly stated an opinion on it.

By [Alex Kasprak](#)

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### Key facts:

- While there is circumstantial evidence and reporting that strongly suggests a diary allegedly belonging to Ashley Biden is authentic, no law enforcement or government agency has "confirmed" its authenticity, or its contents.
- Claims that a court or special master have made statements that confirm the diary's authenticity are a misreading of legal documents.

On Oct. 26, 2020, obscure right-wing outlet National File **published** what it alleged to be the entire contents of a diary kept by U.S. President Joe Biden's daughter, Ashley Biden, when she lived in Delray Beach, Florida. Purportedly left behind in the apartment she was staying in, the diary was quickly **passed around among** some anti-Biden activists, where it has become the source of claims of abuse and trauma she endured by the president, among other things.

Since National File's publication, debates about the document's authenticity have surrounded the diary. It was allegedly left behind in an apartment Biden was staying at in Florida and ultimately sold by the person who found it to right-wing activist group Project Veritas. Project Veritas declined to publish the diary, which **inspired** a "whistle-blower" from that organization to deliver the document to National File.

In October 2021, the FBI had **opened** an investigation into "stolen property," including a journal, belonging to Ashley Biden after "a representative of the Biden family reported that several of Ms. Biden's personal items had been stolen in a burglary." In mid-November 2021, the FBI raided the homes of several employees of Project Veritas as part of that investigation. In August 2022, the two individuals who found, transported, and sold the alleged diary to Project Veritas pleaded guilty to transporting stolen property across state lines.

Developments in that still-ongoing criminal case have periodically been used to assert that the government or courts or some other official entity had "verified" the diary and its contents as authentic. In November 2021, for example, when Project Veritas confirmed media reports that it had been raided by the FBI, U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert **tweeted**, "if the FBI raided someone's house over Ashley Biden's diary being stolen, that means Ashley Biden's diary and the accusations in it were real."

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Similar claims were made when the two people who first obtained the alleged diary were **sentenced** in a plea deal in **August 2022**. "Confirmed: Ashley Biden's diary is real," right wing influencer Kyle Becker **tweeted** of the news, explaining that "two people just plead guilty to federal charges of stealing the diary of President Biden's daughter."

## U.S. Special Master Confirmation?

In March 2023, **claims** that the diary had officially been authenticated peaked again. This time the precipitating event was the filing of a document by a **special master** tasked with assessing Project Veritas' claims of legal privilege to withhold items collected in raids. That **document** primarily detailed reasons for rejecting most claims of privilege, but it also included a review of assertions about Ashley Biden's stolen property that Project Veritas had made:

In September 2020, sources identified as R.K. and A.H. contacted Project Veritas to report that they found a diary authored by Ashley Biden. ...

According to the sources, Biden left the diary and other belongings behind when she moved out of a house in Delray Beach, Florida, that one of the sources subsequently occupied. [...]

Project Veritas reached a Biden acquaintance who conferenced a person who identified herself as Biden. Biden stated that the belongings were hers and asked that they be delivered to a friend in Delray Beach. [...] In early November 2020, Project Veritas arranged for the delivery of the diary and other

belongings to the Delray Beach, FL police department.

Aspects of this narrative, published in a court filing, have been widely shared as the latest evidence that the diary and its contents had been authenticated. But these statements are not a publication of facts or a representation made by the government. They are a recitation of claims Project Veritas' lawyers have made.

Quoting from this section of the document as evidence for the veracity of Project Veritas claims would be like taking a court-published transcript of O.J. Simpson's lawyers arguing for his innocence as evidence that the police or the court believed he was innocent.

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The most recent claims of official authentication stem in part from a March 21, 2023, **tweet** by the National File — the outlet that originally published the diary — that highlighted the special master **filing** discussed above:

To a passing observer unfamiliar with the criminal case against Project Veritas, this tweet could be incorrectly read as stating that the U.S District Court Special Master was the entity that "confirmed" that the diary was

"legitimate." Indeed, that is how several right-wing influencer accounts read and disseminated the news.



*James O'Keefe, at CPAC meeting in 2020*

This was not something the special master or the court said or did. The National File tweet was directed at Project Veritas' founder and former head James O'Keefe in the context of his decision not to publish the diary before the 2020 election. O'Keefe had claimed that he did not publish it because he could not verify its authenticity.

National File argued that the declaration of facts provided by Project Veritas in the special master filing proved that O'Keefe was lying about having doubts, and that he and his organization believed it to be real. In a later tweet, National File wrote:

James SPIKED the diary, weeks before the election. If it were up to James, you never would have seen it. Then, he lied about it, during the final week of the election. He said it was not confirmed.

National File was referring to these representations made by Project Veritas' lawyers in the special master **filing**:

Project Veritas worked to authenticate the diary and engaged a handwriting expert; it began producing a video news story.

