

Gaslit Nation

Lock Him Up Because He's an Actual Criminal

Andrea Chalupa
Sarah Kendzior

Theme Music

Sarah Kendzior: I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of *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.

Andrea Chalupa: We have an exciting invitation to listeners in the New York City area, and the surrounding area if you're just a short bus trip or train ride or car ride to New York City. Please put this event on your calendar. We invite our listeners here in this New York area to come join us on Wednesday, November 6th. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, one of the wonderful leaders of integrity in Congress, if not one of the most formidable leaders of integrity in the Congress, will be in New York City, and I will be joining her for a lunch on Wednesday, November 6 in midtown Manhattan. With me will be the great actress J. Smith-Cameron, who is the star of HBO's hit series *Succession*, as well as civil rights advocate Maya Wiley. So please come join us to greet Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who was, of course, the sole vote in Congress against authorizing the use of military force in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy. She experienced relentless death threats for that, and had to get security. So Barbara Lee is going to be sitting down with us to talk about how do we not just defeat Trump, but Trumpism in America. And if you want more information on that, I'm happy to connect you with the event organizers. Just email us at GaslitNation at gmail.com GaslitNation at gmail.com. And the event, again, is Wednesday, November 6th. It's a lunch in midtown Manhattan featuring the great Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

Sarah Kendzior: Yes, and we'll put info about this on our Patreon page. You can visit, just noting. I will not be there, because I live in Missouri, but it does sound awesome, so I encourage all of you to go. In other good news, and I know you're shocked to hear good news on Gaslit Nation, on Sunday night, Trump was booed at the World Series.

[Audio Clip - lock him up chant plays]

To the laments of elites who are fine with kidnapped children being put in cages, but not with Americans speaking out against a president who is a confessed criminal. The reason Trump's elitist media lackeys went to instant damage control is because they're scared. They're scared of Trump, and they're scared of the American people. We've talked before on this show about how dictatorship is a brand, and how one of the most effective means of protesting a dictator, especially a kleptocrat like Trump, who has never separated his personal business from government, is to damage the brand. Sunday night was a hit to the Trump brand. What you witnessed was the inversion of a Trump rally. You saw a sea of Americans in red hats all staring at Trump, all watching his larger than life image on a screen, but booing and jeering and crying, "Lock him up." Trump can function only in unscripted reality, and one of the reasons the crowd's cry felt like such a jolt is because it

was real. The defiance was real. The protectiveness of our country and its pastimes and its way of life was real, and there was nothing Trump could do about it. Finally, the funhouse mirror version of America that Trump has honed over the last four years was turned into an honest reflection, and the world got to see things for what they are. Reality won over reality TV. You're going to hear manipulative cries for civility. You're gonna hear people say that this somehow goes against due process as if a bunch of random baseball fans have the power of the president. But this was a profoundly American moment. Anyone who has spent time in a dictatorship knows how unthinkable this act would be in one, and one of the reasons this shook some American viewers out of their stupor is because it was so unabashedly unafraid. It showed that even if Trump is behaving as a dictator, we still have not capitulated completely. Americans still have their voices. They still have their ability to protest the powerful, and they're doing so. Andrea, what are your thoughts on this?

Andrea Chalupa: I think that clearly you have to break through the fake reality that Trump lives in. If you look at, for instance, the classic example of Putin's authoritarianism, Angela Merkel got off a call with Putin and said Putin lives in his own reality. He lives on his own planet, and there's a reason for that. There is this excellent book by Peter Pomerantsev called *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia*, and it describes the same thing. Putinism is essentially its own fake reality. They create this reality. It's, "Everything is good. Everything is happy. Don't question anything," and Putin does that deliberately. He doesn't even give attention to opposition leaders or journalists. We as Americans who believe in human rights, the rule of law, who believe in science, who believe in facts, who believe in journalism, we do not count as human beings to him. Brown people are not human beings to him. Brown children, black children, Jewish people, Muslims, they are not human beings to Donald Trump. We do not count in his reality. We do not exist in his reality other than to be used as scapegoats and enemies that he can work up his base to attack, even physically attack. It's all deliberate. So this whole entire fake reality that Trump lives in—you have these idiot Republicans who thought that they can control him, who allowed Trump to come to power, who voted for Trump. You have these cable news sportscasters on CNN and MSNBC that weren't calling Trump for what he was because they thought that they could influence him. Joe and Mika of Morning Joe, who stupidly, stupidly tried to call out the baseball fans for trying to break through Trump's fake, fake reality that he has cocooned himself in, Joe and Mika were friendly with Ivanka and Jared and Trump. They went to Mar-a-Lago in the weeks after the 2016 election. They had these guys on their cell phones. Ivanka hosted Mika at Trump Tower shortly after the election. They, like so many others in the elite, thought that they could control the Trumps, and influence them, and be in their ear, and have a seat at the table in the White House. No. The Trumps are deeply corrupt. They use and abuse people. They simply do not care. They are all about building monuments to themselves by dominating others, and they don't care who they destroy along the way. They will eventually destroy you, and that is what we're seeing. So all these idiot Republicans and cable news stars thought that they could control Trump's reality. Instead, they got sucked in and destroyed by it. And so it's imperative on us as citizens to try to break through that reality as much as possible, and to not let them get away with it, and to confront them at every turn possible. And that is why on the Gaslit Nation Action Guide—which you can find at GaslitNationPod.com—we have a special section just dedicated to art, because you have to be creative now to break through to their reality, and one way of doing that is raising your voice at a baseball game and chanting, "Lock him up." Which, by the way, if you follow the law, is completely appropriate, given that the Mueller Report itself, the 450-page Mueller Report, determined that Donald Trump is a criminal, and the only reason he has not been indicted was because of some stupid DOJ memo. That's it. But Mueller himself

