

Gaslit Nation Transcript

31 January 2024

“Queen of Auschwitz”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/queen-of-97511684>

[opening clip]

Sofia Ongele:

Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin created a tip line to report critical race theory being taught in schools. I had a problem with that [laughs]. So, I wanted there to be an easy, fun, community-oriented way to get this tip line taken down as soon as possible. I coded a tool that allowed people to send song lyrics and lines from the *Bee Movie* to the tip line. Essentially, it takes the name of a real school, a real city in Virginia, and spits out a very ridiculous report. For example, “I have reason to believe Thomas Jefferson High School is teaching race. I overheard a teacher saying, ‘Shawty has them apple bottom jean.’”

[audience laughs]

Sofia Ongele (00:00:33):

It’s silly. It’s goofy. It’s just as unserious as the creation of a teacher-reporting tip line itself, which is exactly what draws people to this kind of action. Democracy is just fun and inviting when you take it into your own hands. After I finished the website, I sent it to my friends at Gen Z For Change. We all posted videos. Thousands of emails were sent from every state in the country, and virtually every continent, and we had emails bouncing within 48 hours. Months later, the tip line was quietly officially shut down.

Sofia Ongele (00:01:07):

It didn’t even last a year. Because of the skills of a few, the platforms of many, and the wills of hundreds of thousands of meddling kids unified in our intolerance of injustice, we were far more powerful than a couple people in official positions of power. The stability of democracy internationally requires that we use whatever skills and resources that we have to combat hate, bring movements to life, and stand united in solidarity with one another on every corner of the globe. Justice can’t wait, so take what’s in front of you, get really creative, and cause a ruckus.

[song feature up and under, [“I Don’t Wanna Be Dismembered” by th’sheridans](#)]

Andrea Chalupa (00:02:13):

Welcome to *Gaslit Nation*. I am your host, Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker and the writer and producer of the journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones*, the film the Kremlin does not want you to see. And with me today is the great Terrell Starr of the must-listen to *Black Diplomats* podcast and Substack by the same name. And you can find both at the top of the show notes for this week’s episode.

The song you heard at the top of the show was “I Don’t Wanna Be Dismembered” by th’sheridans.

"th'sheridans are a London-based DIY band formerly signed to UK indie label Reckless Yes. Made up of Adam Karenina Sherif (he / him) and Julia Oertli (she / her), they make critical pop for radical purposes. th'sheridans draw on the Black rock n' roll tradition, the 1970s CBGB scene, the '90s riot grrrl movement, as well as folk music of various kinds. th'sheridans are trying increasingly to hold their values at centre, rejecting competitiveness and scarcity mindsets in the arts space."

That's very good! I'm gonna try that. [laughs]

"They say no to stuff all the time, basically. In the context of an ongoing global pandemic, th'sheridans are committed to exploring new models of working as a band without asking folks to attend unsafe shows. They reckon the old thing is over."

The Sheridans provided this statement about the song:

"I Don't Wanna Be Dismembered" was originally written in the UK in 2016, a very particular year. Nothing about it was brand new but it prompted us to be more unequivocally explicit about our values as artists.

"The song speaks specifically to the tiresome experience of white supremacy. As Toni Morrison says, "there will always be one more thing". The song also comes out of experiences of intentional DIY communities (which are sometimes heart-breaking), and wanting to be absolutely clear about solidarity with other marginalised folks.

"Adam is an academic historian and Julia is an anthropologist by training, but we make music because we feel compelled to.

"Thank you for all the work you do at Gaslit Nation - we've both learnt so much from the show about rising dictatorships around the world, how their political movements are connected and disguised, and how important it is to resist them at the earliest stages."

Thank you so much, Adam and Julia! We'll post a link to 'I Don't Wanna Be Dismembered' on our social media feeds and in the show notes for this episode on our Patreon page. You can find more of th'sheridans' music on all streaming platforms and on Bandcamp at thsheridans.bandcamp.com/.

Thanks for sharing your work with us, Julia and Adam!

And if you have a song that you would like to submit, look for the link in our show notes. We wanna hear from you, all you beautiful musicians out there. Thank you for making your music. The world needs it.

And our opening clip was Sofia Ongele from her Ted Talk, "Your Creative Superpowers Can Help Protect Democracy." We will also link to that full TED talk in this week's episode's show notes. And mark your

calendars because Tristan Snell, the prosecutor who led New York State's case against Trump and the slush fund known as Trump University and the author of *Taking Down Trump: 12 Rules for Prosecuting Donald Trump by Someone Who Did It Successfully*, will join me for a live taping of *Gaslit Nation* for our community of listeners on February 12 at noon Eastern. An event link will be sent out to our Patreon community at the Truth-teller level or higher on the day of the event. To join us, sign up at patreon.com/gaslit. That's patreon.com/gaslit.

Andrea Chalupa (00:06:10):

Now, Terrell and I had one of our cinematic weekends. We're going to share this with you now because we went and saw a film that is one of the Oscar-nominated best pictures, but it's also a mirror to what we are up against today. And that film is *The Zone of Interest*, all about the family, the commandant who built and ran Auschwitz, and the wonderful time he had there with his family, including his wife, Marjorie Taylor Greene... I mean, including his wife, the Queen of Auschwitz. You have to see this film. And so we're going to discuss it now, but I want to just go into a bit of the history. Rudolf—his last name is pronounced hose—Rudolf Höss grew up in a strict Catholic household. He was an early fan of Hitler's. He engaged in extreme terrorism for the Nazis, spent some time in jail in the 1920s. When Hitler came to power, Höss quickly rose up the ranks, building and overseeing Auschwitz, the largest and most efficient of the Nazi killing machines. He himself put the estimate at over three million were killed there. Historians who have taken a hard look at the numbers over many decades put it closer to 1.1 million people exterminated there. But what's important to know is that that Auschwitz was the most notorious, biggest of all the death camps.

