Gaslit Nation Transcript 05 April 2023 "Donald Trump Indictment Special" https://www.patreon.com/posts/donald-trump-81059408

[advertisement]

[opening clip]

Fox News Host (00:00:30):

Here we have just gotten word former president Donald Trump has been indicted by a grand jury in New York. Trump was under investigation by the DA's office for his alleged hush money payment to adult film star Stormy Daniels during the 2016 campaign.

(audible gasps and outrage can be heard under the clip)

[theme music up and under]

Sarah Kendzior (00:00:54):

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 (00:01:06):

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 doesn't want you to see, so be sure to watch it.

Sarah Kendzior (00:01:21):

And this is *Gaslit Nation*, a podcast covering corruption in the United States and rising autocracy around the world.

Andrea Chalupa (00:01:28):

And we've got announcements. We've got announcements but first, the opening clip that you heard, that was Fox News—along with audible gasps that you may have heard in the very beginning of that clip, announcing today's special—which is the super special of the indictment of Donald J. Barron, whatever his secret name is for himself when he leaks to the press about himself.

Sarah Kendzior (00:01:53):

John Barron.

Andrea Chalupa (00:01:54):

Yeah, that's right. John Barron. And I just wanna be sure that you all heard the audible gasps. So let's listen to that again. Here it is from the beginning. Pay attention to the very start of this clip here.

[beginning of opening clip repeats]

Andrea Chalupa (00:02:06):

There you have it. So we're going to be going into all things indictment special. It's April 4th, 1:30 PM. We're going to be speaking in—

Sarah Kendzior (00:02:14):

It's 1:30 Eastern Time and 12:30 Central Time. Represent. Central Time.

Andrea Chalupa (00:02:19):

That's right, that's right. I am currently broadcasting from New York City, the home of the Trump Infomercial Circus, played up by that disgusting display by mainstream media all day yesterday, breathlessly following every single move of Trump as he showed up. You know, Florida Man leaving Florida to go appear for his arrest. Big arrest day Tuesday. There's 34 counts of felonies having to do with fraud. Surprise, surprise. There's all this ongoing debate: Is this case going to be strong enough? Is it going to get to trial? Will it survive trial? What does it look like? What will ultimately be the possible conviction? And so on. So we're going to end this show with a clip of Alvin Bragg, Manhattan DA, summing up what these charges are and what they mean. And so you'll have information on that. But right now we're recording *before* the indictments have been shared.

Andrea Chalupa (00:03:26):

If you want some good analysis from good legal experts on Twitter, we recommend Elie Mystal, a Harvard Law grad who writes for *The Nation*. He wrote a piece that we discussed in this week's bonus episode on Patreon that was sort of pouring cold water on the indictment fever saying, "Hey, there might be a statute of limitations problem here. Bragg might be trying to engineer some legal theories here that might not hold up. So don't give your hopes up. Just take that with a grain of salt." And then another legal expert that I really like is Ryan Goodman of Just Security. He's somebody who is very outspoken. He calls out the Biden administration when he feels it needs to be called out, especially on how the Biden admin has been dragging its feet on prosecuting/investigating war crimes by Russia in Ukraine. So Ryan Goodman is another legal expert to follow.

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:20):

So during this week of Trump-induced chaos, which is giving us all flashbacks of what that terror was like stuck under him for four years, those are two voices in this wilderness to lean on right now to make sense of the legalities of this indictment once finally revealed. Sarah and I are going to, as always, go into the broader strokes of what this all means for our democracy and this interesting time that we live in. But first, for some fun stuff: We are having a book launch party, a live recording that you are all invited to if you are subscribed to the show at the Truth-teller level or higher on our Patreon. And you can come join a live recording of *Gaslit Nation* on Tuesday, May 23rd, let's say... Sarah, what time works for you? [laughs].

Sarah Kendzior: Uhh, this time.

Andrea Chalupa:

This time, 1:30 PM Eastern, wherever you are in the world, come join us, 1:30 PM Eastern on May 23rd for a live Zoom taping of *Gaslit Nation*. It's a book party where Sarah and I are going to go into the making of our brand new graphic novel coming out this June called *Dictatorship: It's Easier Than You Think*.

Andrea Chalupa (00:05:42):

And that you can buy. <u>You can pre-order a copy</u>. We'll have a link in the show notes for this week's episode found as always on our Patreon page and/or wherever you get your podcasts. And if you want a copy of this book, if you want a free copy, just make sure you're signed on to our Patreon community of listeners at the Truth-teller level or higher, because every month as a thank you to our community, we're giving away one copy a month, starting now, for at least the next year. We'll see if we like doing this and maybe we'll keep going [laughs]. But we worked hard on this book and we wanna celebrate. It's Prom Night at *Gaslit Nation*, okay? So sign up to get your chance to be given a thank you copy of *Dictatorship: It's Easier Than You Think* with a personal message from us as a thank you. And we're giving away one copy once a month to subscribers/listeners at The Truth-teller level higher on Patreon. And if you're also subscribed at that level, good news: Come on over to the book party, the live taping at 1:30 PM Eastern on Tuesday, May 23rd. It's gonna be fun.

Sarah Kendzior (00:06:48):

Now, on with the show, yes?

Andrea Chalupa (00:06:49): Not yet!

Sarah Kendzior:

Oh.

Andrea Chalupa:

Next week's bonus is running a bit early. We have this big deep dive into the warlord street fighting that's going on among the Russian elite right now, including a major high profile assassination in St. Petersburg that took place this Sunday. So we're gonna talk all about that in a special bonus episode that we're running, it's supposed to be next week's bonus episode, but it's so interesting and layered that we're running it early, this Friday, heading into the holiday weekend. So if you're traveling, you have something to listen to to get a sense of the impending collapse of Russia due to Putin's mafia state and how they're all eating each other now and how China likely plays a role in all of that. So look out for this week's Patreon bonus episode. It's supposed to be next week's bonus, but it's running early Friday, heading into this holiday.

Sarah Kendzior (00:07:46): Alright, you wanna kick it off? Indictment Special?

