

Gaslit Nation Transcript

06 July 2022

“End of the Line”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/end-of-line-68699679>

[intro, theme music]

Sarah Kendzior (00:00:10):

I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of the best-sellers, *The View from Flyover Country* and *Hiding in Plain Sight*, and of the upcoming book, *They Knew: How a Culture of Conspiracy Keeps America Complacent*, which is available for pre-order now, so please go do that and will come out on September 13th. I'm also gonna have some tour information coming out for you soon, so stay tuned for that.

Andrea Chalupa (00:00:36):

Yay! I'm Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker and the writer and producer of the journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones*, about Stalin's genocide famine in Ukraine. Please watch it to understand what Putin is currently doing to Ukraine with his genocide and the ongoing Holodomor 2.0 that he's carrying out there. And this is Gaslit Nation- [laughs]

Sarah Kendzior (00:01:03):

-a podcast covering corruption in the United States and rising autocracy around the world, and we keep telling you everything that you need to know and do not want to hear and we're gonna have even more of that. Do you wanna tell them about our special live taping coming up?

Andrea Chalupa (00:01:21):

So Sarah and I just had a three-month break where we ran an important series called-

Sarah Kendzior:

Gaslit Nation Presents... Rising Up from the Ashes: Cassandras and Other Experts on Rebuilding Democracy. And you can go to our Twitter account, @gaslitnation, it's all one word, and there's a long thread of all the episodes connected. So you can catch up on that, catch up on the predictions of other prescient people whose warnings went unheeded. So, anyway, go on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:01:56):

This was essential to everything that is going on currently in America, giving insight into the long game that the aspiring fascists and the actual fascists have been playing against our democracy and what to do about it. It was remarkable for the way it was pre recorded, we had episodes recorded in December and January, and yet those episodes were still fresh in terms of hitting the nerve of the news cycle at the time. [We had Imani and Jessica](#) of [BoomLawyered](#) talking about the long game of taking away abortion rights and what comes next after they take away our abortion rights. What does it all mean? And then that was followed with an incredible interview with Anne Nelson ([Part 01](#), [Part 02](#)), who was talking about all the... The author, Anne Nelson, of *The Shadow Network*, looking again at the big far-right network that has been building over decades to get us to this point.

Andrea Chalupa (00:02:54):

She was building off of all the gaslighting and all of the, not just the religious powers in America that have united to take away our rights and our democracy, but the big business like the oil corporations that are pushing this as well. And then [we had Chase Strangio](#) of the ACLU, who was a lawyer representing a landmark gay rights case in front of the Supreme Court. He is trans and he's working hard to try to protect trans rights across America. We ran an interview with him just days after Bill Maher did a horrific, inhumane, dehumanizing monologue on his show going after Chase. And so on and so on. It just... our episodes kept, even though they were pre recorded—as we mentioned—months in advance, they kept landing right with the news cycle.

Andrea Chalupa (00:03:42):

This really was a series featuring real life Cassandras. How did Sarah and I have that foresight to know who to feature in this series on Cassandras? How did we know? Anyone can have this x-ray vision. Anyone can have this timing and the way you do it is, you know, when Sarah and I put together this series, we spent a lot of time saying, Okay, well, who's the most vulnerable? Who's the most vulnerable? The way you know where the news cycle is headed, the way you see where things are going is you always center who is the most vulnerable. And that's where we came from when we developed this series and that's what we all need to be focused on as all these horrific events continue to unfold: Who is the most vulnerable? Who will suffer the most? If you prioritize those people, those communities, you'll see where everything is headed, what the next moves are of all the forces were up against.

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:37):

To build off that series, we wanted to come together with our community of listeners, because we know we're sustaining each other through this. It's going to get worse before it ever gets better. To that point, we are going to be getting together, as promised, on August 9th, a Tuesday, at 11:00 AM Eastern for a live taping of Gaslit Nation. You can see live how the show comes together. It's pretty ridiculous. [laughs] So we'll send out a Zoom link for that where people can watch a live taping of Gaslit Nation followed by a live Q&A with the audience, whoever chooses to show up. And you can get access to that live taping of Gaslit Nation, you can get access to that Zoom link, by signing up on our Patreon to support the show at the Democracy Defender level and higher. That is essential for helping keep Gaslit Nation going. It's a lot of work. We have a dedicated team. We've all been together since the beginning, it's been a rough ride and our community is what sustains us. The questions we get asked in our regular Q&As, the messages we receive, the information we learn, the book recommendations, film recommendations, and so forth from the Gaslit Nation community when we come together has been extraordinarily meaningful and helps propel us forward as the wind beneath their wings. So we thank everyone for that.

Sarah Kendzior (00:06:01):

Yes, absolutely. And on that note, there was another reason why we had to take a three-month break. So you have some news. Do you wanna share your personal news?

Andrea Chalupa (00:06:14):

I reproduced! [laughs]. I had a baby. With everything going on, I was like, "You know what the world needs?! Another..." Yeah.

Sarah Kendzior:

[laughs]

Andrea Chalupa:

So I had the second coming [laughs]. I had the Messiah so everyone can just relax now. We're all gonna be saved. No, so I'm extremely grateful to announce the birth of a beautiful, strong baby girl. Her name is Chloe and Chloe means "the early buds of spring" and she was born in the early spring on April 16. The day that she was born, my mother pointed out that Chloe was born on Holy Saturday. For those who are people of the Christian faith—the actual Christian faith, right? The community organizer, feed the poor, the actual Christian faith, not this fake-

Sarah Kendzior (00:07:05):

Theo fascist.

Andrea Chalupa (00:07:06):

Yeah, not that. Not the Supreme Court majority version interpretation, but the actual New Testament of taking care of the poor, taking care of each other, inclusivity and all that. But in that real Christian faith, Holy Saturday is the day Chloe was born and it is the day between the crucifixion—Good Friday—and the resurrection—Easter—so it's that day in between when all is dark and quiet. And what Christians believe is happening on Holy Saturday is that Jesus Christ—the socialist, the community organizer, the feeder of the poor—goes down into hell and defeats death. And it's this wonderful story of life conquering death. Holy Saturday gave rise to the saying that even though all is dark and quiet, it doesn't mean that God's not hard at work. And we needed that. My family and I needed that symbolism, you know, with Chloe being born on Holy Saturday because we're watching the genocide that our families escaped, our families survived. We're watching the Soviet genocide, the Kremlin genocide yet again play out in Ukraine.

