

Gaslit Nation Transcript

25 January 2023

“Traitors in the FBI”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/traitors-in-fbi-77709076>

[opening song is [WE CAN'T BREATHE](#), with music by Rayna Zemel and Chief Wakil, lyrics by Chief Wakil and Kelli Wakili, film by Miranda Winters, Rocky Romano and Rayna Zemel.]

Sarah Kendzior (00:31):

I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of the bestsellers, *The View from Flyover Country*, and *Hiding in Plain Sight* and of the book, *They Knew: How a Culture of Conspiracy Keeps America Complacent*, out now.

Andrea Chalupa (00:43):

And 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. The film the Kremlin does not want you to see, so be sure to watch it. The song you just heard was, 'We Can't Breathe' with music by Rayna Zemel and Chief Wakil, and lyrics by Chief Wakil and Kelli Wakili. The song is featured in a short film by Miranda Winters, Rocky Romano and Rayna Zemel. Rayna, who submitted this song to us, is a music producer, playback engineer, live show designer, photographer, film producer, and consultant. She's toured the world with the likes of The Lonely Island, Logic, Lana Del Ray, Dua Lipa and more. After the touring industry shut down in 2020, Rayna pursued her passion for documentary photography. She's documented over 120 protests in the Los Angeles area and her work and efforts are featured in the short film *We Can't Breathe*, which was awarded Best Music Video and Audience Award at the 2021 San Luis Obispo Film Festival.

Andrea Chalupa (01:49):

Additionally, the film was the official selection at the Cleveland Film Festival and Athena Film Festival. Rayna shared this statement about the song: “I wrote this instrumental two days after news of Ahmaud Arbery's murder in May, 2020. 3 weeks later, the George Floyd uprisings began in Los Angeles and alongside my partner, I spent June, 2020 photographing dozens of protests. We compiled so much footage, we decided to make a short film to serve as a time capsule for future generations. I enlisted the vocal talents of Chief Wakil and Kelly Wakili to write lyrics about Black exhaustion. There isn't a specific reason that I create, it's one of the few activities that make me feel joy and is an avenue to channel my emotions.” We'll post a link to this incredible film on our Twitter page and in the show notes for this episode on our Patreon page. You can find Rayna on Instagram [@rayzemel](#) and [@wintersrockentertainment](#), and on Soundcloud at soundcloud.com/rayzemi. You can find all those links on our Patreon. Thank you so much, Rayna, for your incredible talents, and thank you so much to Chief Wakil and Kelly Wakili. If you have a song that you wanna submit, any kind of song that brings truth, joy, your light into the world, please share it with us. You can find the link on where to submit that on the Patreon link for this week's episode. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sarah Kendzior (03:15):

And this is *Gaslit Nation*, a podcast covering corruption in the United States and rising autocracy around the world. We are doing a live taping right now, so it's gonna get wild in here. For some reason, every time Andrea and I do a live taping, some major piece of news related to what we've been studying from the very beginning of *Gaslit Nation* breaks, granted there's been exactly two live tapings. This is the second one. Last time around, it was the Mar-a-Lago raid. This time around it is the indictment of FBI

traitor, Charlie McGonigal. And so if you have listened to any *Gaslit Nation* episode over the past five years, including last week's episode, "[The Real Story of the Biden Documents](#)", but also going all the way back to our first three episodes in 2018, you will hear us say that Trump and the FBI have spent decades in a mutually beneficial relationship based around streamlining organized crime and allowing organized crime to infiltrate US institutions.

Sarah Kendzior (04:22):

In many of these episodes, we mentioned Russian oligarch, Oleg Deripaska, as a key node in this transnational crime syndicate. So it came to no surprise to us when yesterday the FBI's top counterintelligence official in the New York Field office, Charlie McGonigal was indicted for secretly working for Deripaska and facilitating Russian money laundering. McGonigal worked for the FBI from 1996 until 2018, and he follows in a long line of leading FBI officials who worked to serve the interests of the Russian Mafia. And I'm just going to review these very quickly. I feel like I could give y'all a quiz and you'd pass on this. So [laughs], there were FBI heads, Williams Sessions and Louis Freeh, in the 1990s, both of whom worked for the mafia directly after leaving. There was Jim Comey, who took the head of the Russian Mafia, Semyon Mogilevich, off the Top 10 Most Wanted List in the end of 2015, replaced him with a bank robber, never gave an explanation for this decision. We're going to be returning to Comey today and the circumstances of that action. And then of course there was Robert Mueller, former FBI head while the Trump crime cult was, you know, out criming for things Mueller later indicted them for, for example, Manafort with a 2002 indictment. But basically he let them run wild and also did not do anything about Charlie McGonigal, who was in a position to not only work with the FBI but monitor action at the CIA. And so, you know, the only thing that's surprising to me is that the DOJ bothered to indict a corrupt FBI official at all, although you have to ask why it took so long and what McGonigal was up to.