testifying before Congress said that if the president loses reelection in 2020, yes, of course, he can absolutely be tried and put in prison for being a criminal, for assisting a mass murdering regime, the Kremlin, and attacking our democracy in 2016. The Trumps are criminals. Anything they've touched, from Trump University to Trump Organization, has been hit with investigations and lawsuits because they are a deeply corrupt crime family that relies on Putin's mafia state just to stay afloat. So yes, chanting lock him up is constitutional, right? And it is your duty, because this crime family has to be brought to justice. This is not at all on par with chanting lock her up to Hillary Clinton, who did not break the law, who is the most memed political leader. The treatment by the mainstream media and many in America from the left and the right, and I have to say, we are not a show that is a Hillary Clinton show by any means. Even Sarah's book criticizes Bill Clinton, and yet Hillary Clinton promoted Sarah's book anyway. You have to understand: we hold up Hillary Clinton because whether you're left or you're right, if you're a thinking person, if you're an independent thinker, you have to acknowledge the fact that it was an absolute travesty what was done to her. She was dehumanized. She was memed. She was memed. And whether you're a Bernie supporter or whoever supporter, it doesn't matter. The treatment of Hillary Clinton could happen to anybody who dares to take on the corruption in this country. It could happen to Elizabeth Warren. It could happen to Bernie if he gets the nomination. It could happen to Kamala Harris if she gets the nomination. It could happen to anyone that dares to try to stand up and hold the global kleptocracy accountable, because we're up against the richest individuals on this planet. So you don't think what was done to Hillary Clinton will be done to anybody else that comes along? Of course, it will. They'll dehumanize, and they will meme, and they will get their bots going, and they'll get their cable news going. They'll get Fox News going. Certainly, the Kremlin will be on the side of whoever is going to support corruption and make sure that the Kremlin and its allies in the West dodge accountability. This could happen to anyone. That is why we keep trying to remind you that you have to fact check these people in their reality, and "lock him up" is completely accurate and appropriate.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, exactly. "Lock him up" is not some random request. "Lock him up" is directed at Individual One. "Lock him up" is directed at someone who has repeatedly confessed his crimes. He has been confessing his crimes for three years. Like, the most damning words that have been spoken have been his own, and it's interesting and important that you drew this back to Russia, because also in the news this week was that Russia now has the greatest collection of wealth among the smallest percent of a population—like under 1% of the population—of now any country in the world. Like the United States, which is, of course, notorious for this, which is notorious for being a plutocracy, is much lower on the list than Russia. And that is the system that they want to emulate, because it is extremely hard for the public to have any kind of leverage when you have this level of wealth collection and wealth hoarding among an elite. When you have this level of billionaires controlling every meaningful apparatus of power in society, from government to NGOs to the media to big business, that's the situation we have now. And that's why we have these little lackeys, people like Joe and Mika, who are both timid because they have been threatened by Trump before. They kind of go back and forth and vacillate on him, depending how he's treating them, whether he's blackmailing them, whether he's rewarding them. They kiss his ass on multiple occasions, and they're back to it again. But it's much more this idea of like, "I must remain untouchable, and the way that I am untouchable is through my inherited wealth. It's through my political connections. It's through my fealty to this corrupt network, no matter what they do or who they hurt." That is the mindset, and in order to maintain that mindset and to maintain that position of power, they need to buy into this creation of reality, which is a notorious strategy of the GOP. It's what Karl Rove literally spelled out as a tactic during the Bush administration, that the

powerful will invent reality, that we're all just players in their game. He said it out loud. He confessed it because he was so confident that there would never be repercussions and that there would never be any kind of truly powerful political blowback from the people. And now we have a lunatic creating reality. We have Trump, who is a sociopath and a narcissist and an egomaniac, and that's a much more dangerous situation, as awful as the Bush administration was. This is much more dangerous, and it requires these pundits to really vouch for the absurd, to lie just like Trump does in the most blatant and brazen way, and to attack fellow Americans, to attack ordinary Americans who simply oppose corruption, want the rule of law to actually mean something, and oppose the vindictiveness and cruelty of a president who was illegitimately put into power. It's so simple. It's so basic. It's really something everyone should be kept on board with, yet they don't.

