

Gaslit Nation Transcript
12 April 2023
SCOTUS Corruption and the Tennessee Revolution
<https://www.patreon.com/posts/scotus-and-81385891>

[advertisement]

[opening clip - [Tennessee Democrats' closing statement](#)]

Justin Pearson (00:00:31):

Yes, I tell you it was a sad day on Saturday. All hope seemed to be lost. Representatives were thrown out of the state House. Democracy seemed to be at its end. Seemed like the NRA and gun lobbyists might win. But there was good news for us. I don't know how long this Saturday in the state of Tennessee might last.

But oh, we have good news, folks. We've gotten good news that Sunday always comes. Resurrection is a promise. And it is a prophecy. It's a prophecy that came out of the cotton fields. It's a prophecy that came out of the lynching tree. It's a prophecy that still lives in each and every one of us in order to make the state of Tennessee the place that it ought to be. So I've still got hope. Because I know we are still here. And we will never quit.

[crowd goes wild]

Republican presiding over Tennessee House (00:01:43):

Out of order. [bangs gavel]

[crowd repeats chant: "Whose house?" "Our house!"]

Justin Jones (00:01:55):

Today that's not just a chant, it's a testimony. They thought that that was their House. They thought that Thursday they could expel representatives. It's because of you that I'm back in there today. It's because of you showing up here, putting pressure on the council and on the legislature. But one thing I knew for sure is that when I walked in this building today, I was not gonna be alone. Because when I went to that well with my colleagues, Representative Pearson and sister colleague, Representative Gloria Johnson, we did not go there as individuals. We went there as representatives of over 70,000 people, each demanding action to stop these weapons of war on our streets. We went there saying, "Do something, take action. No action, no peace." And rather than respond to those thousands of young people and mothers and parents and grandparents and community members, the extremists in this building led by Cameron Sexton, decided to try and flex their power. They decided to use their power to go around the will of the voters and try and silence us and bury us. They didn't know that we were seeds. They didn't know that we were sowing the seeds of a movement that's not gonna stop today or next week, but that today they are knowing that there's a new South rising, and it begins here in Nashville.

[opening theme music up and under]

Sarah Kendzior (00:03:32):

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*.

Andrea Chalupa (00:03:43):

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

Sarah Kendzior (00:03:57):

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

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:05):

And we are doing a special live episode on the making of our new book, *Dictatorship: It's Easier Than You Think*. That book—a graphic novel made with love, blood, sweat, and tears, and all of it—will be available to you mid-June of this year, but you can pre-order it now. Find [the link](#) to that in the show notes of this week's episode, available as always on our Patreon page for this week's episode. And you can come to a live taping of *Gaslit Nation* and hear me and Sarah talk about what went into this book, why we think it's important, what we wanna highlight in terms of the storytelling. And that live taping will be happening on May 18th at 6... Wait, that's not right.

Sarah Kendzior (00:04:52):

[laughs] That's not right, man.

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:53):

It's not right at all. Hold on. What did we say it was?

Sarah Kendzior (00:04:57):

I have no idea. May...

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:58):

It was gonna be... It was...

Sarah Kendzior (00:05:00):

Like May 24th maybe?

Andrea Chalupa (00:05:00):

Yeah.

Sarah Kendzior (00:05:02):

It was at noon. I know that much.

Andrea Chalupa (00:05:04):

It was at 1:30. Tuesday, May 23rd at 1:30 PM Eastern Time. We will now have it in our calendars. We hope that you have it in yours. It's going to be Tuesday, May 23rd at 1:30 PM: a special live taping of *Gaslit Nation*. And we'll also take questions from you, the audience. We'll be holding that over Zoom, so please come join us and we'll talk about whatever is going on in the world because obviously the book is in relation to that. It's about the war of fascism against democracy here in our country, the United States, as we see very clearly in Tennessee and worldwide, as we'll go into again in this week's episode with Russia's ongoing genocidal invasion of Ukraine.

Sarah Kendzior (00:05:47):

Alright, on that note we're gonna kick off the show by talking about the story that seemed to dominate the news this week because it encapsulates so many horrific themes at once, which is *ProPublica's* article about the relationship between GOP mega donor and Nazi fan, Harlan Crow, and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. The tweet that started off this article and created this shit storm is as follows. They wrote, "For decades, Justice Clarence Thomas has secretly accepted luxury trips from a major Republican donor. Newly obtained documents and interviews show the extent and frequency of these apparent gifts to Thomas has no known precedent in modern Supreme Court history." And then there's an expose that goes along with this. I do encourage you to read it. One thing that was interesting to me as somebody who has been digging into the criminality of the GOP and of American governmental institutions that are revered for baseless reasons is that this is not a new story at all, which *ProPublica* admits. They have a link to a 2011 *New York Times* report on this same guy, Harlan Crow, and on the relationship with Thomas and the corruption and the bribery and the illegality of all of it.

Sarah Kendzior (00:07:17):

And then *ProPublica* did their own individual, unique, extra investigative reporting, but that story is 10 years old. And so then when I started looking into this myself to see how far back this goes, I found a blog from an outlet called *Legal Times* that came out in June 2011. It was responding to the *New York Times* piece, titled *Friendship Between Thomas and Crow Triggers Controversy Again*, because they had been covering this same story since at least 2002, possibly all the way back to the late 1990s. I'm just gonna read a brief excerpt from this *Legal Times* blog post. It says, "The friendship between Thomas and Crow has triggered controversy before. We wrote about the relationship in June, 2002, after Thomas reported he'd received a gift from Crow valued at \$19,000." And then there's an excerpt from that 2002 article saying, "Friendship leaves its footprints in unusual places."