Sarah Kendzior (06:20):

First, I just wanna add one more quick bit of context as to the recent news. In addition to the New York based charges, McGonigal was also indicted on separate charges in Washington DC. I'm just gonna read a description of these charges from CBS: "In a separate case, McGonigal is also facing federal charges in the District of Columbia related to at least \$225,000 in cash he allegedly received from a person with business interests in Europe and who worked for a foreign intelligence service. In that nine count indictment also unsealed Monday, McGonigal allegedly hid from the FBI the nature of his relationship with a former foreign security officer who later served as a source for the Bureau in a criminal investigation involving foreign political lobbying. McGonigal purportedly had 'official supervisory responsibility over the lobbying cases,' the Justice Department said in a release." And so there's some more history to this, but first, Andrea, I'm gonna pass it over to you. I was wondering if you could explain to everybody who Oleg Deripaska is and how this case fits into the broader history of the FBI, organized crime, Trump, and the Kremlin.

Andrea Chalupa (07:39):

Dear Lord. Well, that's a lot. I just wanna give my initial human reaction as a human being experiencing history as it's happening. My first reaction to this was the meme from the movie *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* where Leo DiCaprio is pointing at the TV and he's like, "That's it." Right? "I spotted that thing, that thing that we all knew was always there, like our thing." And this was us. This was flashbacks of you and I meeting and partnering up in 2016, because remember, all those years that I spent focused on Ukraine, which is ground zero for the Kremlin aggression experiment that was then used on us, including the golden handcuffs of entrapping politicians with dark money, including the hacking of elections and so on and so on. And also the divide-and-conquering that Manafort did in creating divisive culture wars

against Ukrainians, creating fake protests, fake activist groups, including in Crimea before the Russian occupation.

Andrea Chalupa (08:34):

Manafort manufactured a fake protest in Crimea against NATO, and so on and so on. So all these years that I was watching that and you were watching Uzbekistan and other places, and then you and I were like, "It's very obvious what's happening with Trump. He's coming to power. He is being helped in this election through the same sort of Kremlin mafia state corruption that infiltrates post-Soviet states to keep them in Moscow's orbit." It was very obvious, plain as day. And then you have this big *New York Times* story that comes out—I believe it was Halloween—saying that the FBI sees no connection between Trump and Russia. Then people like us were automatically deemed conspiracy theorists, nevermind our years of writing and researching and talking about this subject, a subject that the political journalist class—the cable news TV pundit class—was not ready for at all, had no expertise in. They were strapped to their desks. They're trapped in their social climbing in their careers to try to get on television and so on and so on. And they were the ones that were at best ignoring us, at worst writing hit pieces against us and saying, "Don't listen to these women. Don't take them seriously," even though we were the ones risking our personal safety, you know, getting all these weird phishing emails, getting all these death threats and sticking our necks out, ringing the alarm on this. Everything felt like it was falling apart.

Sarah Kendzior (09:53):

I just wanna add one additional note of context there, which is that another thing that contributed to our fear at that time wasn't just our decades of experience studying the former Soviet Union, but the fact that Harry Reid had written two letters to the FBI, one of them in August, 2016, and then a follow-up letter in October, 2016 saying that Russia planned to interfere in the election, to alter results, that the FBI absolutely knew this, that they were doing nothing about it, and that Comey owed the American public an explanation before they went to the polls. And he said this in an open letter. They published the letter online. The story was generally buried, but it wasn't just our intuition. We actually had a few officials—and Reid, of course, was Senate Minority Leader at the time—stating this. And that's a very serious charge. And unfortunately he never completely followed up on what that meant, and then passed away. But I just wanted to throw that in there. Now, back to you.

Andrea Chalupa (10:52):

We will get on Comey in a second because he's clearly complicit on all this and that needs to be highlighted for eternity. But in 2016, I'd already partnered with Agnieszka Holland for *Mr. Jones*, so at this time I was already working on trying to get *Mr. Jones* made, and obviously the villain of *Mr. Jones* is the *New York Times* Moscow bureau chief. Who shared a byline on that big *New York Times* story that seemed to close the case for everyone that there's nothing to see between Trump and Russia? *The New York Times* Moscow Bureau chief at the time. So this was just layers of hell for me that I was plunging into. And luckily I had you by my side [laughs] to go through all that. But, so it brought all of that back. Also deserving of attention is the big Alpha Bank story.

Andrea Chalupa (11:35):

There were computer scientists that, in 2016, were part of a group of independent people just stepping forward, trying to ring the alarm, doing whatever they could with very little access and power that they had. And as part of that group in 2016 were these computer scientists who saw strange communications pinging, going back and forth between servers in Alpha Bank, linked to the Kremlin, and servers within the Trump organization and other sort of entities connected to the Trump campaign. And it was sort of like, "What is going on?" And then the secret server story came out. Then, of course, the big *New York*

Times story saying the FBI sees no connections destroyed it. It made it seem like a big laughing stock and, again, we're all a bunch of conspiracy theorists. What's really interesting is that this story deserves further scrutiny now that we know what we know about McGonigal, now that we've had our deep suspicions—our credible suspicions—confirmed. We all need to go back to that secret server story now because that is an important node in understanding how Trump potentially worked with the Kremlin to come to power.

