

Gaslit Nation
Reality Winner is in Prison While the Traitors Walk Free

Andrea Chalupa:
Sarah Kendzior:
Billie Winner-Davis:

Theme Music

Andrea Chalupa: Welcome to Gaslit Nation. I'm Andrea Chalupa, a writer and the screenwriter-producer of the upcoming journalistic thriller Mr. Jones.

Sarah Kendzior: And I'm Sarah Kendzior, a journalist and scholar of authoritarian states, and the author of the essay collection *The View from Flyover Country*.

Andrea Chalupa: We're here today with Billie Winner-Davis, a social worker and the mother of Reality Winner, an Air Force veteran and the former NSA contractor who provided *The Intercept* with an NSA report on the Kremlin's hacking of U.S. voting systems at a time when the issue was still largely being debated and the public kept very much in the dark. The documents show that the Kremlin cyber-attack targeted at least one voting software vendor, and spearfished over a hundred local election officials in the days leading up to the 2016 election. *The Intercept* shared the leaked report with the NSA, which allowed the NSA to identify the leaker. The DOJ charged Winner with violating the Espionage Act. Winner was sentenced to more than five years in prison. We are very grateful to be joined today with her mother to discuss this immense story and the sacrifice that her daughter made for the public to be made aware of this very serious issue. Welcome to the show, Billie.

Billie Winner-Davis: Thank you so much for having me on.

Andrea Chalupa: How is your daughter doing?

Billie Winner-Davis: Well, for the most part she is doing okay. You know, we've had a really rough two years. She was denied bail during the pre-trial phase of this experience, and so she was held in a county jail in rural Georgia, which was absolutely, it was horrifying the conditions that she was kept under. And then of course after the sentencing she was transferred around the country, like they do with inmates. And so that was pretty frightening for her and for us. And right now, she is in a federal facility in Fort Worth, Texas, FMC Carswell. It's actually they call it a psychomedical center, Carswell, because it has a prison hospital there on the grounds, but she is not in the hospital section of it. She's actually in the prison section of the facility.

Andrea Chalupa: And how old is she now?

Billie Winner-Davis: She is now 27 years old. Yes, she was 25 when she was arrested, and she has already spent two of her birthdays in jail, in prison.

Andrea Chalupa: And how often do you get to visit her?

Billie Winner-Davis: My husband and I try to travel up once a month, but it's typically it's been like every five weeks. It is quite a journey for us. We live about seven, seven and a

half hours away from Fort Worth. And so we do need to, you know, make arrangements and take off work and travel up.

Sarah Kendzior: So maybe we should review some of the facts of the case. Can you tell us, what was Reality trying to achieve when she released those documents?

Billie Winner-Davis: Well Reality and I have never had an opportunity to have a conversation about what led up to the release of the documents, of course, because everything that we say or do is monitored closely. But I know from the transcript of her FBI interrogation and her confession that basically it came down to a moment of pure frustration with what was going on in the country, because as we know during that time frame, on May 9th is when James Comey was fired by Trump. And basically, we know that this was an attempt to make the Russia Investigation go away. We know at that time that there was heavy news reporting about that it's all a hoax. You know, that Trump was trying to convince the country that there was no interference in our election, and that's all a hoax. At that point, you know, Reality is working at the NSA. She sees this document. She prints it. It's on her desk for about a day and a half. And she just becomes very frustrated and believes that this information needs to be out there in the public. And she doesn't see where anyone else is going to release it, so she takes it upon herself to release it to us.

Andrea Chalupa: Yeah, and I want to make clear again that obviously with Mueller's report coming out we learned even more about the sweeping cyber-attacks against our election systems in all 50 states, and obviously there were reports on a handful of cases in 2016 in the fall. But the authorities were just so reluctant, it clearly seemed, to inform the public that all 50 states were targeted, and even with the revelations in Mueller's report, they still leave you wondering what else is there to find out about this. What else are they keeping from us? Because this would clearly undermine the integrity of our elections and would further confirm that Donald Trump is an illegitimate president, given that our election was attacked so aggressively and widely by a hostile regime.