Sarah Kendzior (00:08:18):

"Case in point, the friendship of Justice Clarence Thomas and Dallas State Real Estate magnate Harlan Crow. The financial disclosure forms filed by Thomas last month reporting income assets and significant gifts received in the previous year listed a gift of a Frederick Douglass Bible, valued at \$19,000 from Harlan and Kathy Crow, described as 'personal friends.'" Then it goes on to that. There's some interesting little notes here saying, "Crow is a faithful donor to Republican candidates and causes ranging from President George W. Bush to former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani." Hmm. And then it says, "On his 1998 disclosure form, Thomas reported that Crow gave him a free plane ride to and from the Bohemian Grove"—[laughs]—"the exclusive California club. In 2001, Crow made his friendship clear in another way." Then it goes on to list, you know, more donations; the same ones that the *Times*... along the lines of what the *Times* reported and what *ProPublica* has reported. Bohemian Grove, if you don't know about that, is basically a cult-like ritual. It's a gathering—

Andrea Chalupa:

It's an oligarch circle jerk.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yes, it is an oligarch circle jerk that everyone tries to pretend is normal. They try to pretend there's, you know, nothing going on here. It's kind of like acting like, you know, Jeffrey Epstein brought you out to his island for, like, water skiing. I mean, this is just a little quote from an article called, "What Really Goes On at Bohemian Grove" and they're trying. They're trying really hard in this article—this is from grunge.com—to make it sound normal. This is just a couple sentences. To quote: "Every annual meaning in Bohemian Grove has, since 1880, kicked off with a ceremony called 'the Cremation of Care.' It's easy to see how this could be mistaken for some sort of cult ritual." You think? "According to Bohemian Grove and other retreats, the ceremony starts with a parade of men dressed in red-hooded robes, some carrying torches, some carrying a wooden box with an effigy of a human body inside."

Sarah Kendzior (00:10:18):

So that is what your representatives, your tech giants, your CEOs, your celebrities, that is what they're doing out there in Bohemian Grove. This has been covered by *Spy Magazine*, by, unfortunately, Alex Jones. The fact that Alex Jones has covered it, even though it was with video, has sort of discredited it. People think it's a conspiracy theory. It's a conspiracy fact. Anyway, that's not even the weirdest part of this whole thing. I just wanna say something about this, the fact that this is not a news story. The *LA Times*, by the way, also reported on these illegal gifts back in 2004. And then once they reported on it, Thomas ceased disclosing any donations from Harlan Crow entirely. But what this means is that all of this has been out there and we know that Clarence Thomas is guilty of a lot of offenses along with his wife, Ginny Thomas, the coup plotter.

Sarah Kendzior (00:11:17):

There has long been a movement to impeach Thomas, to remove him from the bench because he's a wrecking ball. He is not working as a neutral arbiter of justice. And all of this was out there. All this information was out there and now, suddenly, you're seeing these sort of fake moves at accountability coming from the Democrats. You're getting people like Jerry Nadler saying, "Oh yeah, John Roberts really needs to do an investigation" as if that is ever gonna happen, as if they're all those Republicans aren't all on the page, aren't all protecting Thomas. They've had an opportunity to enforce accountability for Clarence Thomas for well over 20 years and really could have started with the fact that he shouldn't have been on the bench in the first place, for anyone who's watched the Anita Hill hearings.

Sarah Kendzior (00:12:12):

So I don't have much faith that they're gonna take it seriously this time around. I just wanna emphasize that it's interesting to me so much information has been deleted. When I read you that legal blog, that still is active, the one from 2011. It referenced their own 2002 article, which is now gone because it appears to have been hosted by some other sort of pre-blog service provider. And so all of that information, it's gone. I spoke about this last week about how mainstream outlets like *AP* are deleting their archives from public view and how of course digital native content is easily deleted. And what this means, basically, is that history can be memory holed. And if history is memory holed, then decades of corruption cannot face accountability and will just resurface in the media in this deja news style as if it's something that has just only recently been brought to our attention.

Sarah Kendzior (00:13:11):

And therefore, those who should have been enforcing accountability all this time are off the hook. You know, 'cause it's a new story. They can feign shock about it. As the title of my book goes, they knew. And so that's one thing to think about. There's a lot of other really disturbing aspects to this. Harlan Crow is a collector of Nazi memorabilia, of Confederate memorabilia, of the death masks of slain native Americans. He claims that this is just purely historical interest. He has a garden of statues of ousted dictators. When I heard about the garden, I was like, I get that. That didn't actually offend me. But to own Hitler's napkins, a signed copy of *Mein Kampf*... And apparently he doesn't show everybody the entirety of his collection, including some of these Nazi items.

Sarah Kendzior (00:14:09):

He saves those for visitors. And the rest of it, as many people have commented, you know, Leah McElrath had a number of good threads on this. This is a test. This is a test of where people visiting his house stand. People have come forward like Ethan Zuckerman and Danah Boyd and said they were invited to events at his house and they were repulsed. And they reported it to the groups that hosted them. They said, "Why in the world are we in this horrific place? Why is there, you know, swastika more memorabilia all over this man's house?" And then there's other people who are very happy to defend the Nazi memorabilia; people like Ben Shapiro or Jonah Goldberg or Charles Murray, the author of *The Bell Curve*, a pseudo scientific racist text.

Sarah Kendzior (00:14:58):

I think that we have both a meeting of the mines ideologically—a white supremacist meeting of the mines—but also as David Sirota exposed today, these individuals, these journalists and pseudo intellectuals who are running out and defending Harlan Crow and his Nazi swag are funded by him; sometimes directly, sometimes through think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute. And so, you know, there's a lot of money going around, but what it reminds me of the most in its nature and just the filth of it, and the fact that so many people just look the other way and they think it's normal, both the bribery of Thomas and the Nazi dictator memorabilia in his house, it reminds me of Jeffrey Epstein, which was a very similar situation where you have an exceptionally rich donor doing unfathomably awful things, and then people just kind of, you know, going to galas in his home or taking photos with him, or acting like it's no big deal because he's wealthy and elite and useful and that's fine.