Andrea Chalupa (12:42):

And that has been overlooked in all these years. It was largely dismissed in 2016 and then Durham, John Durham, the DOJ lackey that Trump appointed to launch an actual witch hunt against people that stepped forward to blow the whistle on connections—really weird connections—between Trump and Russia. Durham went on to hit people connected to them with indictments and produced this big muddled report to basically twist their findings and their conclusions about these really troubling findings. So the fact that Durham prioritized the secret server story at all is another big red arrow pointing to the fact that we need to dig up this story and beat the drum on this story because I think it's an extremely important facet to this whole crime. In the show notes for this episode, we link to an article looking at that and people need to reread that to ground themselves in the reality of what went on in 2016.

Andrea Chalupa (13:40):

And the simple reality is this; that the Kremlin worked with the Trump family to bring Trump to power. I mean, the obvious smoking gun for that was Paul Manafort. Paul Manafort is in the family of the Russian Mafia. You know that Paul Manafort, longtime Kremlin operative who was hand to the king of Yanukovitch, the Ukrainian Trump, you know that he's in the family, you know that he's in with them. How do you know that? Because Paul Manafort took \$19 million from Deripaska and made it disappear. And instead of killing him, as Deripaska—a thugged out Russian oligarch—has been known to do, instead of killing him, he allowed Paul Manafort to live because Paul Manafort is within the family of the Russian mafia state and he's more useful to them alive than dead. How does Paul Manafort go on to repay Deripaska?

Andrea Chalupa (14:28):

As we all know, he works for his longtime friend, Donald Trump's presidential campaign for free, being blessed in that role by Jared and Ivanka, being in the big June, 2016 tower meeting with known Kremlin spies, with Jared in the room and Don Jr. in the room, and so on and so on. And I'm bringing up all this old history to point out that yes, this crime really did happen. Yes, it was real. Yes, it is ongoing. Yes, as we talked about in our recent Florida Super Special, George Santos is a mini version of Russiagate. George Santos was collecting dirty Kremlin money for a Ponzi scheme, an actual Ponzi scheme busted by the SEC in Florida that he was working for. He collected money for that Ponzi scheme from Andrew Intrater, who was a person of interest for a time in Mueller's Russia investigation, who is a cousin of super sanctioned oligarch, Victor Veckselberg, who's close to Putin.

Andrea Chalupa (15:24):

What does that point to? That before he ran for Congress, George Santos was already being groomed with dirty Kremlin-linked money. And then Andrew Intrater goes on to dump a bunch of money into his campaign for Congress. And the Republicans, including Elise Stefanik, know all about this and they're absolutely fine with this. The Russiagate crime is continuing to this day. So that's what we're really stressing here, is that this isn't about 2016, it's about the utter lack of accountability for 2016 and all those crimes being allowed to continue out in the open. So back to Deripaska, who is he? Simply put, he

is one of the thuggiest of the thugged out oligarchs. He's the guy that won the aluminum wars in the car bomb 1990s where there was an actual body count. He owns a bunch of massive businesses.

Andrea Chalpa (16:10):

He's not as polished as a Roman Abramovich who really cleaned up his act and how he presents himself to be accepted into high society in the UK. Deripaska is in high society in the UK as well, but he's not a very polished guy. He's a bit too dirty for the US and so he's been trying relentlessly for years to try to break into the US. And he's just too dirty for the US. He's perfectly fine for the UK and the Tories in the UK and so on. He's got a lot of politicians on payroll there, but he was not acceptable enough for us. And the poor guy, like a 16 year old desperate to get into Studio 54 back in the day is trying, trying, trying with the US.

Sarah Kendzior (16:52):

I mean, 2016 is the year that doesn't end. It's the year that was not resolved. It's the year where the people who got into power continued to plot coups and try to destroy not only our democracy, but others in part because, of course, Trump's ability as president was to pardon everybody who had been in this crime cult, including Manafort, Stone, Bannon, etc. I do want to kind of contextualize McGonigal with 2016, in particular with October, 2016, because there's really interesting timing here. One of the questions we always ask on *Gaslit Nation* is, Who knew what and when and who did they tell? Did they let it be publicly known? Were they transparent? Was there an opportunity for accountability that was not taken? And yes, but there's some, you know, crazy shit—even by 2016 standards—happening in October and in early November.

Sarah Kendzior (17:49):

So just to review that, McGonigal, the announcement that he's hired comes on October 4th, 2016, but he then starts working there at the end. And this is when the FBI began a series of strange actions that I actually wrote about in real time. I published an article in *The Globe and Mail* on November 3rd called "Trump's Strategy: Pull the Fringes into the Center and Mainstream Extremism". This seems to be up without the paywall. I also tweeted out some excerpts, so get it while you can. Anyway, there are some things happening that we all remember well; Comey announcing that he had reopened the investigation into Clinton's emails and then taking that back, but not until many people had voted. And that, of course, Comey's actions had influenced their vote against Clinton. But then there were smaller, stranger actions.

Sarah Kendzior (18:41):

The FBI had a Twitter account called @FBIVault and all of the sudden, this account, which had been dormant for a long time, just starts tweeting out all these files about investigations of the Clintons, along with files about the Trump family portraying them as noble philanthropists. And again, this is coming from an official FBI account. This is before people's knowledge of the FBI's relationship with the Russian mafia, with the Kremlin, was widely known. I mean, it should have been. These relationships weren't exactly hidden, but it was not widely known. So people were looking at this and really thinking, you know, that the Clintons represented a type of criminality. I'm not sure they really bought that the Trumps were these noble good-doers, but mostly people were like, "Whoa, this is very openly, overtly partisan."

Sarah Kendzior (19:38):

Then there's a second thing that happened that a lot of folks blew off, which was that a former State Department official named Steve Pieczenik made a video (this video is still up) in which he said that the FBI was involved in what he called a "counter coup". According to Pieczenik, the Clintons had committed the original coup of worming their way into office, I guess beforehand, and then running again. But the FBI had taken care of everything. The FBI had prevented any possibility that Clinton would win this

election. And, you know, he's known as a conspiracy theorist. He's known as a kook. He's also somebody deeply tied to people at the highest level of government, particularly in the Republican Party. So I took this somewhat seriously, and when I was watching all this action online, I thought, "This is what it looks like in other countries when the National Security Services are plotting a coup."

Sarah Kendzior (20:39):

So it was kind of jarring to see Pieczenik in this video. I wrote about that both in *The Globe and Mail* article and in *Hiding and in Plain Sight*. Developments that stemmed from that were the Comey change, and then of course *The New York Times* hyping that investigation to no end while burying others. I just wanna read the report that was released on McGonigal in October, 2016 to kind of give you a sense of his background. This comes from the FBI itself: "Charlie McGonigal named special agent in charge of the counterintelligence division for the New York Field Office." And then it goes on to say: "FBI Director James B. Comey has named Charlie McGonigal as the special agent in charge of the counterintelligence division of New York Field Office. Mr. McGonigal most recently served as the section chief of the Cyber Counterintelligence Coordination Section at FBI headquarters."

Sarah Kendzior (21:32):

Well, that's very interesting. That kind of brings to mind WikiLeaks and Cambridge Analytica and a lot of nefarious actions involving cyber security and hacking and, of course, what Andrea just mentioned about Alpha Bank to mind. So that's an interesting little background there. "Mr. McGonigal entered on duty with the FBI in 1996."—This is still the press release.—"He was first assigned to the New York Field office where he worked Russian foreign counterintelligence and organized crime matters." And I'm jumping in again because [laughs], what the fuck? It's like this guy is like rolled up in a package to wreak havoc for the Trump camp. This is a guy who is deeply immersed in all of the areas that they relied upon to rise to power through illicit means. And of course we know that while he was "working Russian foreign counterintelligence", he was working *with* Russian intelligence, with oligarchs that were deeply tied to the Kremlin such as Deripaska.

Sarah Kendzior (22:36):

Then it goes on to say: "During his tenure in New York, Mr. McGonigal worked on the TWA Flight 800 investigation, was assigned to the task force investigating Wen Ho Lee, investigated the 1998 terrorist bombings of the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and investigated the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks. Now, if I talk after every single one of these things, the show is never going to end, but I'm just going to say there is a deep and poorly studied relationship between Felix Sater (a mafia that worked for Trump in the company Bayrock and who was also deeply tied to the Russian mafia and to Semyon Mogilevich in particular), Mogilevich himself, and Al-Qaeda. The Russian Mafia was in a relationship with Al Qaeda; trading weapons, money, etc. in the years before the 9/11 attacks. Sater claims to have been aware of this and informed the FBI.

Sarah Kendzior (23:38):

And we, of course, know about the difficulties that the FBI and the CIA had in, you know, I don't wanna say in anticipating the events because some did. They just told George W. Bush and he couldn't care less. But, you know, we've gone into this before with Garland's mentor, Jamie Gorelick, creating a kind of division between the agencies, making it difficult to share information, thus leading to the attacks being able to be pulled off. Now, it's very unnerving to me that this guy, McGonigal, is somebody who was involved in these investigations of the 1998 Al-Qaeda bombings and also of 9/11. So I'll just leave it at that for now. Then it says: "Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Mr. McGonigal was assigned to an investigative response squad which focused on pending international terrorist threats in the New York City area."

Sarah Kendzior (24:33):

From there, it just goes on about how he worked in different divisions, worked in counter espionage. So I guess he just stared at a mirror all day long. Then it ends by saying, "Mr. McGonigal will assume this new role at the end of October." And so that's the kicker there is that they were saving him. I think Charlie McGonigal was the October surprise—or one of their October surprises. He was equipped to pull this off. He was deeply attached to a key figure, Deripaska, in this operation who of course was attached to Manafort and Trump and so on and so forth. So this is just another piece of the puzzle, another bit of proof that this was a deliberate operation. It was not just a perfect storm that just happened to the United States and swept us away. This was planned well in advance. Andrea, do you have thoughts on all that?

Andrea Chalupa (25:28):

Well, that brings us to Comey, doesn't it? [laughs]

Sarah Kendzior:

It does.

Andrea Chalupa:

Let's talk about novelist Comey. I mean, thank God he's... I guess we should be happy that he is living out his years now writing novels. I dunno if you saw this.

Sarah Kendzior (25:41):

I did not see this. [laughs] I thought his novel was *A Higher Loyalty* because it's so full of bullshit that it shouldn't suffice as nonfiction. My publisher is shrieking right now, but go on.