Billie Winner-Davis: Exactly. And that's what I ask myself daily. If my daughter Reality had not leaked to this one document at that point in time, would we have ever known the truth? Would we have ever known what I know now? Because it appears that our intelligence agencies were not going to release that for whatever reason. You know, we have the Senate Intel Committee. They used the document that Reality released in their investigation and they admonished the intelligence communities, and basically scolded them for hiding or keeping this information from Congress, from the American people, from everywhere. So what if she had not released this? Where would we be right now? I also asked myself, why in releasing this one document did our government persecute her so harshly? When you look at any other cases out there of whistle blowing, and you look at what she released and her service record and everything like that, why is it that our government has persecuted her more harshly than anyone else? I guess I conclude that it's because they didn't want this information ever to come out.

Andrea Chalupa: Well, Sarah and I were had been viciously attacked for speaking out since day one for audit the vote. That was what really got us hit piece after hit piece, and one way that propaganda likes to work is they confuse you. They create a debate so no one even knows what to believe, and there's very much a muddied debate for several months around election hacking, whether it made an impact or not. And some incredibly high profile, credible journalists and pundits and so forth were so snide in attacking us and just basically presenting the whole issue as overblown, because we don't have the

evidence. Because we don't have it all neatly laid out for us on a silver platter of what exactly went down, they like to be dismissive of people who are outspoken on this, almost to keep a personal image of being level headed and the adult in the room, when the reality is actually quite terrifying. We started off with just a handful of states, and nope, turned out all 50 states suffered cyber-attacks on election systems. And again, what else is there to find out?

Andrea Chalupa: So I think your daughter did a really great service, especially given that Comey as FBI director repeatedly had calls for him to inform the public of how widespread the Kremlin attack was, how serious it was, by Senator Harry Reid, by even other intelligence agencies wanting to go public, and so forth. And Comey, opportunity after opportunity, just refused to. And that was a total abdication of his role as FBI director and his role to keep our country safe. So it is frustrating to see someone like James Comey, who let our country down in such a severe way, James Comey, who played such a pivotal role in the decline of democracy in America, the decline of the Western alliance, all of it. Failing to do his job in 2016, just alone, on how it came to informing and educating the public on the Kremlin's attack. And yet he's out there on a book tour. He's out there in the woods posting these ridiculous photos that he thinks make him look like Yoda, and he's cashing in on his book. Meanwhile your daughter, who is young, idealistic, from what we've read, and she took a chance, and when that report came out in the Intercept, it was a bombshell. People that either ignored or snickered at myself and Sarah suddenly were like, "Wow, this is huge." They took your daughter's report that was provided to the Intercept seriously, when they weren't taking people like me and Sarah seriously. They took what your daughter did very seriously, and that put a bunch of fuel on that fire and lent a ton of credibility to like, "Wow, this is probably worse than we thought."

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, and one of the things that's remarkable to me about this, Andrea just brought up that Comey went on a book tour after failing to inform the American public about a threat to our national security, and then meanwhile we have the actual criminals of this probe, we have people like Flynn, Manafort, Gates, Papadopoulos, either serving relatively minor sentences or no time at all in plea deals that don't seem to have given them anything but personal freedom and the license to carry out more crimes. And meanwhile, if I'm correct, your daughter has the longest sentence, I think, in history for this particular offense. I mean, what do you make of this incongruity, where we have clear cut criminal cases, people have literally pled guilty, who are helping the Trump administration, getting off very easy, while Reality Winner, who informs the American public of these crimes sits in prison?

