

EXCLUSIVE Hunter Biden told Congress he only knew lobbyists who were investigated by Justice 'tangentially' - but emails reveal one called him a 'super friend!' and he told another 'welcome to the team'

By Josh Boswell For Dailymail.com 15:33 EST 01 Mar 2024 , updated 15:44 EST 01 Mar 2024



- **Hunter Biden told Congress on Wednesday that his close relationship with Blue Star chiefs Karen Tramontano and Sally Painter was just 'social' and 'tangential'**
- **But emails from his abandoned laptop show he had a long and deep relationship with the controversial lobbyists**
- **In one email, Painter wrote to Hunter, 'You are a great professional doing excellent work. And a super friend!'**

Emails from [Hunter Biden](#)'s laptop conflict with his testimony to [Congress](#) on Wednesday, DailyMail.com can exclusively reveal.

He claimed his close relationship with two controversial lobbyists was just 'social' and 'tangential', passed off a dinner with [Joe Biden](#) and his business partners as being purely for a UN charity when his emails suggested otherwise, and suggested 'Big Guy' was not a phrase he used for his father – when the nickname appears several times in messages on his laptop.

Flanked by his attorney Abbe Lowell, Hunter, 54, [attended a six-hour closed-door grilling](#) in Washington [DC](#) on Wednesday. A 229-page [transcript](#) of the conversation was released Thursday.

When congressional investigators asked Hunter about Blue Star Strategies, the [Democrat](#) lobby shop that Ukrainian gas firm Burisma hired on his recommendation, Hunter claimed he knew its founders 'just socially and tangentially a few times', according to the transcript.

But that concealed a long and deep relationship with Blue Star chiefs Karen Tramontano and Sally Painter, evidenced by emails on his abandoned laptop.



Hunter, 54, spent six hours on Capitol Hill Wednesday answering questions about his father Joe Biden's involvement in his foreign businesses as part of the Republican-led impeachment inquiry



Emails from his abandoned laptop show he had a long and deep relationship with Blue Star chiefs Karen Tramontano (pictured) and Sally Painter



Sally Painter

From: Sally Painter [REDACTED]
Subject: So sorry my friend
Date: October 21, 2014 at 7:24 AM
To: Hunter Biden [REDACTED]



Dear Hunter,

I am just back from a week in Estonia and heard about the dust-up. The press sucks. So sorry for you and your family but don't let them get you down. You are a great professional doing excellent work. And a super friend! Who has many many many friends as well.

Warmest sally

Sally Painter
Co-Founder and COO
Blue Star Strategies



Washington, DC 20006

www.bluestarstrategies.com

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In an October 2014 email, Tramontano's co-founder Sally Painter called Hunter 'a super friend', and offered her condolences that the media had discovered he had been kicked out of the Navy following a positive cocaine test

From: Eric Schwerin [redacted]
Subject: Fwd: Valeri
Date: February 6, 2015 at 1:58 PM
To: Hunter Biden [redacted]



Eric D. Schwerin
Rosemont Seneca Partners, LLC
[redacted]
Washington, DC 20007
[redacted]

Consider the environment before printing this email.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Karen Tramontano [redacted]
To: Eric Schwerin <[redacted]>
Subject: RE: Valeri
Date: February 6, 2015 at 4:57:20 PM EST

Advocating for him is the easiest part of my life...
Hope to have an update next week,
Thanks
Karen

From: Eric Schwerin [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2015 4:50 PM
To: Karen Tramontano
Subject: Valeri

Karen-

Just to follow up on our conversation yesterday, I gave Hunter a download of your conversation with Valeri and he concurred with the answers I gave you re: the Middle East and Legal Work. All things he could be helpful on. Just wanted to close the loop on that. Hunter said to thank you again for advocating on his behalf.

Best,

Eric

'Advocating for him is the easiest part of my life,' Tramontano wrote in a 2015 email to Eric Schwerin about Hunter

From: Karen Tramontano [redacted]
Subject: Re: Congrats
Date: July 25, 2014 at 2:28 PM
To: Hunter Biden [redacted]



thank you very much. look forward to working together karen

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 25, 2014, at 5:27 PM, "Hunter Biden" <[redacted]> wrote:

Karen-

I just heard you passed your 79. Congrats and welcome officially to the team. I am up at Lake Michigan for a few more weeks, but look forward to catching up when I am back. Eric told me about a couple of the things you are already working on. Sounds exciting. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Best,

Hunter

--

R. Hunter Biden
Rosemont Seneca Partners, LLC

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Hunter emailed Tramontano in July 2014: 'I just heard you passed... congrats and welcome officially to the team'

Hunter had good reason to play down his links with the lobbyists. They were investigated by the Justice Department for illegally failing to declare their work for Burisma, including meetings with State Department officials to convince them the gas company was not corrupt.