Andrea Chalupa: To your point, Joe and Mika only care about Trump when it personally impacts them. They lack empathy, as clearly exhibited during the 2016 election. Because people of color in America knew who Trump was from the get go, and their lives were on the line. The lives of the people they love were on the line, and Joe and Mika didn't care. They were just trading in favors, essentially. They were just acting like they're inside the club and they would have influence in the White House. They didn't care. So you have to understand that Morning Joe is a show that protects the forces that allow Donald Trump to come to power in the first place, and nowhere is that exhibited greater than having Steven Rattner on that show all the time, the American financier who essentially goes on Morning Joe and acts like the publicist for Wall Street. It's so evident in how he protects Wall Street socialism, how Wall Street was bailed out by the American taxpayer. And yet he has the nerve to vilify people like Elizabeth Warren, who is presenting common sense solutions to try to keep Americans from falling through the cracks and try to prevent the middle class from disappearing completely. So Steve Rattner goes on Morning Joe, and he just spouts off all these ridiculous talking points just to protect Wall Street's socialism. That is what kleptocracy looks like. It's where they can take, take, take, take, take, but God forbid the people actually hurting at the bottom ask for any help and support. That is who Morning Joe protects.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, exactly. I've been on Morning Joe. I went on Morning Joe after my book came out, and I mean, people afterwards were like, "Did Sarah Kendzior just subtweet Morning Joe on Morning Joe?" I mean, you can go look up the clip and find the answer to that. Anyway [laughter]. So on the same day that Trump was booed later on in the World Series, the day that Nate Silver has bemoaned as "poor little Trump could not have one good day because of the evil libs," which was quite revealing, is, of course, the day that Trump announced the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who has been rumored to die multiple times before, but apparently this is for real. Trump had promoted the death the night before, like he was promoting a reality show special. We would like to clarify that obviously it is good this man is dead. He was a brutal terrorist. We are happy that the U.S. Special forces was able to take him out, as well as with the help of our other allies in the region, but we have some serious problems with this story. Trump, instead of treating this as a serious and somber moment in American foreign politics, basically made a speech reciting the death that sounded like an extremely graphic plot of a movie. The plot has been contested by numerous U.S. military officials. Trump claimed himself that it was like watching a movie. In reality, it was impossible that he was even able to watch the death, if you match it with the descriptions that he gave. It's important to remember that Trump is a sociopath obsessed with graphic torture. He luxuriates in these descriptions because he does not consider people beside himself to be real, to get back to the point that Andrea and I were just making. Some other things that were a bit particular to this administration—Trump thanked Russia before thanking the U.S. Special Forces. Trump

did not alert House intel officials about the operation, including Pelosi and Schiff, because he said that they would compromise security by leaking, so this is yet another instance of Trump prioritizing foreign governments, including governments that are hostile states like Russia, over the United States. A final point before I ask your opinion on this, is we cannot separate al-Baghdadi's death from the broader situation in Syria. In particular, the shifts in policy that the Trump administration has made recently, which have been so horrific and so disastrous in particular for the Kurds, who are now targets of ethnic cleansing by Turkey. Gary Kasparov, the Russian dissident, chess player, writer, and I think one of the best analysts of the situation, tweeted on Sunday, quote, "Isn't it obvious what happened here? Surely Putin and Erdogan gave up al-Baghdadi in exchange for Trump abandoning northern Syria and the Kurds. A quid pro quo, I believe it's called. Or are we to believe that it's a coincidence that al-Baghdadi was in the only house left standing after all of Putin and Assad's bombing of Idlib? Either they gave him up or simply declined to warn him this time." So basically, Kasparov is putting the killing of al-Baghdadi in the context of these pretty inexplicable and cruel policies that the Trump administration has recently enacted in Syria, the policies that have shocked so many and made people question what exactly we're doing here. Do you have any thoughts on that or on the the assassination in general?