Billie Winner-Davis: Right, yeah. It's been truly a nightmare, and truly horrifying, to watch this and to experience this as a parent of a person who did the right thing. And you bring up Comey. I'm not a fan of Comey. Comey is the one who promised Trump that he would find a leaker and nail them to the wall as an example to others, and that's exactly what they did to my daughter Reality. And then of course you have Jeff Sessions, who, you know, he applauded when she was arrested and was on television, saying, "We found a good one. We captured a good one in Georgia." Her sentence is the very longest sentence that's ever been handed down for this type of offense in the United States, and it's so disproportionate to the actual crime. First of all, I'm very outspoken with regard to them charging her under the Espionage Act. What she did was she leaked one classified document. That classified document did not have any negative repercussions to our safety. It only gave us the truth that was being hidden from us. And what they did is they charged her under the Espionage Act so that Americans would see her as a traitor, and

that to me is just probably the worst thing about this entire case, is trying to portray Reality Winner as a traitor to the country that she was protecting and defending. How can an act of telling the truth about a foreign attack on our own government, our own election system, be an act of somebody who they're trying to paint as a traitor? Bobby Christine, the U.S. attorney in charge of her case, released a very long press statement the day of her sentencing trying to again portray her as an enemy of the state, saying that this wasn't a victimless crime, telling the American people that she was a quintessential threat to the United States. But then he basically said that her sentence was not so much about her and what she had done, but her sentence was harsh in order to send a message to any other persons out there who would think about doing the same thing that she did. So Reality Winner's sentence was not so much about what Reality did, but it was basically to keep anyone else from coming out and telling us the truth, or giving us information that we need to know.

Music

[Commercial break] Sarah Kendzior: We all know the frustration: bottles upon bottles piling up in your bathroom, each one falsely promising a miracle solution. What if it didn't need to be this way, though? What if there were just one shampoo that could truly do it all? Function of Beauty individually formulates every bottle just for you, based on your hair type, hair goals, and preferences. You select your color and fragrance or opt for dye-free and fragrance-free. Name your formula. Our products are so personalized your name is even printed on the bottle. Function of Beauty only use is safe and natural ingredients and is vegan and cruelty-free. The sad reality is most major drugstore brands tests on animals, but not Function of Beauty. I like Function of Beauty, because as you all know I have long thick hair and want to keep it that way, and Function of Beauty makes it easy to take care of all this hair quickly and without a lot of fuss. Listeners will receive 20% off their first custom formula. Go to functionofbeauty.com/gaslit now and take the quick, two-minute hair profile quiz to design your 100% unique shampoo and conditioner formulas. Go to functionofbeauty.com/gaslit now to redeem 20% off your first order. That's [functionofbeauty.com slash G A S L I T](https://functionofbeauty.com/gaslit). One more time, [functionofbeauty.com slash G A S L I T](https://functionofbeauty.com/gaslit). [End commercial]

Sarah Kendzior: One of the saddest things about this situation is what you just said, this portrayal of her as a traitor, because we're at this point in U.S. history where we've been attacked from within. We've been attacked by a hostile state with complicity from U.S. actors, and so when you think is somebody a threat to the United States, it's like, are they a threat to the United States? Or are they a threat to the Trump administration? Because at this point in time, those are two distinct entities, and so the way I view this situation is what Reality did was beneficial to the people of the United States, the people who our president is supposed to serve, the people who Comey was supposed to inform, not beneficial to the Trump administration, because it reveals the complicity of the crimes. One other thing that Andrea and I were talking about earlier and we've talked about on previous shows, is there have been more whistleblowers that have come out since. Natalee Mayflower Edwards, for example, is one who told about Russia infiltrating the U.S. Treasury in 2015, which to me is another major story that seems to go under the radar. We've noticed more people coming forward, and they're almost all women. I think that, thankfully, other whistleblowers haven't been completely deterred by the harsh treatment of Reality Winner, but I was just curious what you think of the fact that it's really women coming out and fighting for our rights, fighting for transparency, fighting for the freedom of

this country, and being disproportionately punished for it as well. I was just curious if you had thoughts on those other cases or on the gender dynamics of this situation.