Andrea Chalupa (00:08:15):

A genocide under Stalin greatly impacted and traumatized my family and now it's creating an all new generation of trauma for Ukrainians. So it's been a very difficult time, as anyone can imagine, for my family. We're watching all the suffering over there. It's very personal to us, obviously. And just to have that symbolism of Chloe waltzing into the world as she did, very easy delivery, very easy birth and a very easy baby—knock on wood, so far—and for her to come in on Holy Saturday was what my family needed. We've had a lot of fun with her and we're grateful for her and we're hopeful, all of us, for the future. My hope remains. The springtime in my heart remains. As Albert Camus, the French philosopher, said, "Even in the darkest of winter, you can find the spring."

Andrea Chalupa (00:09:02):

And so we have. We have that. We do have that, and I have a lot of that to share on this show moving forward, because Sarah and I have had an intense maternity leave, the both of us. [laughs] We have, you know, along with the rest of you watching this horror unfold. And I wanna share also with *Roe v. Wade* being overturned, I was a high risk pregnancy. I had a doctor sit me down and say, "You could bleed to death. You have to be very careful. We might have to abort the baby to save your life." That was just a basic healthcare right that, God forbid, if things turned south for me in my pregnancy, that the choice would be made to save my life because this was a dangerous pregnancy at one point. Luckily I got through it, obviously. But my point is that having gone through the sleepless nights of going through a high risk pregnancy, it's a reminder that abortion is healthcare and what the Supreme Court did was against science. It was against medicine. It was superstitious. It was dark, medieval. And you see these

far-right idiots online saying, “Oh, you libtards, you snowflakes, if you don't like *Roe v. Wade*, if you say it's ‘your body, your choice’, what about all those vaccine mandates?” The vaccine mandates, just like abortion, are healthcare. The vaccine mandates and abortion are meant to save people's lives based on science, based on medicine.

Sarah Kendzior (00:10:34):

Also there aren't vaccine mandates. I mean, I just have to say that the majority of the country had no vaccine mandates. I would've been opposed, honestly, to a federal vaccine mandate because I don't trust the people doing that. But what it should be is a choice and you should make the sensible, pragmatic choice that protects your own body and protects the bodies of those around you, which is another fundamental difference between this kind of fatuous comparison that the right wing likes to make between vaccines and abortion. Your abortion is not contagious. Your pregnancy is not contagious. It doesn't affect people in your immediate vicinity and possibly scar them for life or kill them. It's just such a... It's a baseless comparison. I mean, I think there is a lot of validity to talking about our bodily autonomy, to talking about public health and who to trust, but the two cases and the power dynamic, the power structure, it's enormous.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:33):

And I say that coming from a state where now abortion is illegal. It's illegal in the case of incest. It's illegal in the case of rape. It's illegal in the case of an ectopic pregnancy, although now there are lawsuits and pressure on our attorney general—who signed away my rights to bodily autonomy that morning—to change that. So we'll see. And this was a long time coming in Missouri. We were already down to one abortion clinic by the time this happened. So this didn't surprise anybody.... Oh, wow. The tornado siren is going off as I say this. It feels very symbolic. [laughs] If you hear that, it's not nuclear war, just a tornado. But, you know, that's what it feels like, honestly, living in Missouri every day. It's waiting for a siren. It's waiting for a dark call, a tornado siren on the 4th of July. So anyway, you'll go on from there, but I'm sick of hearing that comparison because on one hand, outside of a few very big cities where people are compact, you know, next to each other on public transportation and all these kind of dangerous scenarios, there wasn't a vaccine mandate. There weren't people up in your face. There were people encouraging you to get it. And that's, you know, basically it. Anyway, go on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:12:42):

That wasn't the case in New York state, where we did have requirements, where you couldn't go into restaurants without showing your vaccine card, where employers had to make sure that the people working for them were vaccinated. So, we did have mandates, forms of mandates.

Sarah Kendzior (00:12:57):

But that's like a corporate thing. I mean, they had some of that in other cities, too. Like you couldn't go to restaurants, you couldn't go out to a concert, stuff like that.

Andrea Chalupa (00:13:04):

Having spent a lot of time in hospitals recently, there's massive turnover in the healthcare profession. There's massive turnover. I received incredible care, but the strain that healthcare providers are under, the nurses and the doctors, the cracks were showing. Even though I had an amazing team, you could just see this stress on people.

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

There was a nurse who was holding my hand when I was getting an epidural and she fainted. And the doctor pressed the panic button and a team of nurses rushing into my room were surprised to see that it wasn't me, the patient, that needed the emergency. It was the nurse assisting me. And when she was carried out, I was talking to other nurses and doctors and they were just saying, "It's really hard. There's a lot of turnover. We're overworked, we're stressed." And when I was asking for a doctor's referral later, my doctor, you know, that delivered me was saying, "It's hard for me to make a referral because there's so much turnover in our industry."

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa (00:14:04):

So New York state did have wonderful vaccine mandates, whatever you wanna call them, because our healthcare system was overrun. And so much of the disinformation that you're seeing against vaccines, against masks, that the whole culture war that the right has been waging, that's destroying lives. That's making it harder for our nurses and doctors to stay in their professions, given how highly trained they are and all the years of work they've put in to serve the public that way. It's putting their lives in danger. It's stressing them out. It's destroying their quality of life and it's a health risk to them, this far-right cultural disinformation. So my initial point is this: What we're up against is what has brought down great countries throughout history and it's religion, it's superstition, it's the dark ages being allowed to overrun facts, science and technology. And that's extraordinarily dangerous.

Andrea Chalupa (00:14:59):

Yes, we are headed towards a theocracy. You have this Catholic majority—this far-right Catholic majority—of the Supreme Court. You have a really strong and well organized coalition of Catholicism and of Catholics and Evangelicals in America that have united to power grab against our democracy and usher in a theocracy and to pass all these laws not based on sound principles, not based on data, not based on experts, not based on published articles that have taken a lot of scrutiny to make it into scientific journals, nothing like that. We're going back into the dark ages of superstition and it's going to be a dangerous time. And they can do it. And they're bent on doing it. And the big bellwether, what we're all sort of... In this horrible hunger games reality show that we're trapped in in America currently, one thing that we're all watching is the gerrymander case in North Carolina.

