

Gaslit Nation Transcript

Mar 18 2020

“Jared Kushner is a National Emergency”

Katie Porter:

Dr. Redfield, do you want to know who has the coronavirus and who doesn't?

Dr. Redfield:

Yes.

Katie Porter:

Not just rich people but everybody who might have the virus?

Dr. Redfield:

All of America.

Katie Porter:

This all totals up to \$1,331. That's assuming they aren't kept in isolation. Isolation can add up for one family already \$4,000. And fear of these costs are going to keep people from being tested, from getting the care they need, and from keeping their communities safe. We live in a world where 40% of Americans cannot even afford a \$400 unexpected expense. We live in a world where 33% of Americans put off medical treatment last year, and we have a \$1,331 expense, conservatively, just for testing for the coronavirus. Will you commit to invoking your existing authority under 42 CFR 71.30 to provide for coronavirus testing for every American regardless of insurance coverage?

Dr. Redfield:

What I was trying to say is that CDC is working with HHS now to see how we operationalize that.

Katie Porter:

Dr. Redfield, I hope that that answer weighs heavily on you because it is going to weigh very heavily on me and on every American family.

Dr. Redfield:

Our intent is to make sure every American gets the care and treatment they need at this time of this major epidemic and I am currently working with HHS to see how to best operationalize it.

Katie Porter:

Dr. Redfield, you don't need to do any work to operationalize, you need to make a commitment to the American people so they come in to get tested. You can operationalize the payment structure tomorrow.

Dr. Redfield:

I think you're an excellent questioner so my answer is yes.

Katie Porter:

Excellent. Everybody in America hears that you are eligible to go get tested for coronavirus and have that covered regardless of insurance. But do not let a lack of insurance worsen this crisis.

Sarah Kendzior:

I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of the best-selling essay collection, *The View From Flyover Country* and the upcoming book, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, out on April 7th and available for pre-order now including in e-book Kindle form which you can read in quarantine.

Andrea Chalupa:

You lucky bastard, Sarah.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yeah, very lucky.

Andrea Chalupa:

Well, I'll tell you why you're lucky. Okay. By the way, I'm Andrea Chalupa, a filmmaker and journalist and the writer and producer of the upcoming journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones*, directed by the great Agnieszka Holland which in that film has been-

Sarah Kendzior:

Delayed. Everything is delayed.

Andrea Chalupa:

No. It's not even delayed. The coveted theatrical release of my film is now canceled for North America. I mean, I don't even know if I'm supposed to break that news but I just need to share that with people because that's no longer happening so forgive me to the distributors for coming out with saying that. I don't know if I'm allowed to even share that but voila, there it is.

Sarah Kendzior:

My tour is canceled so let's just announce all of our...

Andrea Chalupa:

Everything is canceled.

Sarah Kendzior:

We're going through that first... Oh, and this is Gaslit Nation, a podcast covering corruption in the Trump administration, rising autocracy around the world, a global pandemic and the destruction that's raw on our lives, and we're going to be discussing the more widespread and serious ramifications of this pandemic including the mounting death toll, the global lockdown, the collapse of the economy, but on a personal level, it's hard to not think about this in a personal level. We're in a situation now where literally every person in the world is affected.

Sarah Kendzior:

Nobody is spared from this and I don't think we've had a situation in the history of mankind where this has happened. My children are home from school and they were remarking that every child in the world is home from school. We're all home at the same time. Andrea has a baby and her baby is now home with her because her babysitter that would come during Gaslit Nation recording has to watch her own kids and my kids are home with me. And so for anyone who listens to our podcast, the conditions of the recording of this podcast are always a bit minimal to say the least—low overhead.

Sarah Kendzior:

They're going to be chaotic. You may hear our children in the background. You may hear more tears. You may hear more explicit sadness because we don't know what's coming. We live in two different parts of the country. I live in Missouri, I live in St. Louis. Andrea is in New York which may go on a lockdown similar to that of San Francisco. We were going to start the show off today just by talking a little about how this has affected our lives. As I said, I have a book coming out called *Hiding in Plain Sight* that describes the decades of crises in the US that led to the Trump administration taking power.

Sarah Kendzior:

It's somewhat about the rise of Trump, but it's more about the erosion of social institutions and the rise of a kind of apocalyptic death cult, a form of governance that literally doesn't care if people live or die that wants to hoard the world's resources, and that's made up of kleptocrats, and rapture fiends, and sadists. And as I was writing this last year, my editor and others were kind of like, "This is so dark. This is so, so dark. Can't you give practical suggestions? Can't you insert a bit of light?"

Sarah Kendzior:

I do, I think. I mean it's not inserting a bit of light, but I wrote it with my heart. I wrote about what it's like to live under these sorts of circumstances, how it affects me as a mother, how it affects ordinary people just trying to raise their families and trying to survive because that is the story. It's not an abstraction. It's not a social science problem. It's our lives. I'm glad that I stuck to my vision and wrote it the way I saw it, which was very dark and I didn't think that the book would see the light of day. I was so amazed that we were getting so close to the release date.

Sarah Kendzior:

I was supposed to go on tour and I was very excited to meet my readers. I was supposed to go on Late Night with Seth Meyers. I was glad that honestly this book was coming out because so much of the truth of this story has been buried by the mainstream media and by our government. I even described in the book the journalists who did try to tell this story, who did speak out and were censored and threatened.