Andrea Chalupa (00:07:49): Indictment Special. [clip of celebratory music]

Andrea Chalupa:

Alright, so "C U Next Tuesday" was trending last week on Twitter because Tuesday, today, is the day Trump had to appear in court. And it's also, C U Next Tuesday is a funny acronym and I got to explain to my French husband what it means. Trump has finally been indicted for what's being reported as 34 felony counts related to business fraud, an indictment from a Manhattan grand jury in a case brought by Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg, who came to power thanks to the progressive grassroots engine in New York City beating a rich lady endorsed by Wall Street. It's important to note that the Manhattan DA race was cherry-picked, or whatever. It was where the progressive engine of New York really put its resources to ensure that Bragg got over the finish line. And some might say it was at the expense of the mayor's race, right?

Andrea Chalupa (00:08:48):

Because the mayor's race, Eric Adams snuck in because the other guy, that weird Silicon Valley guy, I forget his name...

Sarah Kendzior:

Andrew Yang?

Andrea Chalupa:

Yes. He sucked all the media attention out of the room and he was this scary tone-deaf candidate that got all the attention. And the progressive races, with the exception of Maya Wiley, were a bit lackluster and a bit of a mess. And where was the progressive grassroots engine to protect us from an Eric Adams reign, an Eric Adams victory? Well, the progressives, as my understanding was during that election, the progressives were all busy making sure Alvin Bragg got in. It was a grassroots victory of a prosecutor famous for suing Trump over a hundred times. And it appears—we hope to God we're waiting for his press conference later this afternoon—that he finally got him. I know people want more indictments and obviously much sooner, save for the Mueller report, which is essentially a charging memo.

Andrea Chalupa (00:09:47):

Robert Mueller famously said under oath to Congress when asked by a Republican member of Congress whether Trump could be indicted when he left office, and Mueller said, "Yes." So yes, coming to power with the Kremlin's help and wreaking havoc should have been the first shoe to drop back when we really needed it, before Trump could remake the courts into the *Handmaid's Tale* to take away women's rights like *Roe v. Wade.* So yes, Trump was not indicted for being an authoritarian mob boss who looks up to Putin and Hitler and for trying to violently overthrow our democracy, leading to the deaths of several people and mass trauma and depression. But, you know, the indictment came because he paid off a porn star to remain quiet about their affair. It's a perfectly natural reaction to be upset by this and acknowledge that it's not enough. It's also perfectly natural to celebrate because you're into global street parties. I, for one, opened a bottle of champagne. I just wanted to take in the moment. We are obviously crawling out of a black hole of corruption caused by the Nixon criminal enterprise, followed by the Reagan criminal enterprise, followed by the George W. Bush war profiteers and criminal enterprise. All of those crime syndicates had a baby together and it was Trump. So it's okay to take in a little moment; a little moment of collective celebration.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:09): See, I feel like we're still down in the hole.

Andrea Chalupa (00:11:13):

Well, obviously.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:14):

If you want, share your views, but I have things to say on that. This is one of these moments where I always wonder, you know, because we're in that X-ennial group, whether I really am more Gen X and you're more millennial. And now I'm kind of feeling that, I'm feeling very Alice in Chains.

Andrea Chalupa (00:11:30): We're cross generational.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:31): Down the hole.

Andrea Chalupa (00:11:32):

Cross generational podcast, yeah.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:33):

Because I feel nothing. I feel absolutely nothing. I am not celebrating for sure. I'm also not, like, mournful because I was already mournful because I've been mournful for seven years. And what I worry very much is that this is a reality TV indictment, that the purpose of this indictment on this charge, which you noted is so, so small compared to all of the horrific things that he has done; sedition, obstruction of justice, abuse of the pardon power, being a Kremlin asset; things that we need no future official to do or repeat and they cannot have license to by pointing to the fact that Trump did it. It's more that, to get back to that Elie Mystal article you mentioned, there appears at this point to be a very serious problem with the time constraints of this case. I'm just gonna read one paragraph from this so folks know what Elie wrote.

Sarah Kendzior (00:12:29):

He writes, "The first issue that Bragg has is time. Trump committed the underlying campaign finance offense in 2016 and the statute of limitations on bookkeeping fraud and campaign finance violations is five years. That brings you to 2021. The statute of limitations for tax evasion is three years. Even if you don't start the clock on that until the story breaks in the news in 2018, that brings you once again to 2021. To get to 2023, Bragg appears to be arguing that the statute of limitations paused while Trump was president and living out of state. That's a theory, but not necessarily a good one and certainly not one that has been tested enough to know how it's gonna hold up in the courts. Remember, the alleged immunity Trump had from prosecutions applied only at the federal level. Local prosecutors like Bragg's predecessor Cyrus Vance, who was the Manhattan DA during Trump's presidency, could have charged him with this crime at any time."

Sarah Kendzior (00:13:29):

And so my theory about this is that they purposefully withheld this charge until it didn't matter legally, until they ran out the clock, until the statute of limitations made it impossible to pursue. And I will

remind you again we are recording this at 1:45 Eastern Time. We haven't seen the full indictment yet. We haven't seen what all the charges are. Maybe there are some where the statute of limitations has not run out. I find that unlikely because the statute of limitations has now run out on many of the crimes that Trump committed in office. One of the most damning was when the statute of limitations on the crimes listed in the Mueller report ran out. And that has been their strategy. That's been Trump's lifelong strategy, is to run out the clock, to bribe, threaten and intimidate into getting what he wants.

Sarah Kendzior (00:14:21):

And he's been doing this for 50 years. In addition to this being Trump's first indictment—and that does matter. I mean, it matters in the sense of it's breaking public perception of him being invincible in the sense that, you know, the two impeachments contributed to that as well. But this is the 50th anniversary of Donald Trump being investigated by the Department of Justice. The first time that they investigated him was in 1973, and that's when Trump hired Roy Cohn, who taught him all the dirty tools of the trade. And then he went on to commit a multitude of crimes for his entire life, not just in office, with connections to organized crime that are very well documented. And our institutions did nothing. There was no accountability, no indictments, and hardly even an attempt to take him down or to stop others in his crime cult.

Sarah Kendzior (00:15:14):

Instead, they partnered with him for the most nefarious motives and that leaves me with very little faith that this is meant to be a serious indictment. I think they're just throwing some raw meat out there for all of us with common sense, who know that he's a grave danger and feel that he should have been constrained long ago (for example, before he ran for president for the fifth time). And they've come up with this charge, which is weak and small, even if it is pursued, and is unlikely to lead to prison time. And he can still run again. Even if he is convicted, there's no rule against it. So I'm kind of like, eh, you know, I mean, good for Stormy Daniels, I guess. And everyone should remember that this is a case where a woman was threatened by Trump's goon squad.

Sarah Kendzior (00:16:01):

Her child was threatened. And that's a tactic that he's used on a multitude of people for his entire life and also while in office. It would be nice if maybe this serves as a springboard for other cases, other charges. I have my doubts that it will. I think this is going to be the Trump new reality show, the sequel to the *Celebrity Apprentice*. You know, this is just gonna play out on television in a way probably reminiscent of the Johnny Depp/Amber Heard trial, where we're seeing little bits of it all over social media whether we want to or not. And I don't know... I know you've got a lot to say, so I'll stop there. I'm just gonna say definitely read that Elie Mystal article and pay attention to the actual laws.

Andrea Chalupa (00:16:45):

Yeah, and check in with Elie Mystal as the indictments are released and people read them and parse through them and just hear what he has to say. And also Ryan Goodman, those are the two that we're gonna be reading among others. If there's anybody that's helping you make sense of the legalese of all this, let us know. We're obviously looking at everything from an authoritarian lens because they're all about pageantry. Hitler was well known for his own theatrics. He turned his trial into a recruitment tool for the Nazi movement. He wrote *Mein Kampf* in prison. He really springboarded out of his violent coup attempt. So this is obviously very dangerous times and Donald Trump should not be allowed to run for office. He could win. I mean, if the Kremlin and China... I know that it sounds really counter logical, but they want to see the US be destroyed from within.

Andrea Chalupa (00:17:41):

Our enemies could do some major cyber warfare on the electoral college counties needed to win, just like they probably likely did in 2016, focusing on states that were the focus of the grassroots movement, Audit the Vote, that then became the focus of the Mueller report, where Paul Manafort had shared polling data on these states with a GRU agent, a Russian agent, Russian intelligence. Why would he need that polling data? To know what counties were needed to just win enough votes. So what we're saying is that in the oh-so-close electoral college where, if you look at all the votes combined, Trump didn't lose by that much in the electoral college. Yes, of course he got wiped out in the popular vote. But because we're stuck under this slavery, the statue to the slavery that built America, the Holocaust to that slavery known as the electoral college, that devil's bargain to help get our country founded under our federal government.

Andrea Chalupa (00:18:39):

You know, he could win. I know people think that's shocking because the Trumpian mini-mes got wiped out in the midterms. I do have faith in the American people. As we're always saying on the show, grassroots power is the most reliable power we have left. I do think every single one of us, we're gonna exhaust ourselves, put our lives on hold to fight like hell to ensure he loses that election. But it shouldn't have to come down to us. It should have come down to law enforcement a very long time ago.

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmhmm. <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

A Russian asset whose entire family fortune has relied on inheritance from Fred Trump, who was mobbed up with the Russians in Brighton Beach, developing Brighton Beach. And they, with all of their shady business practices, were dependent by their own admission on Russian money. And then they had a campaign run by a well-known criminal operative in Ukraine, Paul Manafort. So it should never have gotten to this point, as we're always saying in the show, but here we are. Which brings us to Melania Trump because I would like to just get petty for a moment, because I do have a PhD in Petty. Melania Trump, one of the original leaders of the incredibly violent (in terms of incitement to violence) birther movement, the birther movement which her husband and Melania drove in the mainstream media, among the social media far-right rabid white supremacists out there, made the first Black president look illegitimate. They challenged his very citizenship because he was Black. They demanded to see his birth certificate. That's why it's called the birther movement. Melania, as one of the leaders of the birther movement, which laid the groundwork of Trump coming to power.

Andrea Chalupa (00:20:24):

It was all part of his big run for presidency. And media titans like Jeff Zucker ate it up and built on it, and Mark Burnett with *The Apprentice* series, they gave Trump all the primetime, all the attention that he craved. It's sick that this was also normalized at the time. And I'm telling you, future historians are gonna look back at us as barbarians. And I'm sure many people living through this at the time felt this as well. So Melania Trump, birther queen... The fact that she was cheated on by this disgusting man when she had just given birth, and he fucked a porn star and complimented that porn star by saying, "Oh, you look like my daughter, Ivanka."

Sarah Kendzior: Mmhmm. <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

I mean, she's getting all of this thrown into her face. And you know she deserves it. What motive would a woman like that have to marry someone like Trump? What is her own baggage? There's been lots of speculation on Melania. Her family was quite wealthy back in what was then Yugoslavia. Her father traveled abroad quite a bit. He had a Mercedes. He was a car dealer. He had a file by the secret police in Yugoslavia, like so many. That doesn't mean anything. But there's a weird something there with Melania. Twitter has, of course, gone off the deep end speculating on this. There was a viral clip of Melania meeting Putin and looking absolutely terrified meeting him. She smiles to his face and as soon as it's over, she looks like she's about to be slashed in a horror movie. And that's a big contrast to a previous meeting she had. What happened to Melania that in Helsinki at the Helsinki Putin/Trump summit, where Putin looked like he had the world in the palm of his hand, that nothing could stop him, because there he had the president of the United States, Donald Trump, on a leash in Helsinki before the eyes of the world.

Andrea Chalupa (00:22:18):

And Melania in that moment, for whatever reason, looked terrified. And I'm telling you, it was victories like that by Putin that gave him the green light to go and slaughter Ukraine and take all of Ukraine. That's what that was all building towards. So yes, Trump laid the groundwork for the total genocidal invasion of Ukraine, and if he becomes president, it's over for Ukraine. And Poland is next, the Baltic states and so on. All of this is to say is weirdo Melania, who waltzed right into this situation room in the White House in 2019 when there was a big raid on isis and she was coming in and talking to Trump, her husband, and the men and women who were tasked with full on hunting and killing isis. And she was just waltzing in there and giving her opinion on things and how to play this victory of catching ISIS for the public.

