

Gaslit Nation Transcript

13 July 2022

“Rattled”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/rattled-69014137>

[clip from January 6th Committee Hearing on July 12th, 2022]

Jamie Raskin (00:00):

Mr. Van Tatenhove, in the run up to January 6th, Stewart Rhodes publicly implored President Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act, the 1807 law that allows the president to call up militias to put down a rebellion against the United States, and I want to get your thoughts about this in the context of your prior relationship with Stewart Rhodes. I understand that you had conversations with Rhodes about the Insurrection Act. Why was he so fixated on that and what did he think it would enable the Oathkeepers to do?

Jason Van Tatenhove (00:31):

Well, I think it gave him a sense of legitimacy, that it was a path forward to move forward with his goals and agendas. I think we need to quit mincing words and just talk about truths, and what it was gonna be was an armed revolution. I mean, people died that day. Law enforcement officers died. There was a gallows set up in front of the Capitol. This could have been the spark that started a new civil war and no one would have won there. That would've been good for no one. He was always looking for ways to legitimize what he was doing, whether by wrapping it in the trappings of, “It's not a militia, it's a community preparedness team. We're not a militia, we're an educational outreach group. It's a veteran support group,” but again, we've gotta stop with this dishonesty and the mincing of words and just call things for what they are. You know? He's a militia leader. He had these grand visions of being a paramilitary leader and the Insurrection Act would've given him a path forward with that. The fact that the president was communicating, whether directly or indirectly messaging, you know, kind of... That gave him the nod. And all I can do is thank the gods that things did not go any worse.

Sarah Kendzior (02:17):

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.

Andrea Chalupa (02:32):

I'm Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker, and the writer and producer of the journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones* about the Kremlin's genocide in Ukraine.

Sarah Kendzior (02:43):

And this is *Gaslit Nation*, a podcast covering corruption in the United States and rising autocracy around the world and we will be covering both of those today. If you're a regular listener of the show, you'll know that we were off for a few months and ran an interview series which you should check out, the Cassandra series. Now that Andrea has had her baby and is recovering well, we are back and ready to do recaps of all of the horrific things that happened during our absence. So today, the main ones that we're going to cover are the January 6th Committee hearings, which we really haven't covered much on our regular show yet since they happened in June. And Andrea is going to catch you up with everything

happening in Ukraine. So get ready, 'cause this will be another lighthearted and fun-filled hour for you all. So...

Andrea Chalupa (03:39):

Also, big news, Sarah and I are going to attempt the first ever live taping of *Gaslit Nation* on Tuesday, August 9 at 11:00 AM Eastern. So if you wanna sign up to get access to that and stick around for an audience Q&A afterwards, you can sign up at the Democracy Defender level or higher on Patreon, where you'll also get access to our weekly Patreon-only bonus shows, otherwise known as the Early Show, and that goes up every Tuesday afternoon. We run an early show of *Gaslit Nation*. If you can't wait to hear our melodic voices, you can get it early in the day. Alright, Sarah, take it away.

Sarah Kendzior (04:24):

Alright, here we go. It has now been 18 months since the January 6th seditious attacks, the culmination of an attempted coup by Trump and his crime cult to hold onto power. It has been 18 months—a full year and a half—and none of the criminal elites who orchestrated this attempted coup have been brought to justice. The organizers of the January 6th events, Trump, Bannon, Stone, Flynn and the rest, walk free and have been using this year and a half to continue their attack on America's freedom and sovereignty, backed by a vast and violent far-right network that extends around the world. We were in terrible danger on January 6th. We were in terrible danger before January 6th. And we remain in terrible danger now. We, the people, are battling a mafia state. The main reason we have remained in terrible danger is because of the refusal of institutions to enforce accountability.

Sarah Kendzior (05:27):

And the reason institutions have refused to enforce accountability is because they have become rotted and deeply corrupt. How this corruption manifests varies from institution to institution and from individual to individual, but whether you blame negligence or malice, you have to acknowledge that at this point, complacency is complicity. It is one thing to try and fail. It is another thing not to try at all. The DOJ under Merrick Garland has not even tried to hold the criminal elites accountable and folks close to the DOJ are finally publicly admitting that he is in fact refusing to go after those criminal elites, that he is only focusing on low level actors, and time is running out. So that brings me to the January 6th Committee, which at least is trying to do *something*. I have some reservations about this committee, which I'm gonna get to, but I wanna say first that public hearings about corruption and state crime are always a good idea.

Sarah Kendzior (06:34):

The time lag between when the January 6th attack took place, combined with the propaganda blitz from the Right and inertia from the Democrats in the interim, has greatly marred collective memory. So simply having the hearings and revisiting the events of the day jolt the American public back to the reality that they witnessed with their own eyes, a reality that they have been coerced to forget. But the ideal time to have hearings about a violent attempted coup is immediately after the violent attempted coup, and those hearings should not stop until the public is given full information and the perpetrators held accountable. I should not have to explain that, but I do because the lack of urgency has been normalized ever since the second impeachment of Trump which, during its brief run, was skillfully managed by Jamie Raskin and that impeachment was abruptly terminated when the House Democratic leadership barred calling witnesses. Think of all the testimony that you heard throughout June and think how much more meaningful that testimony would've been back then.