Sarah Kendzior (00:16:08):

But then there's a darker and even darker aspect of this as well, which is, of course, this makes me wonder if it's not just about bribery, but also about blackmail. And then this brings us to Harlan Crow's brother, Trammel Crow Jr., who has been accused of sex trafficking and drugging women over a 12-year period. This is a guy who is connected to Sarah Ferguson, the ex-wife of Prince Andrew. Prince Andrew, as we all know, was a client of Jeffrey Epstein, who is credibly accused of raping children who Jeffrey Epstein and his partner, Ghislaine Maxwell, kidnapped for their pedophile trafficking and blackmail operation. And so, you know, that's a coincidence. I don't know. My family members don't collect Hitler's napkins and traffic children, and I think most people don't have two individuals like this in their home, but those are the Crow brothers, and they're very powerful.

Sarah Kendzior (00:17:09):

And it's kind of doubtful to me that they're not working in tandem. I don't know. I mean, usually you don't judge someone by their sibling, but in this case, there's history. And then I'm gonna get, you know, I'm kind of summing up a whole bunch of stuff, and then Andrea can weigh in. But I just wanna bring up one thing, which is the history of Thomas's activity in the 1980s in the Republican Party and how he got on the Supreme Court and why the GOP may have been so desperate to get him there because I think there's a possibility that this may shed some light on the silence, the secrecy, the bribery, and potentially

the blackmail that is at play in this story. So, as I mentioned, I wrote a book called *They Knew*, and in that book I described a man named Craig Spence, who was a GOP operative/mysterious espionage agent who ran a rape trafficking prostitution blackmail ring, very Epstein-esque, allegedly also involving children, out of Washington DC, using both his own home as a surveillance operation.

Sarah Kendzior (00:18:18):

It's in the same neighborhood where Jared and Ivanka moved decades later. It's right around the corner, actually, from the house that they chose. Anyway, he would record power brokers in American politics—many of whom were in the Reagan administration, also a number of journalists—engaged in illegal and disturbing, to say the least, sexual activity and then allegedly blackmailed them. And just like Epstein, he died under mysterious circumstances. He was found dead in a hotel room in 1989 with a note pinned to his body, implying that he was working for the CIA or for another espionage agency. And so you have to ask, well, where did his blackmail end up? Is Epstein his successor? This is the short version of the story. I get into it more in *They Knew*.

Sarah Kendzior (00:19:08):

Anyway, there's a branch of this story which I touched on but which is really fleshed out best in a book called *The Franklin Scandal* by the author Nick Bryant, because another person involved in the Spence case and certainly at least active simultaneously and in the same circles is Larry King; not Larry King the CNN anchor, Larry King, a Nebraskan businessman and kind of GOP player, somebody who was speaking at their national conventions and very much involved with them and who had a relationship with Clarence Thomas. And so I'm just gonna read just a little bit briefly from, again, this is Nick Bryant's book, *The Franklin Scandal*. What Nick Bryant describes in this book is horrifying. So, you know, brace yourself. He describes a pedophile trafficking ring very akin to Epstein. I also wanna note that Nick Bryant is the person who got *Gawker* Epstein's black book and published that.

Sarah Kendzior (00:20:10):

And that's one of the things that prompted people like Peter Thiel to put *Gawker* out of business because the truth about these really horrifying stories was coming out. I find his book credible and I think it's worth examining now. And so I'm gonna just read a little here. It says, “Surprisingly, Clarence Thomas was one Republican big shot who didn't disavow knowing King. Instead, he called King's legal travails ‘unfortunate’. Though Thomas' name appears on the invitation list of a 1987 DC party hosted by King, Thomas said he first met King in 1988 at the New Orleans Convention. Like King, Thomas's wife had grown up in Omaha. She was a protegee of Nebraska's Congressman Hal Daub and accompanied Daub to DC as an aid, the very same Hal Daub who sat on Franklin's advisory board and was also the beneficiary of a King fundraiser and campaign contributions.”

Sarah Kendzior (00:21:06):

And then he goes on to describe the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings. And then there's a really interesting piece of information here where it says... This is Nick Bryant writing again: “The hearing was ultimately a he said/she said affair and Thomas became a Supreme Court justice, but very few Americans were aware of the fact that a second female subordinate of Thomas's had been subpoenaed to appear before the hearing who could have corroborated Anita Hill. Angela Wright had been employed by the Equal Opportunity Commission during Thomas's reign as chairman and she too alleged lewd conduct and sexual harassment by Thomas. Though Wright had flown from North Carolina to Washington to testify, the Senate Judiciary Committee never called her. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph Biden said Wright's subpoena had been lifted because of the wishes of Wright and her attorney.”

Sarah Kendzior (00:21:59):

“But Wright's attorney adamantly denied Biden's claim and stressed that Wright had never asked for the subpoena to be lifted. Because Biden and the Senate Judiciary Committee didn't call Wright to testify, the hearing came down to Thomas's word against Hills and Thomas subsequently eked out a razor thin majority in the US Senate, 52 to 48, to be confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice. If Biden had called Wright to testify, it's certainly possible that the Senate would not have confirmed him.” And then it goes on from there. And I wanna just be clear, this book was written long before Biden became the president and of course anyone can go and watch those hearings themselves and Biden's deplorable behavior. The reason I'm bringing it up now is, one, it shows this connection from the 1980s between Clarence Thomas and a GOP operative who was known to be involved in pedophile sex trafficking and allegedly in torture of children.