Andrea Chalupa (00:23:11):

So you know that this person, Melania, who had the most morbid Christmas decorations in the White House [laughs], like these blood red cries for help. She destroyed Jackie Kennedy's rose garden and so on, made it into a giant beige mess of, of no flavor. This has to be on some level getting to her. And I'm just mentioning all this because I hope it does. And God forgive me for that. I'm very sorry about that. But I do wanna point out that at the heart of this is birther queen Melania getting it rubbed in her face by the whole world that she married a monster of a person and he did this horrible thing to her. And what else would she expect from someone like Trump? So what was her motive ultimately for marrying a monster like that?

Sarah Kendzior (00:23:53):

I just think she doesn't care because he got away with everything else and she has a ton of money and she can do whatever she wants. I mean, granted, you know, ostensibly she's had to have sex with Donald Trump. So there's... you know, the punishment has fit the crime. But like, I mean, I don't know. I honest to God forgot about her until you brought her up. I forgot that she existed. And as I said before with Stormy Daniels, I've always felt that Trump wanted that story out. It was interesting to me when it emerged in the beginning of 2018. That's when we first heard about Stormy Daniels because that was right after the indictments of Paul Manafort and Michael Flynn. And so those were the first signs that the Mueller probe might actually be serious.

Sarah Kendzior (00:24:37):

And at that time, in fall 2017, we already felt that Mueller was too slow, that the probe was taking too long, and the damage to our democracy was too severe. And so that was kind of a sign that they're

finally moving in the right direction. Then the Stormy Daniels story arrives, therefore giving Trump the image of somebody who a porn star would voluntarily have sex with, which of course goes against the many rape allegations that had been leveled at him in the year before in 2016 and then continuing on through the launch of the MeToo movement. That includes allegations from victims of Jeffrey Epstein's trafficking operation; a 13 year old, or a woman who said that when she was 13 years old Trump raped her. I felt like the Stormy Daniel's story was basically good for Trump because it played into this veneer of masculine heterosexual virility that he doesn't really express in a natural way.

Sarah Kendzior (00:25:37):

As I've mentioned before, he had two green card wives and then he had Marla Maples selected for him by political advisors as part of a southern strategy back when he was contemplating running for president in the late '80s/early '90s. He hasn't really had a lot of love interests. The person closest to him until he died was Roy Cohn. This is a very lonely, isolated, insecure man. So Stormy kind of made him seem like, you know, I guess desirable. The part of course that rang true about the Stormy Daniels case and that's much more serious are the tactics; threats and bribes and NDAs and then when that doesn't work, threats to her child, who was a baby. Threats to her family. And then we saw those tactics get used again and again.

Sarah Kendzior (00:26:26):

But I remember that story broke right around the time that Michael Wolf, who again, you know, that's an author who I see as a Trump cover-up guy. He covers up crime with scandal, and he released *Fire and Fury* in that same month in January, 2018, which buried the very serious charges that were being brought up by the Mueller probe and the very serious conversations about Kremlin and other foreign interference into the election and about the direction our country was headed in terms of white supremacist fascist movements that we had seen in, for example, Charlottesville that year. It all got kind of sidelined by this scandal and by people like Michael Avenatti, who of course went on to be convicted himself, constantly being a TV presence and then launching his own campaign for president. They want us to pay attention to the scandals, so they distract us from the crimes.

Sarah Kendzior (00:27:24):

And so I find it very interesting that of all the cases that could have been brought by the Manhattan DA, they chose the Stormy Daniels one, one of the most superficial, inconsequential cases, when we literally had a attempted coup, attack on the Capitol, confessions of sedition, confessions of obstruction of justice, endless threats to private citizens, endless threats to public officials, a democracy in tatters, a DOJ that remains immobile and inert in the face of all those threats and therefore has made supporters of Trump assume that he really did get the election stolen underneath him because, you know, if it hadn't been the case, clearly he would've been prosecuted. We are in such a hole. And then just one final thing. I just wanna make sure I say this on the show in case I forget: The worst mistake anyone can make right now is to think that the crisis the United States faces is about Donald Trump and Donald Trump alone.

Sarah Kendzior (00:28:22):

This has always been a crisis about a network. This is a network of transnational organized crime movements that have appeared in a number of countries and that are backed by operatives who have no particular loyalty to anything but their wallets and their crime cults. And we've seen multiple players in this field be indicted in the last few years; people like Paul Manafort, Steve Bannon, Roger Stone, Michael Flynn, others who should have been indicted like Rudy Giuliani and Bill Barr, and most of all Jared Kushner. That has always been my litmus test of whether we are actually going to see justice and accountability in this country is whether Jared Kushner is held accountable for the multitude of horrific offenses that he committed while he was working in the White House, a place he never should have been allowed to be in because he'd committed so many security clearance violations beforehand.

Sarah Kendzior (00:29:20):

This is actually something he could have been prosecuted for but they didn't even throw him out of office; an extremely dangerous individual tied to Netanyahu, MBS, Putin and his oligarch network, and to the mafia. At heart, this is about the mafia. They want us to think it is not about the mafia. They want us to think the worst thing Trump did was fuck a porn star and try to pay her off on the side and it's not even close. And if folks fall for this, if they don't continue to push for full accountability and for a standard of precedent that makes sure that any future office holders cannot commit the exact same crimes that Trump and his crime cult did, then we will be in trouble. We will have more attacks on the Capitol, more sedition, more treason. We're already at that point. We already have the sedition caucus still in office making our laws, making right-wing, hard line repressive laws that deprive Americans of their rights.

Sarah Kendzior (00:30:22):

As everybody's up in this media circus, you have people marching in protests around the country in states like Tennessee and in Wisconsin and anywhere where people's rights are on the line. They are fighting back and what power brokers would like is for you to pay great attention to every move Trump makes, OJ-style as he mosies on up the highway, and ignore the fact that this is a nation in pain. This is a nation that has been betrayed. This is a nation that has undergone trauma, and that trauma is directly connected and caused by, in many respects, Donald Trump. But it also has spread beyond him into a bigger movement and it derived from a bigger, hardline, right-wing political movement wedded to organize crime that's been in place, I mean, easily since the Reagan era with literally the same participants from that era, but, you know, really for my parents' lifetime as well from the post World War II era onward, it all needs to come out. It all needs to be resolved and justice needs to be done

Andrea Chalupa (00:31:25):

Without question. Absolutely. Very well said. That can go into our next graphic novel. [laughs]. Who will illustrate that?