Sarah Kendzior (07:45):

And yes, it would've been possible. The second impeachment hearings were run on public domain information because all of this took place in plain sight. So the United States is unusual in two ways: We managed to vote out an aspiring autocrat, which was a tremendous achievement of the American people, people who worked tirelessly during a deadly pandemic and then were nearly thwarted by a violent cabal who sought to discard our votes and murder members of Congress. The United States is also unusual in that the incoming administration's response to this incredible threat was not swift in urgent action, but allowing seditionists to roam free *and serve in Congress* while running out the clock. So far, the January 6th Committee has basically told us very little that folks paying attention did not already know, but it's still a worthwhile endeavor. They are leaving a record for history and they are spurring renewed calls for justice in the present, both of which are positive developments.

Sarah Kendzior (08:51):

However, one of my concerns is that the record they are creating will be selective. I'm concerned that it will omit the broader context of criminality that led to both Trump's election in 2016 and to the January 6th events themselves. We've covered that history of criminality extensively, including in our *Gaslit Nation* Capitol attack preview special that we released on January 5th, 2021. We were able to do that because operators like Roger Stone announced their plans well in advance. In Stone's case, it was as far in advance as 2016, when he coined the phrase, "Stop the Steal" and announced that there would be a "bloodbath" if Trump was not deemed president. So far, there has been no mention of that long history by the January 6th Committee. They have the opportunity to change that pattern of omission and tell the public the whole truth, and there is a rumor that they're finally going to confront what Stone did and also what Flynn did today.

Sarah Kendzior (09:57):

I hope that that rumor is true. I should be clear: We're recording this at about 11 o'clock in the morning St. Louis time, Central Time, and so I guess we'll see what happens. I'm hoping that everything I just told you goes immediately out of date. The most dangerous framing of January 6th is that it was about one man and one day. This severely understates the threat. This was a violent attack organized by criminal elites who have been working for the demise of US democracy for over 40 years. Any attempt to limit this inquiry to Trump alone, instead of the criminal network surrounding him, means that this network will simply regroup and align around another candidate to pursue the same dangerous goals. And so now I'm going to discuss what I did not like about these hearings thus far. My first concern is that the hearings are being used for reputational rehab for dirty Republicans, including members of the criminal elite who enabled Trump. Corrupt Trump administration officials like Bill Barr are being portrayed not as accomplices but as witnesses, as if they did not spend their tenure violating the law to protect Trump and the GOP's goal of a one party autocratic USA. As we warned you back in December, 2020, Barr knew exactly when to leave before he would be held legally liable.

Sarah Kendzior (11:26):

This is how he got the name "the coverup general" back in the early '90s. Covering up crimes for Republicans and then covering up his own complicity with an institutionalist veneer is what Bill Barr does and there is no way that the January 6th Committee members do not know this history. So you have to ask why Barr's being depicted in this fashion instead of being held accountable for his own offenses in office. One reason may be Liz Chaney's desire to protect the broader Republican apparatus, but I'll get to her in a minute. Chaney is not alone in that goal. She's, in fact, accompanied by a prominent Democratic

operative. I want to remind everyone that the January 6th Committee hearings are being advised by Jamie Gorelick. She is Merrick Garland's best friend and mentor and one of the most corrupt lawyers in modern US history. She is known for her role in helping facilitate the intelligence failures that led to 9/11, and then went on to enable student loan scams, protect Big Oil, protect Big Tech, help opioid peddlers, help police torture squads...

Sarah Kendzior (12:37):

You know, this is the Forrest Gump of corruption. We've gone through the records many times in the past. I'll post those links in the show notes. It will horrify you. What's most relevant to the January 6th hearings is that Gorelick has a history of direct collaboration with Trump administration officials, including Bill Barr, with whom she wrote a 2013 *New York Times* op-ed saying that the government has the right to persecute journalists. I'm also going to observe that in addition to advising Garland and the January 6th Committee, Gorelick is the person who Joe Biden chose in May, 2022 to oversee the newly formed "Disinformation Governance Board"—whatever that might mean—and that the other person Biden chose is Michael Chertoff, a 9/11 coverup operative and war crime enthusiast from the George Bush administration. So we have two professional liars, torture advocates, and criminal coverup artists tied to 9/11 on a disinformation board.

Sarah Kendzior (13:39):

And you should maybe ask, why did that happen? I don't know. When I say you should ask, like, I really do want someone besides me to ask 'cause I'm tired of being the only one asking sometimes, especially on Gorelick. Anyway, back to the modern day: Gorelick also served as the ethics lawyer for Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump and she's the reason they made it into the White House, despite massive security clearance violations. She also did this favor for Rex Tillerson, despite his Kremlin ties. She is a lifelong protegee of Alan Dershowitz, another deeply corrupt lawyer who worked for Trump and for Jeffrey Epstein. So it's possible that Gorelick is the reason that Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump have also been presented by the January 6th Committee as witnesses instead of active enablers and participants in the criminal apparatus that made this attempted coup possible. Kushner's participation in the hearings was an attempt at rehabilitating himself.