Andrea Chalupa (00:07:31):

Höss was then promoted to overseeing all the camps, including an operation named after him to round up and kill over 400,000 Jewish people from Hungary. During his time as the commandant of Auschwitz, he would torture prisoners, including on several occasions making them stand out in the freezing, freezing cold, negative 30 degrees Celsius temperatures without any warm clothing. And when any prisoners would dare to drag the dying and the people that are collapsing to the infirmary, to the hospital in the camp to be treated, he would have the doors to the hospital locked. So many people died this way. He repeatedly raped a political prisoner in the camp. His son would amuse himself by shooting the prisoners with a slingshot. Höss and his family were very much the “good Nazis, the real Germans” that Hitler was promoting. His wife produced five children, like a good baby-making vessel of the state. That's literally how Nazi ideology promoted women. Women are vessels for making babies, bodies for the state, bodies for the dictator.

Andrea Chalupa (00:08:36):

That's exactly how the six extreme Catholic mullahs on the Supreme Court see us, when they wasted no time overturning *Roe v. Wade*. That's how Amy Coney Barrett, the least qualified justice ever brought up for a Senate confirmation hearing—nevermind being confirmed, but brought up for consideration—shoved through days before the 2020 election in a blatant right-wing power grab by Trump and Mitch McConnell and we're still living with their overpacked ideological courts (30% of our nation's courts) to this day. I bring all this up because Terrell and I over the weekend, having watched that film and discussing it at great length, *The Zone of Interest* by Jonathan Glaser, you have to watch it. It

is a beautifully mundane look at the bucolic living of these Nazis. It is Hannah Arendt's warning of the banality of evil, come to life. The only critique I have of this film is that in the end credits—there it is, the Russian money that helped fund it. Len Blavatnik was one of the financiers. For the Patreon community that gets our bonus episodes, you may have remembered in last week's bonus show when I was talking about how when I was making *Mr. Jones*, I kept coming across Russian money, so much Russian money in Hollywood.

Andrea Chalupa(00:09:55):

And it sucks to see a film that you love so much made possible by Russian oligarch money. Len Blavatnik showers money, for instance, on the Council for Foreign Relations, whose president, Richard Haass, is blatantly trying to force Ukraine to stop fighting and spreading all sorts of disinformation on cable news against Ukraine's war, and speaking very much like a paid Russian shill. So this is an example of how it's so hard to escape Russian money in the entertainment industry. But with that aside, *The Zone of Interest* is a remarkable film. Just... You have to see it because I've never seen a movie this powerful on the Holocaust since *Schindler's List*. And it's very much worth all the attention that it's getting. And I want to also share, sort of along the theme of last week's episode, looking at the sociopaths among us—how one in four Americans, according to one Harvard psychologist or sociopaths—along that thread, there was an American psychologist by the name of Gustav Gilbert, who was brought in by the allies during the Nuremberg trials because he spoke fluent German and the allies felt it was really important to have dignity in the process, transparency in the process.

Andrea Chalupa (00:11:03):

So, they brought in this psychologist to be there for these Nazis on trial so that they would have someone to talk to and could remain calm throughout these proceedings. And of course this turned into an extensive study on the very nature of evil. And the psychologist, Gustav Gilbert, famously recorded his findings on Hitler's henchmen, dissecting their minds. And what it all came down to was this: they simply lacked empathy. There are many, many people among us today who simply lack empathy. We see it in the governor of Texas with his killing machines on the border, killing asylum seekers; asylum seekers like my grandparents who fled, who were asylum seekers, who came to this country as asylum seekers. That's who he's slaughtering deliberately on the border with his barbed wire fences and so on. You see this with Mike Johnson, a Trump protege, a MAGA attack dog holding up much needed funding for Ukraine as Russian missiles are increasingly getting through because of this lack of funding from Congress and so on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:12:07):

We all just have to come to terms that the movement we're up against is just an utter lack of empathy. That's what Trump is galvanizing and leading. And I want to read now from the psychologist—this American psychologist from the Nuremberg trials—what he wrote specifically on Rudolf Höss, who was the commandant of Auschwitz, who's featured, whose mundane evil world is dissected in the brilliant must-see film, *The Zone of Interest*, by John, John the Glazer. Now, here he is now as seen through the eyes of a psychologist. I'll read from Gustav Gilbert's assessment here: *"In all of the discussions, Höss is quite matter of fact and apathetic, shows some belated interest in the enormity of his crime, but gives*

the impression that it never would have occurred to him if somebody hadn't asked him. There's too much apathy to leave any suggestion of remorse, and even the prospect of hanging does not unduly stress him."

Andrea Chalupa (00:12:57):

"One gets the general impression of a man who is intellectually normal, but with a schizoid apathy, insensitivity, and lack of empathy that could hardly be more extreme in a frank psychotic." So it's bullshit that these Nazis were just following orders. What dictators do is they embolden, energize, organize those among them that also lack basic empathy. And together, they become stronger. And together, they steamroll our democracy and destroy everything and carry out genocides. And do it proudly. During the Nuremberg trials, all the observers were pointing out how proud Höss was of the efficient killing machine that he built. They know what they do. They brag about it. