

Gaslit Nation
December 04, 2019
The Endgame

Nick Offerman: Hello, I'm Nick Offerman, white male translator for Gaslit Nation. To sum up this week's episode, kleptocracy anywhere is kleptocracy everywhere, and this is a transnational crime syndicate masquerading as a government. Thanks for listening.

Sarah Kendzior: I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of the bestselling essay collection, *The View from Flyover Country*, and the upcoming book, *Hiding in Plain Sight*.

Andrea Chalupa: I'm Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker, and the writer and producer of the upcoming journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones*.

Sarah Kendzior: And this is Gaslit Nation, a podcast covering corruption in the Trump Administration and rising autocracy around the world. As regular listeners know, Gaslit Nation has long stood in favor of impeaching the motherfucker, and over the last three weeks we finally saw it start to happen. I watched it in real time like a sucker, but Andrea luckily got to escape 11 hours per day of GOP hell and go abroad, so before we get into all the testimony and all the lies, Andrea is going to tell us what she was up to while Devin Nunes was stalking her sister.

Andrea Chalupa: Yeah. That's always fun, to travel abroad when the GOP, the Kremlin-backed GOP, is targeting someone you love, because they always go after family as well, as we say, as we remind people on this show. So, I had an interesting trip. I was invited abroad. These were invitations that were from the grassroots, meaning word-of-mouth is getting around about my film, *Mr. Jones*, which is very much a historical drama of how Kremlin disinformation is aided by corruption in the West.

Andrea Chalupa: Kremlin propaganda cannot succeed without the help of the West. It's a mirror of what we're dealing with today. It's a beautiful film directed by Agnieszka Holland. It won essentially the Oscar of Poland. It's a Polish co-production. And interesting grassroots and festivals invited me abroad, including starting with Poland, which is dealing with its own Trumpian government that is trying to purge the judiciary. There are protests against that that have happened in the last few days, so that was an interesting place to be during this time.

Andrea Chalupa: So, I was invited to Warsaw for an incredible conference called Outriders, which seeks to address how to essentially fix journalism, and it brings together all these innovative minds from around the world on people who are confronting saving journalism, how to practice journalism today in the 21st century. And we had journalists that live in Sudan, in Southeast Asia and all over the world dealing with their own hotspots and coming together and sharing really interesting insights into some volcanic sort of regions of the world.

Andrea Chalupa: And I was thrilled to be there and inspired, incredibly inspired, and that's why I gave a presentation on *Mr. Jones*, because it's a story that raises up the importance of investigative journalism and how it's never been a more dangerous time for journalism, and we need it now more than ever. And one of the organizers of this festival turned out to be a Gaslit Nation listener, so that was really cool. Hello to you, Jacob in Warsaw.

Andrea Chalupa: And then I went to Norway to the incredible Movies on War Festival in Elverum, Norway, which is about an hour or so outside of Oslo, and Movies on War is essentially what Gaslit Nation would be as a film festival. They bring all these incredible movies that are confronting some really important issues. There are two powerful documentaries, for instance, on Syria. One is called *The Cave*, a documentary that I watched on a team of doctors in Syria, including a woman by the name of Amani Ballour who risked her life to save countless, countless people, and it just shows their heroism under these extreme conditions. And of course, again, you see the courage of women under fire and women taking leadership roles, running towards the danger.

Andrea Chalupa: And then another powerful film, which I didn't see but I've heard a lot about, which I think I look forward to seeing and I encourage people to see, and it's another incredible documentary on Syria called *For Sama*. *For Sama* is about a mother, a filmmaker, in Syria who fell in love and had a daughter named Sama during the Syrian War, and she picks up a camera and documents everything for her daughter. The film is called *For Sama*. It's won a ton of awards, a ton of awards, and it's just such a beautiful and powerful, from what I've read, documentation on what life was like inside Syria from the eyes of a mother and capturing it all for her daughter, an important human rights record.

Andrea Chalupa: And so when I was at Movies on War, meeting with the incredible organizers there, including [Osteen 00:04:46] ... Hello, Osteen, another Gaslit Nation listener. I gave a presentation on my film, *Mr. Jones*, which screened at the festival, and one thing I pointed out is that my film, *Mr. Jones*, shows and documents essentially a horrific, little known genocide, Stalin's Genocide Famine, which killed millions of people in the Soviet Union in 1933. The vast majority of the victims were Ukrainian, and Western journalists, powerful Western journalists, including at The New York Times helped the Soviet censors cover this up in exchange for greater access to the Soviet regime. This was horrific, extreme examples of the dangers of access journalism.

Andrea Chalupa: And even though Stalin got away with this mass murder and the famine in Ukraine largely remained hidden for generations, my film still stands as an important testament to what was done, so I held that up as an example of with these documentaries on Syria. Even though Syria is the world's karma, it is what is horrific what has been done to the Syrians and the Kurds and so forth, what Assad and Putin have done, and the miscalculation by the West to try to stop this bloodshed. Even though Syria is ongoing and it's heartbreaking, it's absolutely beyond devastating, these documentaries are so, so, so essential in providing an independent record to give back dignity to the countless victims

and their relatives for many generations to come and say, "Yes, this did happen." Eyewitness accounts themselves, that existence of eyewitness accounts themselves are hope.

Andrea Chalupa: I was very touched by those documentaries, an important reminder that regimes like Assad's regime and Putin's regime, they crumble under the weight of truth, and so that's why we need these eyewitness testimonies and need to preserve them, because if Assad wins, and it looks like he is, we've abandoned the Syrian people. If Assad wins, then generations from now if the Assad family remains in control in Syria, they'll say none of this happened, they'll whitewash it. Putin's regime will whitewash it, so these documentaries are defiant and they're the living truth, and so people have to understand how important those types of works are.

Andrea Chalupa: Then from Norway I went to Helsinki, Finland for another screening of *Mr. Jones*, which was organized by the Ukrainian community in Helsinki, and I opened up my remarks by saying that *Mr. Jones* was energetically cleansing Helsinki after the Putin and Trump summit, so the audience liked that. They appreciated that. And while in Helsinki, I met a Finnish journalist who reported from Donbas, which is a region of Eastern Ukraine under Russian occupation, and she was telling me how it was Mad Max over there with all these drunken or so-called Russian rebels. And then the Russian military was trying to really get them into line and discipline them to the point of just really taking the operation over, because it is a Russian invasion of Ukraine first and foremost, and they couldn't rely on the local population to carry out this invasion themselves. And they even released the prisoners to try to create more chaos and just the horrific stuff that she reported on from Donbas, so that was fascinating.