Sarah Kendzior (14:38):

But honestly, I think it failed because he is so innately repulsive when he speaks that rehabilitation is impossible. Even the MAGA crowd finds him repellent so, you know, that may have backfired. But it doesn't really matter exactly because Kushner never got power legitimately anyway. He gets it through illicit back channel maneuvers and so you should be very concerned about the continued hesitancy of the federal government to investigate or prosecute Kushner, or even look into his illicit foreign ties with Saudi Arabia, Israel and various oligarchs abroad. You should investigate how he *did* get the power that he wields and you should be wary that Gorelick is advising the January 6th Committee and the DOJ, since it is in her own interest as the lawyer who got Jared and Ivanka into the White House to not tell the public the full story. I'm gonna discuss this more in a forthcoming episode, but Gorelick's role advising the January 6th Committee is reminiscent of her role on the 9/11 Committee, another committee that delayed, denied and dodged questions and put forth a selective narrative about a national tragedy. While working in the Clinton administration and the DOJ there, Gorelick created the wall between intelligence agencies that helped facilitate the 9/11 attacks.

Sarah Kendzior (16:04):

She then left in 1997 to take a job at Fannie Mae, only to be asked to consult on the side with the CIA shortly before the 9/11 attacks in August, 2001. Then after the attacks, she was put on the 9/11 committee, which many people objected to because they felt that she was a witness or even an enabler to intelligence failures, and they thought she should be testifying under oath instead of helping to run the hearings and control what information the public receives. We are seeing the same dynamic now with the same players, a gerontocracy of corrupt institutionalists who seek to protect themselves instead of their country. The only breaks in the gerontocracy tend to come from nepotism. Which brings me to Liz Cheney. Liz Cheney is being treated as a great hero of the Democrats due to her willingness to carry out a basic civic duty of investigating a massive attack on our national security and sovereignty. That she stands out for doing that showcases how terrible all the other Republicans are, but it doesn't change who Liz Cheney is.

Sarah Kendzior (17:17):

Cheney is a far-right extremist who has a history of stoking violence through rhetoric, including her claims that Democrats murder babies after they have been born, and there are videos of her claiming this all over her website. As the daughter of Dick Cheney, she likely is committed to making sure the scope of the January 6th Committee does not extend into the long history of illicit plots surrounding elections. For example, the 2000 election that gave us *Bush v. Gore* and the Brooks Brothers riot, which Roger Stone organized. And again, for members of the January 6th Committee who possibly are listening to this, please go down the long road of Roger Stone, no matter what it turns up. That is a road that you cannot wall off because he will simply return again. So I'm gonna wrap this up with a warning, which is that there is a new plan for our already broken two-party system.

Sarah Kendzior (18:14):

The plan is to have two parties. One, a batshit crazy MAGA party led by Trump or DeSantis that will bulldoze your rights. And the second one will be a far-right "respectable" party led by Liz Cheney that will also bulldoze your rights. They will call the Cheney party the Democrats and pretend that a creeping capitulation to a right-wing agenda is some kind of act of healing bipartisanship. You should note that the elevation of Cheney is coming at the same time progressives and even liberals within the Democratic party are being demonized by the conservative Democratic leadership, and it's also coming as centrist media outlets increasingly push far-right propaganda narratives. So watch out for this. When I mentioned this possibility on Twitter, someone wrote to me, "Liz Cheney is not becoming a Democrat." And I replied, "I agree. The Democrats are becoming Cheneys."

Sarah Kendzior (19:16):

The good news is that the vast majority of Democratic voters, as well as many elected Democratic officials, do not want that future. The bad news is that the US currently has a terrible track record of fending off minority rule. So Democrats, please do not let yourself become Cheneys. Operate out of principle, not out of fear. Serve the public who voted for you and voted for your pro accountability platform. The US got to this terrible point because officials gave a pass to crooked elites, cloaking themselves in a respectable veneer, allowing them to carry out a multi decade attack on American freedom. The Democrats still can choose a different path—an honest path, a path of justice and the preservation of our hard fought rights—and we will be watching what path to choose.

[snare drumroll SFX]

Andrea Chalupa (20:14):

Alright. Well ,thank you for that.

Sarah Kendzior (20:17):

I need a drum roll.

Andrea Chalupa (20:19):

[laughs] Well done.

Sarah Kendzior (20:19):

We need some sort of dramatic, Darth Vader noise.

Andrea Chalupa (20:22):

Exactly. So, I have a lot to say to that, because that was a lot. Okay. So I think you're absolutely right that with the dangers of this January 6th Committee even though, let's be fair by pointing out that you and I have been calling for the Democrats to use the House this way, by having hearings that lay out all the corruption and bring must-see TV witnesses-

Sarah Kendzior

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

-like we saw with Cassidy Hutchinson where everyone just froze. And it's been a ratings bonanza, just like you and I predicted it would be. This also underlines the point that the Democrats from 2018 to 2020 wasted two years—two years—not doing this, okay?

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

If they had done it sooner, because there were so many crimes, so many crimes that they could have covered.

Sarah Kendzior (21:12):

Well, we kept saying, "They gotta OJ the shit out of it."

Andrea Chalupa:

Exactly.

Sarah Kendzior:

Which was not the most graceful phrasing, but it's like, you know, make it compelling because the thing is, on the rare occasions that they did that, like when Michael Cohen testified.

Andrea Chalupa:

Right.