Sarah Kendzior:

I described what happened to me and Andrea when we tried to bring this story to the American public of Trump's transnational crime connections, of this transnational crime syndicate masquerading as a government. I traced 40 years of that and I thought if Americans knew then—anyone who listens to Gaslit Nation already knows a lot of this—but if you see it in a cohesive narrative maybe it'll actually do something good for the world. It is ironic or maybe not so much that I don't know what's going to happen over the next few weeks.

Sarah Kendzior:

We're heading into darker times than ever before. I do encourage you please pre-order the book if you are interested in my work or interested in this topic. It's a good book and I think it'll actually be helpful. It'll be cathartic and informative in this time. It's not about sales. I got my advance and I also don't see much of a future, but I want people to know the truth because it still stands that an informed public is a powerful public.

Sarah Kendzior:

Even if we are sequestered in our homes, even if we are locked down, we need to be able to look out for each other in the best way we can because no one else is going to look out for us and we need to be innovative and creative, and compassionate towards each other in this time. The more information we have, the wiser our strategies are, the better. Andrea, I'll let you mourn your own projects now.

Andrea Chalupa:

No. I mean listen, I just want to clarify—Sarah and I cover very dark topics. We've been researching authoritarianism, past and present, how it works, for many years, so anytime we get any moment of fun or a time for us to come together because we do have a long distance relationship, she's in Missouri, I'm in New York, we do get excited when we get to spend time with each other. And there was this really big excitement between us that her book and my film happened to be coming out at the same time in April. She was going to come to New York City and I was going to moderate a discussion with her at a bookshop in New York City and it was going to be like Gaslit Nation prom night all April long.

Andrea Chalupa:

So I think for us getting some moment of having a break from all the darkness that we research for a living, we look forward to those moments. They're soul lifting for us. It's a time for us to finally come together and take a pause and celebrate all the hard work that went into these projects. But to be perfectly clear, if you're in a position in your life where your dreams are being deferred, where your dreams are on hold or your dreams have been canceled momentarily, you're doing great. Count your lucky stars. You're in an exceptionally privileged position and we recognize that fully.

Andrea Chalupa:

We're just making light of this because we were very much looking forward to spending time together and looking forward to supporting each other through all the hard work that went into these projects for the people that are on the front lines, lower-income people, including immigrants, that are in the most vulnerable position of all because not only do they have to go out in low wage jobs where many of them are exploited and essentially treated like slaves and on top of that their community is under a great stress by an actual Gestapo of ICE. ICE, an actual Gestapo which has become a recruitment magnet for sadists to join that force to crack down with these racist policies terrorizing immigrant communities.

Andrea Chalupa:

Our hearts go out to those communities. Our hearts go out to the men and women in the workforce who power our economy, to the warehouse workers, to the truck drivers, to everybody and especially the medical professionals. Personally speaking, I have a really great babysitter who comes over and watches my daughter. She's now at home because school is closed. I'm still paying her. I'm still paying her and I'm not telling you that so you can say, "Wow, what a nice thing Andrea is doing." I'm telling you that to try to say please do that.

Andrea Chalupa:

If you have a housekeeper, if you have a babysitter, please still pay them, as tough as that might be because you're not getting the service, please continue to pay them as long as that takes. You have the budget for their services already set aside in your family budget however long this takes a month, two months because they are the ones that are most economically vulnerable right now.

Andrea Chalupa:

So all of us are being tasked to come together as a community and recognize our immense privilege in this situation, so if you have any power no matter how stressed you are by how this is disrupted your life, no matter how angry you are that a long time dream has been deferred, no matter however this is impacting you. Governor Cuomo of New York just gave a very personal and an uplifting press conference where he talked about all the ways that this is stressing him out personally and what a toll it's taking on his family personally. He said that that's happening across the country right now. So acknowledge the pain and the pressure cooker that were now under, but please understand that if you are in a position to help, you absolutely must help even if that might pinch your pocketbook a little bit.

Andrea Chalupa:

If you are in a position where you desperately need help, please find the courage to ask for that help because asking for help can be extraordinarily difficult. Asking for help can be very scary especially if you're in a vulnerable position. If you're somebody that's afraid of losing your job, if you're afraid of showing any sort of weakness because that's how life is conditioned you to be. So each of us have to dig down inside and find the power to ask for help when we need it and to provide help because that's what we're being called to do. In a moment of crisis, character is revealed, so please show the world, show those in your family, show those all around you what kind of character you have and that's the light you need to be shining right now.

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Sarah Kendzior:

This episode of Gaslit Nation is sponsored by Best Fiends. Everyone knows we're supposed to stay at home because of coronavirus, but what do we do with all that time? Well, I've got a diversion for you. Best Fiends is a puzzle game that you can play right on your phone. You can collect cute characters, solve puzzles and compete against your friends and family. Best Fiends updates the game monthly with new levels and events so it never gets old. My kids and I have been playing it together and have already progressed 15 levels.

