

Gaslit Nation Transcript

19 April 2023

“Discord Traitor Bro”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/discord-traitor-81724757>

[opening clip]

Hal Eisner (00:00):

The latest, of course, is the arrest of the 21-year-old by the fbi. His name is Jack Teixeira. And that was quickly followed by the arrest announcement by Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Attorney General Merrick Garland (00:11):

The Justice Department arrested Jack Douglas Teixeira

Hal Eisner (00:14):

The arrest in North Dighton, Massachusetts of 21-year-old Air National Guardsman, Jack Teixeira

Attorney General Merrick Garland (00:20):

In connection with an investigation into alleged unauthorized removal, retention, and transmission of classified national defense information.

Hal Eisner (00:28):

Allegedly, he had information on Israel, South Korea, the war in Ukraine, classified documents reportedly ranging from intelligence information on Ukrainian military positions, international support for Ukraine, the state of the war, various sensitive topics like under what conditions might President Putin use nuclear weapons. The arrest, coming just hours after the *Washington Post* conducted an interview with a friend of the alleged leaker who is said to oversee a private online group on Discord, a site popular with gamers.

Anonymous Friend (01:00):

He is not interested in helping any foreign agencies with their attack on the US or other countries.

President Biden (01:08):

There is nothing contemporaneous that I'm aware of that is of great concern.

Hal Eisner (01:12):

Pushback from Ohio Republican Congressman Mike Turner was quick.

Rep. Mike Turner (01:16):

You don't share your game plan with your adversary. Certainly in this instance, there are lives at stake.

Hal Eisner (01:22):

And there was concern from former US Ambassador to NATO, Kurt Volker.

Kurt Volker (01:27):

It's revealed yet again we spy on our allies. We can't keep our secrets. That is a little troubling.

Hal Eisner (01:32):

The 21-year-old was in the 102nd intelligence wing of the Massachusetts Air National Guard. He was working as a cyber transport systems journeyman. In other words, he was responsible for keeping the internet working at all of the air bases. And no doubt we will learn more about all this tomorrow.

Co Host (01:46):

It is a wild story of how he shared all this information with these young people for months.

Hal Eisner (01:50):

And it keeps unfolding like the layers of an onion. Tomorrow we see what the charges are. The charges could be significant. If they're under the Espionage Act, he could get 10 years for every count if convicted. So there's a lot riding on this.

Co Host 1 (02:01):

21 years old.

Co Host 2:

Yeah.

[theme music up and under]

Sarah Kendzior (02:10):

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 (02:22):

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 (02:36):

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

Andrea Chalupa (02:43):

We have a book coming out in mid-June. You could pre-order it now. It is a graphic novel called *Dictatorship: It's Easier Than You Think*, illustrated by a fantastic artist out of Poland who's also a fearless organizer for women's rights in a country that is facing off with a bit of a Trumpian government, to say the least, as we feature in our book, and also doing the most at the same time, to help Ukraine and stand up to Russian fascism. So her perspective as an artist, Kasia Babis, the illustrator of *Dictatorship: It's*

Easier Than You Think, her voice is very strong in this book. She caught the spirit of the show, of what we're trying to say perfectly. This is a very powerful book that is also a timestamp of what it was like fighting for our lives through *Gaslit Nation* in the final years of the Trump regime during a once in a century pandemic.

Andrea Chalupa (03:40):

And we managed to keep our sense of humor miraculously throughout. So this is a special book. We're doing a giveaway every month starting this month. And if you want to be considered for that, make sure you get your name in by subscribing on our Patreon at the Truth-teller level or higher and as a special thank you, we'll choose one subscriber a month to receive a free copy of *Dictatorship: It's Easier Than You Think*. And anyone subscribed, everyone subscribed at the Truth-teller level or higher on Patreon is invited to the next live taping of *Gaslit Nation*, which is happening Tuesday, May 23rd at 1:30 PM Eastern. You will get the details for that by making sure you're subscribed at the Truth-teller level or higher on Patreon. In that special live taping, Sarah and I are gonna be taking you behind the scenes of the making of the graphic novel and all that went into it, and the sections we really want you to pay attention to.

Andrea Chalupa (04:35):

And finally, just a personal announcement, on Monday, April 24 at 7:00 PM Central, I am joining the wonderful community, the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers—God bless them all—to do a special discussion of *Mr. Jones*. I will be sharing specific clips of the film, *Mr. Jones*, and sharing the behind the scenes story of those clips, the significance of why I selected those clips out of the entire film, and the relevance to today and the historical context to today. So if you wanna register for that *Mr. Jones* discussion, it's happening Monday, April 24 at 7:00 PM Central, thanks to the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers. Look for a link to sign up at the show notes for this week's episode available, as always, on the Patreon page for this week's episode, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Sarah Kendzior (05:31):

Alright, and one more announcement: I am going to be at the Los Angeles Festival of Books this weekend. So if you're in LA, please come by. My book, *They Knew*, is a finalist for an *LA Times* book prize so I'll be at the award ceremony on Friday night. I'm also speaking on a panel with three other writers on Sunday, April 23rd. It's called "Conspiracy Incorporated". That's gonna be at noon, again, on Sunday April 23rd. The schedule is online. So go ahead and check that out and reserve your seats and I hope to see you there.