Andrea Chalupa (25:53):

I guess I'm happy that Comey decided to become a novelist instead of joining the rotating door of corruption following Louis Freeh and Williams Sessions, former FBI directors who became lawyers for the Russian mafia. So I guess we should be happy that Comey's scratching his artistic itch, but he wasn't just incompetent. He wasn't just misogynistic. There are all these horrific stories of women who were in the FBI Academy who've felt discriminated against. And when they took their stories to Comey, he just piled on with the misogyny. And of course he's going to attack someone like Hillary Clinton and break protocol as he did in July, 2016 in holding a press conference which created a bunch of headlines, helping Trump, saying that, "FBI Director Comey chooses not to charge Hillary for her emails."

Andrea Chalupa (26:47):

Remember the emails? "He does find that what she and her team did was extremely careless." And obviously the screaming dog whistle, the misogynistic dog whistle of that is that you cannot trust this woman, the first woman, God help us, to be the president of the United States. And when Comey did that, he was very much amplifying that he would be an easy mark to work with any of the proud misogynists that make up the Russian mafia. Russia under Putin, the prevailing cultural norms being deeply xenophobic, misogynistic and racist and proudly so, that's why they're financially and materialistically, ideologically aligned with Trumpism, the whole Trump movement. It's deeper than just good old fashioned misogyny. We saw Comey taking the head of the Russian Mafia, the brainy Don, Mogilevich, off the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List in December, 2015.

Andrea Chalupa (27:47):

And then one year later you have a Russian asset elected to be president of the United States. That was willfully done by Comey. And the excuse given at the time was that Mogilevich was in Russia and Russia doesn't have an extradition treaty with the United States, so of course take him off. But why would that stop us? You wanna keep him on the 10 Most Wanted List so you sent a strong message to him, so you sent a strong message to your agents, "Do whatever it takes to get this guy, track him, follow him. If he leaves Russia, grab him." And that's important because Robert Mueller, back in 2011 when he was FBI director, as we've talked about on this show, he gave a powerful speech, which is essentially the cliff notes of *Gaslit Nation* saying how the Russian mafia, the mafia of the 21st century is a bunch of blood money Western political operatives like Paul Manafort that go around pollinating corruption. It's the fancy law firms, the fancy counting firms, the fancy PR firms. And that's what it is today. It's just money laundering, corruption, real estate, all of it. And the face of this global octopus is Mogilevich. And he's going to be on the FBI 10 Most Wanted List until he is caught. Instead, Comey takes him off. Not only that, when the Feds, when the FBI knew that Russian hackers were inside the systems of the DNC—which is a 21st century version of Watergate, it's a break-in just like Watergate was a break-in—the FBI agents were basically just calling up an intern, calling up the front desk of the DNC. They should have had all of their agents show up en masse saying, "We need to talk to Debbie Wasserman Schultz, her executives, everybody right now in a room."

Andrea Chalupa (29:28):

They should have had a massive show of force to shut all of that down instead of being keystone cops. So what I'm saying is, as we say, they hide crimes behind scandal. They also hide their crimes as "Oops, just a little misogyny. That's all it was." It wasn't. So Comey is a hundred percent complicit in this. And we all knew this in 2016-2017, that you could not trust the New York FBI. Even in 2015 we knew this. There was that whole story of Preet Bharara back in the day when he busted a ring of Russian intelligence recruiting local college girls to spy for them, sort of like a honey pot, like a Maria Butina, right? Maria Butina was a cute college girl that Russian intelligence had infiltrating the Republican Party, even getting in a romantic relationship with a Republican, singing Disney songs with him.

Andrea Chalupa (30:17):

And you can see this poor sap in the video really is convinced that this cute girl is in love with them. So Preet Bharara busted a ring of Maria Butinas working with Russian intelligence here in New York City. And around this time we had a big event in the Ukrainian Museum of New York City with Michael Weiss, Mouaz Moustafa, who we had on the show—both Michael and Mouaz we've had on the show, Mouaz represents the Syrian revolution—and myself and a filmmaker that had just returned from Ukraine named Damian Kolodiy, who had a bunch of video interviews with Ukrainian soldiers in the military hospital talking about their eyewitness accounts of fighting Russian soldiers. This was significant because at the time Russia was hiding behind their propaganda that they were not invading Ukraine back in 2014-2015 and the Western press was falling for it by calling the Russian invasion of Ukraine "Russian backed proxies, Russian backed mercenaries, a civil war." That's disinformation.

Andrea Chalupa (31:14):

Russia's invasion began in 2014. And so we had this big event drawing attention to this. It was sort of like a lot of heavy hitters, standing room only, packed. It was promoted on the *Huffington Post* and the whole message was, How do we get through to Susan Rice? How do we get through to Obama to wake them up to give the support to Ukraine that it desperately needs back then in 2015? The support it's finally getting now, it needed back then to stop this war, and to send a strong message of accountability to Putin that would've contained his aggression, that could have potentially stopped what he did to us in

2016 with Trump. Anyway, at this event, you had a young college girl that was buzzing around us. She was staying with us. When everybody else left and it was just the speakers, she was hanging around.