Sarah Kendzior:

Parents, if your kids are home from school, this is a great way to relax as a family. Best Fiends is fun for users of any age to play. Engage your brain with fun puzzles and collect tons of cute characters. Trust me, with over a hundred million downloads, this five-star rated mobile puzzle game is a must play. Download Best Fiends free on the Apple App Store or Google Play. That's friends without the R, Best Fiends.

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Sarah Kendzior:

I also want to emphasize, we as a world are in the same position. We as Americans are in the same position and of course as you know the Trump administration is going to try to use this crisis to consolidate their power through chaos and to exploit it by pinning various groups against each other. We saw this immediately with the demonization of Chinese people with this reference to it as a "Chinese virus". Trump is doing that again this morning. We knew that this was going to get worse from the minute we saw the coronavirus dream team assembled which included the inner circle of Trump's white nationalist, kleptocratic administration. People like Kushner or Steven Mnuchin or most notably Katie Miller, the wife of Stephen Miller, and then eventually Stephen Miller himself.

Sarah Kendzior:

So we're concerned about xenophobia. We're concerned about the targeting of Muslims or migrants or any population that they've traditionally targeted that they seem to want to annihilate or at least deprive of their rights, including the right to medical treatment. I think they want Americans to see certain other segments of Americans as diseased and then on top of that, they want to pin this red versus blue state dynamic which is something that was created by cable news during the 2000 election. This is not a dynamic that really exists in a meaningful way for the majority of American history. They want to do that as well.

Sarah Kendzior:

Since we are a podcast with one host living in Missouri and one in Brooklyn, I want to emphasize how dangerous that is. There was a Trump tweet this morning where he says, "Cuomo wants 'all states to be treated the same.' But all states aren't the same. Some states are being hit hard by the Chinese virus. Some are being hit practically not at all. New York is a very big hot spot. West Virginia has thus far zero cases. Andrew, keep politics out of it."

Sarah Kendzior:

I just have to say, this is such total bullshit and this is so incredibly dangerous to people living in big, liberal cities like where Andrea is in New York that Trump wants to stigmatize and portray as diseased or portray as overreacting. It's also dangerous to states like mine, to Missouri, where we haven't been tested. There have barely been any tests and that's why there haven't been that many cases. And the same thing is true of West Virginia. There haven't been tests nationwide and so what you're seeing is a response from individual governors—in the case of Andrea's state with Cuomo and in the case of my state where the legislature of Missouri got together yesterday and decided to try to ban pornography.

Sarah Kendzior:

That's the thing they're focusing on in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. We know that we're on our own with them. They are a psychotic legislature. They tried to pass laws like legally requiring everyone between 18 and 35 to own an AR-15. These are not people you want in a time of crisis, but we have had our city of St. Louis step up. We've had the county of St. Louis, which is separate from the city, step up. They began shutting down schools and they began issuing safety precautions. They began initiating drive-through testing and the same is true of Kansas City.

Sarah Kendzior:

And so these red-state, blue-state dynamics that Trump and his backers are trying to put forward, they are dangerous and they're false, and it does not reflect the lived experience of anyone in either of these big cities or in these more rural states like where I live. It's a false narrative that the media will seize on because the media over the last decade or two has basically been sequestered into three very expensive cities into New York and DC and LA and also San Francisco, sometimes Chicago. So you don't get an accurate representation of America.

Sarah Kendzior:

Ironically, they would claim that the reason for this is that you needed to live in these cities to do journalism because telecommuting was impossible. You can't just live in a place like St. Louis and be a journalist other than for the local paper. That's crazy. Those illusions, which were just invented, repressive kinds of regulations meant to weed out folks like me and pack in the elites who could spend all the money they wanted to get paid like \$30,000 to live in New York on a journalist salary—

Sarah Kendzior:

all those illusions are going out the window. A lot is being revealed through this crisis. Our flaws, our hypocrisies and also our wasted opportunities. All these things that the government and corporations and other people have been saying that we can't have, like telecommuting for disabled people for example, who've been demanding that for a very long time, or environmental regulations or something like UBI which now Mitt Romney of all people is proposing, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is proposing a better one of \$6,000 versus 1,000.

Sarah Kendzior:

They're doing this because it's an emergency, but it's been an emergency the entire time. It's been an economic emergency my whole life. It's been an emergency of corruption and of poverty and of suffering and of opportunity-hoarding by elites for my whole life. This is just the most tragic, and widespread, and horrifying manifestation of social ills. It's now a public health crisis and we're seeing the weaknesses of our nation and its ability to handle that crisis exposed. People are going to suffer and people are going to die. We have to do what we can to try to prevent that as much as possible and follow the precautions that we know and practice social distancing and wash your hands and so on and so forth, but we're going to learn a lot about ourselves during this time in lockdown. A lot of truths are going to come to light and I just hope that we're not too late to act upon them.

Andrea Chalupa:

It's amazing, it's amazing with the transformation that's going on. Basically what the Amazon fires and the Australian fires did and the horrors of those fires and how rampant they were, completely out of control—they were devouring the earth. That was a massive wake-up call of the climate crisis. We're not waiting for it. It's here. It's already arrived. Basically, this pandemic is the equivalent of the Amazon and Australian fires alerting us to—here in the United States, certainly—just the corruption and the abuse of our healthcare system.