To avoid charges, they agreed in 2022 to file documents with the DoJ detailing their meetings with then-US ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt and two other senior officials, six years after the fact, thus closing the investigation.

Their failure to register as foreign lobbyists, and Hunter's close involvement with Blue Star and Burisma, could go to the heart of a potential prosecution under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which Special Counsel David Weiss' deputies have said is a possibility in their probe of the First Son.



In sworn testimony to Congress, Tramontano said Hunter did not direct any of her firm's work for Burisma and played down her relationship with him

But despite his claims of mere 'tangential' and 'social' relationship with Tramontano and Painter, laptop emails show the president's son was already a personal client of Tramontano's earlier in 2015.

One email appears to show Hunter, through Rosemont Seneca, had hired Tramontano to help build his relationship with Latvian bank owner Valeri

Belokon.

Schwerin wrote to the Blue Star CEO in February 2015: 'Karen- Just to follow up on our conversation yesterday, I gave Hunter a download of your conversation with Valeri and he concurred with the answers I gave you re: the Middle East and Legal Work... Hunter said to thank you again for advocating on his behalf.'

'Advocating for him is the easiest part of my life,' Tramontano replied.

The direct relationship went even further back, with one October 2014 email from Painter to Hunter saying: 'I know that Karen thanked you but we really appreciated your taking the time. And Valeri really liked you – of course. Thanks for your friendship and support.'

Emails from March 2014 show that Tramontano even discussed registering her investment banking license with Hunter's firm.

'I'm going to see if I can 'park my license' as you explained with a firm,' Tramontano wrote to Schwerin. 'I would like to talk further with you – and Hunter – if there were an opportunity to do that with your firm.'

Four months later it appears they followed through with the plans.

From: Eric Schwerin
Subject: Fwd: FINRA Exam Prep
Date: March 10, 2014 at 1:10 PM
To: Hunter Biden



Eric D. Schwerin

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Karen Tramontano"
Date: March 10, 2014 at 3:41:33 PM EDT
To: "Eric Schwerin"
Cc: "Sally Painter" <
Subject: RE: FINRA Exam Prep

Dear Eric,

Again thank you very much. I spoke with Sally at length and I think I'm going to move forward to take the exam – although I think at least as a first option to see whether there's a real business opportunity (assuming I pass) I'm going to see if I can "park my license" as you explained with a firm. I would like to talk further with you – and Hunter – if there were an opportunity to do that with your firm. I know I am putting my cart way ahead of the horse because I haven't even registered to take the tests, haven't taken the tests or passed but I thought I'd at least see if you guys were interested in talking. Thank you very much for your assistance,

All the best,

Karen

Karen A. Tramontano
Blue Star Strategies

Washington, DC 20006

www.bluestarstrategies.com

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From: Eric Schwerin
Sent: Thursday, March 06, 2014 3:12 PM
To: Karen Tramontano
Subject: FINRA Exam Prep

Emails from March 2014 show that Tramontano discussed registering her investment banking license with Hunter's firm

From: Sally Painter
Subject: RE: Thank you
Date: October 9, 2014 at 12:04 PM
To: Hunter Biden

SP

Dear Hunter,

I know that Karen thanked you but we really appreciated your taking the time. And Valeri really liked you – of course. Thanks for your friendship and support.

Warmest regards,

sally

Sally Painter
Co-Founder and COO
Blue Star Strategies

An October 2014 email from Sally Painter to Hunter said: 'I know that Karen thanked you but we really appreciated your taking the time. And Valeri really liked you – of course. Thanks for your friendship and support'

Hunter emailed Tramontano in July that year: 'I just heard you passed... congrats and welcome officially to the team.'

'Thank you very much. Look forward to working together,' she replied.

Other emails cast even further doubt on Hunter's claims of a distant relationship with the Blue Star lobbyists.

In an October 2014 email, Tramontano's co-founder Painter called Hunter 'my friend', and offered her condolences that the media had discovered he had been kicked out of the Navy following a positive cocaine test.