Andrea Chalupa (31:56):

She got Michael Weiss's phone number. Then she came to me and she said, "I have a plan on how to end the war in Ukraine quickly and bring prosperity to Ukraine. Who do you have that you can connect me to to talk about my plan?" At first, I'm like, "Oh, that's pretty ambitious." And so I asked her, "Do you know so-and-so from Hromadske TV?" Hromadske being the core of Ukraine's revolution. She's like, "No, what's Hromadske TV?" And I'm like, "Oh, do you know so-and-so from Euromaidan Press, Euromaidan PR?" She's like, "No, what's that?" You're telling me, young college girl with a Russian accent who looks Russian, who I'm assuming is Russian, you don't know any of the powerhouses of Ukraine's resistance against corruption and against the Russian invasion? You don't know any of these things?

Andrea Chalupa (32:42):

And I leaned over to Michael Weiss across the bar and I said, "Hey Michael, that girl you just gave your phone number to? She has no idea what Hromadske TV is." And Michael, because he studies Russian intelligence, knew exactly what I was talking about. So I had to grab her cell phone, pretend to be drunk, and put my own cell phone in it and delete his number and give the phone back. And so I got her name, I wrote it down, I Googled it, and I found a Google profile of her that looked straight out of *The Americans*, hair pulled back, gray collared shirt, a description of her saying, "I like coffee and beaches." You know how they are. They don't need to put much effort into it. And the idiots forgot the girl's original name in her Google page account.

Andrea Chalupa (33:24):

It was in the URL. So I googled that, a totally different name, not just like a changed last name because she got married, but an entirely different name in the Google URL. And I found all of these anti Ukrainian comments that she had left on *Wall Street Journal* and other places. So that's how Russian intelligence would've found her and recruited her. And so I collected all the information and I'd never had done this before because I don't really know to trust the feds. I've studied enough about American history to know not to trust the FBI. I just thought, Hey, you know, Preet Bharara just busted a Russian spy ring using these young college girls and we had this really weird young Russian college girl sniffing around, trying to collect intel, trying to map us.

Andrea Chalupa (34:04):

And so I called the New York FBI and I talked to some guy with a thick New York accent who was treating me like I was calling in a UFO sighting. He's like, "Nah, that's nothing. Nah, that's nothing." I'm like, well, can I email it to you? Don't you wanna... He's like "Ah, nah." But I still emailed it to some general email account that I found and I never heard back. This was late spring 2015 or so. So that was like one story I've had with the New York FBI. We always knew they were bad news. We always knew they were infiltrated. We saw what they were doing in 2016. We saw Giuliani who, one of his claims to fame was pushing out the Italian mafia to make room for the Russian mafia, and he was gleeful on TV saying, "We have something up our sleeves. We're gonna get Hillary." And then they did.

[audio clip]

Rudy Giuliani (34:48):

And I think he's got a surprise or two that you're gonna hear about in the next two days. I mean, I mean, I'm talking about some... Pretty big surprise.

Host: Oh yeah, I heard you say that this morning. What do you mean?

Rudy Giuliani:

You'll see [laughs] We're not gonna go down and we're certainly not gonna stop fighting. We've got a couple things up for us to leave that should turn this around.

[end audio clip]

Andrea Chalupa (35:07):

And they created that whole thing that Comey fell for willfully. Or I don't think Comey fell for it

Sarah Kendzior (35:13):

He was in on it.

Andrea Chalupa (35:13):

He was in on it.

Sarah Kendzior (35:14):

He was a hired hand.

Andrea Chalupa (35:15):

Mmhmm. <affirmative>. And during this time, I have a friend in the Russian opposition who had to get political asylum here who was always telling me, "Watch out for the New York FBI. One of their translators is Russian intelligence."

Sarah Kendzior (35:27):

And is that the translator?

Andrea Chalupa (35:29):

I assume it is. I mean, he was always saying there's a translator embedded with the New York FBI.

Sarah Kendzior (35:33):

That might have been another indictee yesterday. Yeah, Sergey Shestakov, a former Russian diplomat and translator. He was arrested along with McGonigal in New York on the sanctions and money laundering violations. So maybe that is who you heard about all the way back in 2016.

Andrea Chalupa (35:54):

What's really interesting... So Comey letting one the 10 Most Wanted Russian Mafia boss Mogilevich, off the 10 Most Wanted List, letting him go... He's back. Mogilevich is back. Last April when we took a break for my maternity leave, we missed this story. We didn't talk about it. Mogilevich is back on being massively wanted by the FBI in April, 2022.

Sarah Kendzior (36:16):

Oh, no, I saw that. Their little announcement on Twitter. That's as much as they did. They were like, "Oh, look who we found again. We've realized they existed." And then people are like, "Oh, good, they're cracking down." And I was like, "Really? [laughs] Let's see. Let's see a year from now." So here we are nearly a year from now and Mogilevich roams free.

Andrea Chalupa (36:36):

He roams spree. But why he is so important, why Deripaska is so important, is because these guys—Putin's oligarchs, Putin's wallets—they go around pollinating his corruption, running all of these illicit industries. Corruption is an industry; prostitution, human trafficking, war profiteering, all of it. They're also the Russian military industrial complex. Deripaska has companies that are manufacturing and producing for the Russian Army. And maybe that is in part why we're finally seeing a reaction to them, we're finally seeing somebody like McGonigal getting caught. Deripaska, for instance, under Trump in 2020, he flew his girlfriend to Los Angeles to give birth to their child. He had her set up in an apartment in Beverly Hills with five nannies and a housekeeper. And they tried the same thing again under Biden and got stopped. Then the girlfriend and Deripaska got sanctioned.