Sarah Kendzior (00:23:00):

I know that there's this gloss that people like to put on this, that this is wild conspiracy theories, that this is QAnon on territory: it is not. Cases like this or Jeffrey Epstein, you know, these are real cases of documented child abuse. That's why these wild myths of Pizzagate and so forth are created, is to make them seem less plausible, less serious, and less likely to be investigated. So, one, that's something worth looking into. If the connection is deeper, then that's a way that Clarence Thomas could be easily controlled by the Republican Party beyond blackmail. It also means that Thomas knows things about what the Republican Party was doing. I mean, they were doing this out of the White House. They were, like, leading prostitute tours of the White House on the 4th of July. And this was also homosexual prostitutes in the 1980s.

Sarah Kendzior (00:23:50):

Although now we are regressing into the Reagan '80s, homophobia played an enormous role in the power of that sort of blackmail. So that's one element. There's also the connection of Harlan Thomas's brother to the Epstein operation, the fact that there are two major child trafficking cases and blackmail operations put in play here is another thing. And then you have to think, well, what's up with Biden? Is he gonna do anything about this? This is a fairly substantial amount of reporting now going into this case. Biden seemed pretty eager to get Clarence Thomas on the Supreme Court, you know, blocking testimony, grilling Anita Hill in a brutal fashion. He's very unlikely to do the right thing here. And then you also have the fact—it's the last thing I'm gonna say on this—is that in addition to funding the Republicans, Harlan Crow has been funding the centrist Democratic leadership.

Sarah Kendzior (00:24:52):

In particular, he is a pal of Hakeem Jeffries, currently the House Minority Speaker and the assumed successor of Nancy Pelosi, who was just honored by Harlan Crow last month, or two months ago in February on Valentine's Day. This is not all that surprising since Jeffries himself has, you know, been up to horrific activity for years, like paraphrasing George Wallace in an approving way in order to defend war crimes committed by Israel during the month in July, 2014 when they were massacring Palestinian children. This is a whole bunch of really awful people working together with layers of secrecy, with piles of money and with an utter lack of accountability and justice. And all of this needs to be fleshed out and brought into the light. The reason that we're still dealing with these problems decades after they were first exposed in mainstream publications as well as on legal blogs is because our officials refuse to act.

Sarah Kendzior (00:26:02):

This is not a case of journalism failing us. It's our officials failing us, and so far it seems like they're going to fail us again. And there are real victims here ranging from the captives that they're using in their trafficking operations to anybody who is targeted by the resurgent white supremacist militia movements. And this is just like the swanky elite side of that. To anyone who needs the Supreme Court to actually be

an arbiter of the law instead of just a mechanism through which right-wing extremists can, you know, pick and choose and bribe judges to do their bidding, and their bidding is to destroy this country from within. It's not just illegitimate, as people are saying. It's broken and it's weaponized and it's cruel. And so all of this just needs to come out. And the biggest mistake would be to not keep following up on what *ProPublica* revealed. Everybody needs to keep digging, keep pushing, follow the money and follow the networks above all. Any thoughts on that?

Andrea Chalupa (00:27:11):

Well, well, well, I wanna say that we started the planning of this episode with Sarah saying, you know, "I'm just gonna wing it." [laughs] That last 30 minutes or so, however long that was, that lecture into Nazi glorification and the real life victims that are part of the networks of people who glorify Nazis like Harlan Crow and his brother, that was Sarah Kendzior winging it.

Sarah Kendzior (00:27:40):

I had some material. I had some stuff planned, but yeah, yeah. [laughs]

Andrea Chalupa (00:27:44):

This story is horrific. I mean, Nazi policies mean Nazi glorification. We see the Nazi policies all across these so-called red states, hostage states. You see in Ron DeSantis' Florida Nazis projecting swastikas on the sides of buildings. Wherever Nazi policies are that endanger the lives of women, women historically being on the front lines of resistance movements; endanger the lives of LGBTQ people, who again their existence is an affront to the white male patriarchy that dehumanizes anybody who's not white, male and a certain type of Christianity; that's what the Nazis stood for. The Nazis stood for what this fascist Republican party stands for today. And the Nazi women among them were awarded the right to be bred like farm animals to produce lots of Nazi babies. And it's that same sort of obsession that these Nazis have with sort of controlling bodies, controlling reproductive rights and so on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:28:55):

So wherever you see Nazi policies, you've seen Nazi glorification. So that's no surprise here. And as Ruth Ben Ghiat has said in her book, *Strongmen*, dictators collect bodies. They wanna own you physically. And Clarence Thomas is owned. He's physically owned. He's a kept trophy by Harlan Crow. Harlan Crow gets to flaunt around that he has a Black man in his service, a tool in service of white supremacy. That's a head mounted on the wall for someone like Harlan Crow. Harlan Crow, master collector of dictator kitsch, counts Clarence Thomas, Black man on the Supreme Court, who replaced... Was it Thurgood Marshall that he replaced?

Sarah Kendzior (00:29:43):

I'm not sure if he directly replaced him. He definitely was intended to be the successor.

Andrea Chalupa (00:29:48):

Right, which is also an affront and part of the whole white male supremacy power system, polluting and poisoning our country and therefore the world. But yeah, Clarence Thomas is an item.

Sarah Kendzior (00:30:01):

Yeah, he did. He did. We're right. [laughs]

Andrea Chalupa (00:30:04):

This is how the sausage gets made. It's authentic. It's real.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yes.

Andrea Chalupa:

We're two friends trying to help each other through a time of fighting actual Nazis. Which brings us to the political lynching in Tennessee, obviously. You had a horrific mass shooting in a school; six people killed, including three children. That then became eclipsed by a blatant political lynching in the state that founded the KKK. Founded the KKK. The KKK being founded as white rage backlash to the Civil War. The South likes to politely call it "the war between the states" because otherwise, you know, they try to mask the fact that they're traitors. I kid you not. Ask anyone from the south what the Civil War is called, and they'll say, "That's the war between the states." No, it's when you bunch of traitors wanted to continue to own bodies, Black bodies, and carry on the holocaust of slavery.