Andrea Chalupa (06:06):

Alright, so remember when Donald Trump stole a bunch of highly sensitive classified documents from the US government when he was our grifter-in-chief President, and he and the unholy alliance of Donald Trump, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner were basically running the country into the ground and grabbing as much cash as they could, as almost like they were in one of those plastic tanks on a game show with the dollar bills flying up in there, and they were just grabbing, grabbing, grabbing? Well as part of that big grab of enriching themselves when they were in power, which included Ivanka, for example, jumping the line for coveted trademarks outta China, the infamous \$2 billion that the Saudi Royal family—famously known for being savvy investors—gave slumlord nepo-baby Jared Kushner inexplicably \$2 billion after he left the White House. For what? It's pretty obvious. So as part of that, that family—Donald Trump, namely—left the White House with our state secrets! And just kept them hanging around at Mar-a-Lago, a big viper's den of foreign influence campaigns.

Andrea Chalupa (07:22):

And the DOJ has been handling that situation with kid gloves. And who would've thought that, just like the cult of Trump, the sensitive document cult has spread as well with this kid who I'm calling Discord Traitor Bro (you heard his story in the opening clip of this week's episode) who went ahead and used his intel access, his security access to grab around over a hundred sensitive, highly classified documents from the Pentagon and impress his friends on a gamer Discord server, including foreign nationals from Ukraine and Russia, who would be super interested in what these top secret documents had to say about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This was going on for several months and it revealed, once again, that it apparently doesn't take much to get top secret access. You could be essentially an IT worker and get this access.

Andrea Chalupa (08:29):

Discord Traitor Bro is a nepo baby himself in the sense that his stepfather also worked at this military base. And so did another member of his family. So he came from this world. And the leak was so stupid, so sensitive, and was doctored—as we'll get into later—in a doctored frenzy to make the Ukrainian side look devastated (according to these doctored Pentagon-leaked papers) and the Russian side to be winning. That doctored went all the way up to Tucker Carlson, who gleefully shared it on his show; a show that is constantly praised by Putin's state media over in Russia where they love sharing Tucker Carlson clips and celebrating him as one of their own. And by the way, speaking of Tucker Carlson, as you probably already know but it's worth repeating, Trump was recently interviewed in a really bizarre, typical Trumpian interview where he uses the platform, Tucker Carlson's platform, to kiss up to dictators, including signaling to Putin that he really, really needs his support again in the upcoming 2024 election, which he's currently running in even though he has been indicted and even though he attempted to violently overthrow our democracy leading to the deaths of several people.

Donald Trump (09:57):

He's very smart, Putin. Very smart. Now he's had... And probably a bad year. Don't forget that whole thing is not... He took over all of Ukraine. And what are we gonna do? Cuz Biden is so committed to Ukraine.

Andrea Chalupa (10:12):

And as we all famously know from the landmark Fox News trial that is starting today through all the discovery that Tucker Carlson hates—personally seems to hate—Trump even though they're both proud Kremlin mouthpieces. Maybe it's like a sibling rivalry thing. They each wanna be Putin's favorite. So let's get on to this really bizarre story that has been unearthed out of this latest Pentagon Papers leak, the classified documents leak. And it's important to note if you read through the reporting... So the *Washington Post*, when the story first broke, had the coverage on it saying that Jack Teixeira was just a young kid trying to impress his friends on a Discord server, he really doesn't have any dog in this fight. But if you read through the lines, it's clear that he's had his mind hijacked by Russian disinformation because one of the references he made during this leak was the Russian meme of bear versus pig, which is what the Russians use to proudly, gleefully celebrate online their genocide of Ukrainians.

Andrea Chalupa (11:23):

Bear versus pig is staunch pro-Russian fascism propaganda and this Discord Traitor Bro, Jack Teixeira, used it. The bear symbolizes Russia, the pig is the reference that these Russian fascists make to Ukrainians and the imagery is the fierce Russian bear slaughtering the helpless pigs. Right? That's what it represents. It's genocide imagery. And this traitor to our country fell for it, furthered it, pushed it. When this story first broke my gut instinct, the first thing I thought was this is a Tucker Carlson gateway drug culprit. Tucker Carlson is ultimately behind this leak by poisoning the minds of a sizable, sizable

percentage of conservatives across the country into thinking that Russia is strong, that Russia is deserving of respect, that Russia is a normal country, that Russia's an ally, that we should have no dog in this fight, and pushing all this stuff against Ukraine, including trying to demoralize everyone by claiming that Ukraine is losing and so and so on, even though it's actually the reverse.

Andrea Chalupa (12:48):

Russia is losing the war that they started to the tune of an astronomical amount of dead soldiers, an estimated 200,000 dead injured Russian soldiers. And they're going around begging for whatever they can get to resupply their military and it's gotten to the point where Putin has had to cancel the World War II military parade that the Russians like to hold every May to celebrate the victory in Europe over Nazism. Remember, World War II to Russians is like a religion. They, especially under... It's always been there. They've always had this, "Yay, Stalin, Uncle Joe Stalin defeated Hitler and they couldn't have done it without the Soviet Union. The Soviets got to Berlin first." They've turned all that into a hardcore nationalistic religion, cult-level fervor. And Putin has projected that onto the Ukrainians by calling them fascists and mobilizing the country, brainwashing regular Russians to rise up and join the cause of going to Ukraine and doing what their grandparents did by liberating Ukraine from the so-called Nazis.