Andrea Chalupa:

Medical bills are the number one cause of bankruptcy in America. Basically, this whole pandemic is shining such a strong spotlight on all of these weaknesses in our society that we now have to be forced to correct including workers' rights, including UBI, a basic wage provided to people like stipends to deal with this, this horrible mess that we're in. It's a wake up call. It's a massive wake-up call. We're going to

name names of the people that put us in this crisis. We're going to do that. But first I want to touch on the opening clip, which was Representative Katie Porter, fact-checking the director of the CDC into committing to cover every American who needs a COVID-19 test. Thank you so much, Katie, for showing what true leadership looks like.

Andrea Chalupa:

And then in sharp contrast to that, we're going to now play a montage of how Donald Trump, the Frankenstein monster of decades of Republican corruption, how he's addressed this crisis and the danger that he's put us in.

Donald Trump:

The coronavirus—this is their new hoax. We have it totally under control. It's one person coming in from China. One day it's like a miracle, it will disappear. We only have 15 people and they're getting better. I think we're doing a really good job in this country at keeping it down. Anybody that needs a test can have a test and the tests are all perfect. It has blindsided the world. I don't take responsibility at all.

Andrea Chalupa:

Now, if you want to know how the Republican Party could end up this way, it's very simple. And also how can the Republican Party continue in lockstep to support this Frankenstein monster that they created? It's very simple. Corruption, including moral corruption, is an industry. It's about power and money. People are making money off of Donald Trump being in power. As long as their fortunes rise, as long as they have all that great convenience and freedom of being exorbitantly rich and extraordinarily rich, they're in great shape. Donald Trump can do no wrong. So that's just how nearly half our country thinks and operates as we've seen with the voting.

Andrea Chalupa:

They don't care that there's a war on the poor. They don't care that there's a war on all vulnerable asylum-seekers. They don't care that there's a war on black and brown people because white patriarchy is very much driving that industry of corruption including moral corruption. It's an industry. That's how we have to think about it. So now to name some of the names of who brought us to this, who has made this horrible sort of vulnerability that this pandemic makes even worse.

Andrea Chalupa:

I'm going to read, now, a thread by Chris Lu, a former Obama White House cabinet secretary who was Deputy Secretary of Labor and a transition director. He's now at the Miller Center where he's a fellow. So this is his thread on Twitter which is astonishing and we'll break this down. So Chris Lu writes "Breaking: A week before inauguration day 2017, Trump team participated in a tabletop exercise with outgoing Obama team about preparing for a major domestic incident. One incident discussed was a pandemic. I participated in that exercise."

Andrea Chalupa:

"There were three role-playing scenarios: Hurricane, pandemic, and cyber incident. Obama team discussed need to anticipate requirements, stay ahead of challenges and provide resources quickly. The goal was to acquaint Trump officials with how to coordinate around major incidents. The pandemic role-playing scenario involved novel influenza with infections in Asia and Europe, efficient



person-to-person transmission, insufficient lab capacities, travel bans, lag time before it comes to US, need for vaccines, ventilator shortages. Sound familiar?"

Andrea Chalupa:

"In the event of a pandemic, Trump team was told pandemics can start in other countries and don't respect borders. Science must guide decisions. Federal state collaboration is key. Consistent messaging needed. Social distancing recommended. Days and even hours can matter. 30 Trump officials attended the exercise, cabinet and senior White House staff but the vast majority of these officials are no longer in government. When you're dealing with a crisis like COVID-19, stable and experienced leadership matters."

Andrea Chalupa:

"Bottom line: When Trump says, 'We were all surprised by COVID-19', he shouldn't have been. The Obama team warned Trump's staff about a possible pandemic. Whether it was lack of preparation or staff turnover, the necessary work wasn't done to get in front of this."

Andrea Chalupa:

Now, given all of the notorious staff turnover in the Trump White House and the purging, guess who has remained consistently throughout from the very beginning and top leadership roles basically acting as de-facto residents of the United States? Jared and Ivanka, the Beavis and Butthead of the Trump White House. This is very much on their watch. They're the ones that are the face of this White House. It's the three of them ruling things. Jared and Ivanka work to push out their enemies. We know that. That's all been reported and their past, Jared being a slumlord creating inhumane conditions for his tenants basically operating very much like oligarchs in Ukraine and Russia, treating the people like the shit they grow their money in, that's who Jared is.

Andrea Chalupa:

Ivanka Trump, she and her family used their charity for their own personal gain. They're the ones that were consistently there in leadership positions. This massive, disastrous pandemic response by their White House is very much on them. They take full responsibility for this. So we need to preserve that in stone. We need to not forget that because they're going to try to seize the White House for them to stay in power either in trying to steal this 2020 election with their father's corrupt network or, if we manage miraculously to vote them out and they leave, they're going to come back and try to run Ivanka as the first female President of the United States. We keep telling you that and now those reports are widely circulating.

Andrea Chalupa:

So please keep an eye on them. They are disastrous human beings. The fact that they are still in power is very much a part of this national emergency as much as the virus itself. So please don't forget that. Another person who absolutely takes the blame for this... You know what, listen, let's stay on Beavis for a second. So Beavis Kushner. Trump's bungled response in the White House, that living nightmare. So I'm going to quote Natasha Bertrand of Politico flagging a detail from a story from her colleague at Politico, Anita Kumar, I'm quoting now, "Jared Kushner asked model Karlie Kloss' dad," and the model Karlie Kloss is married to Jared's brother.