'Dear Hunter, I am just back from a week in Estonia and heard about the dust-up. The press sucks. So sorry for you and your family but don't let them get you down. You are a great professional doing excellent work. And a super friend! ...Warmest, Sally,' she wrote.

Another set of emails show Hunter had a close friendship since at least 2010 with her Senior Managing Director, one of Tramontano's eight Blue

Star employees, Gabriel Zinny.

On December 31 2010 Zinny wrote to Hunter and his partner in their Rosemont Seneca consultancy Eric Schwerin, referring to Hunter as 'boss'.

'Boss, Eric, happy new year!! For many more businesses in 2011,' the Blue Star senior staffer wrote.

In a January 2011 email another Rosemont staffer wrote to Zinny referring to 'two deals you discussed with Hunter and Eric.'

A June 2014 email exchange shows Hunter even arranged for Zinny's business associate to [meet with his father, then-Vice President Joe Biden](#).

Manuel Estrella, president of Dominican Republic civil works firm Estrella, wrote to Hunter thanking him for arranging a meeting with Joe.

'Hunter, I just met your father! So exiting! [sic]' wrote Estrella. 'Thanks! Hope to see you soon!'

Hunter replied: 'I'm glad it all finally came together. Thank Gabriel he made it happen.'



Flanked by his attorney Abbe Lowell, Hunter, 54, attended a six-hour closed-door grilling in Washington DC on Wednesday

Thunderbird

From: "Gabriel Zinny" <[REDACTED]>
Date: 12/31/10, 10:04 AM
To: <[REDACTED]>

Boss, Eric, happy new year!!
For many more businesses in 2011

Gabriel

'Boss, Eric, happy new year!! For many more businesses in 2011,' the Blue Star senior staffer wrote

Hey Gabriel,

Hope you're doing well. We were doing some background research on the two deals you discussed with Hunter and Eric earlier this week (re: Manzano) and had a few questions I was hoping you could help me answer. In regards to the Kosmos deal, do you know if Manzano was part of the CNOOC team that made a bid of the company in late 2010? If not with CNOOC, who are they partnering with in China? In regards to the Repsol deal, it looks as though Repsol is following a clear path of divestment in YPF. What has Manzano's communication/progress been to date?

Thanks for your help.

Best,

Mike

--

Mike Muldoon
Rosemont Seneca Partners, LLC

[REDACTED]
Washington, DC 20007
[REDACTED]

In a January 2011 email another Rosemont staffer wrote to Zinny referring to 'two deals you discussed with Hunter and Eric'

From: Eric Schwerin
Subject: Fwd: VP Biden
Date: June 19, 2014 at 6:00 PM
To: Hunter Biden



I love it when a plan comes together....

Eric D. Schwerin

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Gabriel Zinny
Date: June 19, 2014 at 7:25:38 PM EDT
To: Hunter Biden
Cc: Eric Schwerin
Subject: Re: VP Biden

Thank you so much Boss!
Just talked to Manuel who was really excited

You are too generous with your latinos fans!! I really appreciate it,

Muchas muchas gracias Sir!!

From: Hunter Biden
Sent: Thursday, June 19, 2014 7:08 PM
To: Estrella, Manuel
Cc: Gabriel Zinny
Subject: Re: VP Biden

I'm glad it all finally came together. Thank Gabriel he made it happen. Hope we can see each other soon. Best, Hunter

RHB

On Jun 19, 2014, at 7:02 PM, "Estrella, Manuel" wrote:

Hunter, I just met your father!
So exiting!
Francis Person helped me!
Thanks!
Hope to see you soon!

Enviado desde mi smartphone BlackBerry 10.

'Hunter, I just met your father! So exiting! [sic]' wrote Manuel Estrella, president of Dominican Republic civil works firm Estrella. 'Thanks! Hope to see you soon!'

The First Son was also questioned on Wednesday about an April 2015 dinner at DC restaurant Café Milano with his then-VP father and foreign business partners.

Hunter claimed that the dinner was purely to support the UN World Food Program, of which he was a board member.

Hunter told Congress 'entire purpose' of the dinner was about the UN charitable organization, and that 'it didn't have anything to do with business'.

But emails show he had ulterior motives.

In a clandestine message to a guest weeks before the gathering, he wrote 'the reason for the dinner is ostensibly to discuss food security,' suggesting the real topic was something else, and adding: 'Dad will be there but keep that btw us for now'.