Andrea Chalupa (14:13):

Right? So that whole religion of World War II and Russia, it's very much part of this current invasion in Ukraine, nevermind that Stalin got World War II started in the first place when he and Hitler had a pact together, a secret pact to carve up Europe. And we saw this carried out when the Nazis invaded Poland in September, 1939 and the Soviets followed quickly on their heels, and together the Nazis and Soviets had a military parade in occupied Poland. And that is what set off World War II. And you can read about all that in our new book, *Dictatorship: It's Easier Than You Think*. And so this leads us to the fact that Russia, yes, Russia is losing the war. Tucker Carlson is wrong. And it's gotten to the point where Putin has had to cancel his beloved, beloved World War II victory parade because they don't have the tanks, they don't have the fascist pageantry.

Andrea Chalupa (15:11):

Every single scrap of metal they need is being sent to their genocidal invasion of Ukraine. That's the reality on the ground there. But that's not going to stop idiots online from trying to invent alternative realities that they can then profit off of. Remember, Fox News is the most watched cable news network. They have a massive, massive, massive war chest of money coming in—blood money, of course—and they have a whole Twittersphere, a social media blogosphere, linked arm in arm with the Russian version of this, that's linked arm in arm and backed by the FSB, Russian State Intelligence. Right? And a disturbing story of that is the tale of "Donbass Devushka", which translates to Donbas Girl. It's a whole social media network—Twitter, YouTube, Telegram—glorifying Russia and its invasion of Ukraine, selling merchandise, cheerleading for Putin. The image of "Donbass Devushka" is militant-looking but alluring with her eyes showing above a mask, the rest of her face hidden by this dark mask, dark hair, very mysterious and alluring, staunchly anti-Ukrainian.

Andrea Chalupa (16:28):

"Donbass Devushka" pretended to be motivated by being a Ukrainian from Donbas, the part of Ukraine my family is from where Putin has been invading since 2014. It turns out guys Donbas Girl is actually an asshole from, where else? New Jersey. She's from fuckin' New Jersey and she served in the Navy. Her name is Sarah Bils and she currently lives in Washington state. From this wonderful *Wall Street Journal* article, which we'll link to in this week's show notes: "An archive version of the "Donbass Devushka" page on My Shop Online shows merchandise praising Mr. Putin and Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and items with the "Z" symbol of the Russian invasion. The main image of the "For fun" section is a

redheaded woman in a Russian uniform pointing a finger at a submissive pig. The Discord group where the classified files were originally leaked”—by the Discord Traitor Bro—“was called Bear versus Pigs, in line with Russian memes depicting Ukrainians as hapless pigs being slaughtered by the mighty Russian bear.”

Andrea Chalupa (17:40):

So there's this whole culture war of traitors, like a comic con of traitors, and it's being fueled and driven by Tucker Carlson's Fox News. And I don't know why the hell more isn't being done to stop that, why lawsuits aren't trying to stop this, because of the real world danger that he's causing. She launched “Donbass Devushka”... Back to her, she launched her account in late 2021 as the news of the impending Russian invasion was just starting to ramp up. Her following took off when the total invasion launched. She became a darling of the edge lords and other Russian disinformation merchants, as she claimed to be a girl from Luhansk, Ukraine, a city right on the border with Russia. So she seemed like a Ukrainian girl who was telling the “other side” of the war: the side of the Ukrainians who might want to be with Russia.

Andrea Chalupa (18:35):

That's how she presented herself and was perceived. But she gave herself away by grifting a little too hard with her cheesy pro Putin merchandise. So from this Belarusian independent media outlet, *Nexta*, I'll quote: “Her Telegram channel publishes more banned Twitter content, including memes, fake images and ultra violence such as cheering the killing of a US volunteer who went to Ukraine, videos of dead Ukrainians, and supporting videos of a Ukrainian prisoner of war being beheaded by Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group.” Okay, this is an American who served in our military, who won several awards from our military, and she's Jersey-raised, and she's cheering on an American volunteer being killed trying to protect Ukraine from a genocide. She's cheering on a prisoner of war, a Ukrainian prisoner of war being beheaded, which is a war crime. And this is just absolute chilling absurdity.

Andrea Chalupa (19:43):

Again, from the Belarusian independent news outlet, *Nexta*: “Fox News host Tucker Carlson used the fake version of the Pentagon Papers, the leaked papers on ‘Donbass Devushka’ Telegram channel to claim that Ukraine had a seven to one troop loss ratio and is ‘losing the war.’ The fake versions were spread by Pro Kremlin propagandists and ‘Donbass Devushka’ began supporting the well-known Z Channel,”—Z Channel being one of the big platforms promoting Putin's invasion. It's pretty much linked to FSB, Russian intelligence. “The original leaker put the documents on his Discord channel and ‘Donbass Devushka’ seized on them”—not only seized on them, but doctored them and spread the doctored documents through her massive Russian disinformation social media empire. And Tucker Carlson laps it up and promotes this disinformation to his massively huge American audience, spreading lies, brainwashing them, hijacking their minds, and further trying to divide Americans against their own national security interests.

Andrea Chalupa (21:05):

This is happening and there doesn't seem to be a way apparently to stop it because it's happened and it likely will happen again and again. And it could incite violence, like it already did with January 6th, these types of things. And also it could lead to... Let's put it this way: it could help bring a DeSantis or someone like him to power in 2024, these sorts of operations; the disinformation, the Russian disinformation seeded online and making its weight up into Fox News. Not that Fox News obviously needs the help. They're currently being sued for being disinformation merchants, for being lie merchants, a lie factory. But the reality is that Sarah Bils, AKA “Donbass Devushka”, she's still going. She's still out there. She's still doing her thing. She's still spreading lies like this. And Tucker Carlson, he's still at it too.

Andrea Chalupa (21:53):

Nothing's stopping him. So if this is all shocking to you, it's only going to get worse heading into 2024 when so much is at stake; our democracy, we're still living with the fallout of four years of Trump, and we're going to be living with that fallout for the rest of our lives; and also the whole fate of Ukraine. If a Republican gets into the White House in 2024, what does that mean for the future of Ukraine? Yes, Republican leaders in Congress, many of them are staunchly pro Ukraine, but the base has them on a tight leash. The base has them captive. It goes without saying you cannot trust a Republican whose party has been hijacked by the fascists to be in power in 2024. And the operation we're describing here is something that is going to try to ensure that we get a fascist in power in 2024. And they're uniting with Putin to do this.

Sarah Kendzior (22:43):

I just wanted to sort of pull back a little. This entire story is made possible by the fact that there wasn't accountability for Trump and his administration, that there wasn't accountability for Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 to which there is no reaction, and then the movement that emerged from that; all of these alliances between people like Flynn and Putin, between Felix Sater and Michael Cohen collaborating with Kremlin officials to get Trump in; this complete... I don't even wanna say negligence of national security, but complicity of national security in which you see the GOP partnering with Kremlin agents, with oligarchs, with corrupt plutocrats internationally in order to move forward a movement of right-wing authoritarianism combined with organized crime meant to hijack representative democracy worldwide. We've been dealing with this movement. I mean, this is what we've been covering for eight years.

Sarah Kendzior (23:45):

And this story, this particular revelation, this particular chapter, I should say, comes as no revelation because it's simply more of the same; it's more national security documents leaked as, you know, Trump's were stolen, as Kushner stole them; it's more officials refusing to do their job and act; it's very reminiscent in many ways of the lead up to January 6th where people like you and I were saying things like, you know, "Trump and his minions are publicly plotting a coup, here are the coup organizers. It's Roger Stone, Steve Bannon, Michael Flynn, Lin Wood, here's some hotel reservations of the Insurrectionists. The insurrections gonna happen on January 6th." We all knew this, just as these randos hanging out in a Discord server knew American classified intelligence secrets about Ukraine, because the people that were supposed to put a stop to this, the people who are supposed to protect our country—the FBI, I guess the DoD and DOJ and so forth are—refusing to.

Sarah Kendzior (24:51):

And so, you know, unless there is not just accountability for the failures to stop these acts but clarity on why so many of these officials are pushing these internal coups along, are weakening the security of the United States, weakening the security of Ukraine, enabling the tandem operations that are targeting both officials, we're never going to move forward. And it's notable to me that this is all happening this week with the general background of mid April violence that happens in America routinely. All of these special dates that I believe Jake Teixeira was citing, you know, things like Waco or the Oklahoma City bombings, and then other events that happened on April 19 or 20th; the 1985 ATF raid on the group The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord, the execution of Richard Snell, the militant who was executed on the day that McVeigh carried out Oklahoma City bombings. You have the Columbine shooting, you have Hitler's birthday on April 20th. This is historically a very dangerous week. And so this is a time when our national security officials should really be on guard for domestic militancy, for hostile foreign operatives, for treason—because that is at the heart of this—and instead, no, we find out about

it in this fashion. And as you said, you have Tucker Carlson mainstreaming it, normalizing it. You also have Marjorie Taylor Greene doing that from the political end, treating it as a reality show, you know, pantomiming it so that this portrayal combined with the lack of accountability leaves Americans who are not as well informed on these issues thinking, "Well, wait, if this were really a big deal, they would've caught them earlier."

Sarah Kendzior (26:50):

Or, "If this was really a big deal, Marjorie Taylor Greene the seditionist would not be allowed to be in the House holding her seat. She clearly would've been expelled by now." It's the lack of proper retaliatory action towards seditionists and towards people threatening violence against their own country, I think, that makes people so confused that they begin questioning things. That and the ambiguous boundaries between full fledged traitors and administrative officials. You could look at people like Michael Flynn or Steve Bannon who held positions in Flynn's case in multiple administrations and Bannon's in the Trump White House. They are part of the deep state that they claim to hate. You could look at Erik Prince, a longtime GOP lackey who's also a Wagner operative. It's all connected. There's very little action coming from the agencies that are supposed to enforce accountability. And so it's left to people to just sort of hash this out. And even as you're summarizing it, you know, there's all these little bits and pieces that just slip away; like Kushner, like the Saudis, people that are so profoundly dangerous. And we've been sounding the alarm on that danger for eight years. So yeah, this is just the latest chapter in a very dark and apparently endless novel of American decline.