Andrea Chalupa: And then I came home for Thanksgiving, but on the other side of the world in Kyiv, my film, *Mr. Jones*, premiered. Agnieszka Holland, the director, went out for the premiere. James Norton, the star of the film, went out for the premier to Kyiv. It premiered in the largest theater in Ukraine. It was a huge to-do, because this movie was made for Ukrainians first and foremost, and so it was an incredibly moving experience to finally share it with them. And I got a message from a journalist friend in Kyiv, a Ukrainian journalist, who wrote to me. After seeing the film, she wrote, "Dear Andrea, I was at the Kyiv premier yesterday, and the movie was so powerful and beautiful, I don't know how we all lived without it and how much pain we were carrying inside. The screening had almost a therapeutic effect. This is the movie every Ukrainian will show their kids and grandchildren. It's that big and important. My feeling was like I've always needed this story, we've always needed this story, we just didn't know how much we needed it until we saw it."

Andrea Chalupa: And so that is why we say art matters, and that is why we say that getting your voice out there, providing an eyewitness testimony even through art is so powerful, and it can have a healing and therapeutic effect. So, *Mr. Jones*, I'm happy to say, is going to be playing in the Washington D.C. area on December 15th. I'll be there for that screening to do a Q&A. And also Tuesday, December

17th at the AFI Theater in Silver Spring, so please come around for that to finally see the film. And then it goes to theaters across the US and the UK in 2020. Thank you for letting me catch up with you. It's been a really sleepless and busy time, so now on with the authoritarian weather report.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, no, I'm glad you brought up what you did, because I think it's important to remind our audience that we as Americans are not alone in this battle, this battle of kleptocracy, of authoritarianism, of censorship, of varying atrocities. Like you mentioned in Syria, the danger of that narrative being so distorted and twisted that over time it can be forgotten. Which honestly I think is a huge issue that people don't address, is what is going to happen with digital archives, what's going to happen with documentation of the 21st century.

Sarah Kendzior: There was hope initially when all of these atrocities happened in Syria that because they were documented that, one, people would act, and that, two, people would know the truth. But because of the nature of digital media and these social media monopolies and government propaganda, we're in a real danger of that. And I spent a lot of career studying the Andijan Massacre in Uzbekistan in 2005, which I doubt a lot of people know about, and a lot of the recent people don't know is, one, it's Uzbekistan, but two, because all information about it was suppressed by the government. Except for the witnesses who then went online and they created blogs and they told their stories and they posted photos.

Sarah Kendzior: A lot of that material is now gone, because that's now well over 10 years old and it's just disappeared over time, but it's still very important. And as Uzbekistan is gradually opening, it's still an authoritarian state but not as brutal as it was under Karimov, their former dictator who died in 2016, hopefully the full story of Andijan will be told. And I always say it matters, it matters what all those Uzbek journalists have done for the last 15 years to tell that story.

Sarah Kendzior: Even if it didn't seem like people were listening, even if it didn't seem to make a difference in terms of how their government functioned, it matters inherently, because the truth matters inherently. And that's something that we have to remember as we're bombarded with threats, as we're bombarded with propaganda in our own country, and that we have allies facing abroad, that we're in this battle but there is one quality that can link us together, and that's the pursuit of the truth, even if that truth is painful.

Sarah Kendzior: And speaking of painful, we can talk about impeachment, because one of the reasons that Andrea and I were demanding these hearings from the moment that the Democrats won the House is because impeachment was an opportunity for different parties to tell their version of the facts, or to present evidence in an environment that Trump could not control. It was not like the one-way mechanism of Twitter where he just tweets shit out and people try to decipher what the hell he means and whether this misplaced comma means we're now nuking North Korea or whatever. This is a straightforward process, it's a routine,

it's a congressional method, it's extremely old-school in Trump's America to have such a formal procedure.

Sarah Kendzior: Nonetheless, because the Kremlin lackey GOP was involved, it still managed to be a shit-show that still presented very relevant testimony and points due to the high-quality witnesses that were on the stand. Before we get to those witnesses, like Marie Yovanovitch, Gordon Sondland, Fiona Hill and so on, we're going to talk about all of them, if you are familiar with this show, you're probably wondering what the hell was going on with Devin Nunes, the GOP congressman who began every impeachment hearing by rattling off a series of Kremlin talking points like he was the dummy of a bored ventriloquist. And the main talking point he kept coming back to, the one that he just could not get enough of, was Andrea's sister, Alexandra Chalupa.

Devin Nunes: Violating their own guidelines, democrats repeatedly redacted from the transcripts the name of Alexandra Chalupa, a contractor for the Democratic National Committee.

Devin Nunes: Alexandra Chalupa, the former operative for the Democratic National Committee who worked with officials of the Ukrainian embassy in Washington D.C. in order to smear the Trump campaign in 2016.

Devin Nunes: Alexandra Chalupa, a contractor for the Democratic National Committee.

Devin Nunes: Or Alexandra Chalupa, who worked on an election-meddling scheme with Ukrainian officials on behalf of the Democratic National Committee.

Devin Nunes: Alexandra Chalupa, Democratic National Committee operative who colluded with Ukrainian officials to smear the Trump campaign.

Devin Nunes: Who worked with the Ukrainian embassy officials to spread dirt on the Trump campaign.

Devin Nunes: Who worked with Ukrainian officials to collect dirt on the Trump campaign.

Devin Nunes: To dig up dirt on the Trump campaign.

Devin Nunes: All of which were aimed at the Trump campaign.

Devin Nunes: In an effort to influence not only the US voting population, but US government officials.

Devin Nunes: She met directly about these matters with then-Ukrainian Ambassador Chaly.

Devin Nunes: Chalupa's actions appear to show that she was simultaneously working on behalf of a foreign government, Ukraine.

Devin Nunes: Chalupa's activities were one of several indicators of Ukrainian election meddling in 2016.

Devin Nunes: Which she provided to the DNC.

Devin Nunes: And on behalf of the DNC.

Devin Nunes: Which she passed onto the DNC.

Devin Nunes: On behalf of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton Campaign.

Devin Nunes: And the Clinton campaign.

Devin Nunes: And the Clinton campaign.

Devin Nunes: The first question I have is, were you aware of the anti-Trump efforts by DNC operative, Alexandra Chalupa?

Mr. Holmes: I am not aware of it.

Devin Nunes: Mr. Holmes, have you met with or do you know Alexandra Chalupa?

Mr. Holmes: No.

Devin Nunes: The same question for you, Dr. Hill. Do you know or have you met with Alexandra Chalupa?

Dr. Hill: No.

Devin Nunes: Did you know of anti-Trump efforts by various Ukrainian officials as well as Alexandra Chalupa, a DNC consultant?

Dr. Hill: No, I was not aware.

Devin Nunes: Did you know of anti-Trump efforts by various Ukrainian government officials as well as Alexandra Chalupa, a DNC consultant?

Mr. Holmes: I'm not aware of any of these interference efforts.

Devin Nunes: Ambassador Taylor, do you testify to this committee that you only recently became aware of reports of this cooperation between Ukrainian embassy officials and Chalupa to undermine the Trump campaign? From your last deposition, is that correct?

Amb. Taylor: Mr. Nunes, it is correct that I had not known about this before.

Devin Nunes: That's just going over your last deposition.

Amb. Taylor: Exactly right.