Andrea Chalupa (00:31:03):

So you try to give it the gaslighting, polite name of the war between the states, you know, like siblings fighting on the couch over who gets to control the remote. No, you were a bunch of traitors. You committed a massive act of treason against our country and you chose genocide. You chose enriching yourself through this terrorist system at the expense of innocent lives and separating families instead of reform, instead of abolition, right? So all those traitors in the South are carrying out their white rage to this day. You know, Trump was an act, Trump coming to power with the Kremlin's help in 2016 was an act of white rage and so on. White rage is alive and well. It's still among us. As we'll keep pointing out on the show, the Nazis themselves were inspired by it. They went to the Jim Crow South and learned all about how lawfare, the law can be used, what is known as critical race theory [laughs], which they don't want you to learn about today for a very good reason.

Andrea Chalupa (00:31:56):

Because the Nazis were inspired by the Jim Crow South. And how those laws were used to oppress people, to dehumanize people, to politically, legally, in so many ways enslave people; enslaved them mentally and convinced them that they had no power and therefore they were less than human, right? The Nazis were inspired by that. And the reason why they toss the word critical race theory around is because they don't want you to learn about that. But that's what happened then. And it's continuing to happen now as we're seeing in Tennessee. And what happened in Tennessee was this new generation that's coming up and their allies in the older generation have had enough, they've had enough of mass death because again, the NRA, this mass death that we're stuck under by this fascist movement, the gun violence, it's all deliberate, as we've talked about many times on the show.

Andrea Chalupa (00:32:48):

Why are having these weapons of war out on the streets, easy to get, being increasingly extremist on even super simple basic gun laws, gun safety laws, just trying to be as extreme as possible, why is that beneficial to fascist movements? Because what you're doing by allowing these mass shootings to happen is that you're normalizing mass death. They're not just profiting from this directly with their NRA lobby money. They're also getting the benefit of normalizing mass death. And if you normalize mass death, you're empowering corporations to profit off of people however they like. You may have missed back at the end of March, there was a Republican appointed judge, I believe it was George W. Bush who

appointed this judge, who rolled back some major provisions of Obamacare where the struck down insurance companies paying for preventive medicine, including for pregnant women, right?

Andrea Chalupa (00:33:49):

Preventive medicine is the best medicine. It protects everyone. It could help you boost longevity, it can ensure that you catch cancer sooner. You prevent cancers. It gets pregnant women in a country with horrific rates of pregnant women dying, especially non-white pregnant women dying compared to other industrialized democracies. It gives pregnant women the healthcare, the health coverage that they need to protect themselves and ensure a safe pregnancy and a safe baby. So a Republican-appointment judge struck down these provisions, these very basic, common sense provisions forcing insurance companies to pay for preventive treatment, preventive medicine. Why? Because they want more money. We are the shit; the people are the shit they grow their money in, as Ukrainians would say about their own oligarchs, right? So if you normalize this mass death, if you make these mass shootings just a ho hum everyday occurrence and this feeling of nothing will get done about it, corporations can then normalize mass death in whatever industries that they're in.

Andrea Chalupa (00:34:50):

Oh, you know, creating a cancer cluster over in Ohio because railroad giants don't wanna pay a bit more in safety measures and so on and so on. So you see where this is going and you see why the giant corporations, the business elite, had no problem in using fascists as a bludgeoning tool to break down democracy and push back repeals and push back taxes to further enrich themselves, just like Harlan Crows has no problem using a Black man, Clarence Thomas, for that same effect. So back in Tennessee, the younger generation, Gen Z, coming up, they see all this. Obviously they want to live in a country, the United States, the richest country in the world that is experiencing a decline in life expectancy, which is a major humiliation to every single politician left, right, and center across this country and every single business leader, every single CEO across this country, because you are all the ones driving this with your policies and your lack of not doing enough to fight tooth and nail to reverse all this. Those Gen Z kids, they want to live. They want to live. They're fighting for life.

Andrea Chalupa (00:36:00):

They are the pro-life party and they're going in and they're organizing and they're protesting and they're demanding basic common sense gun safety laws. Basic common sense in the state of Tennessee. And as a result, as we saw, three public servants—the Tennessee Three—were put up for political lynching, Surprise, surprise, the two young Black men were stripped of their rights. They were elected to office. And the white men and the women of the Tennessee Assembly, the Tennessee governing House, the Tennessee government, stripped them of their rights and stripped around 200,000 people in Tennessee of their representation. Since then, one of those young men got his rights back. The other one will likely too. And what it did was it shone a huge spotlight on this movement growing outta Tennessee and also the crimes and the corruption by the shameless white men, the KKK in the Tennessee government who dared to carry out a political lynching.

Andrea Chalupa (00:37:08):

It showed how they were committing acts of fraud and corruption, that they were lying about their address, skimming money off the top and so on. So they're now under a spotlight. And we'll link to all this in the show notes so you can get the dirt. Whoever plays dirty is dirty. Whoever slings mud is covered in mud, okay? So when they stand up and do something like this, that's an invitation to go, "Ooh, what are you trying to hide?" Because they're always trying to hide something. And now the big, you know, the string on the sweater is being pulled and it's just the beginning of uncovering how deeply

corrupt those white men and women are in the Tennessee government who dared to hold this political lynching.