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa (00:15:58):

The fact that the Supreme Court agreed to hear that. It doesn't take many justices to agree to hear a case, but the fact that they agreed to hear that... What's going to happen is you're going to have the racist Barack Hussein Obama email forwards, right? The guys that are like the ignorant equivalent of a

Barack Hussein Obama email forward. You're gonna have Thomas, Alito, Amy Coney Barrett, who is the least qualified justice ever to come up for consideration in the Senate. You're gonna have those three vote for the North Carolina gerrymander case. Those three are a given. John Roberts and Gorsuch are the swing voters. They could very well side with the liberal justices because they don't want to further this Frankenstein monster. I think Brett Kavanaugh is spiteful. I think Brett Kavanaugh hates us and wants to get back at us. I think Brett Kavanaugh is tired of people protesting outside his home, so out of spite, he's going to just sell out American democracy even further.

Sarah Kendzior (00:17:03):

Well also, all of these judges that you've named are implicated in various plots against the American people, going back to the 2000 Bush versus Gore election, going back to multiple sexual assault and sexual harassment cases, going back to coverups of corruption, enabling of corruption. They need to solidify their own power for their own sake. You know, they are their own judges. They are their own juries. They want to remain removed from any kind of mechanisms of accountability, which is why they, as one of the three branches of government, have now asserted their dominance not only over the American people, not only over us in our right, but over Congress, over the executive branch and so forth. It's in their own self protection. I feel like the least that Brett Kavanaugh is probably worried about are a bunch of protestors outside his house.

Sarah Kendzior (00:17:58):

I think he's worried about his connections to the people who paid off his debt. I think Clarence Thomas is worried about Ginni Thomas and the fact that she's an insurrection. I think that Coney Barrett and Kavanaugh and Gorsuch are all worried about the fact that they were appointed by an illegitimate president who is a Kremlin asset tied to the mafia, and that if the full story of that is ever recognized as the absolute horror show that it should be—and the sad thing is when Andrea and I started this show four years ago in June, 2018, I think it was recognized as that. I think that this was somewhat of a mainstream opinion. People wanted investigation. People wanted to stop this in its tracks because the corruption was so brazen and blatant that we knew it would only get worse once they were able to pack the courts and purge agencies and take over the bureaucratic apparatus. That's what we warned you of four years ago and now it's happened. So some of this is their own self-protection and the protection of the transnational crime syndicate masquerading as a government, that was the Trump administration. And then, you know, it's only led to a government that wants to protect the institutions protecting that transnational crime syndicate. In that sense, the Biden administration is an extension as well as a failure. But anyway, go on.

Andrea Chaluo (00:19:24):

Yeah. No, I think in Brett Kavanaugh's case, I think there is misplaced hope that Brett Kavanaugh would like to see himself as a respectable member of society still inside the Washington DC beltway, that he would still like to preserve the Supreme Court as this lofty body instead of the deeply unpopular and hated and illegitimate Fox News Tucker Carlson farce that it's become under this majority, but I think the reality is that Brett Kavanaugh, just like Clarence Thomas, right? So I just wanna back up and just point out that Hillary Clinton, who went to Yale Law School with Clarence Thomas, came out recently to say that back then, when they were together at Yale, he was a petty, vindictive, resentful jerk and that's how he's going to rule. And that's how he has been ruling. When they overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Clarence Thomas in his opinion was like, And we're comin' after gay marriage, we're coming after contraception!

Andrea Chalupa (00:20:23):

They're just gonna keep going because there is that line of pettiness that's going to dismantle everything, just people that are just shooting from the hip with anger and ignorance. And I believe that Brett Kavanaugh falls in that category. He will forever be tainted, given his hearing where all this horrible stuff that he did—beer pong Kavanaugh with an attempted rape on a young woman coming forward, remembering the laughter—that was traumatizing. You had a lot of women reporters across media, mainstream and independent media, sharing their own horrific stories to back up the survivor who came forward to testify against Brett Kavanaugh. He'll never forgive us for that, right? We said that on the show when all that was happening years ago in 2018 and it's showing again in his rulings. There is something to be said about Brett Kavanaugh complaining relentlessly about the protests happening at his home.

Andrea Chalupa (00:21:19):

The justices are calling on Merrick Garland to do his job because there's a law, there's a federal law against going to a judge's home and harassing them and trying to coerce them into rulings. And Kavanaugh and other justices are saying, "Merrick Garland, do your job! Keep these people off my lawn!" And so I think what you're gonna see Kavanaugh do is rule in favor of the gerrymandering in North Carolina, hoping that the Republican Party will come to power in 2024 and take over the White House and stay in power because, you know, that would not only just spite us all and own the libs or whatever, but it would also ensure that you had the Republican Party—the party of authoritarianism, the party of state police, the party of Tom Cotton's op-ed in *The New York Times* saying, "Send in the military to destroy protests! Right?"

Andrea Chalupa (00:22:14):

That's what they want. They want to be able to rule from their lofty perch without facing any consequences, without having to face the people. With what they have planned for us, they wanna be able to stay cloistered and protected. How do you do that? How can you exist in this world as a deeply unpopular Supreme Court that keeps going against the will of the people, the vast majority of Americans. How can you do that and go to the supermarket and go to a restaurant and show your face in public? You do that by ensuring that a police state comes to power and stays in power and gets rid of anyone who dares to show up at your house. So I think that is, if you wanna see where things are going, do not place your hope in these people having some better angels they'll listen to or any sort of respectability they might wanna still cling to. No.