Sarah Kendzior: So, Andrea, what is going on here, and why is Devin Nunes obsessed with your sister?

Andrea Chalupa: Because he's creepy, and I have a right to give my opinion on that, Devin Nunes, because I live in a free country, and stop trying to turn us into Putin's Russia. I think what's getting lost in all of this is that Trump's Republican Party, because the Republican Party is now in service to Donald Trump. He's invaded full on ... I mean, Donald Trump is the endgame of how the Republicans have been treating our democracy, have been treating American people. It's the endgame. He's the Frankenstein monster that the Tea Party created or the Koch Brothers created and so forth. So, now they're all out in the open with their xenophobia and misogyny and authoritarian instincts, all of it is out in the open.

Andrea Chalupa: And so they are not only in service to Trump, but Trump is in service to Putin, so now you have the Republican Party being essentially a propaganda weapon that's furthering the Kremlin's interests, and they're carrying out the Kremlin's playbook by targeting my sister. This is a strategy as has been reported on, as anybody who's been paying attention could tell you, this is a strategy that was first and foremost led by Paul Manafort, who's now in prison.

Andrea Chalupa: This is retaliation for my sister telling anybody who would listen, including Republicans in 2016, she tried to warn Republicans in 2016, she warned journalists, she warned anybody that would listen, that Paul Manafort is essentially Putin's operative. And if he's running Donald Trump's campaign, that means the Kremlin is running Donald Trump's campaign. Anybody who was paying close attention to Ukraine knew that Paul Manafort was close consultant to Yanukovich, Putin's puppet in Ukraine. And so this was obvious to anybody who was paying attention, and so this is just retaliation, plain and simple, that came from Paul Manafort himself.

Andrea Chalupa: And Paul Manafort, having been on a \$10 million a year contract from Putin's close oligarch, Deripaska, since 2006, he's carrying out this corruption, carrying out this violence against our democracy like he has against so many countries and parts of the world as a blood money lobbyist. He's doing it to further the Kremlin's interest to destabilize and divide Putin's opponents. He did this in Ukraine. It's the same playbook. And so the GOP and Devin Nunes carrying out Paul Manafort's playbook is carrying out Putin's playbook, because that is who Paul Manafort was in service to, as far as we know, since 2006.

Sarah Kendzior: I mean, can you debunk some of these myths that they've been saying about your sister? I just want to make sure our audience, because they may have been absorbing the fatuous material of not only the GOP but a bunch of bro pundits, who among other things cannot distinguish between you and your sister. Can you just kind of break down some of these myths, like that she went to Ukraine, all of this kind of shit?

Andrea Chalupa: It's been horrendous. I mean, everybody knows that we talk a lot about on this show how journalism is shrinking, newsrooms are shrinking, reporter jobs are disappearing. I know a lot of excellent reporters and editors who have been pushed into other industries because they simply cannot afford to work in journalism any longer. The jobs are just disappearing. And as a result, what you have is a smaller watchdog, and the journalism jobs that are remaining are predominantly white and predominantly male. And that's just to say we're getting our news through a white male lens, we're getting our news through a privileged lens.

Andrea Chalupa: And so what happens if you look at studies is that women, even women political reports, get cut out of these conversations. What you have is an echo chamber of white men in the political arena, political journalism, just talking to each other. And so what's been really interesting in that is they keep repeating things like using my name instead of my sister's name because they've seen me on Twitter, so they're not really bothering for whatever reason, because their lives are not going to be impacted by Trump and his policies.

Andrea Chalupa: They're not being harassed by the Kremlin's active measures. They're not having state-sponsored hacking on their emails. They're not on the front lines of this, because they're white males who are privileged in our society, and who by the very nature of that privilege have far more credibility. They have more weight in what they do and say, and it's the historically marginalized groups, marginalized groups like women and people of color that are on the front lines of this growing threat of authoritarianism in America. And so my sister's story is just being treated like entertainment. I mean, she's being dehumanized.

Andrea Chalupa: For instance, she called me because she's watching CNN, and on CNN she witnesses John King of CNN say that he got confirmation that Alexandra Chalupa went to Ukraine to dig up dirt on Paul Manafort. What a thoughtless, stupid thing to say, because my sister has never in her life even been to Ukraine, and this is what the Manafort, Hannity, Giuliani playbook is trying to do. They're trying to get my sister into legal trouble by making her out to be a pro-Ukrainian Paul Manafort. They're trying to equate her work with Paul Manafort, they're trying to get her for FARA, they're trying to build her up as some giant beast of a political consultant who is furthering the interests of the Ukrainian government against the US interests, so they're trying to make her out to be a Paul Manafort.

Sarah Kendzior: Right, which is insane, because she's a mom who lives in D.C. Just for those who haven't listened to our prior episodes, and by the way, we did a full-length interview with Alexandra Chalupa, I think it's the only one out there where she tells her own side of the story in her own words, and Andrea's sister is a mom who has worked on and off as a political consultant. She is not a DNC operative, she did not travel to Ukraine, she was not secretly passing around documents.

Sarah Kendzior: The myth of your sister is absolutely demented, and like you said, it's coming from the Kremlin, because I think the average American, when they were

hearing Nunes rattle off that name, they had no idea what the hell he was talking about. This is just a flip-the-script method. It's a method to try to have show trials and to try, as you just said, to create some sort of mirror image of Manafort. But my God, Manafort is a career dirty operative. He ran a group called the Torturers Lobby. He's like 70 years old. He's been doing this for decades. To even try to put the similarity with your sister would be hilarious if she weren't actually in danger and if all of these moronic journalists didn't keep botching very basic facts about her situation that put both you and her in danger.

Andrea Chalupa: Exactly. And so John King on CNN saying this then gets echoed by Glenn Greenwald on Twitter saying that my sister was a DNC operative that went to Ukraine to dig up dirt on Manafort, so this then gets repeated by Glenn Greenwald. And then you have people like Seth Abramson saying as though it's matter of fact ... Seth Abramson full on says on Twitter in a single tweet as part of one of his many threads that he does, it is indeed a fact that my sister was a well-paid consultant for the DNC. Well-paid, okay.

Andrea Chalupa: So, Seth Abramson, if you're a fan of Seth Abramson, if you love Seth Abramson and think he can do no wrong, well then just understand that this is a cautionary tale of how insidious Kremlin propaganda is, that it can even infect people that we look up to or people look up to for the truth. Okay? So, if you're a fan of Seth Abramson, just know that this is a cautionary tale that nobody is immune to Kremlin disinformation and how it works, because what he's repeating in a single tweet, and it doesn't matter if it's part of a larger thread where he's trying to debunk Trump's defense by going after my sister, it does not matter. A single tweet out there that is pushing Kremlin propaganda, far right disinformation, that single tweet ...