Andrea Chalupa: Well, certainly the Trump Crime Family operates on quid pro quos. That's how they operate. If you're not useful with them, you don't exist. If you try to stand in their way, they will try to destroy you. Quid pro quos as we know them, just in how they came to the White House in the first place, we know that in June 2016, Don Junior, Paul Manafort, Jared Kushner meeting in Trump Tower with essentially representatives of the Kremlin, lobbyists and lawyers linked closely to the Kremlin, who have pushed the Kremlin's interest for years in the West. They had a meeting with Trump's family and reps of his campaign. This is the same thing, right? And we don't know exactly what was discussed there, whether Donald Trump came in or was on speaker phone or whatever. We don't know, and Mueller did not have the teeth to really go after that, and really force testimony and try to get that testimony out of Don Junior himself. We know that those guys, including Jared, got off, except for Paul Manafort. But a month later, you had WikiLeaks weaponize the trove, the treasure chest of emails stolen from the DNC to deeply damage Trump's opposition in 2016 election. So it's very likely, given what we know about Donald Trump and how he operates, that the June 2016 meeting was a quid pro quo. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Donald Trump and his gang of yes men around him—from the Secretary of State, Pompeo, to the Attorney General, William Barr—pressured through many, many ways on many, many different fronts, pressured the new president of Ukraine to try to invent a crime committed by Trump's opposition, including Biden, one of his political opponents right now running for the White House. So we know that that was a quid pro quo. Ukraine knew that it was not getting weapons that it desperately needed to ward off an invasion, to try to push back an invasion by the second-most powerful military in the world, Russia. And people were dying. While Trump was withholding much needed defensive aid to Ukraine, people were dying in Ukraine. Okay? Once again, Donald Trump and Ivana Trump and Jared Kushner are responsible for the loss of innocent life. Once again. And so, yes, a quid pro quo is very much how the Trump crime family operates. So possibly Kasparov is right. If that's true, what is just as damning, if not more so—listen to this from The New York Times: "For months, intelligence officials had kept Mr. Trump apprised of what he had set as a top priority, the hunt for Mr. al-Baghdadi, the world's most wanted terrorist. But Mr. Trump's abrupt withdrawal order three weeks ago disrupted the meticulous planning underway and forced Pentagon officials to speed up the plan for the risky night raid before their ability to control troops, spies and reconnaissance aircraft disappeared with the pull-out, the officials said. Mr. al-Baghdadi's death in the raid on

Saturday, they said, occurred largely in spite of, and not because of, Mr. Trump's actions." Dear God. So we are operating essentially with Putin's proxy in the White House, Putin's Russian mafia asset and the White House, Donald Trump. And the American patriots who are still left in United States government doing the best they can, the best they can to protect America's security despite the fact that we've essentially been invaded, as we've been telling you since 2016, by the Kremlin through Putin's proxy, Donald Trump.

Sarah Kendzior: To that point, one other thing that Trump said about this is that he basically, as usual, confessed to the crime, and said, "We're there for the oil. Like, we don't care about the Kurds." He basically doesn't care about the U.S. special forces. Trump is notorious for denigrating the military. This is something he's always done, whether it's John McCain or numerous other veterans who he's slighted. We'll get into the latest fund in the later part of the show. It's another betrayal of our country. In terms of a quid pro quo, we know that Trump has been fulfilling Putin's wishlist, his foreign policy wishlist, from the minute he got into office. This seems to be part of it. I'm wary about where it's going. I'm not completely sure, and the gift, I guess, would be the death of al-Baghdadi, which Trump thought would be this great propaganda moment for himself. You know, a way that he could compete with Obama and the killing of Osama bin Laden under Obama's administration, because, of course, Trump is obsessed with this because he's deranged. He managed to blow this moment, and I actually think Trump is, on the whole, very good at propaganda and spin. I feel like this is a quality people consistently underestimated in him, but he got a little too enthusiastic. He was really in there for the gruesome details. He had to embellish. He had to lie. He had to seem like he had total control over this situation, like he really was the Commander in Chief. He could not stand, I think, the idea that members of the U.S. military, actual other human beings, helped pull this off after years and years of trying. You know, the only individual that he's singled out is the dog that was involved in the operation. This is after Trump's bizarre rant about dogs as he described the death of al-Baghdadi. So there's something psychologically askew in his dog obsession as well. I mean, I'm not saying you should name the people who are involved in this mission, because this is a national security issue, but show actual respect. Give some credit and recognize that this, they're not doing this for Donald Trump. They are doing this for the safety of the world. They are doing this for the safety of the U.S. They're doing this to rid the world of a terrorist monster who's been slaughtering people, who is responsible for the deaths of so many in that region. But he can't ever distance any of that from himself.

There's one more thing I want to bring up with this, because I feel like the media kind of missed it on Sunday. Trump apparently was going on about how he himself is like the arbiter of national security and spotting terrorists and hunting terrorists and spotting the threat in advance. And among the claims he was making is that he saw 9/11 coming when no one else could see it coming, and nobody knew what he was talking about. In the book that I wrote that's going into production now, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, I actually discuss this claim that Trump has made about 9/11, because it's it's kind of interesting when you dig into it. Trump did have a book that came out in 2000 called *The America We Deserve*, and I read this Godforsaken book. He's not entirely wrong about this claim. The book had a ghostwriter who put his ramblings into coherent sentences, and in it, "Trump"—quote-unquote—does call out Osama bin Laden as a major threat, and he does bring up the World Trade Center as a target. These are not exactly leaps in logic. You know, this is not some genius analysis by Trump since the World Trade Center was attacked in 1993 and bin Laden had just committed terrorist acts in Kenya and Tanzania, but what I thought was interesting here, and alarming, is that Trump had this obsession with terrorism when he was a businessman. You have to remember, this is 16 years or more before he was elected, and while he had always shown interest in running for president, he didn't