Andrea Chalupa (00:23:05):

They want to be able to live out their lives in comfort and in privilege and be cloistered from the rest of us as everything falls apart. But what they don't realize is that that's impossible. You simply cannot have that. It will not happen. But they're so isolated from the rest of us. The power structures in America are backfiring so greatly right now in terms of the stupidity inherently in structures; the Senate not having population representation so Wyoming's votes are much greater than a populous state like California, the electoral college being a slave state monument giving far too much weight to states like Wyoming. And I keep mentioning Wyoming because we just saw the Liz Cheney debate on stage where the people that she's up against in the Republican primary for Liz Cheney's seat in Wyoming, these guys are like a racist email forward on acid. They've completely lost their minds, or they're cynical enough to pretend they've lost their minds to appeal to a base that is so gerrymandered it's like the worst of the worst people have been corralled into these districts. And so now the Republican Party is held hostage by a Frankenstein of their own making, and that's only going to get worse by the shortsighted, petty Supreme

Court majority that's going to protect their own skin and their own minds by ushering in American theocracy. And no one is safe from it.

Sarah Kendzior (00:24:32):

And also, on that note, nobody is making an active move to protect us from this. This was all predictable. I mean, the Roe ruling in particular was leaked weeks in advance. So the Democrats or anybody else concerned with privacy, with surveillance, with civil liberty, with our bodily autonomy, of women and anybody who wants to have a child or anybody who doesn't want to be hunted down by a bounty hunter, anybody who wants to be free to leave their state border without concern, you know, they had plenty of time to prepare for this, even just rhetorically. And instead, the kind of things they prepared for should really make you think about whose side they're on. For example, Biden made a deal with Mitch McConnell that was supposed to be announced right after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*—this was pre-planned—to put in a pro-life judge in Kentucky.

Sarah Kendzior (00:25:25):

And when, I think it was *The Courier Journal*, the newspaper out of Louisville, when they broke that story, Democrats reacted in disbelief, harassed and threatened the reporter who broke the story, refused to accept that it was true because they couldn't believe that that Biden would do something like that, on top of having absolutely no plan to check an illegitimate, rogue, sadistic Supreme Court whose intentions were well known, even though that's literally his job. You know, that's part of his job as the executive branch. Instead, he is an accomplice to it. They'll refer to this “deal” with McConnell. It's not a deal, it's a collaboration, and that is the reality that we are in. You could put it politely and say, “Oh, well, Joe Biden is just not the man to meet the moment.” That is understating the gravity of the situation.

Sarah Kendzior (00:26:23):

You see the same thing with Pelosi and with the Democrats standing on the steps of Congress singing “God Bless America” as a theocracy strips our rights away. I remember the next day listening to Iron Maiden’s “Bring Your Daughter to the Slaughter” and thinking they really should have gone with that instead because the feeling of it, it’s so... I don’t know. I mean, everyone is reacting differently and I think it depends on where you live and how many of your rights have been taken away, but for me, you know, it was an immediate thing. And to see that as the reaction, knowing they had the lead time, knowing that, as Andrea mentioned earlier, we had had Imani Gandy and Jessica Pieklo from Boom Lawyered, experts on reproductive rights who’ve been warning of this for years, came on our show in I believe December to warn us of this outcome.

Sarah Kendzior (00:27:15):

We ran it in May, coincidentally, in the week that the leak happened from the Supreme Court and they predicted everything that would happen down to the line. And there was plenty of time to rebut it. They're not standing up for us. We need to stand up for each other. We've said that many times on this show, that grassroots power is the real power. How that power is applied now is going to differ somewhat depending on where you live because among the things that they're trying to do—the Republicans are trying to do—is create laws where if you merely tell people the location of a place you could get an abortion, or you have a website that provides that information, or you're giving somebody a ride, or you're giving somebody money, you will then be held legally liable. It is meant to intimidate you.

Sarah Kendzior (00:28:04):

This is a surveillance state structure that rivals or even surpasses that of any solidly authoritarian state in the world. These are the kind of conditions that people who I knew in places like Uzbekistan, you know, one of the most repressive dictatorships in existence during the time I was studying it 10-15 years ago, this is how they would have to communicate, which would be quietly, off the internet, within closed networks. And what that did was often give people the impression that they were fine with their own oppression, that they accepted it, that they were on the side of the government because people living in fear don't have the same right to free expression. Every day is a giant risk. And we live in this world where people measure things by tweets and likes and quantified social media engagement, and it ignores the community activism and the networks of support that exist locally on the ground and that are not necessarily visible.

Sarah Kendzior (00:29:14):

And so before you cast judgment on people living in "red states", which are actually, in reality, purple hostage states, states where people *have been* voting harder, where people *have been* voting for things like progressive ballot initiatives. For example, in my state, in Missouri, in 2018, we voted to get rid of dark money. We voted to expand Medicaid. We voted to legalize marijuana. We voted to raise the minimum wage. We voted to protect unions. And you know what happened? The state legislature, the far-right extremist Republican state legislature said, "Screw you. We're not doing any of that. Your votes don't count." And we are not unique in this way. This has been happening in states all over the country and it's happening with elections. Their new rule, which is a microcosm of what the Supreme Court is heading for for the 2024 presidential election, is to have your votes for a candidate in an election also no longer count, to have it be legal for a state legislature to just say, "We don't care what you want, we are overruling you." And if you don't live in a state like this, if you live in a state that traditionally has been more liberal, a state like New York, a taste of what it feels like also happened because of the Supreme Court when they passed a measure overruling state laws about gun control and making it a federal law, I believe, for conceal and carry to be allowed everywhere, regardless of what people in their own localities want. And it feels like shit. And then if you have people yelling at you on top of it, if you like, for example, lived in New York and a bunch of people were like, "hahaha, I guess you didn't vote hard enough. I guess you really wanted to bring back the Charles Bronson era of death wish."

Sarah Kendzior (00:31:06):

I mean, you know, it is just so much salt in the wound. So please research the conditions of any state that you're going to judge. Please research what citizens have been doing to try to protect ourselves from these mini autocracies, one, because we have actual strategies and two, because we are the victims in this, just as you are the victims in this, just as all of us are the victims of this. If you are an American, you are the victims of this. And I actually include the people who voted for Trump or the Republicans in this because guess what, guys? you're getting screwed, too. They do not care about you. They just want your money. They want your stuff. They want your rights and they're not gonna be there for you when you need them. So everybody is in trouble here. Everybody should be opposed to this incredible corrupt overreach of the Supreme Court, of a court that is indeed illegitimate.