Andrea Chalupa: The way the world works in the 21st century, that single tweet can easily be taken out of context, easy cherry-picked and put in some Breitbart piece that then goes viral and gets spread around, and that is how the cesspool works. He refused to correct this information, saying that my sister, "Well, she was a well-paid consultant who did work with the Ukrainian embassy to dig," and that's all bullshit. That is all bullshit. So, what he's referring to is Ken Vogel's original Politico piece, which we have good reason to believe was a hit piece placed by Paul Manafort himself, because around the time Ken Vogel came around to interview my sister, she heard from a friend that the Trump transition team was asking around about her and trying to dig up dirt on her.

Andrea Chalupa: And then Ken Vogel shows up to interview her and twists her words and launches this article, which has been the focus, obsession of Devin Nunes and Hannity and John Solomon formerly of The Hill, and the whole cesspool of the far right propaganda machine, and it's the only thing they have to go on. In this article, Ken Vogel took my sister's entire salary over a 12-year period working for the DNC, took her entire salary over a 12-year period and lumped it into one single sum of like \$400,000 or so. And the GOP, the RNC even took that number and put into a meme that they blasted out on social media to try to make my

sister look as though she got \$400,000 from the DNC. She got that over a 12-year period, and if you added it all up, it's like \$34,000 a year.

Andrea Chalupa: And in fact, I can tell you personally speaking, one of the biggest issues I've had with my sister over the years is that she was working herself to death for the DNC, because she's family there, she's been there for most of her career, and she would put in all these long hours. She's that person that stays late to help out her colleagues, and I was giving her so much shit over the years as she was running herself into the ground working too hard, getting sick, and that she needed to take better care of herself. She's that kind of worker, she's that person in the office that will always be there for you, and she was getting paid shit, in my opinion.

Andrea Chalupa: She was getting paid far less than she deserved, and now these assholes are taking her entire salary over a 12-year period and putting it into one single lump sum and spreading this disinformation that she was a well-paid operative. That then gets repeated by Seth Abramson, and when we asked him to correct it, he refuses, and it was just heartbreaking, because here I was in Helsinki, it was midnight, 1:00 AM, I had to catch a flight in a couple hours, I was basically not going to sleep that night. I was lucky if I got four hours. And I'm on the phone with my sister who's so upset because Seth Abramson is pushing disinformation about her and he refuses to correct it, and I'm up on Twitter late at night, sleep-deprived, trying to ask Seth to please correct this, and he refuses to talk to her.

Andrea Chalupa: And he has some weird defense saying that my sister even offering to speak with him, she should speak to the Senate committee or something, some weird thing where he refused to talk to her and actually treated it as abnormal that she would even want to talk to him. If he is a journalist, if he claims to practice journalism, journalists issue corrections all the time. All journalists make mistakes. We're covering complex issues, and mistakes happen. You address them and you correct them, and it happens. You just need to fix it. It's not a big deal. There's no reason to be ashamed, because it happens to everyone.

Andrea Chalupa: The only reason to be ashamed is when you know you've made a mistake and you refuse to correct it and you refuse to talk to the source. And all he had to do was get on the phone with my sister and she would walk him through, "That's not correct. They took my entire salary over a 12-year period and this is just simply not correct." And she even gave him her statement from CNN where she tried to correct these things, and he just treated it for some inexplicable reason as though it confirmed what he was saying, which was simply false. I don't want to get into a debate over Seth Abramson, but I'm not interested in that.

Andrea Chalupa: What really hurt me is that when we tried to correct this, people trashed us and kept saying stupid things like, "Oh, but it's part of a larger thread defending your sister."

Andrea Chalupa: I'm like, "It doesn't matter." There's a single tweet out there where Seth Abramson treats as fast deliberate disinformation against her. That's simply false, simply false.

Sarah Kendzior: Right, and it wasn't even the only error he made. He also said she was a reluctant witness, whereas she has consistently said, "Yes, I will testify. Yes, I want to tell my story." I mean, that's the great irony of your sister's situation. From the start, she's been trying to tell people the truth. She tried to tell people the truth about Manafort, she tried to tell them the truth about Trump and the Kremlin, she tried to tell them the truth about her own situation, her own experience and generously reached out, politely, to try to get Seth to take this libelist content down and he refused.

Sarah Kendzior: And there's another tweet he put up where he put your name instead of her name, which is obviously wrong. He's one of many bro journalists to do this. Matthew Yglesias did the same thing, Josh Marshall did the same thing, refused to correct it as well. Jon Favreau did the same thing, and thankfully he did correct it.

Andrea Chalupa: Well, in Jon Favreau's credit, Jon Favreau apologized, which I appreciate. At this point, any acknowledgement from a white male in media, I appreciate.

Sarah Kendzior: So, we're not mad at him, because as you said, everybody makes mistakes, but it is on them to correct them. And the thing that makes this so detestable is that your sister's life has been threatened for three years, and your life by proxy, because people keep mistaking the two of you, has been threatened for three years. And so for him to both botch your name, say that you in fact are her, then botch her story, echoing GOP and Kremlin propaganda that has prompted death threats to her, and then she reaches out and is like, "Please, please change this. You need to actually be accurate."

Sarah Kendzior: And he comes up with some horse shit about, "Oh, I'm not an investigative reporter. I don't talk to actual humans. I'm a curatorial journalist," which is insane. It's an extension of this extremely creative and euphemistic way of lying and admitting that he was lying. He did the same thing back in 2016 when he basically claimed that if he says enough times that Bernie Sanders is winning the election, then it becomes reality, that there's no such thing as truth, that there's just repetition of facts to create a new reality.

Sarah Kendzior: Well, guess who else is doing that? Trump. That is literally Trump's strategy, is getting out there and saying, "What I say is true is true. It doesn't matter what the actual truth is, what you see with your eyes, what you hear with your ears, what has actually happened and has been documented. What I say is true is true."

Sarah Kendzior: And the people who get away with shit like this, as you say, are almost always white men, because they're given this false authority, they're given this false

sense that, "Oh, well they must really know best versus these hysterical women or these people of color," or on and on and on. We've seen this throughout American history. That's why when you read American history textbooks, they're often full of lies, because they're written by the winners, and the winners were often people who beat into submission others and then lied about the fact that that was done.

Sarah Kendzior: And so this is just an extension of that same mindset, and it's deeply troubling. This is not a story where you can get things wrong, where these little mistakes ... They might seem little to others. They're not little to the person that they're happening to, and we've seen this with everybody implicated in this. We saw this throughout the impeachment hearings with the lies about Marie Yovanovitch, with lies and threats towards Fiona Hill, with lies towards Alexander Vindman, many of which, just like the attacks on your sister, had to do with their ethnicity. Everyone I just listed is an American, everyone I just listed is fighting on behalf of America, fighting for American democracy.

Sarah Kendzior: Yet they're called Ukrainian, and in Vindman's case anti-Semitic remarks that were questioning his loyalty were also made, and it's part of a broader narrative. And so those who deign to say that they are investigating the complexities of this story and breaking them down need to be very careful. And of course when a person actually implicated in the story reaches out to you, yes, you should listen to them. It doesn't mean you need to worship them or agree with them or anything like that, but you have an obligation to hear it out. And if it's something that can be objectively proven like a salary, then yes, you need to correct it.