Andrea Chalupa:

So Jared asked Karlie Kloss' dad for suggestions to fight coronavirus, and so he turned to a Facebook group for ER doctors telling them that he had a direct channel to the White House. Jared Kushner is tapping into Facebook groups like I might tap into a Facebook group to sell an old piece of furniture. You know what I'm saying? That's who is responding to this pandemic where countless lives are at stake and the death toll could reach millions if we don't handle this correctly.

Sarah Kendzior:

I just want to break in on that because I have a theory about this which is I think that as we've talked about over and over again, they try to cover up crime with scandal. They try to cover up malice with incompetence and I think that this administration was very keenly aware of the virus and its potential to wreak havoc and cause mass death and caused destruction and cause the kind of systemic collapse that trump has been rooting for openly for years, and that Bannon was rooting for openly for years, and that Barr and Pompeo and all of these apocalyptic, cultish personalities have also been rooting for and that Kushner seems to be rooting for as well.

Sarah Kendzior:

I have no doubt that he actually did do this, that he had Karlie Kloss' dad go nosing around Facebook. But I think that's the kind of image of themselves that they want to project is incompetence, is being inept instead of having a very malicious, very cruel and horrifying plan which is what I think is actually going on and I think as you and I have both said, the plan is to seize power. The plan is to run the White House from within while Trump is inside it, basically acting as an unnamed Chief of Staff in the shadows and then eventually to formally take it over.

Sarah Kendzior:

Of course, we're going to have God knows what kind of country should the virus go away. Everything is going to change. But they have ambition and their ambition is evil. And so when I hear about them doing that, I tend to think that that's kind of what they would like us to see, is to think that they just are fucking around and they don't know what they're doing. I think they know exactly what they're doing.

Andrea Chalupa:

No, I think they're just plain idiots. I think there's certainly a strain among them that likes the doomsday aspect and believes that it fulfills some cultish prophecy that they worship that's a massive evil mutation of Christianity. I think that's that question if you watch the excellent documentary, *The Family*, on Netflix. So *The Family*, this extreme, fake Christian cult is the story of a group of businessmen in Washington State back in the day that joined together to basically bring big business together to fight unions, to fight the people-power of unions that were organizing at that time and it's morphed into this global movement to worship big business and to scapegoat the most vulnerable among us and that includes LGBT people.

Andrea Chalupa:

They lost the battle for gay marriage here in the US and so they've exported that movement to other countries like Uganda and Romania. And why LGBT people? Because *The Family* has some twisted white patriarchy idea of how society should be organized. Think about it. LGBT people are on the front lines of the progressive movement being closely allied with all these other movements and they just treat them like scapegoats and it's just totally inhumane. And that's been a long practice of the Far Right in America.

Andrea Chalupa:

Another disturbing quality of *The Family* is that they groom young white men to rule the world. They groom them to positions of power. White women are seen as being supporters, being second-class citizens and they're there to support their white men in the name of Jesus. And basically what *The Family* has become is everything that the historical Jesus railed against. In the historical record, Jesus was a revolutionary. Jesus fought corruption. Jesus put his life on the line to take on a corrupt system. They are everything the historical Jesus himself railed against.

Andrea Chalupa:

So I have no doubt that there absolutely is that cultish element among this, but there's also idiots like Jared and Ivanka that are just idiots. I'm giving you the Gaslit Nation guarantee that whoever is listening, whoever is listening to this episode right now, if you are not Jared and Ivanka or anyone that supports them, then you are 100% smarter than Jared and Ivanka. You're extraordinarily brilliant, compared to these two especially. What I mean is that they're idiots and it's our job to get these idiots out of power because this is what happens when idiots have power, and it's unchecked.

Andrea Chalupa:

It's a dangerous situation. It's a hostage situation. So I want to just emphasize that with... So remember when Donald Trump did an oval office address and the markets just tanked because it was Donald Trump doing an oval office address and he just terrified people even worse. So this is from The Daily Beast: "Senior officials held with several closed-door meetings into the early afternoon gaming out how to finish cleaning up for the misinformation and inaccurate assertions that President Trump made in his prepared remarks, which were largely co-authored by the White House's immigration policy advisor, Stephen Miller and the President's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

Andrea Chalupa:

Seven Trump administration officials described with Daily Beast a mad dash to contain fallout from Trump's delivery that could further spook the markets or stir panic in Americans at home and abroad and international trade partners and allied nations. The chaos only added to the frustrations that the upper ranks the Trump administration have felt this week as top officials have scrambled to control the fallout of a growing pandemic and it's been complicated by the fact that part of their efforts have been devoted to making sure that Trump himself doesn't feel under siege."

Andrea Chalupa:

So we have an autocrat in the White House with thin skin because autocrats have thin skin. That is characteristic of autocrats. Another person to name-check in all of this is of course book deal John Bolton, Iran War John Bolton. So this is from May 2018 in the Washington Post: "The top White House official responsible for leading the US response in the event of a deadly pandemic has left the administration and the global health security team he oversaw has been disbanded under a reorganization by National Security Adviser John Bolton.