Sarah Kendzior (00:37:47):

Yeah, I just wanna add one thing here, which is that it also shows the importance of local news because in the midst of this it was a Nashville based local TV network, news channel 5, they did a long expose about how this Tennessee Republican body has been introducing legislation and not notifying the public, denying roll call on bills, killing bills for no reason, basically that the people of Tennessee have had no representation, no real representation. And this of course doesn't come as a shock to anyone who lives in a similar state. I live in Missouri and I've talked multiple times about how we do go out and we vote for progressive ballot initiatives, we protest, we petition, we do all those things. They don't give a shit. They truly do not give a shit and they don't give a shit most of the time if they get caught.

Sarah Kendzior (00:38:38):

And what's interesting to me is that you're seeing a national blowback in all of these gerrymandered purple hostage states. You see it in Wisconsin with the results of their election. A lot of this is the pushback against the repeal of *Roe v. Wade*. You see it in Michigan also protecting abortion rights, a very engaged citizenry, not just young people, but everyone. And yet these are exactly the people who liberals from the coasts often write off and even tell us that we deserve it. You know, it's like the old "you're asking for it" kind of logic. And then when we explain over and over and over again how voter suppression works, how gerrymandering works, etc. we still get, "You should just move" or "You should die." And like, I'm sorry, like this is so obvious to me. This is so obviously a ploy.

Sarah Kendzior (00:39:34):

It's the same ploy as the Republicans where they want to split this country up into parts and the very existence of people like Justin Jones and Justin Pearson and Gloria Johnson and of all those protestors in Tennessee, or of all the voters in Wisconsin, all of these progressive-minded anti GOP extremism people who make up the bulks of these states, we're enormously inconvenient and so they want us all to move out so that it is easier for Republicans to gain full control without any kind of pushback or any kind of transparency. Josh Hawley has admitted that this is the plan. And so anytime you're yammering at somebody in a "red state"—AKA a gerrymandered hostage state—that this is all their fault and they're not voting hard enough and all this bullshit, that's whose plans you're fulfilling. That's who you are helping. And you are absolutely abandoning all of the victims of these governments, which often are people of color, the Black south, people in Native American reservations or poor people or everybody who has been suffering under GOP state governance without any real representation for decades.

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:52):

Yeah and it's a reminder that in every single state... Howard Dean was correct with his 50-state strategy that brought Obama to power in 2008: you leave nobody behind and you build movements in all these states. And that's what Jones and Pearson are going to do in Tennessee with this younger generation that's coming up of leaders. And that brings us, of course, to Wisconsin because I think as we're always saying on this show, it's important to highlight that grassroots power is the most reliable power we have left. We have on our action guide on gaslitnationpod.com saying, "Hey, join a community. Here's where to look up all sorts of communities near you. Find one, join one. Strengthen that community." And you can join a group like MoveOn, moveon.org. I remember back in the day, Ben Wickler, who is the state director for the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, his home state, who organized, who led, drove that victory of ensuring that a Democrat won a seat on Wisconsin's supreme court, which is going to now

confront extreme gerrymandering in that state and be able to undo some of the Republican gerrymandering in Wisconsin and win back two important seats in that state for Democrats.

Andrea Chalupa (00:42:05):

Which is a huge, huge, huge deal. And I remember when Ben Wickler was an organizer with moveon.org. He would organize these big protests. He'd be standing on a box or he'd be out there with a bullhorn, he'd be surrounded by a big crowd of other activists. He was a grassroots organizer through and through. And he rolled up his sleeves and he moved back home to Wisconsin and he ran for the state party and he took control of the state party. And he's been leading the state party to victory. And he's showing what a successful state party looks like. He's inclusive, he does the damn work, he knocks on doors, he's constantly building, building, building. And he brings everyone together. He's a coalition leader, he is a coalition builder. And I bring that up to say marches matter. Grassroots events matter. Showing up to a protest matters.

Andrea Chalupa (00:42:58):

That's where Ben Wickler, the guy that is going to save Wisconsin and the electoral college in 2024 and therefore save the White House and therefore keep the fascists out of the White House and will be protecting the world... Ben Wickler came from the grassroots. You too should come from the grassroots. I'm in the grassroots. All of us need to get together in the grassroots and fight like hell no matter what state we live in because every single state, every single district is worth fighting for. And the work that we do on the grassroots level is a powerful investment that can have powerful repercussions for many, many years to come, as we see in the Ben Wickler model, in the Ben Wickler example. And what did he do coming off the heels of that massive victory where they won that must-win Supreme Court case in Wisconsin where abortion rights are on the line, where our very democracy is on the line?

Andrea Chalupa (00:43:48):

He didn't just bask in his victory, he got to work helping Tennessee. He called his colleagues over in Tennessee and said, "How can I help you? What do you need?" And what are they doing now? They're building together. They're now taking on the fascists in Tennessee. Do you understand how powerful this moment in Tennessee was? Justin Jones, when he was being reinstated, getting his elected job back—a job given to him by the people, by the voters—He led a march with something like a thousand people. What do you think those thousand people are gonna do? They're gonna go back to their homes, back to their communities, have conversations, plant seeds. Everyone's electrified. So I just want everyone to remember, as scary as this time of fighting actual Nazis is, there's a massive pushback against this. And not a single one of us is alone in all this.

Andrea Chalupa (00:44:38):

And yes, it's dangerous what they're doing. Yes, it's horrific what they're doing. Yes, it's like nightmare after nightmare, what they're doing. And it's global. It's a global fascist movement that we're up against and the infection is in every single country. No single country is immune, right? But just understand that none of us are alone in this and that all of us are infinitely more powerful than we realize. And the moment we're in right now is being called to recognize how extraordinarily powerful we each are and that none of us is alone in the dark. We're all linked arms fighting side by side and we're gonna get through this moment together and the next generation that's coming up behind us is gonna go even further because that's what our goal is. That's what we're all working towards.

Sarah Kendzior (00:45:22):

Do you wanna end it there or did you wanna do your spy?