Andrea Chalupa: We will link in the show notes for this episode the tweets that we're referring to that's between my sister and me and Seth Abramson so people can follow this and see that we're not making this up. This really did happen. And also, we'll link to an essay Seth Abramson wrote where he did state about truth being relative, and if you see something enough times, it becomes true. So, what is Seth Abramson going to do? Keeps repeating over and over again that my sister was well indeed a high-paid consultant, and then that's going to make it true if he just says it enough times when that's simply false.

Sarah Kendzior: It would be super nice if he could. I hope that Seth Abramson can redefine reality and just keeps tweeting that we're all millionaires.

Andrea Chalupa: And then suddenly money appears in our bank accounts, I would be okay with that.

Sarah Kendzior: Yes, it's magic. Like a little genie, we just say the name three times and money pours from the sky.

Andrea Chalupa: Yeah, and I have to tell you, if you're a fan of Seth Abramson, because some people were attacking us and saying he's a curatorial journalist, let me tell you

something. A curatorial journalist, his defenders were saying, "Well, he pulls information and brings it together." That is called analysis. He did not invent that. That already exists, it's called analysis, so if he's trying to invent this new phrase, "curatorial journalist", which basically says that he doesn't have to talk to sources, he doesn't have to issue corrections, that's not journalism. That's simply not journalism. That's performance art.

Andrea Chalupa: And I can tell you, I was having brunch with a couple friends, including one who's a producer for an excellent, one of the few excellent, cable TV news shows. It's covering all of this whole nightmare and doing an extraordinary job. It's a show we all know and love. And we're sitting there, and somebody asks the question, "What do you guys think of Seth Abramson?" And the cable news TV producer and I kind of got politely quiet, and then I finally spoke up and said what we were both thinking, which was, "He does a good job in researching and raising questions that need to be raised, but he often crosses the line in a way that makes you uncomfortable and detracts from the good work that he does."

Andrea Chalupa: And the cable news TV producer said, "Yeah, absolutely. That's it." And a very clear example of this, the Mueller Report. When the Mueller Report finally came out, Seth Abramson did a 400-tweet thread. I have no idea what he actually tweeted about, but I do know that he did a 400-tweet thread. Do you see what I'm saying? His antics distract from the actual work itself, and so what we're covering is very sensitive, and it's difficult to believe. The facts themselves are difficult to believe, so we don't need anything that could be confused for performance art added on top of it, because it distracts from the larger story.

Andrea Chalupa: And unfortunately, Seth Abramson ventures willingly into that territory, and he really treats this not as journalism, but as some weird performance art sometimes, and it's to his own detriment. He's holding himself back by doing this, and if he can just ... Sarah and I try to come to our own work with humility. We try, we make our own mistakes, we deal with that as we go along. That's how you learn and get better. And so if Seth Abramson could just sort of take that spirit and sort of approach his work with greater humility and practice actual journalism by talking to sources and issuing corrections, it would be a lot better for him. So, if you support him and the work he's doing, understand that I'm bothering to even talk about this to try to help him, really just to try to help him do better and not hold himself back.

Sarah Kendzior: And help any of these people, because it's not like he's unique in this respect, and I think to some degree everybody is limited and harmed by the architecture of Twitter and by the fact that tweets can be taken out of context, even when they're in a threat. They become weaponized by outlets like Breitbart, NRT, they can be faked, but what you're going to do if you're going to be a "curatorial journalist" which is an analyst, which is a good thing to do, it's good to analyze these works, first of all you need to look at all of the works that are available, and then you need to analyze them in the proper context.

Sarah Kendzior: So, when you're looking at a report, for example, by Ken Vogel, who has been revealed as a propagandist, you need to keep that context of, "Why did he write this article? Is the information in this article accurate?" And of course, any historian will tell you, you need to look at primary sources. You cannot ignore primary sources, and in this case the primary source was literally sitting on Twitter. Your sister was reaching out to him. But there are also interviews that she's done in her own words, like the ones she did for our show where there's a transcript, where she breaks down some of these issues.

Sarah Kendzior: And if you're going to be comprehensive, you really have to be comprehensive. If your goal is just to curate, then you need to read everything and you need to be thorough, and you can't just pick weird, little pieces that fit a preconceived narrative in your head, because honestly we need more analysis. We need good, thorough analysis, and it's just a shame that so many that could be doing that to the service of the country have just chosen a different path. Should we get into the hearings themselves?

Andrea Chalupa: Yeah, that sounds good.

Sarah Kendzior: All right, so did anything in particular stand out to you, any particular testimony?

Andrea Chalupa: The endgame of all of this, which was stated by the witnesses, so if you look at Alexander Vindman and his opening statement, he said, "The privilege of serving my country is not only rooted in my military service, but also my personal history. I sit here as a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army an immigrant. My family fled the Soviet Union when I was three-and-a-half years old." These are immigrants that escaped ... Look at Vindman, look at my sister, who keeps being brought up in this testimony. The Soviet Union and the trauma of that loomed large over our family. Our parents were born in refugee camps.

Andrea Chalupa: When my mom first came to New York City by ship, the first thing she saw was the Statue of Liberty, and so I think that's so important to remember, is why these people like Alexander Vindman are risking their lives and their careers by speaking out is because they understand what the endgame is of Donald Trump if he goes unchecked. So, what we're seeing now, this authoritarian wannabe putting his laser pointer or propaganda machine against private citizens and destroying their lives and traumatizing them and their families. There's a great interview that Molly Jong-Fast did with Lisa Page in The Daily Beast, which goes into this in heartbreaking detail, heart-wrenching detail.

Andrea Chalupa: And so if Donald Trump wins, if he steals another election, if he steals the 2020 presidential election, it's going to be a floodgate of horror. If you think that the idiots are in power now, wait until they steal a second term. It's going to be game over for us. I don't know how we would survive that. And the best chance we have, as we're always going on and on in this show, is the best chance you have against authoritarianism, the vaccine against it is community, and that's why we're always going on and on and on about getting involved locally where

you live on the state level. Because if we lose the federal government, the best protection you have is to make your state as blue and progressive and activated as you can, as a shield, as a defense against what's happening in Washington, because it's going to be worse than what we even have now.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah. No, I agree. And on that note, I wanted to read a little bit while you were gone, and I wrote a few op-eds for The Globe and Mail, and one of them was on Marie Yovanovitch. Who like Alexander Vindman and like your parents, is originally from Ukraine and has seen firsthand not just due to her heritage but also because her service abroad in other former Soviet authoritarian or semi-authoritarian states, places like Kyrgyzstan. She's seen the brutality that these regimes can enact. She can see how long dictators can linger.