Project Veritas reached a Biden acquaintance who conferenced a person who identified herself as Biden. Biden stated that the belongings were hers and asked that they be delivered to a friend in Delray Beach.

Project Veritas believed that the diary was authored by Biden and worked to finalize the news story about the diary and continued to analyze the contents of the diary. [...]

These statements, as well, have been used as evidence of government authentication in myriad social media posts. However, they are representations made by "petitioners, through counsel" — i.e., the lawyers for Project Veritas. They are not, as has been implied, statements of the special master, the U.S. District Court, or government prosecutors. The special master's filing explicitly **describes** those prosecutors as not endorsing Project Veritas' representations:

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The Government, for its part, has been more circumspect in its public statements to the Court regarding the relevant factual background and its investigation. It characterized Project Veritas' assertions as "either false or misleading and . . . directly contradicted by the evidence described in the sworn affidavits that were submitted to the federal magistrate judge in support of the search warrants.

The government, in other words, has not stated a view on the authenticity of the diary published by National File, and the lawyer representing Ashley Biden has declined to confirm its authenticity. Simply put, nobody in a position to officially "confirm" the authenticity of that document has made such a declaration.

## **Circumstantial Evidence Suggests Diary Is Authentic**

Regardless of any sort of official confirmation from the government or the Bidens, ample evidence strongly suggests the diary belonged to the president's daughter. This information was not new and not a revelation by the special master. The details that went viral in March 2023 had been in the public domain since December 2021, when The New York Times



published a detailed **account** of the investigation into Project Veritas.

In that report, the Times detailed an exchange between Biden lawyers and Project Veritas lawyers that ended with a threat by the Biden legal team to report the diary's theft to the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York (SDNY). That communication occurred the same month the FBI opened an investigation:

Ms. Biden's lawyers refused to acknowledge whether the diary belonged to Ms. Biden but told Mr. [Project Veritas lawyer Jered T.] Ede that Project Veritas should treat it as stolen property — the lawyers suggested that "serious crimes" might have been committed — and that any suggestion that the diary was abandoned was "ludicrous."

Ultimately, one of Ms. Biden's lawyers, Roberta Kaplan, told Ede: "This is insane; we should send to SDNY." Shortly thereafter Ms. Biden's lawyers alerted prosecutors at the United States Attorney's office for the Southern District of New York, which is now overseeing the case.

That an investigation was opened into, as it was **first described** in public filings, the theft of "personal belongings of an immediate family member of a then-former government official who was a candidate for national political office," and that two people were arrested for allegedly transporting, among other things, a stolen journal, further support its authenticity.

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The existence of a phone call between Project Veritas and someone who identified herself as Ashley Biden, while also suggestive of the diary's authenticity, is not news, either. In March 2022, The New York Times **reported** on it:

A month before the 2020 election, Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s daughter, Ashley, received a call from a man offering help. Striking a friendly tone, the man said that he had found a diary that he believed belonged to Ms. Biden and that he wanted to return it to her. [...]

The man on the other end of the phone worked for Project Veritas, a conservative group that had become a favorite of President Donald J. Trump, according to interviews with people familiar with the sequence of events.

From a conference room at the group's headquarters in Westchester County, N.Y., surrounded by other top members of the group, the caller was seeking to trick Ms. Biden into confirming the authenticity of the diary, which Project Veritas was about to purchase from two intermediaries for \$40,000.

Another piece of supporting evidence is that the Delray Beach Police Department "determined" that items including the diary "belonged to" Ashley Biden, and apparently felt confident enough to contact the FBI after receiving it and other items from a lawyer for Project Veritas, as **reported** by the Times in December 2021:

On the morning of Sunday, Nov. 8 — 24 hours after Mr. Biden had been declared the winner of the election — a lawyer named Adam Leo Bantner II arrived at the [Delray] police station with a blue duffel bag and another bag, according to the police report and the footage. Mr. Bantner declined to reveal the identity of his client to the police. [...]

The video footage [from an officer bodycam], which appears to be a partial account of the encounter, records Mr. Bantner describing the bags as "crap." [...] [T]he police did examine the contents of the bag and quickly determined that they belonged to Ms. Biden. The report said the police contacted both the Secret Service and the F.B.I., which later collected the items.

This is ultimately how the alleged Biden diary ended up in the hands of the federal government in the first place. All of these relevant facts aside, though, no government official, prosecutor, or judge has explicitly "confirmed" that the diary published by National File is authentic.

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These claims are regularly raised whenever there is movement in the criminal case against Project Veritas. Such opportunities allow for short-lived virality and new attention to a story whose publicly known facts have

not changed for at least a year, but they are never accurate. For these reasons, we rate this claim as "False."

## Sources



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