The friend, Michael Karloutsos, replied 'Everything is between us' and asked 'What is the UN Food Program called?'

Hunter followed up making it clear he didn't want to put in writing the name of one of the dinner guests, then-Kazakh prime minister Karim Massimov, adding to the clandestine nature of the supposedly above-board meeting.

'There are 10-12 for dinner. Most notable the Prime minister of a country I'll tell you over phone,' he wrote.

Hunter was asked about an infamous 2017 email exchange between his business partners discussing equity in their multi-million-dollar deal with Chinese oil giant CEFC, in which his partner James Gilliar suggested Hunter would hold 10% for 'the Big Guy'.

Democrat lawmaker Jamie Raskin asked Hunter: 'On the question of

nicknames, I have not seen your father referred to as the big guy anywhere else in this record. Was that his nickname in your family, the big guy?' Hunter replied 'no'.

'Did you ever call him the big guy?' Raskin asked. 'No, I never called him that,' the First Son said.

But emails on his laptop show that others close to Hunter [referred to Joe as the 'Big Guy' in conversations with the President's son dating back as far as 2013.](#)

Trade union lobbyist Chuck Harple referred to President Biden as the 'big guy' when he emailed Hunter trying to arrange a meeting between his union boss and the then-vice president in 2014.

And Geoff Rogers, an executive at a wealth management firm used the moniker for Joe when he wrote to Hunter about the vice president's appearance at a 2013 private club dinner in Delaware.



The First Son was also questioned on Wednesday about an April 2015 dinner at DC restaurant Café Milano with his then-VP father and foreign business partners, including then-Kazakh prime minister Karim Massimov



From: [redacted]
Subject: Re: April 16th
Date: March 26, 2015 at 4:08 PM
To: [redacted]

Now I remember. Brain is still a little fuzzy from that night! Thank you!

Michael Karloutsos

From: Hunter Biden
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 7:07 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: April 16th

The UN World Food Programme (WFP.org and WFPUSA.org).
I am chairman of board of WFPUSA.
There are 10-12 for dinner. Most notable the Prime minister of a country I'll tell you over phone.
Also CEO of WFPUSA and a few other interesting people.

RHB
[redacted]

On Mar 26, 2015, at 12:30 PM, [redacted] wrote:

Everything is between us. All good! What is the UN Food Program called? I know you mentioned your dad would probably join the dinner as well. Anyone else of note? Praying for Beau.

Michael Karloutsos

From: Hunter Biden
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 1:26 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: April 16th

Ok- the reason for the dinner is ostensibly to discuss food security. Dad will be there but keep that btw us for now. Thanks. Also let David know I will get back to him asap- probably sometime next week when we are through these next few days with beau- which also is just btw us.

RHR
[redacted]

On Mar 26, 2015, at 12:04 PM, [redacted] wrote:

That would work well.

Michael Karloutsos

In a clandestine message to a guest weeks before the dinner, he wrote 'the reason for the dinner is ostensibly to discuss food security,' suggesting the real topic was something else, and adding: 'Dad will be there but keep that btw us for now'. The friend, Michael Karloutsos, replied 'Everything is between us' and asked 'What is the UN Food Program called?'



Tony Bobulinski has publicly stated that James Gilliar was referring to Joe Biden as the 'big guy' in an infamous email and that Joe not only knew about but was involved in Hunter's deal with Chinese oil giant CEFC

Another recipient of Gilliar's infamous May 2017 email, Tony Bobulinski, has publicly stated that Gilliar was referring to Joe Biden, and that Joe not only knew about but was involved in Hunter's deal with Chinese oil giant CEFC.

The transcript of Hunter's Wednesday grilling was released by Republican House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer. He is leading the investigation into whether Joe Biden used his position and 'brand' to enrich his family in a complex \$20 million 'influence peddling' scheme.

He told reporters after Hunter's six-hour deposition 'proved several bits

of our evidence' and added 'we will have a public hearing next.'

'I think a public hearing will hopefully clear up some discrepancies between some of the statements being made by some of the associates and that we heard today.'

Hunter's attorney Lowell told reporters after the meeting that the deposition showed Republicans have 'no evidence.'

'The Republican majority ends the day with where they started. They have produced no evidence that would do anything to support the notion that there was any financial transactions that involved Hunter with his father period,' he said.

'It seems to me that the Republican members wanted to spend more time talking about my client's addiction than ... anything to do with what they call their impeachment inquiry.'