Sarah Kendzior: I think that that's something Americans often don't quite grasp. They think that because we've had a long history of changing out leaders every four to eight years and not having a complete overthrow of our constitutional principles, but once a dictator gets in, it is very hard to get them out. And life will still go on, you'll still I guess, I mean in most cases, see your friends, raise your kids, eat your meals. You'll suffer, you'll lose your freedom, you'll lose many of your resources, your material possessions, and I'm not saying that a lot of this hasn't already happened in the United States, but it's different under authoritarianism and it's much more difficult to fight back against, because you lose that basic freedom of speech. And what I wrote about her testimony, because both for her and Vindman it broke my heart to hear this, to hear of these immigrants coming to the US, or their parents coming to the US, in search of safety only to have that horror come home.

Sarah Kendzior: And so I wrote, "There is nowhere for Marie Yovanovitch to go. There is no longer refuge in this world. Like many Americans, she lives in a simulation of democracy, dependent on the refusal of elites to admit the severity of the crisis. Yovanovitch swore to tell the whole truth, but to tell the whole truth is to terrify everyone. To tell the whole truth is to say what officials gloss over but what citizens can see. This is a transnational crime syndicate masquerading as a government. There is nowhere Marie Yovanovitch can be safe, because Trump is everywhere.

Sarah Kendzior: His criminal colleagues are everywhere, and when one of them gets imprisoned, like Russian operative Paul Manafort, Trump's campaign manager who worked for Kremlin interests in the Ukraine, others like Trump's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani and his indicted lackeys, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman take their place. One last point, Democratic leaders claim they want to limit the scope of impeachment proceedings to Trump's 2019 Ukraine shakedown, but that's both impossible and insulting. The 2019 Ukraine shakedown is a continuation of the 2016 election heist, which was a continuation of Trump's lifelong deference to the Kremlin and his schemes with corrupt actors from the former USSR. Limiting the impeachment scope does a grave disservice to people like Yovanovitch, whose lives are in danger by the unwillingness of officials to examine crimes in context, and the refusal of institutions to hold perpetrators accountable."

Sarah Kendzior: So, again, when Andrea and I are going on about the need to tell the truth, to be forthright, to be thorough, we're not just nitpicking. This jeopardizes people's lives, the lies and the propaganda, and yes, the sloppiness jeopardizes people's lives, and that is one of the reasons that these testimonies are so important. And even though they're lengthy, even though they've gone for an exhausting amount of time, it is to your benefit to watch them. This is one of the few venues we have left where people can tell their side of the story, whether that includes the GOP rambling on, or whether it includes the Democrats trying to bring accountability in some form, or whether it includes neutral arbiters, which is really the defining characteristic of this group of witnesses, minus Gordon Sondland who's a scumbag.

Sarah Kendzior: But the others were career bureaucrats, and as I said in a previous episode, I think one of the reasons they were selected is because prior notable hearing subjects, like James Comey or Michael Cohen, come with incredible baggage. And I strongly think that these current hearings need to be linked to those prior testimonies and to the broader story of the Kremlin attacking the United States. That is what this is about. I do think that the strategy, if there is one that the Democrats are employing, was to bring out people like Fiona Hill, like Marie Yovanovitch who have just impeccable credentials, who have no history of partisanship or bias, and have them speak to the American people.

Sarah Kendzior: And I think it's effective, but I mean, we're up against a lot. We're up against a propaganda deluge, and we're up against just incredible abuse of power and an unwillingness still among the Democrats to admit how dire things are and how high the stakes are, and that there's just not room for error.

Andrea Chalupa: Exactly. So, we also had some breaking news out from the great Natasha Bertrand, who is a phenomenal reporter, and because she's a phenomenal reporter, she's one of the few reporters that my sister will actually get on the phone with and trust. Because that's why actually practicing journalism and adhering to the laws of journalism where you issue corrections when needed, you talk to sources, you try to always keep in mind that you're dealing with real people's lives in you're reporting first and foremost.

Andrea Chalupa: Natasha Bertrand has a very long track record of doing that, and that is why my sister will get on the phone with her and trust her, so if you have that track record as a journalist, it is to your own benefit. And anywhere Natasha Bertrand goes, we'll follow her, because she's jumped around from different outlets, but she's the one that we'll invest in, because she gets it. She's a true journalist. She's fantastic.

Andrea Chalupa: And so she wrote a report for Politico, and I'll read from it now, because this is really interesting that this was leaked by somebody. The Republican-controlled Senate Intelligence Committee thoroughly investigated that theory, the theory of Ken Vogel's Politico article that my sister and Ukraine colluded in the 2016 election to help Hillary and hurt Trump. And according to people with direct knowledge of the inquiry, they found no evidence that Ukraine waged a top-

down interference campaign akin to the Kremlin's efforts to help Trump win in 2016. The committee's Republican chairman, Richard Burr of North Carolina, said in October 2017 that the panel would be examining, "Collusion by either campaign during the 2016 elections."

Andrea Chalupa: But an interview that fall with a Democratic consultant at the heart of the accusation that Kyiv meddled, Alexandra Chalupa was fruitless, a committee source said, and Republicans didn't follow up or request any more witnesses related to the issue. The Senate interview largely focused on a Politico article published in January of 2017 and written by Ken Vogel. According to a person with direct knowledge of the closed-door hearing in which Chalupa was quoted as saying officials of the Ukrainian embassy were helpful to her effort to raise the alarm about Trump's campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, in 2016.

Andrea Chalupa: In her Senate testimony, Chalupa denied serving as an intermediary between the Ukrainian embassy and the DNC and said she had been targeted by a Russian active measures campaign. Intelligence officials have since briefed senators on Russia's attempts to pin blame for the 2016 interference on Kiev as part of a disinformation operation according to a source familiar with the briefings, which were first reported by The New York Times. Chalupa confirmed to Natasha Bertrand that she was questioned by the panel.

Andrea Chalupa: So, this debunks even Seth Abramson's attempts to waddle into this. This basically ... Look, motherfucking Seth Abramson, the Republicans themselves looked into my sister's stories, the Republicans themselves looked into Ken Vogel's bullshit hit piece on my sister and found nothing there. There was nothing there, because this is a disinformation campaign driven by Paul Manafort and the Kremlin first and foremost. Again, when BuzzFeed published the Steele Dossier in January 2017, Putin's Sean Hannity on Russian state media did a TV segment blaming my sister, and me as her accomplice, for creating this whole Russia-Trump scandal.

Andrea Chalupa: Okay, this is an entire disinformation campaign led by Manafort and the Kremlin, and you, Seth Abramson, are not immune to it, and so many others are not immune to it. And that is the problem, that is why Gaslit Nation exists and why we have to keep talking about this and confronting it, because no one is immune to it. That is the point. This gets even the people that are devoting tons of time trying to follow all of this.

Sarah Kendzior: One more thing I want to add to this, because I think it needs to be emphasized strongly, is the GOP knows your sister didn't do anything wrong. As you just said and is now public information, she was already cleared, so when they go out there dropping this propaganda and these lies, it's not because they genuinely are wondering or are concerned about corruption or are concerned about Ukraine, or are even concerned about your sister. I mean, they often botch her name so badly that they're saying she's Alexander.