Sarah Kendzior (00:32:00):

That is something that we should all be saying. We should not feel shy about saying this. We should not go into the sort of institutional rapture that is encouraged by little DNC troll bot farms, where they bastardize the words of scholars like Timothy Snyder. When Tim Snyder in his book, in *On Tyranny*, when he says things like, "Stand up for institutions, protect institutions", he means the institutions that haven't been corrupted. He means the institutions that are not oppressing you. He means the institutions, for

example, like the newspaper in Louisville that broke the story of Biden and McConnell's collaboration, the newspaper in a city that is heavily Black and that has Democratic representation fighting so hard to preserve reproductive rights while everyone spits on it and harasses the reporters and stereotypes it and refers to it as a "red state paper" and all this garbage that I deal with regularly over here in Missouri, too, where we've got a similar situation in St. Louis and Kansas City and whatnot.

Sarah Kendzior (00:33:03):

We need to band together or we will fall together and there's just no way around that. So please, you know, be like me and Andrea [laughs]. Andrea's living in Brooklyn, I'm living in St. Louis, Missouri. We are co-hosting a show. We are Americans. We are two American women supporting each other in a time of peril. And we can do this. We can work side by side because these differences that they like to put in as some sort of primordial designation like you're just red or you're blue and it's so simplified and, you know, if I moved 20 miles over to Illinois, I would somehow become a different person, it's bullshit. It's bullshit. It's meant to encourage secession. It's something that foreign operatives have longed for and have funded, in the case of Russia. It will weaken us as a country. It will weaken us as individuals. It will weaken your soul. I'm gonna be going off on this all year so I'm gonna shut up now because there's more of this where this came from and let Andrea take the wheel here.

Andrea Chalupa (00:34:05):

Yes. So over here in blue state heaven... Just kidding. [laughs] No, I'm just kidding. Which doesn't exist anymore because the Supreme Court.

Sarah Kendzior (00:34:13):

And Eric Adams. I'm sorry. You have Eric Adams, I have Tishaura Jones. I win, but go on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:34:17):

Yeah, in our conversation with Jessica and Imani of Boom Lawyered, we raised this point saying if there's anything that's gonna break up the US, it's the Supreme Court because they're ruling on their whims. There's zero rhyme or reason. There's no law of physics that oversees and unites and finds some sort of common ground with all of their rulings. They're swerving left and right. They're like a drunk driver court in terms of just trying to take our rights as quickly as possible and usher in a theocracy where a cult of greed and power can rule and be authoritarian. It's lawlessness. The law makes no sense. And when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned by this Catholic extremist majority, all the episodes of Gaslit Nation flashed before my eyes. All the warning signs were there and all the opportunities of hope were there.

Andrea Chalupa (00:35:11):

I do wanna just share sort of the bigger picture of where the danger lies and where the opportunities lie. The big danger is the seduction of breaking apart, of independence referendums, of New York state and California and Illinois and another so-called solidly blue state saying, "Enough of this. We don't want this freak show majority of a Supreme Court, this Tucker Carlson Supreme Court, to rule our lives anymore. We don't want these dangerous, irresponsible, ignorant, resentful rulings by the Catholic extremist Supreme Court to chip away at the quality of life in California and New York. We don't wanna go down in quality of life and become a Kentucky or a West Virginia because you guys are so corrupted and captured by greed. We wanna have our independence, so we're gonna have an independent referendum and we're gonna vote." Just like a Brexit, essentially. "We don't want people to look to the European Union."

Andrea Chalupa (00:36:11):

Well, look at the European Union. They're a bunch of different states that somehow operate independently and together where their interests align, so why don't we try to work towards that model? So, there's gonna be a lot of seduction on the left to try to break apart. And that's understandable, because people are frustrated because the founding fathers were inherently flawed in terms of the system that they left us. It was all geared towards capitalist interests, capitalist control, slave-owning control. That's why we have a Senate that protects the elite. The founding fathers, even the good ones, were terrified by a lot of the mobs that developed (the so-called mobs) of angry veteran soldiers that risked so much in the Revolutionary War to fight and weren't being paid, weren't being taken care of. And so you did have a fear of the so-called mob, of mob rule, when the architecture was being put together.

Andrea Chalupa (00:37:01):

So therefore you had this elitist control that was thrust into the heart and soul of the power structures of our nation. We see that now in the Senate, electoral college, and now the Supreme Court. It's unfair and we're now butting up against it. It's destroying American potential because it's going against the majority will and that, in turn, hurts the world because as we all know, America being the number one most powerful military in the world—by far—with military and financial influence across the world (less so across Africa where the former president, the Russian asset, allowed China and Russia to move in as the US pulled out under Rex Tillerson), but, you know, we're still America. We're still known in China, according to a friend from Beijing, we're known as “the boss”. We're still the number one superpower, right?

Andrea Chalupa (00:37:58):

Nobody comes close to us. We were always told that Russia had the second most powerful military in the world. We now see Russia's military, what a clown car that military actually is and how it's buckled under its own corruption. So America is the boss right now, currently, and if we fall under theocratic, authoritarian, Tucker Carlson, Marjorie Taylor Greene control, that's going to have major consequences for the rest of the world, wherever you live. You cannot escape it. So all you rich people trying to move abroad to escape this, I don't blame you for doing that by any means, a lot of people need to move because of, you know, family, career opportunities, their own health, maybe they have cheaper medical bills in another country that can treat what they have, right? Because bankruptcy is still being caused in America by healthcare.

Andrea Chalupa (00:38:47):

I just had a baby. It was insanely expensive and it was ridiculous what I had to pay for that. So I understand. I do sympathize with people that move abroad and it is a privileged position for the most part being able to do that. What I want you to all live with and take with you: You cannot escape America anywhere you go because of just how massively powerful this nation is. So if you cannot escape that, you need to fight like hell to protect American democracy, wherever you are, wherever you live. And if you are not American and you're listening to this show in some other country, you need to be extremely vigilant that the far-right virus does not take over your government in any way, shape or form. You need to nip it from the bud as soon as it rears its ugly head, because it will grow.