Andrea Chalupa:

The abrupt departure of Rear Admiral Timothy Zimmer from the National Security Council means no senior administration official is now focused solely on global health security. Zimmer's departure along with the breakup of his team comes at a time when many experts say the country is already

underprepared for the increasing risks of a pandemic or bioterrorism attack. Zimmer's last day was Tuesday, the same day news of Ebola outbreak was declared in Congo.”

Andrea Chalupa:

He is not being replaced. Pandemic preparedness and global health security are issues that require government-wide responses experts say as well as the leadership of a high-ranking official within the White House who is assigned only this role.” And here's a quote in the article, "Health security is very fragmented with many different agencies,' said J. Stephen Morrison, senior vice-president of Center for Strategic and International Studies. 'It means coordination and direction in the White House is terribly important.'

Andrea Chalupa:

The personnel changes which Morrison and others characterized as a downgrading of global health security are part of Bolton's previously announced plans to streamline the NSC.” Okay, John Bolton. Surprise, surprise. You gave us a worsening pandemic. That's part of your legacy now.

Sarah Kendzior:

Once again, we're dealing with people who it may come off as incompetence, but its malice. That gutting of those institutions which were supposed to handle Homeland Security, supposed to handle pandemics, Public Health, came at the same time that we didn't have a Secretary of Defense for a year, that they gutted the State Department, that they gutted the DoD, that they gutted courts and agencies and replaced them with lackeys. I think that that's deliberate. During the government shutdown of early 2019 when Bolton was still there, we talked about this quite a bit on the show, about how they have this apocalyptic vent, how they view a depopulated country—a depopulated Earth—as easier to manage, and how they have a hierarchy within that—a global hierarchy and a hierarchy within the United States with certain groups stigmatized or demonized.

Sarah Kendzior:

You've seen that increasingly in public discourse. You see papers like the New York Times churning out articles praising Nazis, publishing eugenicist views. I'm worried that this kind of conflagration of all these abhorrent viewpoints and policies and people coming together is not some kind of happy accident. These are people who crave power. They don't seek it by traditional means. They don't seek it by winning over the public or by winning elections or by achieving on merit.

Sarah Kendzior:

This is the Roy Cohn school of destruction where it's brutal, and sleazy doesn't quite cover it. There are threats and bribes and lies, and absolutely no regard for human life. No regard for the sanctity of human life. I think that there's a reluctance to talk about this in frank terms because of course doing so, you sound like a "conspiracy theorist" or alarmist or hysterical. I think that those concerns are out the window now. I think we're now finally done with people saying that we're “too dark” or this is “too out there”. We're living through what feels like a horror movie or like some kind of awful thriller, like something that would be dreamed up in Hollywood.

Sarah Kendzior:

The people that are overseeing this crisis resemble that level of exaggerated cruelty and it's because they are. They really are that way and they really are doing these things and there really aren't people

that have put them in check. This is why Andrea and I pushed so hard for Mueller and for others to indict Jared Kushner and indict Ivanka Trump because they are a danger to world security. This is why when Bolton was appointed, it wasn't like, "Oh, we don't like him" or "he's a GOP guy." We were like, "He's going to end the world. He is a viciously dangerous, psychotic individual who should have no proximity to the highest levels of government at all. None of these people should."

Sarah Kendzior:

And so what I see now is when we have a crisis, they see an opportunity, and they're going to push that disaster. They're going to push that destruction until they can profit off of it whatever way they can. Whether in an immediate way which we see through the Kushner family trying to seek patents over vaccines and over other items that may help in this pandemic. They're going to try to hoard them. They're going to try to profit off them. But I think the long-term ambitions are worse and I think that we need to look at the darkness of the philosophies that they espouse particularly things like eugenicist claims which as you noted you see that kind of rhetoric coming out of *The Family*. You also see this kind of use of religion to mask what is basically brutal, corporate, capitalist policies and they'll say this is divinely mandated and that's why it's excused.

Sarah Kendzior:

The same thing happens with Kushner. You could read about him going to his rabbi who believes that the world should be slaves for a chosen few. This is all happening by the way in an environment of incredible anti-Semitism where there are attacks on synagogues, there are attacks on Jewish-Americans. These two things are happening at once that Kushner and Ivanka are part of their own religious extremism and don't care about the attacks that have been going on against American Jews and against Jewish people worldwide.

Sarah Kendzior:

So these are two separate things and I don't want people to get that confused. You also see an international alliance that includes people who don't seem to have a particular religious vent, maybe Bannon. You're also seeing Opus Dei members like Barr and others who are Catholic and see this as the rapture like Pompeo. You see alliances with Islamic regimes like MBS in Saudi Arabia. I mean, what I'm basically saying here is that in one sense it's a matter of religion but it's usually a matter of religion as a pretext for chaos and death, and destruction.

Sarah Kendzior:

We should not expect people to act like rational actors. We certainly shouldn't expect competence or care from this government, and I think everybody understands that, but we should also unfortunately open our minds to just how far they will take it, that they may actually see this as a good thing. The one thing that has reassured me a bit throughout this crisis is seeing the reactions of everyday people from all around the world, no matter what country you're in, you are suffering in this crisis and you're trying to cope in these crises.