Sarah Kendzior:

Which was supposed to be the beginning of 81 different groups, individuals, organizations testifying, people were tuning in, people were horrified. And Michael Cohen, uh, you know, I, I don't like him. But I do appreciate that he; one, confirmed Trump is a crime boss; two, confirmed that Trump made him threaten a ton of people; and three, he said, "Hey, guess what guys? In 2020, Trump is not gonna go away. He's gonna refuse to step down." All of that happened. If they're not gonna listen to you and I, people who have studied authoritarian movements for, you know, several decades of our lives, they can at least listen to Trump's crime cult lackey. And sadly, that is the kind of voice that is prioritized. But anyway, go on.

Andrea Chalupa (22:02):

Yeah. I want to give a big neon light warning to everyone, especially the Democratic party, everyone must demand this of the Democratic party and the Democrats must do this (and I'll explain especially why): Keep the hearings going all the way up to election day. It is not about politicizing the hearings. Just forget that stupid accusation that people like to make. How do you politicize a hearing when literally one fascist party tried to violently overthrow our democracy? Keep the hearings going all the way up to election day 2022 midterms. Do not stop. Do not stop. Put your foot on the gas pedal. And here's why. Number one, they tried to violently overthrow our democracy. People died. People died by suicide in the days after. It was a massive national trauma, one of the darkest chapters in our nation's history. It shocked the entire world.

Andrea Chalupa (23:01):

Our children were watching this and it's going to be studied and mourned—if there's any democracy in America left in the future—for generations to come. It's that dark. So keep the hearings going. The second point is media ownership in America is owned by extremely rich people. I don't care whether they identify themselves as Republican or Democrat. It makes no difference. When you've reached that level of astronomical wealth, like Jeff Bezos, taxes feel painful to you. Having to pay your employees more feels painful to you, right? You know, with Bezos and his union busting in Amazon warehouses and all that. So the media, I don't care which media we're talking about, the entire media landscape in America except for public-owned media is in the hands of extremely wealthy people who have lost sense of reality. And why? Because we're living in a time of economic inequality crisis and inflation crisis because the super rich—the historic number of billionaires and multimillionaires—are tax-dodging, hiring fancy accountants to hide their money, avoid paying taxes, and they don't wanna pay their employees, their workers, to keep up with inflation.

Andrea Chalupa (24:11):

So therefore you're going to get the Democrats—whether they're real true blue fighting for the workers Democrats, there's a lot out there—you're gonna get the entire Democratic Party and Biden, no matter what they do, good or bad, you're gonna get it through a corporate oligarch media filter. They're gonna

be beating the drum of Hillary's emails, only this year it's gonna take the form of inflation and recession and all those other doomsday figures. So in order to provide a cat laser pointer for the stupid media, you've got to keep those hearings going! And program them with powerful, powerful witnesses. The third reason is because what we've seen, and what I believe is a real driver of Biden's low approval ratings, is Merrick Garland cannot be relied on. We know that. Sarah's gone over that in past episodes.

Andrea Chalupa (25:04):

He's been mentored by Jamie Gorelick, who is sabotaging this whole thing deliberately, as Sarah's outlined in previous episodes and threads you can find on Twitter. Merrick Garland would've done something by now. And that's not coming from me, that's coming from prosecutors. There was a letter by the massive group of former federal prosecutors saying, "For the love of God, Merrick Garland, do your job." These are former federal prosecutors who know how this system works. They know what limitations there are within the federal system of prosecuting crime and they're watching this Merrick Garland train wreck, where he's just sitting on the sidelines. And that's bad for Biden. That's bad for the Democrats for the obvious reasons that they're not doing their job and they're allowing elite criminal impunity, which is devastating psychologically and it's devastating for our entire country, for our democracy, and our national security.

Andrea Chalupa (25:57):

Because what it does is it puts out a big fat welcome mat for future wannabe autocrats to come along and try the same thing because they know they'll get away with it.

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

The entire machinery that helped get Trump elected illegally in 2016—and we know it was illegal. This isn't a conspiracy theory. We need to get past the Twitter meme that this is some nonsense that Sarah and I just invented. Russiagate was a real criminal enterprise. How do we know that? Because the former director of the FBI ran a year's long criminal investigation into it and produced what's essentially a 400 page charging memo known as the Mueller Report. He even testified. The former director of the FBI, Robert Mueller, even testified when asked by a Republican member of Congress in the House, "Could you charge Trump for a crime after he leaves office?" and Robert Mueller, former director of the FBI said, "Yes, you can."

Andrea Chalupa (26:47):

And famously reticent Robert Mueller came out and broke his silence and said, "I want Americans to take this extremely seriously and take Kremlin terrorism and aggression extremely seriously. This is dangerous." Right? This really did happen and the fact that we all survived it, and democracy survived barely, is a miracle. For anybody that's studied authoritarian states, as we have for decades combined, it's a miracle we outvoted Trump as we did. It's a miracle. So my point is that we all went through this mass trauma and we needed a sense of justice. We needed to see justice. We needed Trump and his entire goon squad, the Roger Stones, the Paul Manafort, the entire machinery held accountable. Why? Because this same machinery helped bring Nixon to power. And what happened with Nixon, which was a



viper's den of corruption, all those indictments that happened from Nixon's White House. Those same guys, Roger Stone and Paul Manafort, they cut their teeth working for Nixon and so forth.