Billie Winner-Davis: Thankfully women are coming up, and women are, I think women are braver at this point in time, and willing to sacrifice. Women always sacrifice. As mothers, we sacrifice our time and our lives for our children, and I think that that's what we're seeing in our country these days, is that we have women who are willing to sacrifice for the betterment of our nation and for other people and everyone else. I mean, I'm proud of my daughter. I am proud of what she's done her entire life. Her entire life has been about service to her country, service to community, and I'm proud of this act. You know, I think that she did the right thing, and unfortunately, she's paying a high price, but in the long run, she's going to come out as kind of a hero to this entire story.

Andrea Chalupa: I think without question. The argument is the report that she leaked could be a roadmap to our enemies to infiltrate our election systems further. But let's be real, if the Kremlin knows how to do it, you think that the Chinese hackers don't know how to do it, and so forth? I mean everybody spies on everybody; everybody hacks everybody. That's the 21st century.

Sarah Kendzior: And that's bad, but it's not caused by revealing that this happened, which is what she did. It had already taken place.

Andrea Chalupa: She wasn't doing it to aid our enemies, which was which is what the Espionage Act of course would be applied towards. She was doing it to inform the public because she thought that the news was coming out too slow or might not ever come out. And the debate was so muddled. People did not know what to believe. The public wasn't being served with how serious this was, and they needed some clarity. They needed confirmation that yes, this was a widespread serious attack on our election systems which are indeed vulnerable, and it was sweeping. And so she did a public service. Absolutely. And the misogyny part of it, again, we go back to Comey. He had no problem breaking protocol by having a press conference about Hillary Clinton's emails, and using the word careless. Even though Comey himself was using his personal email account for official FBI business, and at the same time he sent that letter which statistically has been shown to have made a big impact right before the election. A letter that anybody would have known would have been leaked as the Republicans in the House ended up leaking it, saying that Hillary Clinton's email investigation was back on just days before the election. Basically, Comey played a major hand in the October Surprise that helped tip the election for Donald Trump. Meanwhile, he was quiet as a mouse when it came to addressing one of the greatest crimes in human history that was being unleashed on our democracy. That was a clear pattern of misogyny right there, and to add to that, there was a very large group of women that came together to bring a case of harassment and discrimination at the FBI Academy, and when they bravely brought their complaints or their allegations up to James Comey, then FBI director, he dismissed it. He dismissed it. These were women who were having their careers derailed because of this misogyny, and it was rampant, and Comey just dismissed it. So there is something wrong with Comey, and we will never let the public forget it, because we don't want history to forget it. And we agree that your daughter will be, we hope, if there's any fair, free future that good that comes out of all of this, all of our efforts to try to stop this derailed train from going off a cliff, that your daughter will be remembered as a hero, and we hope that Comey will be remembered as a misogynist who helped take down the Western Alliance and really damaged countless lives in the process.

Billie Winner-Davis: Another case to look at is this Flynn case. He hasn't been sentenced yet, but the fact that the Department of Justice wanted to go so light on him, he's the one that's actually working with foreign governments against the Americans, yet they wanted to go light on him. Where when you look at the DOJ's recommendation for the sentencing of Reality Winner, they just wanted her to be persecuted. It's so night and day in our country, and yes, you have to wonder about, is it because she's a woman? And of course, she's a woman without power.

Andrea Chalupa: It's almost like at the DOJ, men fail upwards. Women and people of color tend to be defined by their mistakes. So you have someone like Paul Manafort, for instance, who for decades raked in millions of dollars aiding horrible human rights abuses around the world, destroying democracies around the world, laundering that money, not paying his taxes in the U.S., and so forth. And he was a major figure in the Kremlin's attack on our democracy, because they needed Americans in order for this to succeed, Americans who knew our election systems, knew which states to target. As we found out in the Mueller Report, Manafort had a strategy to target key states the Midwest, like Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, with sharing data, polling data on those states with someone connected to Russian intelligence, and those were the states where the audits, where the vote recount campaigns were being led by grassroots efforts and so forth, because the polling was so off. All this is to say just as a recap of Manafort's crimes. And yet when he was in jail, Manafort had access to all types of comforts. He had access to the Internet. Manafort was doing quite well after his arrest, that he even committed more crimes, because he felt just so comfortable. And meanwhile, you have the drive seven hours, and a luxury for you is that you get to hug your daughter.