Andrea Chalupa (28:14):

I live in Brooklyn, so I'm just gonna keep referring to Donbass Devushka" as the New Jersey Asshole. She had on her podcast, Scott Ritter, longtime Russian disinformation agent who was convicted of sex crimes involving a minor. Surprise, surprise. Garland Nixon, another disinformation merchant, and Jackson Hinkle, same thing. This is like the whole like pro fascism crowd gathering together. And what's really funny is that she would do this podcast in a Russian accent. In a Russian accent.

Sarah Kendzior (28:48):

Oh, I heard that. How did anybody think that that was real? I heard those clips and I was... Are you playing... I feel like we... I don't know if we should play them.

Andrea Chalupa (28:57):

Yeah, yeah. So here's a sample. Here's a sample.

Clip from the New Jersey Asshole (29:01):

I am... I approach from geopolitical angle, me and JM, just me for the most part. And I think that we are both comfortable with being accused of being Kremlin bots. So we're both political scientists with focus on Eastern Europe, specifically World War II and on, so I'm, you know, I'm from Russia. I was born there and obviously this is of great interest to me, but I do not claim, nor do I know very much militarily about this conflict. So I kind of just rely on Scott. I am obviously anti NATO, but yeah.

Andrea Chalupa (29:46):

And so I dunno who in their right mind... I mean, she basically is not in her right mind according to reports of her friends and family. Her mother said that she's known to make up stories. She was dismissed or she was, whatever the official word is, she left the Navy.

Sarah Kendzior (30:03):

She got demoted, I believe. She left with a demotion that was unexplained, but it was probably because she was a giant treasonous, bad-Russian-accent-imitating freak.

Andrea Chalupa (30:15):

She left November, 2022. So that means that for 11 months of last year, as Ukraine was about to be slaughtered, she was grifting hard off of that genocide, claiming to raise money for Wagner, the Kremlin-backed private military firm. Erik Prince has Blackwater, the Russians have Wagner, named after Hitler's favorite composer. Wagner commits atrocious crimes against humanity in Africa, many African nations, Syria, Ukraine. They are known to kill Russians who try to escape the frontline and go to the Ukrainian side with a sledgehammer. There was a Wagner soldier who was just being interviewed—because some of them have come forward—about the war crimes that he committed in Ukraine, including being ordered to clear out entire towns and cities, just go on a killing spree. anything that moves, shoot it, empty the town, the city of people. As part of his killing spree, he admits to shooting a five-year-old girl point blank in the head. Point blank in the head.

Andrea Chalupa (31:46):

This is what Wagner does. And this is what Sarah Bils was promoting and profiting off of. And both sidesing, as well as Tucker Carlson, as well as Rupert Murdoch, and that entire far-right blood merchant lie factory machine that is destroying our democracy here at home. And there doesn't seem to be any way to curtail it. There doesn't seem to be any mechanism to stop this, even though there should be. And I understand there's issues of free speech. You have the Fox News Rupert Murdoch side being able to spew all the lies they want, and the politicians they prop up at the state level are banning our books. So they're allowed to censor and we can't turn off the disinformation that's harming our national security and hijacking the minds of this Discord Traitor Bro who, as you mentioned, he's a young kid who has fantasies about what happened in Waco.

Andrea Chalupa (32:41):

He has fantasies about Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing; these horrific white nationalist events that happened long before he was born, but he's completely mythologized them. Who is doing the mythologizing? It's the whole Trumpist cult movement that was brought to power, taken out of the darkness and brought out into the mainstream by Rupert Murdoch and Tucker Carlson. That is who mainstreamed all this. So I don't know what kind of form justice could take to try to put this horrific level of genie back into the bottle, but it doesn't seem our democracy is set up for that because I didn't even bother mentioning... Oh, by the way, the DOJ is investigating Sarah Bils to understand her role in the massive Pentagon leaks and the documents that were altered to push Russian disinformation. The DOJ is investigating her. I didn't even bother mentioning that earlier because what are we gonna expect to come out of that?

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmmhmm. <Affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

They're also supposedly investigating Trump, who's right now doing interviews with Tucker Carlson on TV and running for office.

Sarah Kendzior (33:53):

Running for president. Yeah. And getting ready to reinstall himself in there. This is a very obvious organized plot in which the perpetrators of the plot announce their intentions in advance. When it comes to a time when the other party holds office, they then shift their plot to what they'll call a culture war or a cultural front, which is really just a twofold attack; one, on civil rights, human rights, voting rights; and two, on the flow of information. And they have a number of powerful people in play. They have people like Elon Musk able to retool algorithms so that, you know, even if we want to share the truth about things, to get information out in the world as we have been able to successfully for the last 15 years, we can't. That in turn leads to the split of communities onto all these different forums.

Sarah Kendzior (34:52):

It leads people to sort of retreat. And in the midst of this, you have a right-wing apparatus that's not just incredibly successful at winning over white boomers through fear tactics as they've been doing through Fox News since 9/11, but trying to mold the next generation in a very overt way, you know, with people like Jake Teixeira, with people like Kyle Rittenhouse. They're desensitizing them to violence. They're glamorizing violence. They're constantly saying, "We will have your back. We will support you no matter what kind of, you know, heinous blood thirsty action you take. If you are taking it on our behalf, we will always be with you. We will get you lawyers, we will get you money, we will get you prestige, we will get you fame." That is what they are dangling in front of young men in their late teens, in their early twenties. And they're also trying to create this caricature of a world in which young white men are hated by evil liberals who are out to ruin their existence.

Sarah Kendzior (36:01):

They have operatives like LibsofTikTok that selectively take information off of that social media website or just find sort of really anomalous examples and then say, "this is my stand-in for all trans people. This is my stand-in for all gay people." They're doing this with incredible deliberation. There's this mythology that because of the cartoonish nature of somebody like Trump, the buffoonery of somebody like Roger Stone, that they're not slick. That they're not organized. They are incredibly organized and their entertainment value, you know, their willingness to combine violence with nasty humor, with a WWE-style of presentation, that is what is bringing people into the fold. On the other hand, what do we have combating this? Basically nothing.

Andrea Chalupa:

Nothing!

Sarah Kendzior:

When you get people, when you get young activists, you know, who are full of passion and empathy and ideas, that is who the Democrats will attack. They will attack those young people. They will get angry at protesters or they try to co-opt it, or they try to commodify it. When you had that outburst of 2020 where it really seemed the majority of Americans had just had enough, you know, and some of this was covid, but this was the effect of covid, kind of making people introspective, making them think, "What do I value in life? What do I value in my country? What do I want it to be?" And coming out and standing in support of marginalized and vulnerable communities and hoping that in the future we will have a better country. This changed the Biden platform. This changed the platform of many Democrats that were running in that time because that grassroots movement was so powerful.

Sarah Kendzior (37:53):

You know, then they were like, “Yeah, we are going to incorporate these into actual policies, make actual change, not just make it talk.” Of course it was just talk. It ended up being a continuation of a lot of the worst, most violent policies of the Trump administration, whether it's the abuse of migrant children, whether it's climate policies, whether it's of course Biden's hideous covid policy, you know, it's the same. And what it amounts to, this is a soft focus death cult. That's what we get out of the Biden administration and these Vichy Dems, versus the burning, apocalyptic death cult of Trump and all of his backers. Either way, these are people who do not value the sanctity of human life. These are people who leave you wondering if they're going to laugh at your death, laugh at the death of your loved ones, brush it off, view it as unimportant.

Sarah Kendzior (38:46):

And when young people are growing up in that environment, I think what they see is these two sides of power. And they think, well, I'd like to be on the one that will have my back. Even if they're evil, even if they're downright demonic in their behavior, which I would ascribe to Trump and Tucker Carlson and people like that. They would rather have that feeling of protection. And so it is extremely important that those who oppose this, who don't want to live in an authoritarian, brutal, hyper violent society, provide some sort of alternative pathway and means of support, not just for like young white boys, but for everybody, for all young people and say, “Yes, you're important, you're valued, you're loved. We will stand up for you. You're not here to save us.”

Sarah Kendzior (39:36):

There's always that mantra like Gen Z is here to save us and as a parent of two Gen Z kids, I can't stand that. I feel like they have gone through so much. They have had to live through covid. They've had to live through incredible political chaos. I've had my son once ask me, “What's the opposite of unprecedented? Is precedent a thing? Is that an actual word?” Because over and over, every event in his *short* lifetime—his 12 years of age—has been unprecedented. And I have to explain, no, actually this hasn't happened before and no, really nobody in power is doing anything to fix it. You can't put all that on young kids. Adults, especially those who we are paying with our tax money those who hold positions of power, it is on them to fix things.

Sarah Kendzior (40:22):

They can't just bitch about shit on Twitter like we do. That can't be their equal contribution to the solution of these problems. They have to have a pathway forward, because I do worry about this. I worry very much about the sophistication of these right-wing actors and how they know where to reach, that they know to go to Discord rooms, that they know to look for gamers. And meanwhile all you get from the other side is this constant fear that God forbid somebody criticized Biden online or criticized Merrick Garland online. Let's pay a bunch of propaganda operatives to make sure that doesn't happen again. You know and the other side is breeding little neo-Nazis like Rolf in the sound of music, kids you might look at and be like, “oh yeah, he seems like a good guy” but that's what they want.

Sarah Kendzior (41:08):

Because they also wanna market them. They wanna market these sweet-faced boys who they are turning into terrorists. And Marjorie Taylor Greene is extremely upfront about that. Even in her characterization. She writes that Jake Teixeira's white, male, Christian and anti-war, which makes him an enemy to the Biden regime. This is total bullshit. He is a traitor. I mean, you might be able to say this is somebody who's been used. This is someone who's been taken advantage of, but he did what he did and it has nothing to do with him being white, male, Christian and anti-war. You know, the vast majority of people who are white male Christian are anti-war. He's not. He's pro Putin's war. He's anti Ukraine defending itself.

Andrea Chalupa (41:51):

He wants to feel powerful. He's a fascist.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yes.