Andrea Chalupa (27:48):

And Nixon gets pardoned and jail sentences get reduced and so forth. So we shouldn't be surprised that the dead rotting corpse of Nixon rose up like a zombie from the grave to take the form of Trump. And here we are now. So if Merrick Garland isn't pushed by the good Patriots throughout government, especially in the DOJ, of course, to do the right thing and bring down the elite criminal enterprise—the top organizers, the guys that were running the literal war room in that fancy Washington DC hotel that was set up in advance of the physical, violent assault on our democracy—then that's going to send a devastating message to all of us. And that's psychologically extremely damaging and hurtful and we all are gonna be living with this vulnerability over our heads, of When's it going to happen again? Who's gonna be allowed to come into power next time? The same machinery that helped bring Trump to power, that helped engineer a coup, could help bring DeSantist to power in 2024 or 2028. Or Ivanka.

Andrea Chalupa (28:58):

We're not safe unless big fish are indicted and sent to prison and serve their prison sentences. We're not safe until that happens. And we all know that. That's why there's a lot of infighting. That's why a lot of the Democrats are going at each other's throats because people are anxious. They feel the very real danger here against us and against our children. And we know that once you're in an autocracy, it takes human sacrifice to get out. Look at what Ukrainians are doing now, putting their lives on the line, because they don't wanna end up like Russia. You don't wanna come to that. Would you sacrifice your kid because Merrick Garland didn't do his goddamn job? Who wants to volunteer their child to go out and give their life so America can live in a stable democracy? Those are the decisions that are being made by Ukrainians today.

Andrea Chalupa (29:42):

Who wants to be in that position today because Merrick Garland didn't do his job? I don't want my kids to be in that position. So if you wanna look at Biden's abysmal approval ratings, you have my whole record of everything I've said on *Gaslit Nation*. Sarah and I have been extremely forceful in warning the Democrats not to endanger us. You have that all on record. I do wanna say—I want this on record too—I think Biden has done a lot of amazing things and I'm gonna list them now. And I'm going to list them because it underlines the point that it's Merrick Garland that is setting him back more than anything. It is Merrick Garland who is setting him back and anybody around Merrick Garland, his lieutenants, the top people he works with, his whole team, they're all complicit in this.

Andrea Chalupa (30:23):

All their names need to be famous because you're allowing all this to happen as well. And so I'm going to underline all the great things Biden has done and you're gonna be like, “Wow, Biden has done a lot of great things so why aren't his popularity numbers higher?” And remember, a president's popularity rating helps determine his party's outcome in the midterms, so there can be a lot of extraordinary Democrats but they're gonna feel the brunt of the force because Merrick Garland's not doing enough. So hear me out here. Biden led on COVID relief, which put money in people's pockets. Biden brought jobs back to the level they were before the pandemic devastated everything. That's huge. That's economic strength right there. Biden led a successful vaccine roll out. I thought it was successful. I got a vaccine right away and it led, at least into New York I believe, a baby boom happened.

Andrea Chalupa (31:09):

Because a lot of babies were born like 9-10 months after that vaccine roll out. Then Biden led on, finally, some major gun safety legislation. Yes, it's not enough, but it's significant given where we've been in the past, how stalled we've been. Biden has led on herding the cats of the EU. Europe, especially Western Europe, has been abysmal in appeasing Russia, namely France and Germany, the leaders of the EU, have led this horrific policy of appeasement when it has come to Putin. Angela and Merkel is gonna be remembered as a Chamberlain by history because Angela Merkel, for 20 years as the leader of Germany, she made sure that Germany was increasingly dependent on Russian gas. That is now paying for Putin's war crimes in Ukraine. That's the Europe that the US has had to deal with for so long. And Biden and his team, to their great credit, joined with leaders from Eastern Europe and some of the Nordic nations, got the EU to stop appeasing Putin and wean itself off a dependency on Russian gas and oil, which is still a long process, but it's been a sea change. Biden brought NATO back together bigger than before.

Andrea Chalupa (32:27):

And guess what? Biden, unlike Obama—and there were times during the Obama years, where, I remember one time I went out to dinner with a journalist friend and I just started crying at the table because of Obama's lack of support for Ukraine. Obama refused to send javelins to Ukraine. You're hearing a lot about those javelins that Ukrainians are have been fighting with for a while now. Obama refused to send those. Congress was bipartisan in trying to force him and Obama was like, “No, I don't wanna risk escalation, I don't want them to get in the wrong hands,” whatever his reasoning was. And even Biden was pushing him, of course. By sharp contrast, Biden has been remarkable in some of the stuff he's been sending over to Ukraine, especially recently. This weekend, you probably saw there's been a lot of talk over HIMARs.

Andrea Chalupa (33:11):

HIMARs are long range artillery missiles. They are so advanced and sophisticated compared to anything the Russians have that one analyst compared them to the Mercedes-Benz compared to the Soviet-era LADA cars that the Russians are firing. These HIMARs are just destroying not just Russian generals but also Russian ammunition depots, just destroying them, like setting off a 4th of July here and there, you know, all across Russian-occupied territory. And the Russians, they're losing their minds over this. If you read the Russian blogosphere and the Telegram channels, they're shitting themselves. They don't have any answer to US-supplied HIMARs to Ukraine. And Ukrainians are using them with such skill. These are precise and devastating artillery that are being used to weaken the Russian war crime machine. Biden did this. Obama would never have done this in a million years.

