

Commentary

Journalist Investigating Hunter Biden Scandal Removed from Job, All Files Seized

By Jack Gist

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President Joe Biden's infamous words, "No one f***s with a Biden," might be having a trickle-down effect in what has been called an "unprecedented" action from one of the establishment media outlets that have grown as accustomed to covering for the Biden family as Pavlov's dog is to salivating at the sound of a bell.

Catherine Herridge is an acclaimed investigative journalist who was looking into the Hunter Biden laptop scandal before she was fired by CBS News last week. In an "unprecedented" move, sources told the New York Post, Herridge's files were seized by the company. Because the Biden name was in play — Hunter is the president's son — the seizure seems like something out of the old Soviet Union.

Herridge was working on a First Amendment piece that was being watched by journalists nationwide. Her co-workers were already on their heels after learning she was fired, but when they found out the network seized her work laptop, they were shocked. According to insiders, Herridge may have had confidential information on her computer.

"It's so extraordinary," a source close to the situation told the Post. The source said the files that were seized in all likelihood contain confidential material from Herridge's work at Fox News and CBS. Network officials boxed up all Herridge's personal belongings except for her notes and files. They then told her that they would determine what, if anything, would be returned to her, according to the Post.

A second source told the outlet, "They never seize documents [when you're let go]. They want to see what damaging documents she has." CBS News' seizure of her files raises questions about a First Amendment case Herridge is involved in because the files might include privileged conversations with lawyers or the identities of her sources.

A fierce advocate of a journalist's right to protect their sources, Herridge did not comply with U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper's order to reveal how she learned about a federal probe into a Chinese American scientist operating a graduate program in Virginia.

Herridge also might be in legal trouble for refusing to name her source for an investigative piece she wrote for Fox News in 2017. If found in contempt of court, she could be ordered to pay fines of up to \$5,000 a day.

Inside sources told the Post they were concerned CBS might be subpoenaed to reveal the identity of Herridge's source. This would erode free-press principles and force reporters to adhere to prescribed truths handed down by totalitarian powermongers. "This is a company that only plays checkers. They don't play chess," the second source said. "They don't understand the ramifications of their actions." Legal scholar and commentator Jonathan Turley said the timing of Herridge's firing raised suspicions.

"She was pursuing stories that were unwelcomed by the Biden White House and many Democratic powerhouses, including the Hur report on Joe Biden's diminished mental capacity, the Biden corruption scandal and the Hunter Biden laptop," Turley wrote in a piece for The Hill.

Leaving sensitive documents in the hands of shadowy CBS officials could compromise Herridge's numerous other confidential sources and potentially violate HIPAA laws because some of the files may contain personal and family medical records. According to Turley, the network's "heavy-handed approach" is "dead wrong" and "sent a chilling signal in the ranks" of the network and beyond.

The union that represents CBS staffers, SAG-AFTRA, was also incensed by network officials ordering the seizure of Herridge's notes and files. "This action is deeply concerning to the union because it sets a dangerous precedent for all media professionals and threatens the very foundation of the First Amendment," the union said in a statement Thursday.

"It is completely inappropriate for an employer to lay off a reporter and take the very unusual step of retaining and searching the reporter's files, inclusive of confidential source identification and information," SAG-AFTRA said.

“From a First Amendment standpoint, a media corporation with a commitment to journalism calling a reporter’s research and confidential source reporting ‘proprietary information’ is both shocking and absurd,” it said.

“The retention of a media professional’s reporting materials by their former employer is a serious break with traditional practices which supports the immediate return of reporting materials,” the union said. “We urge CBS to return this material to Catherine in support of the most basic of First Amendment principles.”

Herridge was among 20 CBS staffers terminated as part of a purge of hundreds of employees at parent company Paramount Global. A network representative told the Post, “We have respected her [Herridge’s] request to not go through the files, and out of our concern for confidential sources, the office she occupied has remained secure since her departure. We are prepared to pack up the rest of her files immediately on her behalf — with her representative present as she requested.”

A skeptic might say, “Sure. Now that you’ve reviewed the files and seen what she has, give them back.” It’s like cheating at poker. If you’re privy to the cards your opponent is holding, it’s like money in the bank.

Americans aren’t stupid. The feds have shown they aren’t above colluding with the establishment media to advance progressive policies and protect their own. Network executives are only too eager to play along. We get it. Big Brother is watching.

“Nobody f***s with a Biden” means that you will be assimilated into the progressive hive. Resistance is futile.

The elites don’t get the adage, “Saying ain’t doing.”