Andrea Chalupa:

He would've been there on January 6th and he probably could. And I wanna say to the Marjorie Taylor Greene's, the QAnon ladies... Who do you think right now is trafficking children? The number one kidnapper in the world right now is Putin. He is kidnapping thousands upon thousands of children out of Ukraine, forcing them onto Russian-occupied territory, into Russia itself, and then bragging on his state television empire that he's doing this and how he's supposedly placing these children with other families. There are reports of these children being beaten, being tortured, being terrorized, being told their parents are dead, their parents never loved them. These children are going through a nightmare, a living nightmare for those that are still alive. And God only knows what is happening to them; the sexual exploitation, the rape. Russia, even before the war was one of the largest human trafficking countries in the world.

Andrea Chalupa (42:56):

Massive problem there. They were all tied up in Jeffrey Epstein's empire.

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmhmm. <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

That's why Trump was so pro-Russian all of these decades was because of the easy girls coming out of Russia. You had reports of these oligarchs, these Russian linked oligarchs, having these yacht parties with endangered species, the hides of endangered species on their bar stools, flying in virgins from God knows where. And Marjorie Taylor Greene is supporting the worst child trafficking operation in the world right now, which is Putin's Russia? QAnon lady, really? Marjorie Taylor Greene is a handmaiden to abusive, abysmal, nightmarish child trafficking right now, right now, with every Kremlin lie that she speaks coming out of her mouth, paid for probably by dark money rubles. Okay? That's what that is all about. And my God, if you can just confront what Russia is doing to the children, if you can just take down that operation, the journalists, the humanitarians, the leaders out there, the public servants, you'll take down the entire giant apparatus.

Andrea Chalupa (44:10):

Because the reason why they are fighting so hard, the reason why they're being so terrifying, the threat is constantly there, it's because they wanna live above the law. They wanna be able to fuck whoever they want and get away with it. They wanna be able to rape and get away with it.

Sarah Kendzior:

Mmhmm. <affirmative>

Andrea Chalupa:

They wanna be able to enrich themselves and get away with it. That is why again and again, you're constantly finding, "Oh, GOP official over in Arizona just got busted for porn" or molestation or whatever. There's constant stories of that coming out constantly because that is what they're working towards. They want life to be some disgusting orgy of stealing lives, owning bodies. That's what dictatorship fascism does. That's what Mussolini was all about. That's what Hitler's officers were all about. That's what the Russians are doing.

Andrea Chalupa (44:53):

They have systemic rape that they're carrying out in Ukraine right now and that is what we're fighting for. We're fighting for civilization itself right now. That is what this war is against. It's fighting for civilization and fighting for our future and fighting for simple, simple laws being upheld and accountability and justice. It's very basic and they're assaulting all of that. And I wanna apologize to our listeners in New Jersey. I do not think you're assholes. That should be obvious. My grandma lived in New Jersey for many, many, many years in Pompton Lakes. I used to go there all the time. I just think it's funny because I'm a New Yorker. I've lived here for 20 years. I've been raised by New Yorkers. So it's just me busting your balls like we do here in Brooklyn. I love you New Jersey, you're a wonderful state. I got to see Paul McCartney in New Jersey for my birthday.

Andrea Chalupa (45:42):

I love you forever for that. You're great people. I miss my grandma very much. And Pompton Lakes. Okay, so [laughs] I just wanted to clear that up. But I do wanna say there are movements pushing back against the hell that we're all facing. For instance, the online grassroots movement of fact checkers and blinkers known as NAFO, the North Atlantic Fellow Organization. It's a grassroots army of Ukraine supporters from all walks of life, men and women all over the world, who have various versions of a shiba inu dog as their avatar. They're known as NAFO, hashtag NAFO. What you do to become a fella is you donate to a Ukrainian cause, like the Georgian Legion that's fighting for Ukraine, and somebody in the community just gives you your own shiba inu dog avatar based on whatever tickles your fancy. And then you have that as your avatar and you join the whole hashtag NAFO movement online and together you fact check the disinformation merchants of death, including the Kremlin official accounts.

Andrea Chalupa (46:46):

It was NAFO that was really digging into this, along with the wonderful investigative journalists at Bellingcat, and pulling the strings of the sweater and it all came unraveled. So thank you NAFO for that. It's a full-fledged organic movement. Now, where does this all lead us? Well, recent surveys have been very promising about Americans' resolve to confront this global fight for freedom for civilization itself. According to a recent *Newsweek* survey, the majority of Americans—55%—support Ukraine joining NATO. That's good because that's the only way we ensure no more invasions of Ukraine happen. First, Russia has to be crushed in Ukraine, and that may happen in the coming spring offensive if the Biden administration and Jake Sullivan as national security advisor hurry up and rush and get Ukraine the F-16s that it needs to close its damn skies. The one silver lining out of this massive Pentagon leak is that it drew a huge, huge, huge neon sign pointing to the fact that Ukraine's Air Force is depleted and Ukraine's Air Force needs to be rebuilt, desperately, if Ukraine is going to survive.

Andrea Chalupa (48:06):

And so you have seen more MiG fighters and so on being sent to Ukraine in recent days. Thank God. More need to get over there. More planes, more planes and long range missiles. I went off on this in the last episode, it should be very obvious why Ukrainians long range missiles. We've seen them use the longer range missiles that they have to great effect to destroy ammunition depots and to weaken Russian logistics so Russians have a harder time slaughtering civilians in Ukraine. So again, very simple

ask. Reach out to your public servants in Congress wherever they are that represent you in the halls of power and tell them to do everything they can to support Ukraine, support Ukrainian refugees, and get Ukraine everything it needs to win this war. We have to accept the fact, we have to prepare ourselves that there needs to be a winner. In order for this war to end, Ukraine must win.