Andrea Chalupa (00:39:31):

If you laugh at it—because it is ridiculous and it is clown ca-ish—if you laugh at it, if you dismiss it, if you have media that tries to both sides it, that's a recipe for disaster, as we've learned the hard way here in the us. The other thing people have to understand about the seduction of breaking apart as the United States is that, look at the lesson of Ukraine. Geography is destiny. Ukraine was a vibrant democracy with an impressive economy, being one of the leaders in IT in the world and being a really interesting country with a lot of diversity—cultural diversity, language diversity—and a welcoming refuge for dissidents across the region, and a growing LGBTQ community that was inspiring the region and so forth. Look at what happened to Ukraine. Ukraine suffered by simply being a neighbor of a mass murdering mafia state, Russia. What do you think is going to happen to us in the US if we break away from Kentucky, Mississippi, Texas, and all these other states, and they become independent nations that could enter into foreign treaties with other countries like Russia, like Saudi Arabia? Well, states like Texas and Kentucky and West Virginia, they're gonna become failed states, just like Putin's Russia. They're going to suffer greatly with a massive amount of unemployment and poverty and a big disgruntled population, and they're going to have no way to vote their way out of that. They're gonna become authoritarian states like Russia. And what does Russia's leadership do in order to survive the weight of their disastrous corruption and war against the Russian people? They find a scapegoat. The scapegoat they have are the so called Nazis: the Jewish Nazi president in Ukraine. They find a scapegoat. They create wars in order to distract from Russia being a failed state. Kentucky, Mississippi, Texas, they're going to create scapegoats.

Andrea Chalupa (00:41:31):

They're going to create wars against states like New York. I want to add, also, it's going to be in the best interest of our adversaries—Russia and Saudi Arabia and China—to supply weapons of war to states like Texas because they're gonna want an active war zone here in the United States. They're gonna want us killing each other. Why would they want that? Because if the US was strong, peaceful, united, and powerful, we could be a lot better at holding the terrorist regimes accountable. That's why they're always trying to go after the European Union and break up the European Union, because the European union is a body of accountability, of reforms, of going against not just rogue actors, terrorist states like Russia, but also going up against corporate greed and the big corporate giants like Apple and Google and so forth. So it's in the best interest of the worst evil on this planet to have America be weak and at each other's throats and destroying each other. And if we break apart as a nation, then you're gonna have these bad actors funneling weapons of war and furthering the flames of war, and next thing you know, we have a civil war and we're destroying each other. And it's going to last for decades. The average civil war lasts eight years and leads to hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of displaced people. So, no. Don't fall into the trap of secession.

Sarah Kendzior (00:42:52):

And in all the states you're mentioning, people are already feeling the effect of autocracy. People are already under threat. Texas has the largest Black population of any state in the country, has one of the largest Latino populations. Mississippi is also another state with, I think, a near majority Black population and so it's real interesting to me when I see rich white people from the North, just being like, “Oh, let them secede” because what you are saying is that you are fine with the abuse of vulnerable, marginalized communities. This also includes LGBT communities who are also under threat from new state laws. You are saying to people who, despite your fantasies, do not have the money to move and also *should not be asked to move*. You should not be asking people to abandon their families, their communities, their jobs, and just uproot themselves, particularly when you are talking about the Black American South.

Sarah Kendzior (00:43:47):

Southern American culture is Black culture. You are asking people to abandon a region that they helped shape, who predominantly shaped. The music, the food, all the little reasons you like going to the South were made possible by the contributions of Black Americans. The civil rights movement that everyone is like, "Oh, just emulate that. And it'll take a few decades and we'll be fine." That came out of the South. All these movements that you venerate, all this American stuff you love, that is the South. And the North has made wonderful contributions here, too. I don't wanna sound like I'm being divisive in this. I'm just asking you to think about who actually lives there. Who really lives in Houston? Who really lives, you know, in El Paso? And honestly, who really lives in California? Oh, look, it's the largest group of Republican voters in the country. California, just like every other state, is a purple state. It is a mix of people. Every state across the country has this dynamic and what it comes down to are state legislatures and whether those state legislatures have overruled the will of the people through gerrymandering, dark money, voter suppression, intimidation of poll workers. If you are for "vote harder" or "vote them all out", those are the things you need to be focused on. You need to be asking, Why is Louis DeJoy still there, probably preventing people from voting by mail again? Because that's why he was installed by Trump in the first place. You need to think, Okay, if people are gonna get out and vote in massive numbers, what threats will they face in the polls? Will the polls still be there?

Sarah Kendzior (00:45:29):

Will there be a place to vote? How will people with no transportation be able to show up? There are very practical things you could do to help this situation, but spitting on the South and making sweeping generalizations, whether they're about North, South, East, or West, whether they're about "red states" or "blue states", it doesn't reflect reality. And finally, my final point on this, I'm just gonna read a little tweet from Jason Kander, who ran for Senate and actually has a wonderful new book coming out. We're gonna have him on the show to talk about it. But he ran for Senate and I happily voted for him in my state of Missouri back in 2016. It was probably one of the most enthusiastic votes I ever cast, and I'm not known for my enthusiasm.

Sarah Kendzior (00:46:11):

Anyway, he had a warning about the guy who is currently my Senator, Josh Hawley, the insurrectionist. And so Jason wrote, "If you're considering moving out of a red state, just know that people like Josh Hawley are counting on it. Here he is predicting liberals in red states worried about their daughter's futures will move away and conservatives in blue states will stay for their daughter's sake." And then the quote from Hawley follows: "I would predict the effect is going to be that more and more red states are going to become more red, purple states are going to become red, and the blue states are going to get a lot bluer. I would look for Republicans as a result of this in time to extend their strength in the electoral college and that's very good news for those of us who want to see Republican presidents elected and want to see the Supreme Court remain conservative so I think this will have a pretty dramatic effect on American politics as we go forward."

Sarah Kendzior (00:47:00):

This isn't wrong in terms of what it's predicting, but you have to see that it's deliberate. This is the culmination of a plot and they want a mass relocation of people. They want you to surrender in advance. And again, just like Andrea is not judging the people who are going abroad out of fear in this situation, I'm not judging people who are afraid for immediate concerns and they want to leave, like if you're in a gay marriage, if you're in any kind of position where you feel your life is in the line, of course I

understand wanting to leave and leaving. This is not a judgment of that, but it's this sort of encouragement from people with no skin in the game. I'm talking about millionaire white guys.