Sarah Kendzior:

So we see people singing from their balconies. We see people giving money and goods to their neighbors. We see people offering to volunteer. We see sincere expressions of grief. The majority of people in the world I really don't think are terrible people. I mean it probably sounds crazy for you to hear this from me because I'm known as so depressing, but I think most people are good and I think

most people haven't had the opportunity to give to the world what they're capable of because the way the world is structured, it's so cruel and it's so repressive in that regard, and you're punished often for trying to do the right thing.

Sarah Kendzior:

But I think that's out there and what we unfortunately have is, really, rule by the worst people in the world. And I don't mean incompetence, I mean cruel. And so that's what we're up against and I hope that local officials who do have power continue to fight this administration and to demand better for their citizens because honestly it's on the states, it's on the counties, it's on the cities, it's on the citizens themselves to be able to fight back against this.

Andrea Chalupa:

Communities have never been more important. As we always say, join a community, strengthen a community. And while we're all locked into our homes, check out the Gaslit Nation action guide. There are some things that you can do from your couch. From my couch in Brooklyn, I led the effort in launching the hashtag, one of the main hashtags of Ukraine's revolution, Twitter storms that got the attention of major media and world leaders. I did that from my couch. I'm an introvert by nature. So I've done a lot from my home. And so the Gaslit Nation action guide, the Gaslit Nation reading guide, that is where you should be spending some of your time while we're all confined in our homes, because there's a lot that you can do to stay engaged and stay involved and help us flush these idiots out of power, and trust that as we're always telling you on this show, be prepared for the horror. It's going to get worse. It's going to get worse.

Andrea Chalupa:

There's going to be breaking news that's going to make you gasp and lose your breath. You're going to get that and just please be prepared for it now because all of the way these wannabe autocrats have devised their reality show of terror has been to destabilize us. They do not care about public opinion. All they care about is power. So be prepared, be prepared now so you can stay alert, stay clear, reserve your energy for the fight ahead because we desperately need everybody to stay engaged.

Andrea Chalupa:

And now that raises questions of what to do about the 2020 election. The Ohio primary was canceled. We have primary results tonight. We're recording Tuesday morning so we're going to find out tonight how things went in Arizona, in Illinois, in Florida. You have people that would desperately love to vote, but they can't because they have pre-existing conditions, they're more vulnerable than others to this virus. So we're seeing it already, a suppression of the vote.

Andrea Chalupa:

Even if you take precautions, people do not want to end up in a hospital, especially now. So what does this mean for November 2020? We don't know. Governor Cuomo today in his press conference, he told New Yorkers, he said, "We don't know if it's going to be nine months. We do not know." So people simply do not know. I don't know what's going to happen in November. We simply don't know. A vaccine is being tested now in Washington State. Even that, it's going to take a year to 18 months or so. It's going to take a while before a vaccine starts circulating.

Andrea Chalupa:

So please right now prepare yourself for the worst just so you can stay clear-headed and reserve your energy as much as possible to stay engaged and stay in the fight and show up where you are needed, where you can safely show up, whether that's making phone calls, sending texts, doing things that you can safely do from home to help make a difference in the crisis that we're in.

Andrea Chalupa:

So meanwhile, a crisis is a great time to commit crimes and the Trump Crime Family is no exception. So the latest there is you have Trump really wanting to grant a full pardon to Michael Flynn, one of the biggest clowns in the Kremlin clown car. Michael Flynn, like Bolton, is a danger to society. He was fired from the Obama White House for being cuckoo and he was the one that was on the phone with the Russian Ambassador trying to smooth things over because the Russians were upset when Obama passed the sanctions and the Russians were expecting the reward for helping bring Trump to power. So Michael Flynn, like any of these other idiots, is a crime machine.

Andrea Chalupa:

Then you have Barr's DOJ trying to drop charges against the Russians at the center of the Mueller investigation that were behind funding the troll factories and they cite the reasons there that the Russian side is using the system of fighting these charges to get access to information to understand how American national security works. That sounds like a very sound defense, but unfortunately Barr himself is compromised because he led the cover-up of the Mueller Report.

Andrea Chalupa:

So even if in theory that's a sound judgment, we do not know whether that's either a sound judgment or part of Barr's cover-up because Barr himself is compromised and he should be impeached, he should recuse himself from anything having to do with Russia given his history of connections to Russia which we've covered on previous episodes and given his role in leading the cover-up the Mueller Report.

Andrea Chalupa:

Back to our discussion of is it a religious death cult at the center of this driving things? Or what is it? It's a combination of that, yes. Ultimately, at the end of the day, it's about power. And how does a Far Right death cult secure power? You attack the communities that are on the front lines of fighting for progress in our nation, the communities that are on the front lines of dissent, and that of course includes women. Since Trump stole the 2016 election, women have been running towards danger, first with the Women's March, then running for office and winning in historic levels in the 2018 election. Women have been running towards danger ever since Trump seized power in this country through this corrupted election in 2016, aided by the mass-murdering regime, the Kremlin.