allegedly have these kind of national security interests. And one of the things about this is that during this time, Trump was working with the Russian mafia and its associates, and one of those associates was a mobster turned FBI informant and then later turned Trump's direct partner, Felix Sater. And so Sater claims to have been working with the U.S. government to track al-Qaeda between 1998 and 2001, and this claim has since been backed up with some documentation. It's a disturbing claim in itself. Sater later went on to partner with the Trump family directly on real estate ventures that were fronts for money laundering. Meanwhile, you have to kind of look back at what was going on with al-Qaeda in the late 1990s, when Trump and his ghostwriter put out this book. That was when they allegedly had the support of the Russian Mafia, in particular, Semion Mogilevich's group. And that's according to, among others, Alexander Litvinenko, the Russian dissident who was famously poisoned by the Kremlin in 2006. But before his death, Litvinenko claimed in 2005 that Mogilevich has had a good relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin since 1994 or 1993, and that Mogilevich is in contact with al-Qaeda and sells them weapons. So here it is surprisingly easy to get a direct line from al-Qaeda to Trump, and to be very clear, I am not saying Trump did 9/11 or anything remotely like that, but I wonder if Trump's unusual early obsession with terrorism may have had to do with the Russian mafia operatives with whom he was working in the 90s.

And finally, this raises the question of why the hell did the FBI not do anything or say anything when Trump ran for office given that these are his long-standing ties? Why would you allow a guy like this to get national security briefs as a candidate, much less inhabit the Oval Office and get executive power? And we now see the result of that negligence or refusal to identify the full scope of his ties. So I thought I would clarify that.

Andrea Chalupa: James Comey as FBI director had no problem holding a press conference about Hillary Clinton's emails, even though she did nothing wrong and there was nothing there. Hillary's emails, okay. I can't even get into that because just such a big nothing. So James Comey had no problem holding a press conference on Hillary Clinton's emails, yet did not hold a press conference—even though it is unusual for an FBI director period to hold a press conference—but he did not publicly warn the American public that a known Kremlin operative, Paul Manafort, was running Donald Trump's campaign and that Donald Trump and his family deeply relied on funding from Putin's oligarch state for years. James Comey even refused to sign onto a letter by major U.S. agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, warning the American public about Trump and Putin's meddling in 2016. So James Comey is very much complicit in the Kremlin's attack on our election in 2016.

Sarah Kendzior: His latest excuse, Comey is now going around saying basically like, "Oh, you know, we can't talk about Trump and Russia in the election because it's too complicated for the American public to understand," which, it just blows my mind, the audacity of that claim, how condescending and insulting it is, how he tries to excuse his own dereliction of duty by placing the onus on the American public. And also, I'm sorry, it is not hard to understand, because this goon squad keeps confessing. Like Trump literally got up on a stage and asked Russia for Clinton's emails. Donald Trump, Jr. has emails where he's like, "Oh, wow, you're gonna give me the goods on Clinton? Thanks, Russia. Good idea." Felix Sater, who I just mentioned, and Michael Cohen, Trump's attorney, have emails publicly from 2015, saying, "Our boy is finally going to get into office with the help of the Kremlin." Like the criminals are spelling out the crimes! They're using really easy language. They're not out there using Latin and legalese and all the stuff that, you know, the alleged good guys have been using, which I do think makes it more difficult for the public to understand. It's not that complicated. He's a Kremlin asset. He bribes people. He

threatens people. He's not working for America. The FBI screwed up. I don't know why they screwed up so badly when this is like a crime that you could solve with back issues of Spy Magazine, but they did. They owe us an explanation. Comey owes the public an actual explanation.

Andrea Chalupa: An apology. James Comey should spend the rest of his life volunteering for immigrant communities on the border, and James Comey should spend the rest of his life leveraging his entire network of people who work in our national security. He was the head of the FBI. He has a network of incredibly talented people around him who are law enforcement officers. What they should do is volunteer their services pro bono to try to locate the children who have been separated from their parents on the border. That is the only way right now for James Comey at all to come close to redeeming himself for his role in helping bring a Russian mafia asset to power.

Sarah Kendzior: I think that would be an actually useful thing to do. I can't believe—

Andrea Chalupa: Instead of his bullshit book tour. I hardly swear on the show, but. [laughter]

Sarah Kendzior: It's all crap! I remember Harry Reid imploring Comey, like, "You need to inform the public of this threat now. You need to give the public full information about Trump's ties." He didn't mean do it like years later in a book tour and half-ass it the whole time. It is just, it's disgusting. And the reverence people still have for Comey! For a while I kind of felt like, "Wow, Americans, you know, we're finally kind of on the same page. There's some people everybody hates. There's Jeffrey Epstein, there's the Sackler Family, and there's Comey." Like, everyone kind of hates them. You know, the Trump people, the Democratic side. And then he just got built up, built back. He got this false redemption, which is such a dangerous thing. We're seeing this again with people like John Yoo, the torture memo guy, going on and slandering, you one of the new witnesses in the Trump case. You have to stop redeeming these people through books and through cable TV appearances and through all this nonsense that presents them as a legitimate individual whose career somehow makes up for their massive betrayal of duty to the American public. I'm sorry. He sucks. He screwed up, and people are dead as a consequence. People are dead because James Comey wouldn't speak up, because he's too gutless or cowardly. I just know he owes us an explanation, and that, as you just pointed out, you cannot separate the Trump-Russia crisis from the broader crises of authoritarianism and of cruel, evil policy that this administration has enacted as a result of Trump getting into office.