Sarah Kendzior:

The one we publish from the Gulag.

Andrea Chalupa:

Yes, the Gulag edition.

Sarah Kendzior:

The DeSantis Gulag.

Andrea Chalupa:

Yes, the DeSantis Gulag, which will be like a really evil version, an upside down world version of Disney World. Okay, so fun fact: The case the Manhattan DA brought that led to Trump's indictment began with the Mueller report. The Mueller investigation farmed out around a dozen investigations, including this one into the hush money payments. And here's what else is coming down the pipe that looks a bit

promising, we hope, if you're a praying person. So there's the Jack Smith special counsel appointed by Attorney General Merrick Garland. Smith is focused on the classified documents case, the treasure trove of highly classified documents, including nuclear secrets kept in the foreign spy viper den and blackmail market known as Mar-a-Lago. He's also looking at January 6th; that super chill, no big deal thing that happened on January 6th where Trump tried to violently overthrow. According to Fox News' Brett Baier, several secret service agents who likely were with Trump on January 6th are being forced to testify. So if Jack Smith is a real person, if he's not like the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus—

Sarah Kendzior:

An AI creation.

Andrea Chalupa: Yes, exactly right. I mean, if you read—

Sarah Kendzior (00:32:56):

Literally, I've wondered, but yeah.

Andrea Chalupa (00:32:58):

Yes. I feel like Winston Smith in 1984 when I think about Jack Smith.

Sarah Kendzior: Yes! Yeah.

Andrea Chalupa:

Like he's just this like fantastical character that everyone puts their hopes and dreams on.

Sarah Kendzior (00:33:08):

Most un-Googleable name possible. Although I remember we did, you know, we found stuff about him. We found things about the war crimes tribunals and Kosovo that he had done relatively little work on. Yeah, I mean, it's, it's another hype man. One interesting thing that happened over the last year that's reflected in our coverage of Jack Smith and other people's propaganda shows on Jack Smith, is that Google has broken. You can no longer search for things. I used to say endlessly when Trump first started running for office, it's in the public domain. Look it up. Every crime this man has committed over the last, you know, 35 years is in the public domain. Go read Wayne Barrett. Go read David Cay Johnston. Go read all of these authors who've documented it. All that stuff is gone.

Sarah Kendzior (00:33:58):

It's behind paywalls. Or it used to be available in Google Books, it's not available through a preview. It's in libraries. You know, if you work hard, maybe you'll find it. But also as I mentioned I think in the bonus episode this week, we have a situation where mainstream media outlets are deleting their own articles related to a number of topics. The one that they deleted last week that I happened to notice because it was all my source notes for our show on Oklahoma City and the Fort Smith Sedition trial in 1988 and other things, was articles on that. Articles that AP published in like 1985, they're gone. They're just deleted. They don't exist anymore. I mean, maybe you can get on Lexisnexis, I'll have to try that. But anyway, if you wanna get tha history, if you wanna have access to your history, you have to pay a lot of money.

Sarah Kendzior (00:34:44):

And I've noticed that the articles about Trump's crimes over the time he was in office have been either paywalled—you know, all those paywalls that went up in 2021—or they are also gone. And one interesting thing to do is go to BBC for example. They've deleted a whole bunch of Trump Mueller probe crime articles. I mean, hopefully now they won't go and delete these two. I've noticed that the foreign language additions of BBC, those articles are still up. So you can go and get the information as long as you can translate it. But why are we in this situation? Why is the mainstream media deleting evidence of crimes? And these are digital native articles. There's not a print record a lot of the time for us to fall back on. Our history is being rewritten.

Sarah Kendzior (00:35:29):

And so when Jack Smith was appointed as special counsel, of course the first thing I was gonna do is research him, vet him. And I ran not into the obstacle of him being named Jack Smith, but into the obstacle of the great era of information access, information freedom, and decades of archived history being freely available online, it's just not there. Websites have gone under, they're inaccessible and it's harder to put the pieces together. And that is the state that corrupt power brokers want Americans to be in. They want us to be exhausted from the nonstop corruption and crime and inflammatory, hateful rhetoric. But they also want us to be—if we are still motivated to find the facts—unable to find them because they literally remove them from public existence. And so we are relying now on our collective memory.

Sarah Kendzior (00:36:24):

That is by the way, why if you go to gaslitnationpod.com, you will find the episodes and the transcripts of every show that we've done because we feel an obligation to keep this information out there and accessible to everybody. All of it is free. And we are just two people with a podcast, completely independent, completely funded by our audience. And if we paywalled it, we'd probably make a lot more money, but the stakes are too great. And with everybody else closing shop or joining these weird little paywalled networks, or networks that are run by various PACs or political organizations, it's more important than ever that the facts remain independently sourced, verified, and held independently. It's a scary time. And that's also just something I want folks to consider when they're looking into the Trump indictment, is that they're gonna struggle to get a lot of the information that they freely found in 2018 when the Stormy Daniels story first broke.

Sarah Kendzior (00:37:24):

They'll look for those original sources and they'll either have to pay up or they just quite literally will be gone. And Twitter is an extension of that of course, too, under Elon Musk with people nuking their accounts, therefore deleting years/decades of firsthand observations and links and so on. And also the fact that Elon Musk wants this. This is a controlled demolition. He wants people—he and his backers—to be unable to put the pieces together, to exchange information freely, to have thoughtful conversations, to cite their sources. They're trying to make it more difficult to post links on there. And that's a crisis that's laid over the crisis of indictment. And I wonder about that too, about the timing. I wonder about their need to get social media and media in a certain position so that when this indictment occurs, instead of everyone bringing up articles about all of the crimes that Trump committed in the past that are well reported on, well documented, instead, we can't see the people who we're following.

Sarah Kendzior (00:38:23):

We can't access the information we're reaching and we're stuck in OJ-land with a bunch of vacuous talking head pseudo legal experts spouting speculative nonsense that completely removes the broader context of Trump's history from the current conversation. And that, of course, is taking place in a much more right-wing media than we initially had. We've addressed this on the show before, how starting around September of 2022, networks began mass firings. They started firing reporters who covered corruption, reporters who are women, reporters who are not white, and they started hiring a lot of hard right-wing voices. It even extended into entertainment at the streaming networks where you could see projects being shelved that were made by creators of color. You know, even something like *Bat Girl* getting shelved for allegedly a tax deduction, it's not. It's to shape the broader political culture. Sarah Kendzior (00:39:23):

They were, at the time—and I said this back then, I'm like, they're fertilizing the ground. It was like how 2015 had a sort of similar media story to it. They were fertilizing the ground for Trump to grow back then. And I kept wondering in fall 2022, what are they fertilizing the ground for now? And I think it's this. It's this combo indictment on a weak charge and campaign launch, because of course he's running for office again to be mafia Grover Cleveland. And so all of that is stuff you should keep in mind.

Andrea Chalupa (00:39:54):

Mmhmm. <affirmative>. Let's go back to other investigations that are still ongoing. There is the New York State Attorney General Tish James bringing a civil lawsuit about, you guessed it, fraud by the Trump organization lying to lenders and insurers about their assets because they're just one big Potemkin Ponzi scheme, trust fund-gone-awry, Russian asset, money laundering Kremlin clown car. And then you have—

Sarah Kendzior (00:40:29):

Say what you really feel.

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:30):

[laughs]. Then you have Georgia which even the most cynical pundits say looks promising. The case in Georgia is brought by Fani Willis, the district attorney for Fulton County, which includes much of Atlanta. This is the case of whether/how Trump and his lackeys tried to steal the 2020 presidential election by pressuring officials in Georgia to magically produce the votes they needed to win the state. This is the stuff of dictatorships. Trump thinks he's Putin's United Russia party where votes just magically appear. The videos, the security camera videos, the videos that have been taken over the years by extremely brave activists across Russia of ballot boxes across Russia physically being stuffed, physically being stuffed with votes for Putin's United Russia party. That is what Trump was trying to desperately engineer through his pressure campaign which is, again, an incitement to violence in Georgia. You had that Georgian official that had to speak out and say, "Enough already. People might be killed, people could very well be killed."

Andrea Chalupa (00:41:40):

And a few weeks later they were on January 6th, 2021 and in the weeks and months after, with the many deaths by suicide of the police officers who risked their lives protecting our very democracy. Yet Trump walks free with his cult, inciting his cult, and runs for office. Then the fourth case is of course Alvin Bragg. And we're going to play at the end of this episode a clip, this press conference. So I just wanna point out of those four cases that everybody is breathlessly watching; Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg, New York Attorney General Tish James, Fani Willis who is a district attorney for a county, for Fulton County in Georgia. Out of those four cases, three are being led by Black prosecutors and that is everything that these authoritarian white old stormtroopers, like the Young Republican Club being the stormtroopers

and then the white old dinosaurs, the whole white patriarchy, proud white male patriarchy of the Republican Party, the Christian Nationalist Republican Party, that they are violently working towards with their extreme gerrymandering that furthers extremism, with their blatant attack and rolling back of civil rights legislation, landmark civil rights legislation like the voting rights law has been completely gutted by John Roberts' Federalist Society-packed Supreme Court, when you have their massive sweeping propaganda empire of Rupert Murdoch and all of the Fox News spinoffs like One America Network and Newsmax and so on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:43:23):

What the far right is trying to engineer in America is to protect white supremacy that built this country through genocide and a centuries-long abusive, disgusting, evil system of slavery. They see the writing on the wall. The reports have all been out there, the research has all been out there that there is a browning of America, that this historic melting pot is, is, you know, the big fear of that love couple, the love marriage that fought for marriage rights in I believe it was the state of Virginia. And even in Russia where the Republicans have their ideological cousins, even in Russia, when you talk to Putin supporters—the fascists in Russia—they believe that white people and non-white people making babies together will produce mutants. So we're talking about white supremacy ideology that is masked with all sorts of dog whistles, but not so much anymore because Trump has unleashed a Pandora's box of Nazis.

Andrea Chalupa (00:44:22):

You have Nazis in Florida that are blasting projections of swastikas onto buildings. They're out and they're proud and they're out in the open. The hoods are off, then tiki torches are out. So all of this to say is what the white supremacy power structure in America, what it ultimately fears—and unfortunately you have clueless white women in many of the American suburbs going along for the ride, knowingly, some un unknowingly because they haven't had to understand how life really works. It's a dangerous time and what they're fighting against is just good old fashioned accountability where equality feels like oppression. And so it's not that Alvin Bragg and Fani Willis and Tish James are going after Trump because he's a Nazi leader, who by his own wife Ivana's admission kept a book of Hitler's speeches by his bedside and every authoritarian expert who has studied Hitler is like, "Yeah, this man has modeled himself on Hitler."

Andrea Chalupa (00:45:20):

Sarah was mentioning earlier Stormy Daniels, of how Trump wants that story to be out. Where does that come from? Mussolini. Mussolini used to like to talk about, you know, being like a manly man who would bed women. He would wear that like a flag draped over him. And Trump is cut from that same cloth. And so the reason why these three prosecutors who happen to be Black are going after Trump is because it's the law. It is the law. And they just happen to not give Trump the benefit of the doubt. They happen to not fall into the trap of institutional politeness. They happen to not fall into the trap of both-sidesing it because in the communities where they come from, you know, it's like when they see a threat, they see a threat. They come from communities that know an existential threat when they see one, whereas Merick Garland kicking the can down the road and having this mysterious Jack Smith figure come in to be the special counsel, that's really as we've always said waiting out the clock and it shows that white privilege, the white blinders.

Sarah Kendzior (00:46:25):

I just wanna add one thing just to compliment what you were saying. It's a matter of race, but it's also a matter of insularity and exclusion. And one of Trump's great advantages his entire life was his and his father's deep connections—and Roy Cohn's deep connections—into politics in New York and politics in DC. And you can look at all of the people who were tasked with prosecuting Trump and you'll see that

they actually had a personal relationship with him. There's Cy Vance, who was supposed to prosecute Don Jr. and Ivanka for fraud back in 2012. He was given a massive campaign donation by one of Trump's lawyers and he decided not to do it. And then Cy Vance's father, of course, had been Secretary of State under Jimmy Carter. This is an insular network. You had Mueller as head of the FBI while Trump and in particular the Russian Mafia, people close to Trump—Michael Cohen, Felix Sater, all these others—were criming it up.