Andrea Chalupa (37:32):

The lawyers that helped them do this were indicted and so on. So we're seeing sort of a big pushback that I think it's fair to say is in result to the war, Russia's massive invasion. We're at war. We have no choice but to finally do something. The US did not want this war. The US in fact was trying to pull out of Afghanistan quickly and pivot towards China and figure out some strong policy to counter China. The last thing they wanted was to have to prop up Ukraine in a war. In fact, they were trying to train Ukraine for gorilla warfare because they expected Ukraine to fall. And when Ukraine didn't, when Zelensky refused to flee the country, and when Ukrainians started winning the hearts and minds of the world with all of these viral videos and these viral statements of defiance, the US had no choice but to defend Ukraine and, and get all the allies together and strengthen NATO.

Andrea Chalupa (38:28):

And it's been this big push ever since and as a result, you're seeing more clamping down on Putin's oligarchs who are essential to the war effort. Now, the UK is falling short on this. You have right now Prigozhin who is one of the nastiest of the oligarchs. He, of course, runs Wagner Group, the private military force which is named after Wagner, Hitler's favorite composer, for a reason—because these are actual Nazis that we're fighting against. Russia invaded Ukraine at 4:00 AM just like the Nazis did. When the invasion was launched, the Ukrainians were like, Oh my God, this is what Hitler did to us and now Putin's doing it to us. And one of the forces they're invading with is Wagner. Prigozhin has just brought a case against a fantastic journalist that we all know, especially if you've been listening to the show for a long time, Elliot Higgins of Bellingcat, trying to go after him and all these other things. And he's so far being allowed to do it in the UK. So that's part of the problem. You still have all of these pig troughs of corruption that these oligarchs are feeding on in the US and the UK and we just have to put a stop to it. I've got a million things to say about this. I feel like I could just keep going.

Sarah Kendzior (39:38):

I just wanna break in. We'll go back and forth. We'll do Russia corruption and US corruption because yeah, in the UK, you know, we saw this with their libel rulings, these attempts to suppress information about Kremlin operations, about Russian mafia activity. They did it to Carole Cadwalladr, they did it to Catherine Belton. I just want to note, as we've always said on this show, these operations go hand in hand. And Trump's election, as Andrea once said, was the merger of the Russian mafia in the West and the Russian mafia in the East. And there's another key figure in our government who I think we need to

introduce to this discussion and that's Mitch McConnell, who is in a business partnership—or at least a relationship—with Deripaska. He has had Deripaska investing in aluminum plants in Kentucky despite Deripaska being sanctioned by the US government.

Sarah Kendzior (40:34):

And then here's where things get interesting. So you've got McGonigal hired, while he's working illegally with Deripaska in 2016. In 2017, the Trump administration has their kayfabe WWE feud with Comey, fires him. People mistakenly think Comey is a hero but then of course it brings up the question of who's going to be the new director of the FBI. And Mitch McConnell had a suggestion. Mitch McConnell wanted Merrick Garland to be the head of the FBI and Mitch McConnell asked Trump to appoint Merrick Garland. Why did Mitch McConnell want this? Well, he thought that Garland was somebody who could keep the FBI's secrets, including this illicit relationship with the Kremlin, with organized crime and with figures like Deripaska—at least that is my assumption. That's what logic dictates here. Of course, Trump rejected this idea and instead appointed Christopher Wray, who is another corrupt FBI lackey. He went on to allow an attempted coup, allow a violent attack on the capitol.

Sarah Kendzior (41:45):

None of the organizers of that have been held accountable because of two people; Merrick Garland and Christopher Weay, both of whom remain in the Biden administration. Biden, of course, then asked, you know, appointed Garland as AG and did not fire Wray. He left him there despite this absolutely horrifying tenure. So folks need to ask some questions about why Joe Biden has the exact people that McConnell and others in the GOP wanted holding the most powerful criminal justice positions in the United States. Maybe that explains why Biden is always going on about how great Mitch McConnell is, you know? Reaching across the aisle to people who slap democracy in the face. I don't know. It's an interesting story.

Andrea Chalupa (42:36):

What's weird is that when Biden first comes in, he does what we ask him to do in one of our early tapings of 2021: He declares the Kremlin a national security threat. Then he launches his big old task force against transnational organized crime, but we haven't really heard much about that. And this whole investigation into the FBI was coming out of Los Angeles and other places far removed from the New York office, which is tainted as we've said. It's an extension of Giuliani, basically. And as a result, as we keep saying, the crimes keep happening without accountability. For instance, in 2016: Trump, Manafort, Russiagate. In 2020, you had Giuliani being the Manafort because Manafort was in prison.

Sarah Kendzior:

Still criming, but in prison.