Sarah Kendzior: They're saying that she's a man because these are talking points that they are handed. They're talking points that are designed by the Kremlin and their lackeys, whether Hannity or Manafort, that they are just reciting like little puppets. And I also need to emphasize here that while they are doing this, they themselves are implicated in this conspiracy, and there's no greater example of this than your sister's stalker, Devin Nunes, who midway through the impeachment hearings was revealed to have been meeting with Giuliani's partners, his indicted partners.

Sarah Kendzior: There's an article in The Daily Beast that says, I'm just going to read a small passage, "Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of Rudy Giuliani, helped arranged meetings and calls in Europe for representative Devin Nunes in 2018. Congressional records show Nunes traveled to Europe from November 30th to December 3rd 2018. Three of his aids, Harvey, Scott Glabe, and George Pappas traveled with him per the records. US government funds paid for the group's four-day trip, which cost just over \$63,000," so if you're obsessing about salaries and expenditures, you might want to take a look at that.

Sarah Kendzior: And so as this is happening, as Nunes is revealed to have been colluding with Giuliani's indicted goon squad, he is overseeing the impeachment hearings, and this is mind-blowing. This should really, gravely concern Americans, not just that it's happening, not that we have so many members of the GOP who are in this crime cult surrounding Trump and whose loyalties appear to extend to the Kremlin, and I think there are various reasons for that. Some of it is threats and fear, some is opportunism. I think a lot of it has to do with dark money being pumped into their campaigns and basically making them contaminated.

Sarah Kendzior: But this is something where the Democrats need to fight back, and a few of them back. Eric Swalwell got up and entered that article that I just read part of into the Congressional Record, because they need to establish the extent of criminality that's happening here. These are not differences of opinion being expressed at these hearings. These are political maneuvers being part of the hearings. They turn the impeachment hearings into show trials. That is the goal of Nunes. It's certainly the goal of people like Bill Barr, who as I talk is out there putting out legal propaganda, which is more dangerous than media propaganda, because he actually can have the power to rewrite the law, to preemptively exonerate the guilty and to persecute the innocent.

Sarah Kendzior: That is the goal, and that is what they're going to try to use these hearings for. And we did a little mini-episode after the first set of hearings just to get our initial thoughts out where you pointed out that the House needs to keep these hearings going for as long as possible for numerous reasons. First, because this Ukraine crisis is obviously tied into the broader 2016 crisis and the decades of Trump and Manafort and other people's links to Kremlin-linked organized crime. That is what is at the heart of this story. That needs to be brought out into the open. Mueller failed, Comey failed, the FBI failed. It needs to be revealed in full to the public on the Congressional Record.

Sarah Kendzior: He also needs to be impeached for other crimes, like abuse of migrants at the border, abuse of the pardon power. These are very serious offenses, and they need to be stopped now, the abuse of migrants at the border, the separation of families needs to be stopped now, but we also need to set a precedent, because if we're ever going to get out of this, if there's going to be another president, they need to not have this ability to look back at this time and shrug and be like, "Well, Congress said it was okay," or, "This is an acceptable pattern of behavior."

Sarah Kendzior: Because what people are going to remember in decades from now is not going to be the minutiae of the Ukraine transcript of Trump's little conversation with Zelensky. What they're going to remember is that children died in cages on the border of Texas and Mexico. They're going to remember that breastfeeding infants were wrenched out of their mothers' arms and taken away, and then that parent was deported, and the people just sat back and they did nothing, and they let it happen and they said, "Oh, we don't want to get into a partisan dispute," or, "Oh, we need to just focus on one issue for impeachment."

Sarah Kendzior: The depravity, the heartlessness on display here is so vile, and so yes, we need to keep these impeachment hearings going for that reason. But you also pointed out, Andrea, that when we get to the Senate, we're going to have a new series of problems due to Mitch McConnell. Do you want to expand on that point? Because I thought that was an interesting observation.

Andrea Chalupa: Right. I mean, the reason why the House wants to keep impeachment for as long as possible, because when it goes to the Senate, it's going to be full-blown Banana Republic, because Mitch McConnell, who has no morals, he's as corrupt as ... He's part of this coalition of corruption, him and his wife, so as soon as this goes to the Senate, what's going to happen is they're going to basically bring in people like my sister and just try to terrorize her.

Andrea Chalupa: And you're not going to have an Adam Schiff following procedure and the rule of law and refusing to allow witnesses to be intimidated in the halls of Congress and so forth. It's just going to be a bloodbath on our democracy under Mitch McConnell's watch, because that's how they are. The Republicans are aligned with Putin because they behave like Putin. There's no middle ground with them. They push for everything, they want everything.

Andrea Chalupa: As you said earlier, you mentioned Zelensky. It is so deeply unfair for anybody to ask Zelensky to clear the record on what really happened between him and Trump. He simply cannot do that. Ukraine is dependent on the US as one of its largest donors, and for him to say anything that might anger a mob boss, Russian mafia, mobbed-up president, Donald Trump, who is beyond vindictive, who's had an enemies list that he acts on for years, that's into intimidation and blackmail, all of it. Zelensky is a hostage in the situation. He has the lives of his citizens literally on the line, and what Russia has been doing is continuing its invasion.

Andrea Chalupa: You have these so-called humanitarian trucks that are just massive convoys of big trucks filled with supplies that have been crossing the border from Russia into Russian-occupied Ukraine. And we've just in the last month alone had swarms of these trucks entering the Donbas area. I'm reading now from one information agency out of Ukraine, the 93rd humanitarian convoy, "Consisted of 42 trucks," the Ukrainian border guard service said, "The Russia sends 90 second..." oh, dear God.

Andrea Chalupa: So, this is very dangerous for Ukraine, so what Putin can do and what Putin has done is openly attacked Ukraine as we saw in the Kerch Strait, and he can push deeper and grab more territory and kill more Ukrainians and so forth. So, again, Donald Trump's presidency comes with a massive body count from the Kurds in Syria to the children on the border to Ukrainian soldiers that were desperately needed, that US aid that was held up so Donald Trump and his goon squad could extort the president of Ukraine. So, this is unbelievably dire, the situation that we're in.

Sarah Kendzior: That's one of these things lost in all of this kind of partisan maneuvering and this horse race coverage of both the 2020 election, but also impeachment. We got these kind of ridiculous articles like, "How is it affecting the views of the Democrats?" And, "How is it affecting whether people will turn out to vote?" The fate of the free world is at stake. I don't know how to overstate this, and I don't want to state this in a way that plays down atrocities that have been committed by the American government, whether in other countries or on our own country, but we are heading as a world in a new direction, a direction guided by but not limited to the matched nations of the Kremlin.