Sarah Kendzior (00:47:23):

When Mueller finally did indict Paul Manafort, it was for a crime that Manafort had committed while Mueller was head of the FBI, but I guess he just didn't get around to it back then. Again, this is somebody in Trump's corner, at least in the corner of the crime cult surrounding Trump. They don't wanna actually arrest him. Same with Comey. Comey takes the head of the Russian mafia off of the FBI list. Comey releases bullshit about Hillary Clinton a week before the election to try to tilt it to Trump. They're all not going to obviously prosecute him. Garland. Garland is mentored by Jamie Gorelick. We've gone over her before. She's the new Roy Cohn. Also, she was Ivanka and Jared's ethics lawyer. She is who got them in the White House. Therefore, if Merrick Garland prosecutes Donald Trump, he's going to end up looking into that whole network, which includes his very best friend and mentor and also her mentor, Alan Dershowitz, who is Trump's lawyer.

Sarah Kendzior (00:48:19):

Again, very insular. And then of course Bill Barr is like the GOP cleanup guy for multiple administrations; somebody who will reliably protect Trump and act as his faithful servant, as his personal attorney. One of the reasons that these guys got into their positions in the first place—besides nepotism inside Vance's case—is because they're white. You know, Trump does not want Black people in a circle. That's the club. And to get into that club, you either need to be white or you need to be like Eric Adams; basically a racist who happens to be Black. And there are other examples of terrible hostile leaders, you know, Lori Lightfoot, etc. But this little legal club in particular, I have noticed it too, that Tish James would not be allowed in this world. Alvin Bragg was not allowed in this world.

Sarah Kendzior (00:49:10):

And even when you look at the commentators on TV. Who is taking this seriously? Who has all along said, "Of course Trump's not above the law. Of course you need to prosecute him. Of course he's dangerous. Of course the threat is immediate to our communities. It is real."? It's been people like Elie Mystal and Jason Johnson and Tiffany Cross who lost her MSNBC show and they wouldn't explain why. And Zerlina Maxwell lost her show because they were outspoken and truthful and adamant and they understood the connection between racism in America and authoritarianism in America and also the immense disparity in criminal prosecutions of white people and Black people, especially when there's also a wealth disparity. And so this is the American story and Trump has exploited his knowledge of that for his entire life. What's disgusting is if you look at when he was first investigated back in 1973, all of the different social movements that have formed since then, all of these ups and downs; progress in civil rights followed by backlash.

Sarah Kendzior (00:50:20):

But there's no way though at this point that anyone can claim ignorance. This is not 2016 where we're all like, "Gee, what would Trump do if he has power? Gosh, it's so mysterious." Everyone knows, everyone knows the deal is rotten. [laughs] No, I'm not gonna just recite the song. But everybody knows that this is an aspiring autocrat and a career criminal who puts us in actual, real, non hypothetical danger. And everybody should know that it's these little networks of insularity, which by the way also provide Trump with just immense blackmail material to keep people in line. That's another thing that Roy Cohn taught

him well and that's another thing that protects people generally, like Alvin Bragg or Tish James and certainly Fani Willis down in Georgia, is that, you know, they're not close enough to them so they don't know the dirt on them, if there is any dirt to speak of.

Sarah Kendzior (00:51:13):

Whereas if Trump's dealing with Cy Vance or something, or Eric Schneiderman. Remember him? He was another alleged hero. He was the guy who was supposed to bring down Trump in 2017 and then it turned out he was a sexual assaulter and he had to leave his position. Trump knew that, Roger Stone knew that, they knew it about Eliot Spitzer and the prostitute. You know, they wait. They sit around and wait and then they play their cards. And I don't think that they have cards to play for the three prosecutors who you named for the reasons that I just said. And I might be wrong. Maybe there is stuff to know, but it is definitely notable.

Andrea Chalupa (00:51:48):

Mmhmm. <affirmative>. And the other case that's coming up that looks to be headed to trial at the end of this month, April, is the E. Jean Carroll case for Trump's alleged rape of Carroll in 1995 or early 1996 in a Bergdorf Goodman department store dressing room. So that's also ongoing. So there's a lot. I mean, this guy's going to be wrapped up in trials and investigations and he's gonna be loving it. And the media's gonna be loving it. It's like this Jeff Zucker syndrome where it's the sportsification, the blood sport of our politics turned into terrifying reality tv. And it's going to make it impossible for the Republicans to put forth anyone serious. That ship has sailed. There's no one serious coming for the Republican primary. It's all a bunch of authoritarian lap dogs and they keep digging themselves a deeper hole. The writing is on the wall that the American people are gonna sacrifice everything to stop this guy in 2024. And I wanna just say to the purists out there saying that, "Oh, it's awful. It's anti civil rights, anti rights to say that Trump should be deprived the right to run for office." He's a traitor. He's a well-documented traitor to this country. He's a traitor.

Sarah Kendzior (00:53:06):

He confessed to it too. He flaunts it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:53:09):

If somebody has a felony, depending on what that felony is I believe in redemption. But he is somebody who has an entire history of crimes and corruption and robbing, stealing from people, ripping people off, sexual assault, sexual violence, and he's a traitor. He is a traitor. So yes, there is a certain category reserved for people that reach a certain level of criminality and Trump is in it. So yes, given all the boxes he checks, he should not be allowed to run for office. Print that. Post it up everywhere. Let the progressives who are purer than I come at me for saying that, but that's the truth. That brings us to, let's check in with the stormtroopers here in New York City, the New York Young Republican Club, which recently hosted a fundraiser featuring the ladies of the Red Scare podcast. The New York Young Republican Club released this super creepy statement: "President Trump embodies the American people—" True in a *1619 Project* kind of way, guys, but I'm sure that's not what you meant.