Andrea Chalupa (34:06):

Biden did this. And I cannot tell you what a game changer it has been in a very short time that they have been employed on the ground in Ukraine. And the reason why they took a while to get there was because they needed training. All of this sophisticated US-supplied weaponry needs training because the Ukrainians are more used to the Soviet models. Putin doesn't know what to do now. My point is that Biden has done a lot of wonderful stuff. Has he fallen short on a number of key things that we still desperately need, like he should absolutely, for instance, call a climate emergency? He should absolutely do more by executive order for the climate, without question, and he should be very visible about doing that. And he should be partnering with a lot more governors on the ground for doing that. That needs to happen a year ago.

Andrea Chalupa (34:51):

He should do a lot more with executive orders when it comes to protecting abortion rights. He did do a wonderful thing by sending out a strong statement, or letter, whatever, to healthcare providers across the country urgently reminding them all that it is federal law that all healthcare providers must provide an abortion where the mother's life can and must be saved. He is doing a lot. He is doing a lot with a lot of the many crises that he's been dealt, including inheriting an extremely gutted, purged, demoralized, weakened viper's den of Trumpian traitors in the government across the board. But what is holding Biden back—and I promise you it's this, we've been saying this since last year—what's been holding Biden back is Merrick Garland and it's obvious to everyone. Pretending that there's not a dysfunction there isn't helpful to anyone.

Andrea Chalupa (35:46):

The clock is ticking and too many experts that know better have lost their patience and anybody who at this late stage continues to defend Merrick Garland has to have some ulterior motive at this point because it simply does not make sense. If you try to hide behind, "Oh, the secrecy, the secrecy, these are investigations, secrecy," no, it's not. They have enough. They have it all on video. They have it on social media. They have it crowdsourced. Biden risks repeating the great disaster that Obama and his administration engineered when they let Wall Street get away with the criminality and corruption of the Great Recession, where no one went to jail for that. Maybe like one person was thrown under the bus here or there, but all those guys on Wall Street, those wizard wizards of Wall Street, the Greed is Good crowd, they got away with it and they're back at it again. Our global economy remains vulnerable. So we cannot repeat that same mistake when it comes to Trump's war machine, Trump's crime machine.

Sarah Kendzior (36:49):

Yeah. I'm just gonna say a couple things because I want you to update everyone on Ukraine. You know, what you just said shows that when Biden and his administration want to act forcefully and want to do the right thing—like they have for Ukraine—they will, even if it's unpopular, even if they get shit for it. They are indeed capable of doing these things. And the second thing is, you know, pressure works. They're getting enormous blowback about *Roe v. Wade* and their utter lack of preparedness for that. They are gradually putting in things like women should not be condemned to die from ectopic pregnancies and doctors should be protected at a federal level if they're treating patients. This should not be stuff though that we should have to ask for, it's just something they should have done.

Sarah Kendzior (37:37):

But they're responding at least. I mean, it's kind of back and forth. As I'm saying this, that Kentucky pro-life judge that's been compared to Samuel Alito is still bafflingly being nominated by Biden. And the Democrats in the Senate are even like, What the hell is this? Like, what are you even doing? What is the point here? The thing is that nothing is set in stone here. There's opportunity and possibility. And so yes, as we all know voting is important, but sharing your thoughts about the government that you pay with your tax dollars, protesting their decisions, critiquing them, demanding better, demanding rights for all, demanding what we deserve, those are things that are good too. As for Biden as an individual, I don't know. Someone was saying that Biden still thinks it's 1991.

Sarah Kendzior (38:25):

And I was kind of thinking, well, what does that mean? And then I thought, yeah, that's basically true because in 1991, he was a good advocate of global democracy. He was good on supporting the newly

independent states of the former Soviet Union, believing that they are entitled to the rights that everyone should have. And at the same time, he was palling around with Jesse Helms,wh he was a close personal friend with. Strom Thurmand. He was interrogating Anita Hill. Unfortunately, we're seeing some of those same tendencies there. And I don't know how much of that is playacting for political reasons and how much of it reflects his actual beliefs, but I almost feel like it's incidental because what it comes down to is us, you know, the American people. How are we being treated? What rights will we retain? Will they fight for our rights? Will they get rid of Merrick Garland so that we can have accountability and not be ruled by a transnational mafia syndicate? You can't kumbaya with a mafia state. You can't have bipartisanship with an authoritarian cult. These are the important lessons that the whole administration and any future democratic administration needs to learn

Andrea Chalupa (39:34):

Without question. I understand the structural fascism that we're currently trapped under with the Senate, the electoral college, the gerrymandering, the hyperpartisan fascist Fox News propaganda machine. I understand. There's a lot. Oh, and then the Federalist Society and the packed courts, McConnell and Trump got 30% of the court. So I understand everything they're up against. And I know there's going to be transactions, right? Just to get what we need, just to get some of these big congressional wins. McConnell is going to get kicked some things that he's demanding and McConnell is ruthless. McConnell has Putin's tendency of ruthless... I wouldn't even call it negotiation, but Putin and McConnell both have a long pattern of pushing deals too far, just cutting out the other guy's legs. So it's hard. Everything that they're up against is hard. At the same time though, I'm telling you, if you reel in some of those big fish, if you stop treating Ivanka and Jared as though they're the good guys now and reel those guys in for their corruption, for their role in all this—remember Jared was the pardons guy.