Sarah Kendzior: We also read that Reality has been prohibited from speaking to the media, that she's been banned, and I was wondering if you could comment on that, and also kind of tell us, like, if she were able to talk to the press, what would she say?

Billie Winner-Davis: Oh, well, okay. So it's kind of hard to explain to people, because several media outlets have requested interviews with Reality, and of course the Bureau of Prisons will send it down to this specific facility, Carswell, and they'll let them know that it's up to that warden. Well, Carswell has been denying every request, but they let some of the press know that they can have written or email communication with Reality if they so choose to. But Reality is called in, because she's being monitored by a security officer, and basically, she has been told that she is not allowed to have any contact with anyone associated with media or the press. So even if Carswell tells a reporter, yes, you may contact Reality Winner through email, she's forbidden from doing that. And so basically, they've gagged her, you know? And so we're trying to get through that, and trying to work through that with the prison, and try to at least get some sort of access to her. I think what Reality would tell the public is that whatever she did, she did for the good of the country. She never meant to hurt the country. She never meant to do any type of harm, that she doesn't hate America as they try to put out there in all of the media and all of their press releases, that she's not an enemy of America or the people. I think that that is the message that she really wants out there, because the prosecution did a good job of taking certain things and piecing them together in a false type of puzzle. You know, they took pieces out of context and put them out there for the judge and for the world to see. They portrayed her as somebody who hated her country because of a scribbled joke that she wrote in a journal, and also text messages between she and her sister that occurred almost two years prior to her arrest. And they put those together and they formed this

narrative of this very angry young woman who hates America and wants to join the Taliban.

Andrea Chalupa: Oh, dear God. That is the definition of Thought Police, what you just described there. If everyone got arrested for utterances they made out of frustration, or dumb jokes or dark jokes or whatever it was, scribbles in a journal from years ago, we would all be in the Gulag.

Sarah Kendzior: Hey, don't give them any ideas.

Andrea Chalupa: I'm so sorry, but your story just really, I want to start bashing furniture, like I'm so sorry that you had to go through that, because scribbling in a journal is nothing compared to the encyclopedia of acts that Manafort and Flynn and Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump and Michael Cohen and Rick Gates and Mike Pence and Donald Trump and a whole long list of others, Papadopoulos, acts, actions, deliberate actions that were taken to undermine our democracy. It's just simply, there's just no comparison here between what your daughter did and what the President of the United States and his family did to our nation.

Billie Winner-Davis: I'm grateful to hear you say that. I'm grateful. I love the way that you summarized that, because yeah, that needs to be said over and over again. And I thank you for that, because you put that perfectly.

Andrea Chalupa: And I think it's just a horrific reality for all of us to live under, that we live in an America where someone like your daughter is locked away with a gag order, and Roger Stone is walking around free and threatening judges from his Instagram account and coming out with a book, and so forth.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, and one of the things that's additionally frustrating is at the time when Reality released the documents, which was in June when they were published, in June 2017, as we've said, people didn't necessarily know the full scope of everything that's transpired. We're now two years later. The Mueller probe has finished. You know, there have been a multitude of indictments as well as documentation into Russian interference into the election. Which of course Trump will simultaneously brag about or deny. This is why we have a show called Gaslit Nation, is because of this attitude. You know, there's also been along with the Mueller Report, a large number of reports in the press that over the last two years have grown in terms of detailing the extent of infiltration, not just through propaganda, but into our actual election systems, like hacking databases, hacking polls, and you voter registrations, all these sorts of things. There's been basically a vindication of what Reality did and why she did it. I was just curious if recently anyone from Mueller's team or from the various congressional committees that are supposed to be looking into this, have they reached out to her? Have they interviewed her to learn more about what she discovered?