Andrea Chalupa (48:54):

And once Ukraine wins, Ukraine needs to join NATO. The Russians do not want to fight NATO. You see how badly they're doing against Ukraine alone. Oh, and one thing this Pentagon leak did and Tucker Carlson, of course, fanned the flames of, they claimed that there's US forces on the ground in Ukraine. Yeah, dummies. It's the same US forces who are stationed there to protect our embassy and just like standard run of the mill stuff. And Tucker Carlson is building this up as though, "oh my god, we've got boots on the ground, we've got a shadow army." They're bullshit. Bullshit. And that's so dangerous because that puts a target on the head of the men and women who are doing the run of the mill work of protecting our interests abroad; our embassies and consulates and so on. The level of incitement to violence that they are allowed to get away with, I will never get used to it.

Andrea Chalupa (49:43):

It's increasingly appalling. So back to more good news. Americans are strongly in support of Ukraine, including supporting getting Ukraine whatever it needs to take back its territory, even if this means prolonging the war. So all wonderful. More bad news for Putin: Italy, who was seen as sort of a weaker link in the European alliance because of how economically tied it was to Russia, Italy has kicked its dependence on Russian gas. Italy used to be one of the biggest customers of Russian gas, which again was seen as a danger to European unity at the start of the total war. Since then, Italy's prime minister has been staunchly pro Ukraine, even going off on the Kremlin shills to their faces. There's a beautiful video of the Prime Minister of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, the Prime Minister of Italy Meloni, going off on Kremlin shills in the Italian parliament. We will play a little bit of that just so you can get a bit of that excitement. You can just imagine the hand gestures for yourself.

(50:47) [clip of Giorgia Meloni admonishing Kremlin shills in Italian Parliament]

Andrea Chalupa (50:56):

And that leads us to a personal note. I had a rare night out with my husband, which I do every like... Since we've had kids, like every 10 years. But so we went and saw *Tosca*. The reason why we saw *Tosca* at the Met is because my husband's father is on Wikipedia for leading a student uprising in 1956 Romania in solidarity with the Hungarian uprising next door. He had heard over pirate radio of the Hungarian uprising of the college students taking over the radio towers and he wanted to recreate that in communist Romania. And so he and his friends got together organizing a whispering campaign, and they were gonna march on the school. He even broke up with his girlfriend for her own protection. And the night before launching this big uprising, he was lying in his dorm room listening to Puccini's *Tosca*, the story of a woman who gives her life for a freedom fighter.

Andrea Chalupa (51:51):

And as he's listening to this opera, *Tosca*, there's a knock on his door and it's like half a dozen Securitate agents, secret police agents who drag him away in front of everyone to make an example of him. And he was thrown into a communist prison for six years where he was literally told that he was sent there to die. And he was tortured and all this horrific stuff happened to him. And a lot of families like this, that trauma of that event, of what he survived, carried on through the family. Anyone that's been through that, that lingers. That's there. And so *Tosca* is very personal to us. The power of art to remember, to pay

tribute to. Again, that is what the power of art is. Art gives space to our ancestors. Art gives space to our personal identity, to our childhoods, to the stories we grew up with, to the people we love.

Andrea Chalupa (52:34):

So through the power of art, we paid tribute to him by going to the Met to go see *Tosca*. And I was so overjoyed because it was a Ukrainian soprano who played the role of *Tosca* beautifully, masterfully. And God bless the Met, this man came out on stage right before the curtain went up and gave tribute to Ukraine's defenders. There were Ukrainian soldiers who were in the audience of *Tosca* with us. And right away people started standing up and applauding, giving the Ukrainian soldiers a standing ovation. And it was so incredibly moving to see. I needed that. My soul needed to feel that support. In this world of Tucker Carlsons trying to demoralize everyone and lie to everyone and create an army of zombies to usher in the apocalypse, it's so, so needed to see that level of humanity and solidarity and creativity and love.

Andrea Chalupa (53:23):

And after the curtain call when they came out on stage and the beautiful *Tosca* came draped in the Ukrainian flag and the audience just went wild. It's just so heartfelt. So I wanna thank everyone at the Met for their staunch support of Ukraine. It is so beautiful and so necessary to see. And I wanna thank all the artists out there fighting for breathing room, fighting for a space for all of our minds to heal and to unite and come together and be reminded that we're so much stronger than the fascists trying to rip us apart.

[closing clip]

Jake Tapper (53:53):

In one of the ugliest and most embarrassing moments in the history of journalism, Fox issued a statement saying 'we are pleased to have reached a settlement of our dispute' — [laughs] Dispute.—"with Dominion Voting Systems. We acknowledge the court's rulings finding certain claims about Dominion to be false. The settlement reflects—"...I'm sorry, this is gonna be difficult to say with a straight face—"This settlement reflects Fox's continued commitment to the highest journalistic standards. We are hopeful that our dis—" [laughs] Sorry.—"We are hopeful that our decision to resolve the dispute with Dominion amicably instead of the acrimony of a divisive trial allows the country to move forward from these issues." Unquote.

[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:

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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:

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