Andrea Chalupa:

Still criming in prison. But Giuliani was working with Russian intelligence in Ukraine, including a guy named Derkach. Who is Derkach close to? Mogilevich, the brainy Don. You know what I mean? It's like, what the fuck man? Just get them. Just get them because they're trying to have their babies here. They're trying to get us citizenship for their kids. They want to entrench themselves here. They're polluting our politics by donating to both parties. They're all over New York donating, as I think you pointed out, Blavatnik's donating to useless Jay Jacobs that's holding the Democratic Party back here, which has national implications. The path to winning the House goes through New York State. We cannot win the House, we cannot win the House seats we desperately need in New York State if Jay Jacobs

remains the leader of the Democratic Party. And unfortunately he's entrenched in that position in part because of all of these big corporate genocidal donors, including Blavatnik, who has been linked to the Kremlin but you're not allowed to say that cuz then he'll sue you and all that.

Sarah Kendzior (44:28):

And linked notably to both Deripaska and to Veckselberg, so if you're hearing about either of those, Blavatnik is a US citizen and he's the proxy. He's the proxy for the sanctioned oligarchs that can't donate to all these campaigns and he's giving to both sides, often in record amounts; record recently for the Democrats and record for Kevin McCarthy who then went on to become House speaker.

Andrea Chalupa (44:51):

Yeah. And so if this sounds like a stream of consciousness *Gaslit Nation*, it's because Sarah and I have been living and breathing this. And I think, as folks have said to us that our show helps them feel sane. It's called *Gaslit Nation* because we point out the gaslighting. Well, seeing a guy like McGonigal getting taken down, that was a feeling of like, "Yes, we've known all this time. We've known all this time." And I did get a rush of feeling, "Oh, I feel sane and we weren't just crazy." like all the people that try to label us as crazy.... Here we are. I don't know man, I don't know where we go from here. I think there's this horrible sense that they will not get Trump. They absolutely will not get Trump. Trump will take them down with him if they actually do it because he's so entrenched. He knows these guys. He's collected the kompromat himself on all of 'em. So Trump's protected. So instead of taking down Trump, they're going to get idiot criminals; the low hanging fruits, the Michael Flynn's among them. And that is a guy like McGonigal.

Sarah Kendzior (45:55):

Yeah, I mean Flynn would be a real... That would be meaningful. But McGonigal, he was another hired hand and not an organizer. But I think the point you make, that it's impossible for them to take down Trump without taking down themselves in the process, that's been the explanation for this the entire time. The New York FBI is complicit and for them to tell the truth about the 2016 election or about a number of things that have happened since they implicate themselves, not just in negligence but in active corruption and active complicity. And I just wanna make one final point on McGonigal specifically. If you're wondering what he did after he retired from the FBI, which was in 2018, of course he went and worked for a company that Jared Kushner was involved in in the sale of nuclear material.

Sarah Kendzior (46:47):

That is Brookfield Property. So this traitor armed with an arsenal of classified intelligence worked for Brookfield, a scholar, Tampuson Shaw, had a thread about this. I'll just read the first tweet of it. It said, just explaining what this is: "Kushner arranged the sale of US nuclear company Westinghouse to Brookfield Business Partners. Another Brookfield subsidiary, Brookfield Property Partners, bailed him out of his 666 Fifth Avenue deal. Both are registered in Bermuda and their ownership is opaque." And then she goes on to describe how this ended up, you know, a multitude of financial relationships emerged from this, including funding separatists in eastern Ukraine, which is of course what Manafort's stock and trade was. So we're back to that again. But my point is that they waited and they did not arrest him early. They did not get him out of the FBI when he was doing.

Sarah Kendzior (47:43):

God knows what they did not get him after when he was working for a Kushner venue. And so the repercussions of that for national security, for our sovereignty, are severe. The repercussions of waiting for *any* of these people are severe. You cannot sit there and say, "Oh, I'm gonna get the little guys and

get the big fish,” which is one of those, you know, clawing mantras that we hear uttered on Twitter by these DOJ cheerleader troll bots. It's incredibly dangerous. This is a dangerous individual. He's low hanging fruit, but the fruit is rotten. And the American government has been stuffing it down our throats for about a decade or more. It's disgraceful. It's absolutely disgraceful that it took this long.

Andrea Chalupa (48:30):

Yeah. Don't expect anything from Merrick Garland. And let this also shed light on why January 6th, which was a coup being planned out, out in the open—we even announced a special for it in advance—was allowed to happen. Enough FBI agents were either sympathetic to the Trump cause, the white supremacist violence and beating down the left, or they were paid or working under someone who was paid to look the other way. I know McGonigal is like a sacrificial lamb or the transnational crime syndicate, but there's plenty more of him where that came from.

[closing song is [WE CAN'T BREATHE](#), with music by Rayna Zemel and Chief Wakil, lyrics by Chief Wakil and Kelli Wakili, film by Miranda Winters, Rocky Romano and Rayna Zemel.]

[outro theme music - roll credits]

Andrea Chalupa:

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

Sarah Kendzior:

We want to encourage 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:

We encourage you to help support Ukraine by donating to Razom for Ukraine at razomforukraine.org. 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 theorangutangproject.org.

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:

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:

Original music in *Gaslit Nation* is produced by David Whitehead, Martin Vissenberg, Nik Farr, Demien Arriaga and Karlyn Daigle.

Sarah Kendzior:

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Andrea Chalupa:

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