Sarah Kendzior (00:47:48):

I'm sorry, if you're looking at someone with a shitload of money, if you're looking at somebody who's got a passport to a foreign country and they can just pick up and leave whenever the hell they want and have their second citizenship (I'm thinking of a particular person), when you're looking at people who are literally registered foreign agents telling you to move out of your "red state" that's actually a gerrymandered hostage state instead of show compassion for the people who live there, instead of fight for the rights that you are guaranteed, be suspicious of those sorts of calls. Those are not statements of compassion for others. Those are not statements of patriotism and loyalty to a **United** States of America. That is proto secessionist rhetoric wrapped up in a liberal gloss, so watch out for it and like Andrea said in the beginning of the show, look for who is most vulnerable and protect them. If you let that be your moral guide, you will make good decisions going forward.

Andrea Chalupa (00:48:45):

Yeah. So let's talk about opportunities because I'm always reminded by this interview I had with a member of Pussy Riot and a director of the Belarus Free Theater and what they were stressing to me is that "you still have time in America". We're not a totalitarian state like Russia and Belarus. There's still opportunity. You know, Stacey Abrams is still at it. Stacey Abrams had a 10-year strategy. She planted 10 years of seeds that bore incredible fruit in the 2020 election with turning Georgia blue. I take my marching orders from people that are on the front lines of doing the wonky, all-important, grassroots power work like Stacey Abrams, like Amanda Litman of-

Sarah Kendzior (00:49:32):

Run For Something.

Andrea Chalupa (00:49:32):

Runforsomething.org. And the state's project, all the wonks, all the community organizers. Give to those groups. Give to the good Democrats in Congress who show up for you. Don't give to the Party, give to the individuals that you like in Congress, that you believe in, who are speaking for you, who are fighting for you. Give directly to the candidates, give directly to the grassroots organizations that are planting important seeds of change and much-needed progressive infrastructure. The central party blew opportunity after opportunity that got us to this point. It's criminal, what they did. That's not me trying to discourage anyone. That's just a fact. It takes two to tango, right? We got here because the Republicans had a long game. They're extremely well organized and disciplined and determined and there was nothing equivalent of that on the Democratic central governing party side. As a result and in reaction to the dereliction of duty from the central Democratic Party, you've had a massive number of wonderful grassroots groups that have sprouted up.

Andrea Chalupa (00:50:41):

Sure, many of them are working in partnership and in conjunction and, and there's overlap between the Democratic Party itself, but for the most part there's been a lot of leading from the outside, right? Stacey Abrams even wrote that brilliant book, *Lead from the Outside*. So that's the spirit we need to take this in, which is grassroots power is the most reliable power we have left. When you're feeling angry, when you're feeling demoralized, if you are a non-white person, if you are an LGBTQ person and you're

experiencing any microaggression living your life out in the world because some jerk now feels empowered by the Tucker Carlson super majority in the Supreme Court to treat you like less than a person or be disrespectful to you, you know, those microaggressions that many marginalized communities experience on a daily basis, every time you come across that, make a donation to a member of Congress or a person in your local community that is fighting for you, that you trust, that you believe in, a grassroots group or Stacey Abrams' group or Black Voters Matter, just any grassroots group that is doing the damn work that we need right now because that work is extremely important and it matters. And it's making a difference.

Andrea Chalupa (00:51:48):

If you look at the kids that launched the March for our Lives—the Parkland movement—that represent the generation of children that are growing up with metal detectors in their schools and mass shooting drills, things that other kids around the world do not have to live with, those kids are the ones that are dedicating their lives to a better America, to rebuilding our democracy, and they're the ones that are pointing out that we are winning gun battles in state governments across the country. We are getting better representatives inside the system, better laws on the books. We are. There are important changes that are being made and we have to continue to chip away at that. So whenever I feel demoralized, I amplify a member of Congress or a local public servant that I believe in, that I trust, and I make a donation.

Andrea Chalupa (00:52:35):

When I come across a microaggression by some jerk out in the... Like the other day I was at a community pool in Virginia and I'm standing there, there's plenty of room around me, but some white guy enters the pool and walks directly at me, so I had to move out of his way. And I did it because I was sleep deprived and I wasn't thinking. And then afterwards, I'm like, "He wouldn't have done that if I were a man," a white man, especially, right? He would not have done that. He did that to me because I was a woman and I had to get out of the man's way. It was the strangest thing. Wanna know what I did in reaction to that? When I finally caught up to what had just happened, I made a big fat donation for people I want in Congress to represent my rights, to fight for my rights and my family.

Andrea Chalupa (00:53:14):

So that's how you have to respond to the situation. Stay in the fight, stay engaged, keep fighting and show up for your community and fight like hell for your community and the people that you want to have your back. It is still a coalition that we need in order to overrun these guys, and we can and we will do it. And we will continue to chip away at them. Why is that? Because one of the opportunities is the changing demographics, the browning of America. The population is changing and white people will soon be a minority, which is why these white people destroying our democracy are so terrified right now and going to all these extreme measures. They're trying to stack their deck to be as strong as possible for when the browning of America comes. That's what this is all about, right?

Andrea Chalupa (00:53:55):

They know ultimately time is not on their side and that the population will overrun them. We saw that with the big redistricting that was going on. Remember, there's a big fear that Republicans were going to be able to gerrymander their way into controlling the House in the 2022 midterms. There's a big fear that was going to happen, that the redistricting battle would automatically—automatically—give Republicans the House without even the election being held. That did not happen because of changing

demographics. We're already seeing the changing demographics come into play against the Republican Party. The Republicans were limited in how power-grabbing, how aggressive they could be in the redistricting battle because of the changing demographics. And so that gave us hope going into these midterms. We're already seeing that. Now, as Stacey Abrams will say, demographics are not destiny. You still need to do the work.

Andrea Chalupa (00:54:50):

You still need to build the progressive infrastructure on the ground and that's where the grassroots power comes in. That's where amplifying important voices comes in. Another opportunity is direct action. When you see the abortion war, there's a lot of things that you could do. People on the ground could pay attention to protests and other things that the anti reproductive rights groups are doing and counter those through simple acts, like if you see that there's an anti-abortion movement protest in your county, in your state, follow the logistics on their Facebook page. See where they're telling people to park and then get your group together and take up all those parking spaces on the morning of their event. Nothing will disrupt the ant hill like taking up all the parking, right? It's amazing how many things in life are determined on where you're able to park.