Those kids are dead or separated from their parents in part because the government—and I mean this in the broadest respect—would not investigate Trump-Russia when it mattered back in 2015, back in 2016, back in early 2017. They had time, they had a chance, and they blew it, and we don't get that time back, and those parents don't get those kids back, and I want everyone to remember this. There isn't forgiveness here. You can try to do the right thing, and you should try to do the right thing and redeem yourself if you were one of the people who caused this, but damn, this will not be forgotten.

Andrea Chalupa: So if we ever do manage to get a Democrat into the White House, that president will have to basically spend his or her first term repairing the deeply damaged relationships between us and our allies. That's basically what the first term is going to be spent doing. Do you understand how much harder it will be to get groups like the Kurds to back us up in wars against terrorism and existential wars? Because they're going to look at

even a Democrat president and be like, "I may trust you, but what if you lose reelection? I cannot risk the instability of American politics." That is the deep damage that has been done here. That is how Putin wins out. Putin needs America to be damaged on the global stage because of people like our allies. The democracies around the world are reluctant to stand with us, or reluctant to make deals with us, and are reluctant to defend our interests abroad. I'm not saying in the Forever Wars, but the Bush Wars. Right? The apocalypse that Bush unleashed in Afghanistan and Iraq, Middle East, that's still ongoing. We're stuck. We're stuck with that right now, and we're going to have a very, very hard time having people fight by our side in these horrible regions that Bush destroyed because of what Trump has done. And that's great for Putin, because he needs the Global Democratic Alliance to be fractured. Because why? Then he escapes accountability. He escapes accountability. He gets to be this wonderful dictator, and no sanctions, and he's welcomed into the club, and so forth. You're seeing that more and more. Even France is like saying, "You know, maybe we should let Putin back in," because you have a fractured Western alliance right now, and that's what Putin wants. So the next Democratic president, if we get one, because a lot of the crimes that brought Trump to power, we're seeing a limited accountability here. That president's going to have to fight with both hands tied behind his or her back. It's gonna be very difficult for many years to come.

Sarah Kendzior: Oh, yeah. This is gonna go on for the rest of our lives, if we're lucky enough to have the rest of our lives. And that's why we need a shit shoveler as the next president. We need somebody who is prepared to have things be extremely hard, extremely unglamorous, and extremely complicated.

Andrea Chalupa: We need a woman.

Sarah Kendzior: We need a woman!

Andrea Chalupa: We need a multitasking woman. It is a fact that women have a higher endurance for pain than men. It is a fact, and it is a fact that women are more collaborative than men. These are all traits that are necessary for the next President of the United States to clean up after the disasters created by Trump and Putin.

Sarah Kendzior: You can see this even in the case itself. Like, the witnesses, the whistleblowers, the people who have tried to hold Trump accountable have largely been women. And I obviously appreciate the efforts of men who have done this as well, but it's been women who have stuck their necks out. It's been women whose testimony has moved things. Then you get jackasses like John Bolton getting the credit for it, so it's very frustrating. I think that there is a tendency when you're female, you're on the alert for a threat all the time. You have to be vigilant as a way of life in order to survive, and so I think women on the whole have been more able to recognize the severity of this crisis and to see just how bad things can get, just how much things can be covered up, just how senselessly validated, powerful, and corrupt men can be like. We've witnessed this our whole lives, so in that sense, it's not shocking. It's very frustrating when we see people falling for the same tricks over and over again. And I'm not saying like, you know, all women are good, all men are bad, or anything like that. But I do think that we've been kind of trained through life experience to be perpetually on guard, and that's a good quality. That is a quality I look for in every candidate. I don't want an optimistic little ray of sunshine. I want somebody who's going to call it like it is, and be prepared, and think 20 moves ahead, and actually put a stop to it and look out for the American public.

Andrea Chalupa: We need a Nazi hunter.

Sarah Kendzior: We need a Nazi hunter, because we've got Nazis. And speaking of the perpetually surprised punditry, we once again had another week of everyone wondering why Bill Barr, nicknamed the "Cleanup General" by a Conservative in 1992, whose entire reputation is about cleaning the GOP's dirty laundry while baselessly persecuting Democratic rivals, like that is what Bill Barr is known for. They are shocked, shocked, shocked that he is at this again, and that Bill Barr is doing exactly what we told you Bill Barr would do when he was nominated last year, which is flip the script, investigate the investigators, and build an entire alternative reality to fit his aims, and to cover up for all of the dirty business that Trump, his family, and his pool of lackeys have been involved in. So now Bill Barr has kind of formally announced his show trial ambitions, and it is frustrating. I am frustrated at the perpetual surprise of the punditry who apparently lack access to Wikipedia, and I am even more frustrated that there is not a movement within Congress to impeach him, or at least to like on a daily basis call out how dangerous he is and how illegal and illicit and damaging his actions are. Like, people should be very proactive about Bill Barr, because Bill Barr is a very proactive kind of guy. He's not stupid. He's very skilled. He's good at being bad. They need to be prepared, and they are not. And we're seeing this yet again.