Billie Winner-Davis: No, they have not, and that's been a point of frustration for me and for her and for others. Since she was persecuted and jailed, she's just like nonexistent. And we've reached out to members of Congress, asking them to please review her case, look into it, and the replies that we get back are that they cannot intervene in another branch's case. Because she falls under the judicial branch, they cannot intervene in that. It's very frustrating that she is just being buried in all of this, and that's why myself and a small

group of supporters, we really work every single day. We try to keep her name out there, to not let her disappear in all of this.

Sarah Kendzior: One of the things that's been striking to me is that I have seen a wellspring of support for people who you can sometimes describe as whistleblowers, sometimes describe as infiltrators, for example, people like Chelsea Manning, Snowden, Assange, who in my mind, what they did was different than what Reality did. I mean, I think what Reality did, the reasoning behind it was very clear-cut. And of course, Andrea and I suspected the government in Russia of having influenced, illegally, the 2016 election, so when we saw this documentation from the NSA that was released by Reality, we were like, "Aha! We were right. Our suspicions were founded. The truth is finally coming out. Maybe we can move forward as a country. Maybe we could have election integrity, election transparency."

Sarah Kendzior: One thing that surprised me was we kind of thought there would be more public support for Reality's case, or at least it would be a point of focus for the news media. It would be a point of focus for maybe the same people who are interested in what Chelsea Manning had exposed, because ultimately this is a case of high-level government corruption. But we haven't really seen that. What are your thoughts on how the press has handled this case?

Billie Winner-Davis: It's been really puzzling as far as why she doesn't get the coverage. I listen to and watch the news, and there are so many instances where they could just indicate, "Hey, and remember the document released by NSA worker Reality Winner?" Because it fits in to everything that's being talked about, but they don't say her name, and I know that in the beginning, when she was first arrested and that the news was first released, what really made the headlines was her name, because she has a unique name. People made fun of it. The news was all about her name, it wasn't so much about what the case was about. We've tried really, really hard to make sure that the reality of it, no pun, well pun intended, the reality of it is out there, that she's a real person and this is a real case, and she's being harshly persecuted by the government for doing something that was in our best interest. It's puzzling to me why people like Rachel Maddow in all of her reporting on the Russian interference, it would be nothing for her to just insert, "Oh yes, and we know some of this information because Reality Winner released it." It could be just a blip out there, but they just failed to do it. The most recent happening was CNN. They did a story on Reality, and basically, they were reporting as far as why there's kind of like a media blackout as far as getting to her, because they had attempted to interview her in prison and were denied. And so they did this piece, and the piece was scheduled to air on CNN, and it kept getting bumped. In two days, it was bumped to three different shows, and then it was just completely bumped off. There's a part of me that understands the news cycle. They go with what sells, they go with what's dramatic, they go with what's the big news of the day, but to me it's really kind of frustrating, because when you watch our news today, they report on the same thing over and over and over again, with different perspectives and different panels, instead of actually giving us all of the news.

Andrea Chalupa: That's why Gaslit Nation has to exist.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, we went rogue, because I mean, you're right. There are topics that they don't want to touch, and honestly one of the things Andrea and I have noticed is that hard evidence of election tampering, and by that we don't just mean a bunch of troll accounts or bot accounts spewing out propaganda that can sway public opinion, which,

while sketchy, isn't quite as much of the espionage kind of attack as a foreign country with complicit American actors possibly tampering with the actual votes. This is what Harry Reid warned about multiple times in 2016. He said, "They're going to falsify election results." We've never heard from him about what he meant on that. The closest we've seen of hard documented evidence was the evidence that your daughter produced, and so it is remarkable. I think they are afraid of the consequences of this. I think it of course calls into question the legitimacy of the election, which then of course calls into question all of the things that happened after, all the appointments that were made. Supreme Court appointments, lower court appointments, policies that were passed, laws that were struck down and laws that were put into place. It makes us question quote-unquote "reality." I get why that would be a threat to them, but it's very frustrating, because at the least we should be able to have a debate about this.

