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## EDWARD EDWARDS

# Biden: Trying to be Seen from a Basement Amid the Whirlwind

By Carl Golden | May 11, 2020, 12:52 pm | in Edward Edwards (<https://www.insidernj.com/category/edward-edwards/>)



He's stuck in the basement of his home in Wilmington, Del., unable to engage in traditional campaigning, soak up the cheers of raucous rally crowds jammed into arenas, clutch outstretched hands or impress audiences with knowledgeable and insightful policy pronouncements.

He's former vice president and presumed Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden who, in addition to the frustrations of home confinement, is tormented daily by published and broadcast reports suggesting that he's been weakened and should consider standing down rather than risk losing to President Trump.

While the misgivings and concerns expressed are often anonymous, others have spoken out publicly urging party leaders to reconsider in favor of a candidate they perceive to be stronger before time runs out.

When the coronavirus pandemic swept across the globe and forced a near halt to every phase of daily life in America, traditional political activity was an immediate casualty.

Gone were the barnstorming hop scotching national tours, the television coverage of adoring crowds trying to catch a glimpse of the candidate, the daily newspaper dispatches from the campaign press plane.

He likely won't benefit from a convention bump because there likely won't be a live convention.

Generating enthusiasm and building momentum from a basement in Wilmington will tax the ability and ingenuity of even the most seasoned and creative consultant.

With no definitive date for when the country will re-open and what the environment will look like when it does, a vacuum has been created. And, its impossible to control what rushes in to fill it.

Consider:

\*Biden is distrusted by the left wing progressives who remain bitter and unforgiving for his ending the career of their hero, Vermont socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders. They don't believe he will be the keeper of the progressive flame, but will extinguish it in the name of political expediency. Reconciling his compromise and consensus strategy with the rigid ideology of the hard left will be a major challenge.

\*His debate and television interview performances have been uneven at best. He often appeared befuddled and incapable of arranging his thoughts in a crisp, concise fashion. A repeat in a debate with Trump would be devastating.

\*He's been under siege since allegations of sexual assault were lodged against him by a woman staffer from a 1993 incident in a Senate office building.

\*Conflict of interest accusations remain unresolved concerning the appointment of his son, Hunter, to a \$50,000 a month seat on the board of directors of an energy company in Ukraine while the elder Biden served as the Obama Administration's point man on dealing with that nation.

While he has denied the accusations of sexual assault lodged by Tara Reade, her story knocked the campaign off balance and has dominated media coverage. In journalism parlance —the story has legs.

Howls of Democratic hypocrisy erupted following Reade's allegations as critics gleefully recounted the show no mercy assaults on Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh two years ago when he stood accused of committing a sexual assault on a high school classmate.

Many of those same Democrats who demanded Kavanaugh's scalp have rallied behind Biden, either dismissing Reade's story, accepting his denials on their face, or dodging the issue by suggesting an investigation is in order — hopefully a protracted one.

Lurking in the background, is the conflict of interest his son's landing a gig as a member of the board of the Ukraine energy company despite no experience in energy policy.

The explanation for Hunter's raking in in two months more than the yearly average household income in the United States have been less than convincing, particularly after he conceded in a television interview that he attended two board meetings and would not have received the appointment had his name not been Biden.

It wasn't supposed to be this way.

After Sanders abandoned his campaign in the face of a primary elections victory streak by Biden, the party establishment was encouraged by the prospect of a unified party closing ranks and erasing the nightmare of the 2016 Hillary Clinton disaster.

Biden has given no indication he's considering stepping aside and, in the absence of an earthquake-like revelation, he'll tough it out in the hope that the country will return to some level of normalcy, he'll respond credibly to the allegations against him, and he'll return to the press the flesh campaign style that's always served him well.

It is his third attempt at the presidency (his 1988 and 2008 campaigns crashed shortly after takeoff) and, at age 77, his last. While he hasn't yet amassed the delegate majority to assure his nomination, it is within his grasp and it is highly unlikely the convention — even a virtual proceeding — will be stampeded into choosing someone else, their worries notwithstanding.

With the awesome power of incumbency at his disposal, Trump confronts none of the Biden-like problems. Like his predecessors, he towers over the political landscape and controls the daily news cycle. Where he goes, the media follows; when he tweets, the media chases his comments.

His party is together, solid in its support. Whatever voices are raised in opposition are quickly squelched and — unlike Biden — Trump is not the subject of discussions about whether he should remain the candidate.

According to the Real Clear Politics national average, Biden enjoys a four-point lead over Trump — slim and close to the margin of error — but an edge nonetheless. Make no mistake, it's a race he can win.

Trump's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has often been erratic, including his rambling two-hour news conferences crammed with misinformation, attacks on the media, and impossibly optimistic predictions on when the nation will enter a recovery.

The economy has been devastated by the pandemic, unemployment is the highest since the Great Depression, and there is a growing restlessness verging on rebellion over the prolonged lockdown.

Whether Trump can weather this storm and whether Biden can take advantage of it remains to be seen.

Biden must exercise caution, however, and avoid one of the more egregious errors committed by Clinton — a belief that Trump wouldn't be taken seriously by the American people and he'd self-destruct.

Well, today Trump is tweeting from the White House while Clinton communicates with her followers from somewhere in Westchester County, N. Y. Biden would prefer to be free from his basement.

Carl Golden is a senior contributing analyst with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. Hear a discussion of state and local political issues on a Hughes Center podcast at Stockton.edu/hughes (<http://Stockton.edu/hughes>) center.

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