So we have as of this morning a new witness statement released from somebody who had heard Trump's call with the Ukrainian President, and was deeply alarmed and wants to speak to Congress to voice his concerns. His name is Alexander Vindman. He, of course, has a twin named Yevgeny, because this has to move this way. And I'm just waiting for the moment where Trump is like, "You know, it wasn't him. It was his twin," and we're gonna get the full soap opera thing anyway. I should not be joking about this, because he is being seriously attacked. I encourage everyone to read Vindman's statement of testimony. It's very straightforward. He describes his experience as a Ukrainian-American who went on to serve his country in Iraq, then join the government in a national security capacity. And he was alarmed by the extortion that Trump was attempting to implement in regard to Ukraine and the general torpedoing of United States foreign policy, and the reputation and trust of the United States internationally. So, he is speaking out, and he's being smeared. You've got pundits on CNN smearing him, pundits on Fox smearing him, trying to destroy his reputation. One of the things that is very alarming is that they are questioning his patriotism, and they're questioning his loyalty. And they're doing this by saying he is a Ukrainian-American. This is a guy who moved to America as a child. I think he was like 9 or 10 or something when he arrived from the former Soviet Union, and they're just like, "He speaks Ukrainian and he speaks Russian." Like that's some bad thing! I want people in the government who speak those languages. The Obama Administration infamously cut research into the former Soviet Union and cut the number of speakers of those languages, and that's part of the reason we gotten this problem, is because we don't have people with the geopolitical acumen. This guy actually has it. But honestly, Andrea, this reminded me of the way that the like Breitbart, Sputnik, Manafort, Trump team machine goes after your sister. You guys are Americans. You're from California and of Ukrainian descent, and they do this whole thing where it's like, "Ooh, a Ukrainian-American. They must be a spy for Ukraine." That's just total bullshit. It's deeply insulting. It's incredibly offensive, and we've got one more example of it here.

Andrea Chalupa: Yeah. Without question. What these authoritarian wannabes in power are doing is they're trying to attack and jail innocent people who are following the laws of this country. This is what authoritarianism looks like. Their far-right propaganda machines, from Fox News to the Kremlin-funded Sputnik News, those far right propaganda machines are deeply pocketed. They have massive amounts of resources at their disposal, and what

they are doing is they're using their propaganda machines to harass innocent people who were just following the law and being patriotic in protecting their countries from an attack from a mass-murdering authoritarian regime. That is what is going on, and my sister is a victim of this. They are trying, like with Biden, to invent crimes that my sister in no way, shape, or form committed. What they're doing, essentially, is they're trying to punish people who exposed their crimes. Trump is obsessed with hunting down, humiliating, and punishing those who caught him, from Lisa Page to Bruce Orr to Andrew McCabe to Christopher Steele. Devin Nunez, Donald Trump, Jim Jordan, the Republican Party generally is trying to hunt down and harass and unjustly persecute those who caught them. That's all this is. And that also extends to our allies, by the way. Devon Nunez went to London to try to hunt down the information on Christopher Steele. The UK is one of our closest allies in protecting our national security, and we're joined together in fighting against terrorism. We're united in standing up to Putin's aggression. Historically, that's been the case since World War II. The U.S. is united with democracies around the world, and standing up against fascism. That has been the world order since World War II. And of course, anytime we've fallen short of those values, we've weakened ourselves without question. Now you have attacks and investigations by the deeply corrupt Republican Party and Trump crime family in the White House trying to hunt down even any assistance from our allies like Australia and the UK and so forth, because they are furious that they got caught, and they want to harass relentlessly and persecute and deeply damage those that expose them. A lot of this is also trying to set up this horrible narrative that it was the whistleblowers, it was the investigative journalists, it was the American intelligence community, the CIA and the FBI that is to blame. Right? That's what they're trying to say, and if they can succeed in setting up that narrative, they can invent the crimes. If they can invent them by strongarming the president of Ukraine into inventing something in Ukraine that they could connect to their enemies, then what they can do is they can justify a pardon for Putin's American operative Paul Manafort. Paul Manafort, since 2006, was getting a 10-million-dollar a year contract by Oleg Deripaska, a Russian oligarch that is incredibly close to Putin. Putin does not have his fingers directly on these crimes. He farms them out to his court of Russian oligarchs. Putin is arguably the richest man in the world. The fact that he has an obedient court of oligarchs who are all disgustingly rich off the backs of innocent Russians, okay, off the backs of innocent Ukrainians who are being murdered by Putin's invasion, and innocent Syrians who are being murdered by Putin's bombardment of poor Syrians and Georgians and so forth. Putin, with his core of oligarchs combined, is astronomically rich. He basically controls a blood money atomic bomb that he leverages against democracies around the world to weaken them, to spread his corruption, so he could avoid accountability and remain in power, even if he is just the czar of a pile of bones. He doesn't care. I mean, he brought back Stalin. He resurrected Stalin for a reason. There's statues going up to Stalin under Putin for a reason, because he believes that wealth and power and destroying others all for the sake of money and power is completely justifiable in his mind. And Donald Trump shares those atrocious lack of morals. It's a matter of values. That's what they share. So they need to get Paul Manafort pardoned. They need to get Paul Manafort out of prison, because Paul Manafort has no problem putting on a suit and tie and going on Chuck Todd's Sunday show, and spouting their talking points, and trying to clean up their image in the West. They need someone like that. Manafort has that criminal mind that they need to rig the system so they can hack our elections and get their candidates elected, whether it's in Ukraine or the United States.