Andrea Chalupa: Sarah and I have heard from a number of our friends who are experts on national security and related issues that across the media space, including in Hollywood, there's been censorship. There's been this clear paranoia of just certain elephants in the room being too big to discuss.

Sarah Kendzior: Yeah, not like state censorship, not like the Trump administration says, "You can't do that," although honestly, I've heard cases of that, but like a self-censorship, like a chilling effect, a culture of timidity would go on.

Andrea Chalupa: Right, which can be enforced, as we know, from sitting authoritarian regimes in a number of ways, including lack of accountability. When you see criminals and accused criminals are living above the law, that just sends a chilling message to the rest of us that our laws are working in service to the very powerful and the very corrupt, and to the rest of us, we have to basically fall in line with the new power structure. And so you see people submit to that, and that's definitely the atmosphere of self-censorship. It's worsened and hastened when you have such a rampant lack of accountability for all these crimes and all the accomplices of these crimes, and so forth. And when you see whistleblowers like the woman at the Treasury, Natalie Mayflower Edwards, and your daughter Reality Winner, when you see them suffer so greatly, that of course deliberately sends a chilling effect to the rest of us of, "You could be next. Be careful what you say, be careful what you engage in, be careful who you book, be careful of what books you publish, be careful what you say, because you could be next." All of it is done intentionally. You don't have to carry out censorship by dragging someone out their home and beating them in the street. You can carry it out in all these other ways as the power structures of corruption seem to be clearly doing.

Billie Winner-Davis: I totally agree with what you're saying. It makes sense. Throughout the work of trying to build the support for Reality as well, we've kind of been censored by some groups. You know, some groups don't even want us to mention Russia. To me, that doesn't make any sense that there's so many different groups out there that have different agendas. But the media, too. I mean, it's just so weird that they just stay away from her story.

Andrea Chalupa: Yeah, no, it's obvious. I mean, when Assange was indicted for the Espionage Act, there was a huge rallying of U.S. Support for Julian Assange, and this is the Espionage Act, the same that put your daughter in prison, and you don't see anybody giving her that same amount of fanfare and all across the political spectrum rallying of support. You just simply see far more support for Julian Assange than you do Reality

Winner, even though he's anti-Semitic and he's a misogynist and an accused rapist by two women. All of that is to say that we're very frustrated by the hypocrisy here, and that your daughter's made to suffer when others are going free.

Billie Winner-Davis: I would just like to remind everybody that Reality Winner is an American, and she's a United States veteran who served and protected. She should be supported more than she is. There should be a rally for her in the United States, before we do that rally for someone who is not even an American citizen.

Andrea Chalupa: And worked against America's own democratic interests deliberately, was an important node in the whole coalition of corruption that helped elect Trump. Absolutely.

Sarah Kendzior: In terms of the legal process, is there any chance of an appeal or a pardon? Is that something you're seeking? How do you think this will play out?