Andrea Chalupa (00:45:24):

[laughs] Sarah just asked do I wanna end it there—

Sarah Kendzior (00:45:28):

I said do you wanna end it there or do your spy stuff? [laughs] This is what you'll get to see if you come to our *Gaslit Nation* live thing. Yeah, your spy stuff; how there's spy documents in Minecraft, which is, you know, since the dawn of Elon Musk's Twitter, I genuinely have been struggling to determine what news is true, you know, these tweets that fly by from weirdly verified accounts and so forth. So when I saw that there's apparently classified intelligence documents in Minecraft, a game that my child plays incessantly, I thought it was bullshit but Andrea was telling me earlier that it is not, and that she's gonna explain to me what happened in the show. So would you like to explain, live, what has been going on with that?

Andrea Chalupa (00:46:13):

So here's the spy stuff. A leak coming outta the defense department, outta the Pentagon, of around a hundred highly classified sensitive documents was released on a Discord server, a gamer server for Minecraft. And there was also a similar leak, I believe, off of another Discord server for some Filipino pop star and so on. And some of these documents have been edited. The Russian Telegram channels put out edited versions of this leak where they changed the number of casualties of Russians to be significantly lower than they actually are and raised the casualties of Ukrainian soldiers to obviously make the Russians look far better than they are and try to mask the fact that Russia's losing this war in Ukraine. And the big takeaway of this is, yeah, it's a highly sensitive leak. The online sleuths have pieced together how these documents were photographed and there's even objects that you can see on the person's desk who did the photographing, including overwhelmingly American products.

Andrea Chalupa (00:47:20):

There's Gorilla Glue, there's some archery equipment base, there's a lot of stuff that you could buy off of Amazon that people have been able to piece together in these photographs that are floating around online, which seem to indicate strongly that this was an American leak, somebody that is into Gorilla Glue and archery and is a gamer. So maybe somebody on the younger side, like a millennial or late Gen Z that works somehow in the Pentagon. The authorities who are on the hunt for this person have a small list to choose from because of how highly classified these documents are. They would've been very limited in terms of the distribution. They're now obviously rethinking all those distribution channels. The most interesting sort of insights out of the leaked documents are focused on the Russia/Ukraine war and the much-anticipated spring offensive that's coming up.

Andrea Chalupa (00:48:17):

And there was sort of the run of the mill stuff that, yeah, the US spies on its allies and adversaries as we learned from the Snowden leaks and the whole aftermath of the Snowden leaks. Everyone's spying on everyone, okay? [laughs] And there was all sorts of chatter in these documents on how Egypt was considering providing ammunition, missiles for Russia; Egypt, a country that we supply something like a billion dollars of aid to every year and so on. So most of it was focused on the Russia/Ukraine war. So the whole idea is that the existence of such a leak is an embarrassment because it shows some sort of a breach of trust, sort of a breakdown of operations inside the defense department. It also talks about how US intelligence didn't feel that Ukraine was ready for the big counter offensive that was coming up this spring.

Andrea Chalupa (00:49:10):

The big buzzword, the big talked-about thing coming outta Ukraine is what is Ukraine going to do now that the spring rains will be over, the ground will harden, the sun is coming out and during these warmer months with the harder ground and through summer, that's when wars get active, right? And that's when you can move, tanks don't get stuck in mud. So a year ago Ukraine took back a massive amount of land occupied by Russia. So what's going to happen now? That's sort of what people are looking towards now. And these hundred-plus leaked documents, which are really a snapshot of the US intelligence and how they're feeling towards Ukraine and the war and where things were headed, are a snapshot of March, I think early March. So things could have changed since then, but back in early March the US wasn't super confident in how Ukraine could do or whether it had everything that it needed.

Andrea Chalupa (00:50:07):

And so that alone being leaked out there could be a way to demoralize the Ukrainian side and so on. But I wanna remind everyone that Ukrainians are pretty much... I don't wanna say immune from demoralization because they're pretty much used to being on their own anyway historically. And if you ask any of them over there, they're pretty shocked by the amount of attention and support that they've gotten from the world so far. So it's very hard to demoralize Ukrainians when they're very driven by freedom as a religion. If you go to Kyiv, there has been for many years and I'm sure it's still up there today, a giant, giant billboard banner that says "freedom is our religion." So they're very internally motivated to live free. They don't care about anyone's opinion on that. They have reformist-minded anti-corruption political parties that are quite active that have been called self-reliant.

Andrea Chalupa (00:50:55):

So I would add that self-reliance is also their religion. So it's hard to demoralize the Ukrainians. As we saw in February of last year when the whole world thought that Ukraine was gonna get slaughtered in three days by Russia, the second most powerful military in the world, the Americans were offering Zelensky a ride out of town, Ukrainians stayed and fought and they turned that war around and they created history. They changed the course of world history and what they have done just in this year alone is going to be studied by military historians for centuries to come. It's the stuff of Roman empire battles, like David and Goliath battles throughout human history, what we've witnessed in this last year alone from Ukraine. So all of this is to say that if you wanna know what this whole leaked document thing is really about, I'll tell you what it is.

Andrea chalupa (00:51:40):

The most shocking headline I've seen in reading all this coverage is simply this: Once again, the allies, led by the US, led by NATO, they need to be doing more to get Ukraine what it needs. That's the subtext and the text here of these leaked documents. And yes, there is a lot of bending over backwards to resupply Ukraine with the Soviet-era gear that they have, but it's very clear that the US is sort of stuck in that mode when they need to stop listening to Jake Sullivan, who was the guy that hampered the US response back when Russia first seized Crimea and was able to gobble up a significant part of Donbas back when this war first started in 2014/2015, right? Jake Sullivan, who's overly cautious and spreads that fear among US foreign policy and the think tank world.