Sarah Kendzior: We're guided by a transnational crime syndicate that has infiltrated multiple governments. You're seeing it in the UK, you're seeing it now in France where you see Macron basically capitulating to Putin over NATO. We saw in Poland, in Hungary, we see it in Turkey, we see it in longstanding authoritarian states like Saudi Arabia, we see it in states like Israel where Netanyahu will simply not leave despite his indictments. It's this consolidation of corruption, and it has very real human consequences. As people go on about, "Oh, will Ukraine catch on with Americans?" Ukrainians are dying and have been for half a decade, since Russia invaded Crimea and then began to escalate its war because of the failure of the West to step in.

Sarah Kendzior: That failure of the West, it's the same in Syria, it's the same in Ukraine, and eventually it will be the same in the West as we get devoured from within by complicit actors. And that is one of the reasons it is so important for the propaganda and the narratives that are allowing these atrocities to take place to kind of go under the radar, even though that seems almost impossible because they're so horrific, you would think everyone would be watching them, they get glossed over. They become political talking points instead of crises that humanity should be addressing.

Sarah Kendzior: And one thing, to just briefly comment again on the hearings, where we saw the immediate value of it is after the hearings a lot of GOP representatives went on to reiterate this talking point that it was Ukraine who interfered in the 2016 election, that Ukraine was to blame for everything. And finally journalists understood that this was propaganda, because Fiona Hill had gotten up at the hearing and laid out the propaganda narrative in a very clear, very simple way, simple enough that even Chuck Todd could understand it. And because of that, there was actual pushback against the GOP by people like, miracle upon miracles, Chuck Todd. I also love how they get accolades for doing the baseline minimum of efforts here, but nonetheless for doing their job, for finally, finally doing their job.

Sarah Kendzior: But nonetheless, it's good. They understand this is a preconceived narrative that has been pushed and pushed and pushed, pushed by Fox News, pushed by The Hill, pushed by The New York Times, pushed by Politico, both of which by Ken Vogel, and they recognize it and therefore are much more effective in fighting against it. And that is also why we have this show, but our show is not going to compare to the neutral ground of congressional hearings, and so yes, these need to go on for as long as humanly possible.

Andrea Chalupa: And I want to point out that Google Maps and Apple Maps both showed on their maps Crimea as being part of Russia, Crimea that is still suffering under human rights abuses under Russian occupation. And that is what happens when you have a Russian mob boss in the most powerful position in the world as President of the United States, and he was brought to that position with the help of the Kremlin. And he's now in the UK for a NATO summit and Europe is in crisis, because for years Russia has been funding far right parties across.

Andrea Chalupa: And Russia has been driving this information campaign across Europe, including setting up something like 150,000 Twitter accounts to drive this information to help create confusion in the Brexit vote, which has been a big destabilization for us against British citizens, and also is pulling the UK out of the EU. So, here in NATO's meeting, as McConnell said, a brain-dead NATO, because you have the President of the United States being an asset of Russia, and NATO was founded to counter Kremlin aggression.

Andrea Chalupa: You had states like the Baltic States on the border of Russia that couldn't wait to get in. NATO expansion happened because you had so many states that lived under Kremlin occupation during the Iron Curtain period that they couldn't wait to sign up for NATO membership, because these were traumatized populations that know what Kremlin occupation and aggression is like firsthand.

Andrea Chalupa: And so now you have NATO in crisis because the big funder of NATO, right? That is an issue. Everybody has to pay their fair share without question. But Trump isn't demanding that NATO pays its fair share out of any sort of strategic understanding of NATO's purpose. He's doing that because that's Trump, and so I just want to say it's a dangerous time. Even McConnell, who wants to merge as the leader of Europe, he's even trying to welcome Russia back into the club and

saying a lot of things that are alarming Ukraine watchers, which basically just signals that Ukraine has never been more vulnerable. And without a strong, united EU, without the United States, Ukraine is on its own, and Putin is going to take advantage of that, because Putin was the architect of this and has been for years.

Andrea Chalupa: And I want to close by really bringing it home by talking again about the incredible interview with Lisa Page in The Daily Beast by Molly Jong-Fast where she describes a lot of the experiences, a lot of the trauma that my sister has gone through being a target of the far right propaganda campaign. Lisa Page of course was a lawyer for many years at the DOJ. In the FBI, she was an expert on the Russian Mafia, and she understood the enemy very well, and she talks about how she's even afraid to go in physical spaces because the president has turned her into such a target.

Andrea Chalupa: And just like my sister, she cannot opt out of this. She lives with this. It can flare up at any time, and it does, and so Donald Trump has his rotating targets that he lashes out on and Lisa Page is one. My sister and Ukraine are another, of course, and you could wake up one morning and your day is shot because he's gone after you again, and all of his MAGA monkeys are going after you, and the whole cesspool is fired up and targeted at you that day or that week, and it disturbs you. You live with it. It disturbs your family and the people that care about you. It is trauma, it is trauma, and it is ongoing, and it may never end. It may never end.

Andrea Chalupa: I saw Liz Wahl, who quit her job as an RT broadcaster, she was an anchor for RT, and she quit on air because of the Soviet history that was in her own family, and she couldn't stand seeing what the Kremlin was doing to Ukraine, so she quit on air in a major protest against Kremlin aggression. And I saw her I think a year or two after that, and she was showing me that all of these Kremlin bots were relentlessly harassing her, relentlessly harassing her, because if you do anything to stand up against the Kremlin, they will hound you. All of these patriots like Vindman and others that are taking this stand, they're doing it at great risk and threat to not only themselves, but their families. And so that carries so much more weight and power in the decision of them to come forward, and I just hope people keep that in mind.

Andrea Chalupa: And just to really sort of hit this home even further, with this report that my sister gave testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee in the fall of 2017. I just so happened to learn around that same time that the great Pulitzer prize-winning historian, Anne Applebaum, in her book, *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*, I learned from that book, because Anne Applebaum and I shared a historical advisor. And that historical advisor for my film and Anne Applebaum's book, *Red Famine*, that historical advisor in her research uncovered hours of testimony that my grandfather gave the US Congress about surviving Stalin's Genocide Famine in Ukraine.

Andrea Chalupa: So, I got to hear my grandfather's voice many years after he passed away. And I was so excited about this discovery and the fact that my grandfather was cited in Anne Applebaum's book, *Red Famine*, that I sent it to my sister so thrilled, and later she told me that she received this news right before her Senate testimony. Because that's what this is about, that is what all of this is about, is preventing the endgame, and so let's not forget that.

Andrea Chalupa: Our discussion continues, and you can get access to that by signing up on our Patreon at the Truth-teller level or higher.

Sarah Kendzior: We want to encourage our listeners to donate to RAICES, a Texas-based nonprofit agency that provides free and low-cost legal services to underserved immigrant children, families and refugees. They're helping with the crisis facing migrant families at the Texas border and need your support.

Andrea Chalupa: We also encourage you to donate to help critically endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry. Donate to The Orangutan Project at theorangutanproject.org. Gaslit Nation is produced by Sarah Kendzior and Andrea Chalupa. If you like what we do, leave us a review on iTunes. It helps us reach more listeners. And check out our Patreon. It keeps us going.