Andrea Chalupa (00:55:43):

And I'm taking that piece of direct action from an amazing thread we'll link to in this week's show notes on abortion providers that took up a parking lot on the day of a protest and were able to create a peaceful day at their abortion clinic by just taking up the parking of where the fascists plan to meet. Okay? So we'll link to that thread and you can read through what I mean by direct action. So there's always direct actions that are very simple but effective that you can take in your community. The third thing is I wanna talk about brain drain. I was in a supermarket in Brooklyn and I heard an advertisement from the state of Ohio calling on New Yorkers to move to Ohio and all the great opportunities in Ohio. "Wouldn't it be great if you could come relocate to Ohio? We need you. Come to us."

Andrea Chalupa (00:56:28):

Why would Ohio advertise for New Yorkers to move there? Because they desperately need talent. Their corporations need talent, their universities need talent. They need to build up their local industry and you can only do that with brains. What's going to happen with these draconian, superstitious abortion laws—you know, Ohio being a state that just outlawed abortion—if you are a university professor and you have a job offer from an Ohio university or a Michigan university (where abortion is still legal) and you have daughters, you have kids, where are you gonna go? You're not gonna take the job in Ohio. You're gonna go to Michigan because it ensures a better quality of life, including the rule of law, including health care, including, respecting science and facts and data. So you're gonna go to Michigan for the quality of life. So states like Ohio and Texas and so forth that are banning abortion, they're going to experience a brain drain.

Andrea Chalupa (00:57:32):

Their corporations, their universities are gonna have an extremely difficult time attracting talent which is going to make them significantly less competitive over time. They're going to feel that pain. And what's going to eventually happen if they're smart—which they're not, unfortunately, as we're seeing—they are going to experience greater economic vulnerabilities and instability because of their own attack on their quality of life in those states. No amount of ad campaigns by Ohio trying to recruit talent will be effective against their own abortion laws. So that's another thing. Another opportunity that we have is the fact

that anytime you overstep by doing something stupid, like overturning *Roe v. Wade*, you radicalize people, right? You radicalize people. And what you're seeing is a new generation of people coming up, voters that are already radicalized by all their TikTok activism. These are kids that are growing up with trans rights, trans kids being perfectly normal to them, gay rights being perfectly normalized to them.

Andrea Chalupa (00:58:37):

They're growing up seeing pop stars like Billie Eilish, who is progressive in the way she presents herself. She's not out there like a bimchette flaunting her naked body everywhere. No, she's wearing sweats and she's filling up stadiums, right? And so there's a new generation of kids that are coming that have a lot more interesting moral compass than we've seen from any previous generation, even the millennials. The K-pop generation, right? Which shows that a greater curiosity, greater interest in the world beyond their own borders, a more accepting spirit. And these guys are gonna come of age and vote in very large numbers, and they're gonna run for office, and they're gonna protect their communities because this is a very communal generation, as we're seeing through their activities on social media and so forth. And they're gonna really tilt the balance of power.

Andrea Chalupa (00:59:26):

You see a lot of incredible stories of this new generation coming up, being on the front lines of interesting ideas and solutions already, including what we saw with organizing March for Our Lives and what a big movement that has become and how that movement has grown into running for office, passing laws and so forth. Even young Republicans' kids that we're seeing are polling to show that they believe in climate change. They trust the science, they wanna live on a habitable planet. They don't wanna be displaced by climate disasters. So the old guard of the Republican Party that has spent decades going full fascist is going to be eventually washed out by changing demographics, by the young generation of voters that are coming up that are a lot more inclusive and morally smarter than the rest of us.

Andrea Chalupa (01:00:13):

And then the third is their own deeply unpopular rulings are going to radicalize Americans to the point that it's going to ignite greater and greater grassroots movements that are going to push back against all this. So have faith that those are genies that have been let loose from the bottle that no amount of Koch money can control because they're unpredictable. That's why you have this deeply cornered and fearful and aggressive far-right movement that's fighting right now like a cornered dog. They see the writing on the wall and they see that the numbers are against them and that ultimately, generationally, they're going to be overwhelmed. It's going to be a nightmare battle. There's gonna be a lot of moments of horror until, eventually our side does win and overwhelm them and it's not going to happen without us staying vigilant, staying engaged in the fight and supporting the good people, the good public servants who have the track records that prove, that show that they're on our side, that they're one of us, that it's their families lives that are on the line. And they realize that, and they know that and they're acting like we're all in this together because we are. And so we are gonna get through this ultimately. We just have to fight for that day to come.

[theme music - roll outro credits]

Andrea Chalupa (01:01:33):

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

Sarah Kendzior (01:01:38):

We want to encourage you to donate to your local food bank, which is experiencing a spike in demand. We also encourage you to donate to Oil Change International, an advocacy group supported with the generous donation from the Greta Thunberg Foundation that exposes the true cost of fossil fuels and facilitates the ongoing transition to clean energy.

Andrea Chalupa (01:01:57):

We encourage you to help support Ukraine by donating to Razom for Ukraine at razomforukraine.org. Do not donate to the Red Cross because your money will never reach Ukraine for the most part. Please donate locally, and Razom for Ukraine is an organization that works there on the ground. We also encourage you to donate to the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian relief organization helping refugees from Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan. Donate at rescue.org. And if you want to help critically endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry, donate to the Orangutan Project at theorangutanproject.org and check the products you buy for palm oil and don't buy them anymore.

Gaslit Nation is produced by Sarah Kendzior and Andrea Chalupa. If you like what we do, leave us a review on iTunes. It helps us reach more listeners. And check out our Patreon, it keeps us going.

Sarah Kendzior (01:02:50):

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

Andrea Chalupa (01:03:02):

Original music on Gaslit Nation is produced by David Whitehead, Mark Vissenberg, Nik Farr, Demian Arriaga, and Karlyn Daigle.

Sarah Kendzior (01:03:08):

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

Andrea Chalupa (01:03:15):

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