Andrea Chalupa (40:51):

He even said this under oath during his interview. Pardons were what gave Bannon and Manafort and Stone and those other guys-

Sarah Kendzior:

And Flynn.

Andrea Chalupa:

And Flynn free reign to be traitors basically, and to profit off of undermining and attacking our democracy. So reel them all in. Give us some big fish and you'll see Biden's approval rating skyrocket. And I wanna just point out the time of anxiety that we're all in. We've seen this again and again, and you see this in Ukraine. When everything is existential, as it currently is, people are anxious and even though they're on the same side, there's a lot of infighting and it can get very cannibalistic. But I wanna just remind everyone, the so-called red states, the hostage states like Sarah's Missouri, what those abortion laws are doing, those anti-abortion laws, they're opening up a very dangerous gateway to hell where they can be criminalized and used against anybody just by accusing someone of having had an abortion.

Andrea Chalupa (41:50):

Well, how do you prove that? Or accusing someone of helping someone get an abortion, or, you know, it's a very dangerous, slippery slope that will be abused to the fullest by legislators in Missouri that ignore the people's will repeatedly, even when there's referendums where the people vote one way and

the hardcore fascist Republicans ignore the will the people and go in a completely opposite way. We saw that with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Abortion rights are hugely popular in America. The theocrats, the wannabe theocrats on the majority of the Supreme Court completely ignored the people's will on that. And this is just the beginning. It can get a lot more dangerous and people who are living in hostage states know that. And a lot of the reaction I'm seeing of people in states like Missouri and Ohio and elsewhere, they're having the same reaction as Ukrainians did when Russia went full genocide against Ukraine.

Andrea Chalupa (42:47):

And so I just wanna remind everyone of that. If you're in a relatively safe state, like a blue state—no state is safe, no state is safe. When they have the courts hijacked, no state is safe, as we've seen with the Supreme Court majority overturning New York's gun law. But just remember that. I wanna just remind everyone as well that my friend, Sarah Kendzior is coming from such a sincere place in all the work that she does and who she is and what she's fighting for. Never lose sight of that because I see Sarah call out the Democrats online—as you absolutely should, because pressure works—but you're also absolutely mobbed in return for that. I don't always agree with some of your takes and you don't always agree with some of mine, but your heart is truly in the right place.

Andrea Chalupa (43:32):

And that is for you and I to finally turn this podcast into a UFO podcast and retire from authoritarianism and raise our children in peace and not have to fight these damn battles anymore and not stick our children when they're adults with these assholes. We have to get rid of them now because they're not gonna stop. Sarah is fearless and she's fighting for my kids. She's fighting for your kids. Neither of us wanna do this for much longer, but we're stuck. All of us are stuck. Our generation is stuck with this because previous generations did not do the work that was needed and they kept kicking the damn can down the road. Now time's running out and it's too late. It's on us now to fight like hell or it's just gonna get worse. And that brings us to Ukraine. Some of you have sent me this link.

Andrea Chalupa (44:18):

You may have seen a viral clip by one JJ Mearsheimer saying that Putin's genocidal total war invasion of Ukraine is all NATO's fault. There was that viral clip that was going around earlier in the year of Mearsheimer, a leading so-called realist of the University of Chicago, saying, “Oh, NATO has expanded, encroaching on Russia's territory. What do you expect Russia to do? And now NATO is going to just push back. NATO and Russia are now fighting each other and using Ukraine as a pawn.” That whole talking point. A lot of people on the Left and a lot of people on the Right, the fringes, were blaming NATO for Russia's genocide of Ukraine and sayin, “It's all NATO's fault. NATO expanded into Russia's neighborhood, its sphere of influence and so forth.” Obviously, if you believe all that, the only way that works is if Soviet history never happened. But Soviet history did happen.

Andrea Chalupa (45:16):

And Soviet history was Russian colonial genocide where Russia went into Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic states and elsewhere and murdered off as many people as possible, passed all these repressive laws, committed acts of genocide and replaced the language when they could with Russian, carried out a brutal system of Russification. The Soviet Union” is a gaslighting term. These were captive states and they were forced under Russian colonization. So when the Berlin wall fell, when the Soviet Union fell, a lot of these former captive states rushed to join NATO because they wanted to be safe. They didn't want

to suffer another genocide. And so that's really what drove the expansion of NATO. And these idiots on the far left and far right made Putin's war all about NATO. Well, guess what? Finland and Sweden just joined NATO and Putin's like <shrug>, "Alright. That's cool with me guys. Yeah, no problem."

Andrea Chalupa (46:13):

So why would Putin suddenly be fine with Finland and Sweden joining NATO? Finland and Sweden which were neutral for so long, especially Finland, which is famous for neutrality. Finland joined NATO because they don't want to experience a genocide. They don't want to have war crimes and mass rapes of men, women, and children like what Russia's carrying out in Ukraine. And Russia is suddenly fine with this. So it turns out the war was never about NATO. Surprise, surprise. Anybody that's been telling you like we have on this show, anyone that studies Soviet history could have told you that. Putin, of course, is forced to be fine with it because Putin is losing the war in Ukraine. After losing the battle for Kyiv in a humiliating defeat, Russia regrouped with their battered army and they tried to take all of Donbas, the region of Eastern Ukraine where they already had a foothold since eight years ago.