Sarah Kendzior: [laughs]

Andrea Chalupa:

They go on to write, "Our psyche—from if to super ego—his soul is totally bonded with our core values and emotions, and he is our total and indisputable champion. This tremendous connection threatens the established order." I'm putting that on a Valentine's Day card, Sarah, and mailing it to you next year.

Sarah Kendzior (00:54:31):

Yeah, I saw that and I was thinking about it in the same way you did [laughs]. In a 1619 kind of way, it's accurate. He is in all-American creation and he knows how to tap into all-American weaknesses. And among those weaknesses is apparently the young Republican party of New York and the Red Scare Podcast. It's such blather and it goes hand in hand with the more sort of respectable yet absolutely vacuous argument that people are making that, you know, the presidency itself, like the title and the grandeur of it all, should make a person ineligible of being prosecuted for a crime even if they've, say, I don't know, confessed to that crime multiple times. We had Matt Taibbi tweeting out a sort of hilarious but not intentionally so statement being like, "My God, if we go after Trump, this means that any president who commits crimes could be held accountable."

Sarah Kendzior (00:55:25):

[laughs] Yeah, man, that's what we want. We want all of them to be held accountable. And he used to want Bush to be held accountable, Clinton to be held accountable. I think he wanted Obama to be accountable, maybe for drones and things like that. Good! Hold them all accountable. Presidents need to be held to a higher standard in general, but also if they've committed a crime, they've committed a crime. You know, all men are created equal. Live up to it. Other countries prosecute not just their former leaders, but their current leaders. It happens a lot and life goes on and people survive because they're not in a fucking personality cult, which is what's happened to a small portion of the American public. I say small because look at who showed up in Manhattans today to back Trump; like 50 people.

Sarah Kendzior (00:56:12):

But his biggest cult is the media and the political elite. And I count Marjorie Taylor Greene as part of that political elite. And I count Leslie Stahl as part of that media elite. And they work together and they try to give this impression that there's this big mass movement for Donald Trump. There never was. There wasn't when his inauguration happened and there's not now. There's a tiny band of fanatics who can cause a lot of damage through violence and then there are industries that are backed up by Trump. There's organized crime. There's the mass media, there's New York political operations, there's the Republican Party in and of itself. There's ancillary groups like the NRA. All of these mechanisms through which dark money is pumped into our system, through which mafia money is laundered, they rely on Donald Trump and they've relied on him for many decades.

Sarah Kendzior (00:57:04):

And if you pull that thread, a whole bunch of things unravel, to which I say, good! Bring it down. Let everybody see what's underneath. Let everybody see everything they've done and bring them all on trial. I am fine with it. I do not care what goddamn party you're in. I care that we have been screwed over from the day... You know, the year that I was born. Donald Trump has been committing crimes since well before I was born. Most of us have grown up in this country never seeing justice, never seeing any chance of eradicating this system of elite criminal impunity. And now it is time. And if this gets people's like fires roaring or what have you, gets them motivated to go after more serious offenses, then good. What should not happen is for people to be like, "Oh, my dream has come true. Trump is indicted" when it's a pretty, at this point at least from what we know a trifling charge, which he should easily be able to surmount. Don't let it rest there. Keep telling these stories and keep pushing back and pushing for more because you deserve it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:58:09):

Absolutely. Because trans people exist, Matt Taibbi thinks that Trump should be able to get away with crimes. That's all this comes down to. It's like their Nazi instinct for wanting to crush the woke left because God forbid if we finally live in a country with greater equality, social justice, sustainable environmental protections, we stop having all of these damn chemical spills and CEOs are forced to actually think about public health, public good instead of their bottom line. So yeah, a lot of people have come a long way from how they used to be perceived publicly. Maybe they were always this way. Maybe they got away with doing things in Russia and missed the bad old day. Who knows? Anyway, somebody who is sending their support to Donald Trump is Viktor Orbán, the Ron DeSantis of the European Union. He released a statement of support for Trump on Twitter writing, "Keep on fighting Mr. President, we are with you."

Andrea Chalupa (00:59:08):

It must be noted that Orbán has gerrymandered his way into a chokehold of authoritarian power and Hungary. He's pro Putin and openly anti Ukraine and all of his shenanigans threaten to destabilize the EU. One of his consolidations of power, one of the strategies he used to consolidate power were anti-gay laws just as Putin did in his rise of becoming a dictator, just as DeSantis is doing now in Florida. Now, how do Republicans plan to get through this? What is their messaging, especially as Trump is the base? Well, Marjorie Taylor Greene, who of course gives off the vibes of a concentration camp guard, she made the case that Trump being indicted is actually a good thing because, you know, Nelson Mandela was arrested.

Sarah Kendzior:

And Jesus.

Andrea Chalupa:

Jesus, let's not forget. That's how they see him. It's a cult. It's a damn cult. But that's what they're going to use. That's the messaging they're going to use to rile up the base entering into 2024. And it's going to be a Kremlin clown car of reality TV hell. And I hope to God that the Jeff Zuckers out there can realize—but they won't—that you were part of this disaster in 2016. You were part of the crime scene in 2016. Please don't drive us off this cliff again. The next blow will be fatal. And so with that, we're going to have a closing clip of New York City today as Marjorie Taylor Greene thought she could show up here to lead a Trump rally outside of the courthouse where Trump had to show up to get fingerprinted or whatever. And in this clip, you know, New Yorkers obviously responded with a good old fashioned New York Hello.

[closing clip #1]

[closing clip #2]

Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg (01:01:22):

Under New York State law, it is a felony to falsify business records with intent to defraud and intent to conceal another crime. That is exactly what this case is about; 34 false statements made to cover up other crimes. These are felony crimes in New York State. No matter who you are, we cannot and will not normalize serious criminal conduct.

[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 encourage you to donate to help rescue and recovery efforts in Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquakes in early February. To help people in Turkey visit the TPF Turkiye Earthquake Relief fund at tpfund.org

Andrea Chalupa:

To help Syrians in need, donate to the White Helmets at whitehelmets.org. We also encourage you to help support Ukraine by donating to Razom for Ukraine a razomforukraine.org. In addition, we 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. And avoid products with palm oil.

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Sarah Kendzior:

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Andrea Chalupa:

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Sarah Kendzior:

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

Andrea Chalupa (54:54):

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