Andrea Chalupa (00:52:35):

You have the Russians who are masters of fucking with people's minds and mindhacking and casting a much bigger shadow than they actually have and nuclear saber rattling and all of that. And here you have mastermind Jake Sullivan, who is going out there taking all this stuff off the table: "No, Ukraine's not gonna join NATO, no NATO troops on the ground. No, we're not going to give long range missiles to Ukraine. No, we're not gonna give fighter jets to Ukraine." Why are you telling the Russians all this stuff we're not going to do? That's basically a giant green light knowing that you're gonna hold back so that

they can go in deeper. You know what I mean? It's so dumb. So Jake Sullivan is a dangerous human being and I hope to God history remembers him as such. He's been the bane of my existence, along with Putin.

Andrea Chalupa (00:53:23):

He's Chamberlain-esque in so many ways. If you wanna know what these Discord Pentagon paper leaks all about, ultimately it is a big shame on the US-led coalition to help Ukraine, showing that the Americans are holding themselves back. Ukrainians are begging for F-16s. They're begging for that. A lot of the stupid assumptions on this war so far is that Ukrainians need the Soviet era stuff because they're used to it. That's what their military is trained on. Ukrainians have shown absolute brilliance in how quickly they adapt and how quickly they learn. Understand you're dealing with a highly educated, highly literate country where people speak several languages there. They don't have the culture in America where you have one party, the Republicans, that like to deliberately dumb themselves down and see anybody that went to university or college as inherently dangerous. Ukrainians aspire to be educated.

Andrea Chalupa (00:54:18):

They see it as a point of pride having degrees, college degrees. They're a very nerdy society. Ukraine is a very nerdy, hardcore nerdy society. They pride themselves on the power of the mind being a natural resource of that country. They're eager to learn, they learn extraordinarily quickly on whatever new technology has been thrown at them. And they've adapted and they've created all sorts of extraordinary hybrid systems to protect their country. And so yes, they need to be trained on F-16s, fighter jets, because one of the big revelations of these leaks is that Ukraine's Air Force is severely weakened from this last year of trying to protect their country. Russia does not dominate the skies, thank God. But if you wanna protect Ukrainian civilians, if you wanna close the skies over Ukraine from Russian planes, Russian missiles, you need to get F-16s there.

Andrea Chalupa (00:55:14):

And anybody who is worth anything in the analysis of what's going on in Ukraine is saying the same exact thing. So I don't want any well-intentioned *Gaslit Nation* listeners popping up in my mentions on Twitter quoting some yahoo from Koch-funded think tank shadow network saying, "Oh no Andrea, I like your show and all that, but here's why Ukraine shouldn't get F-16s. My buddy Joe down at the bar read this thing." No, all the people that know what time it is in Kyiv say that Ukraine needs F-16s months ago, this needs to have already happened. So if you wanna know what this big leak is coming outta the Pentagon, it's a giant red letter—well-deserved—on Jake Sullivan's forehead showing that the US is simply dragging its feet and giving Putin a green light, still, after all this time of genocide, after all these reports of thousands of kidnapped children sent into Russia where God knows what is being done to those children.

Andrea Chalupa (00:56:10):

In a country where sex trafficking, pedophilia, human trafficking, where Epstein's network is a well-known documented nightmare and you have thousands of Ukrainian kids kidnapped into that hell, that circle of hell. And still you have the Jake Sullivans of the West twiddling their thumbs over giving Ukraine F-16 fighter jets which they desperately needed months ago. Get them the goddamn F-16s, get them the long range missiles, because guess what you dummies in DC in those Koch-funded networks, Jake Sullivan, Jake Sullivan's mom, guess what? If you have these long range missiles, guess what they can do? They could bomb the storehouses where Russia's munition is being kept and that can really strain the logistical lines and really disturb the anthills of Russia's operations of sending soldiers in, of sending missiles in. Okay? So the longer the range missiles, the more you could bomb the factories holding, you know, making these things, making the ammunition for the Russians, storing these missiles, right?

Andrea Chalupa (00:57:10):

You disrupt the logistics of the Russian fascists, you're going to weaken the Russian military and you're going to save civilian lives. So I'm gonna say for the 50th time this episode, you wanna know what this massive leak is that some hysterical men on Twitter are comparing to the Snowden leaks. It's not. It is a major leak. It is a big leak. Whoever pulled this off so far... Pretty impressive, right? But don't get lost in the noise of it. All you need to know, the big takeaway of what was revealed in this leak, is that the idiots in DC are still dragging their feet and haven't decided yet whether they wanna help Ukraine win this war. And Ukrainians have been begging them for F-16s and long range missiles and the Jake Sullivans of the world are holding Ukraine back from survival, holding Ukraine back from victory, just like they did back in 2014 and 2015 when they blatantly followed a policy of appeasement of Putin and allowed Putin to ice skate around the world like some legitimate president and hold summits with him and so on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:58:14):

That has not fundamentally changed. So if you want Ukraine to win this war, put pressure on Biden. Put pressure on the Republicans because there are good Republicans that understand what's at stake here. They're not all fascists when it comes to Russia and Ukraine. But put pressure on them and say, "Get Ukraine the F-16s. Get Ukraine the long range missiles. Get Ukraine what it needs to win this war." For this war to end, there needs to be a winner and there needs to be a loser. There is no draw. If you have a draw, that means Russia gets to buy time and rebuild and regroup and start again. Russia, as we've seen, is drowning in fascism. Even if Putin goes tomorrow, some other fascist mini-me will replace him, right? All the sharks are already circling Putin for that to happen. For this war to end, there needs to be a winner and there needs to be a loser. And so Jake Sullivan and the rest of the DC establishment needs to decide: Do they want to win this war or not? That's what these big leaked papers are all about.

[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.

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 at 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:

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

Andrea Chalupa:

Gaslit Nation would like to thank our supporters at the Producer level on Patreon and Higher...