Andrea Chalupa (47:10):

The reason why they were allowed to get a foothold is because—as we've been saying for years on this show—Ukraine's Western allies were caught flatfooted. They didn't know what to do when Russia invaded and they were very slow in getting Ukraine what it needed so Russia was able to advance as much as it did. And so Russia decided to play from that strength and invade even further. Well, they've been barely making any gains and any incremental gains Russia has made in Ukraine have been paid for with a massive amount of casualties and destroyed weapons. They're just bleeding dry right now. They're like a man on the verge of death, crawling in the desert. That's Russia right now with its invasion of Ukraine. They are still carrying out war crimes wherever they go so none of this is funny. And they do continue to fire off rockets into heavily populated areas, including bombing a shopping center.

Andrea Chalupa (48:10):

They are bombing residential buildings. They're just lobbing bombs into civilian targets every day, committing more and more war crimes. They're just shamelessly committing war crimes. They're a war crime army so remember that when you hear from the Left and the Right fringes screaming about Mearsheimer and NATO. So the big game changers I mentioned earlier were the HIMARs, the long artillery weapons that are supplied by the US. For the love of God, keep those coming. Keep those coming. Keep those coming because compared to Russia, Ukraine is still outgunned so they need all the advanced long range systems that they can get to destroy all the rocket depots, the big warehouses where all these rockets that are killing civilians are being held. That's what Ukraine is using them for. They're destroying the rockets that Russia is raining down on its civilians.

Andrea Chalupa (49:03):

So please keep those coming. The other thing is, Russia is trying to blackmail the world right now by destroying Ukraine's grain, seizing Ukraine's grain, which is going to engineer a famine well beyond Ukraine's borders. It's like Stalin's Holodomor, the genocide famine Ukraine, only bigger and it's going to impact countries in Africa and Asia and the Middle East. It's going to further economic and political instability already brought around because of the pandemic and soaring inflation, and it's gonna create a big domino effect, likely, just like the Arab Spring. But it's gonna be completely uncontrollable and further wreak havoc around the world and set off a chain reaction that no one can control. And Putin is

doing that to hold a gun to everyone's head and saying, "Let me win in Ukraine or I'm gonna starve the world."

Andrea Chalupa (49:51):

That's what he is trying to do right now and we cannot let that terrorist win. The faster the pressure, the faster the supplies for Ukraine, the more you weaken him. He backed down when it came to NATO. He will back down if you keep applying that pressure and the next pressure point needs to be declaring Russia a state sponsor of terrorism because that will further isolate Russia economically and that will further weaken Russia across the board. Just to show you what the isolation of Russia looks like, Russia is turning in desperation to Iran right now for combat drones. Do you know how pathetic that is? Russia's technologically advanced when it comes to Iran. China's not bailing Russia out so Russia has to go to little Iran for some drones. That's how pathetic Putin's, you know, so-called second most powerful army in the world is. So please, for love of God US, keep up the pressure. A Ukrainian soldier that was interviewed recently on camera, when he was asked:

Reporter (50:47):

Your message to NATO and the rest Europe?

Ukrainian Soldier:

Stop being [bleep] [bleep]

Andrea Chalupa(50:49):

"Stop being a pussy." And he just walks away. And that's the damn truth. Everyone needs to see that when you stand up to Putin, he bends. Don't believe his bluffs. Putin right now is claiming that he's just getting started in Ukraine. That's a bluff. He's lost over a dozen generals. He's lost more soldiers in Ukraine than all 10 years of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. They're losing historically and Russia's becoming weaker and weaker as a country and the instability is just going to grow there. I can go on and on about this, but one thing that needs to be on the table immediately—as part of the "Stop being pussies" doctrine—is that NATO, the most powerful military force in the world, needs to go on a humanitarian mission to free the Black Sea. Russia cannot lay claim to the Black Sea.

Andrea Chalupa (51:40):

It's a sea, first of all. And so it needs to be free of all the Russian mines that have been littered across the Black Sea and Russian warships that are laying claim to the entire Black Sea. It needs to be freed up right now so that Ukraine's grain can leave freely and safely and go feed the world. NATO can do this. NATO has the ability to do this and they must do it under the mission of a humanitarian intervention to ensure that food gets to where it needs to go so that millions of people don't starve around the world and that Putin can no longer hold millions of people around the world hostage to his genocidal imperialism, because he will not stop in Ukraine. How do we know that Putin and the rest of Russia won't stop in Ukraine? Because that's what they've done in the past. Russia's a failed state and they need external enemies to distract the people back at home and to give justification for the massive corruption. They need wars in order to stay in power. They need wars to keep the Russian mafia in power. So if you stop them in Ukraine, if you weaken the war mission in Ukraine, you can save countless lives and finally bring an end to Russian genocidal terrorism.

Sarah Kendzior (52:51):

And that happy note will conclude this episode of Gaslit Nation.

Andrea Chalupa:

[laughs]

[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](http://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](http://rescue.org). And if you want to help critically endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry, donate to the Orangutan Project at [theorangutanproject.org](http://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):

Gaslit Nation would like to thank our supporters at the Producer level on Patreon and higher. If you do not hear your name here and you should, then just send us a quick message on Patreon. We've had a very intense maternity leave <laugh> so we appreciate your help. Thank you so much to all of our supporters. So let us know if your name is missing and we'll quickly add you to the list. So thank you very much to...