Billie Winner-Davis: Because she accepted a plea deal, there's no chance of any kind of appeal on the case whatsoever. That is written into the plea deal. I just want to backtrack: as far as the plea deal, she was very much forced into this plea deal. She didn't see a way out, because of the rigor with which the government went after her. The court system in Georgia, they were so against her, you know? Her being denied bail and being held in that little county jail for over 16 months, the judge denying her legal team subpoenas. They requested to issue 41 subpoenas and the court denied 40 of them. How could they possibly defend her? The government made it clear to her and her team that they were going to seek the full 10-year sentence on her if they had to go to trial on this, and the best that they would offer her was this plea deal of 63 months prison, plus three years supervised release. So Reality was at a point where she didn't see any other alternative, and so she did take the plea deal. She changed her plea to guilty and she accepted this sentence, which was approved by the court. In that, she's not entitled to any kind of appeals whatsoever, and she's going to be under restrictions for the rest of her life. I know people have made comments out there that it's okay, she'll be rich after this, she can write a book, there'll be a movie, there'll be all these things that she can make money on. You know, Reality Winner is not allowed to make any money off of her case. She will not be allowed for her entire life to benefit from her case and neither will her family. Any children, grandchildren that she has, they're even written into the plea agreement as being forbidden from benefiting from this case. So the government really, really went after her in so many different ways that you don't see in other cases. What we have available to us, is we do have available the clemency and pardon process, which we are looking at doing, and clemency basically is asking for her release, a commutation of her sentence. She is eligible for that at this time because she's already served a third of her sentence. We're a bit concerned right now whether or not the Department of Justice will even look at that, because recently, in the month of May, they had a big award ceremony where they gave out awards to the people who were involved in the Reality Winner sentence, and they actually gave out awards to these people for securing the harshest sentence for Reality Winner. Looking at that, we don't feel like the Department of Justice right now will even consider clemency, and so we're kind of waiting on that, but we will be doing that. We are seeking attorneys to try to do that process for her and some other things as well. Then at some time in the future, we really would like to see a pardon. I don't know if we'll get a pardon, especially with this administration, but I think sometime in the future, another administration will look at this and will give her a full pardon that will restore her rights. Probably the most insane thing about this is Reality Winner at this point will never be able

to vote in the United States again. The insanity of that! You know, she was protecting her vote, but she will never be able to vote unless she receives a pardon.

Andrea Chalupa: We don't want her to feel forgotten. We want her to feel that her sacrifice was worth it, because as Jennifer Cohen, the election integrity expert, wrote, there was a difference that came out after Reality took a stand and did what she did. You did see, it was a lightning bolt moment, as I've said a couple of times so far in this episode, it's a lightning bolt moment what your daughter did. So Jennifer Cohen put together this great thread on Twitter which we'll link to in the show notes on our Patreon page for this episode for people to read, saying that there was a turn towards taking a stronger stand against Russia, and that it's hard to imagine that your daughter's sacrifice, her bombshell of an account that forced everyone to pay attention, didn't contribute to that.

Andrea Chalupa: So we want to thank her for what she did, and her bravery, and refuse to allow her to be censored by the House, an American Committee, that seems to be so prevalent in our culture and our media and government today. We absolutely hold her to a very high esteem, and we don't care what experts on either side of this issue say, because she's a young woman, she's idealistic, and what she did was just a simple act to try to inform the public of how serious the election hacking by the Kremlin was in 2016. Since she did that, we have found out, finally, from Mueller and other sources, that yes, it was widespread in all 50 states, and that of course raises the question again and again, what else is there to come out on election hacking in 2016 and all the years that have followed, because nothing has been done to address this in the way it needs to be addressed. And so the other question is, what can we do for her in prison? Can people send her books? Can we send her care packages? What do you think would lift her spirits?

Billie Winner-Davis: Yes, absolutely. She does receive quite a bit of mail, but it's always welcome. And so we do have her address on the website. The website is StandWithReality.org. Her address is there, and at times she does do requests for books and we'll post it there. But basically, she loves anything. I mean, she's very eclectic in her reading and her likes, and so she can receive books as long as they're from the publishing company or Amazon directly. We also, there's been times where some supporters have gotten together to assist with her college funding. She is taking college courses while there in prison, and right now she's taking four classes, so once she finishes those I'm sure that she's going to want to then continue. And so they do do fundraisers for that. You can write your representatives, let them know that you care about Reality Winner and her story, and ask them to at least acknowledge it, or to look into it, to review her case. We've had pushes for people to call the White House and ask the White House to release Reality Winner, on certain days. You can follow us on Twitter and on Facebook. All of that information is also on the website, StandWithReality.org.

Andrea Chalupa: Thank you so much. Sarah and I are really crushed by what you as a mother and a family have to go through, and we just thank you for all the support you're giving your daughter.

Billie Winner-Davis: Well, I appreciate you guys, and I appreciate the work that you are doing for our country and for us. I really appreciate you having me on and spotlighting my daughter's case.

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.