Andrea Chalupa:

So as a result, what is at risk now are reproductive rights for women because that allows women control over their own bodies, control over their lives. So understand that we're at the start of something. We're at the start of a very dark time and if women lose those rights they've long sacrificed and fought for, that's very dangerous to women's health. Reproductive rights in this country, that battle really hits home that this is not about any religious belief, but about power. Power, power, power.

Andrea Chalupa:

If you close women, if you take away their rights, you're closing over 50% of the population, you're putting them in a vulnerable position where women will have to risk their lives to get an abortion in all kinds of cases from being raped or just being overwhelmed with children or so forth. They have that right to choose. It's their bodies, it's their lives.

Andrea Chalupa:

Unfortunately, we have a very dangerous situation right now with the Supreme Court. There was a letter written to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts, where a man named James Dannenberg, a retired Hawaii state judge, sent his letter resigning his membership in the Supreme Court BAR. And I think this is worth reading an excerpt from... So here's his letter. "I can no longer say with any confidence that you are doing far more and far worse than calling balls and strikes. You're allowing the court to become an errand boy for an administration that has little respect for the rule of law."

Andrea Chalupa:

"The court under your leadership and with your votes has wantonly flouted established precedent. Your conservative majority has cynically undermined basic freedoms by hypocritically weaponizing others. The ideas of free speech and religious liberty have been transmogrified to allow officially sanctioned bigotry and discrimination as well as to elevate the grossest forms of political bribery beyond the ability of the federal government or states to rationally regulate it. More than a score of decisions during your tenure have overturned established precedents some more than 40 years old and you voted with the majority in most. There's nothing conservative about this trend. This is radical, legal activism at its worst."

Andrea Chalupa:

"Without trying to write a law review article, I believe that the court majority under your leadership has become little more than a results-oriented extension of the right wing of the Republican Party as vetted by the Federalist Society. Yes, politics has always been a factor in the court's history but not to today's extent. Even routine rules of statutory construction get subverted or ignored to achieve transparently political goals. The rationales of textualism and originalism are mere fig leaves masking right-wing political goals, sheer casuistry."

Andrea Chalupa:

"Your public pronouncements suggest that you seem concerned about the legitimacy of the court in today's polarized environment. We all should be. Yet your actions despite a few bromides about objectivity say otherwise. It is clear to me that your court is willfully hurtling back to the cruel days of Lochner and even Plessy. The only constitutional freedoms ultimately recognized may soon be limited to those useful to wealthy Republican, white, straight, Christian and armed males, and the corporations they control. This is wrong. Period. This is not America."

Andrea Chalupa:

"I predict that your legacy will ultimately be as diminished as that of Chief Justice Melville Fuller who presided over both Plessy and Lochner. It still could become that of his revered fellow Justice John Harlan the elder, an honest conservative, but I doubt that it will. Feel free to prove me wrong."

Andrea Chalupa:



"The Supreme Court of the United States is respected when it wields authority and not mere power as has often been said, you are infallible because you are final but not the other way around."

Andrea Chalupa:

"I no longer have respect for you or the majority and I have little hope for change. I can't vote you out of office because you have life tenure, but I can withdraw whatever insignificant support my BAR membership might seem to provide. Please remove my name from the rolls."

Andrea Chalupa:

And that's from James Dannenberg, a protest letter to Chief Justice Roberts. That's *The Family*. That's the death cult that we're talking about, the white patriarchy that worships in the temple of big business for business' sake, for everything that Greta Thunberg, the child activist, rails against. We're being forced now to live with the horror show that death cults like this around the world have produced, from the climate crisis hitting us to this pandemic, which despite the theories going around that was naturally caused, I firmly believe this. I trust the experts. I trust Dr. Fauci on this, of NIH.

Andrea Chalupa:

There are markets in the Wuhan region which are inhumane markets. There are animal cruelty markets that should have long been shut down that people were keeping open for profit. So our greed is literally killing us and this has been going on for a very long time, and we're finally being forced to confront it. It's hitting us now at home. You know all the starving polar bears we saw? We're the polar bears now on so many different levels now because of this man-made greed. It's about damn time that we did something about it.

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 help the victims of the Australian fires by donating to the Australian Red Cross, working on the ground to help people in need. We also encourage you to donate to WIRES, a group that rescues native Australian wildlife in distress. Donate at [wires.org.au](http://wires.org.au). We've posted links to these groups and others on our Patreon page.

Andrea Chalupa:

We encourage you to donate to the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian relief organization helping refugees from Syria. Donate at [rescue.org](http://rescue.org). And if you want to help critically endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry, donate to the Orangutan Project at the [orangutanproject.org](http://orangutanproject.org). Gaslit Nation is produced by Sarah Kendzior and Andrea Chalupa. If you like what we do, leave us a review in iTunes. It helps us reach more listeners. And check out our Patreon. It keeps us going.

Sarah Kendzior:

Our production managers are Nicholas Torres and Karlyn Daigle. Our episodes are edited by Nicholas Torres and our Patreon exclusive content is edited by Karlyn Daigle.

Andrea Chalupa:

Original music in Gaslit Nation is produced by David Whitehead, Visonberg, Nick Farr, Damian Arriaga, and Karlyn Daigle.

Sarah Kendzior:

Our logo design was donated to us by Hamish Smyth of the New York based firm Order. Thank you so much, Hamish.

Andrea Chalupa:

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