Sarah Kendzior: I think it's important for people who are watching the impeachment process to realize that this is what they are up against. This is what we as Americans are up against, and anybody trying to defeat Trump on corruption, like they are actually fighting this broader international network, what I keep calling a transnational crime

syndicate. That's why I've been concerned about the kind of timidity of the impeachment process. It looks like Pelosi is finally going to call to formalize the inquiry this week, to have a vote on that. But as the clock keeps ticking and they keep consolidating power, this becomes more troubling. You know, the odds become reduced as to whether justice will prevail. This is in like a kind of literal way, like the Democrats are now down two members in the House. Last week we discussed the tragic death of Elijah Cummings, who is the head of the House Oversight Committee. Now, the vice chair of that committee, Katie Hill, has resigned due to her being the target of revenge porn and due to allegations that she had an improper relationship with a staffer. Hill, in her statement, said that it was because of her abusive ex-husband. The oversight committee does not have that many people on it. They've just lost two. There are three members of the quote-unquote "squad" on the oversight committee. They are relentlessly targeted. They get death threats all the time, and the acting chair of that right now is Carolyn Maloney. We'll emphasize that it's acting in case there is any confusion from last week. We don't know who's actually going to be running this committee, but we have—you know, I hate the Dems in disarray narrative. I think that's something that Republicans and just the media likes to throw out there. We have some Dems in disarray going on here through no fault, really, of their own. Obviously, not the fault of Cummings. But the situation is already very bad, and I'm kind of wondering if Pelosi is finally kind of pushing this thing into motion because of this incredible instability in Congress, particularly on one of the most effective and powerful committees, the committee that is addressing a lot of Trump's crimes, particularly his kleptocratic initiatives, head on. So hopefully they'll still be able to do that. But yeah, like you said, the threat is very large. It's very severe, and it's not limited to Trump. I mean, hopefully they'll realize that.

Andrea Chalupa: And without question, anybody in a position of power to do anything to protect our sovereignty, to protect the rule of law, to protect our upcoming 2020 presidential election, anybody in a position of power to do anything is a target. So just imagine that. We've talked about the death threats and the harassment and the hacking attempts that my sister is still undergoing, and the political persecution. She's just one story. We hold her up to remind you that this is going on. This is widespread. So anybody, any member of Congress who is standing up for the rule of law right now, and their staff, are undergoing, I'm sure, any types of threats or targeting. It's just inevitable. This is systemic. This is how the mafia and corruption gets things done, and they have the means to do it. You saw even Harvey Weinstein employing these tactics to try to kill the stories against him, employing the psy-ops firm Black Cube to harass journalists. You saw Ronan Farrow almost getting his story killed at NBC News because of the intimidation tactics and pressuring, and so forth. So we are very much in the fight of our lives, and just understand that ultimately the war of what is going on right now is a war of the mind. Their tactic is fear. Their tactic is terrorism. You cannot give into fear. You absolutely cannot give into fear. You have to stand up and keep horrible human beings out of power, and every little act you do, no matter how small, spreads hope into the world. Activism is hope in action. So please find your community, join a community, strengthen your community, and show up for each other and refuse to abandon each other. And you can find more ways on how to help protect your community, your world, your children's future, by going to GaslitNationPod.com and looking up our action guide. Just pick one item and just get involved and just show up. Just keep showing up and refuse to allow fear to win.

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

Sarah Kendzior: We want to encourage our listeners to join us in donating to help climate refugees in the Bahamas impacted by the hurricane. One way you can help is by donating to the Grand Bahama Disaster Relief Foundation, a local organization coordinating relief efforts on the ground.

Andrea Chalupa: We also encourage you to donate to help critically endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry, and now, horrendous fires in Indonesia. Donate to the Orangutan Project at TheOrangutanProject.org. END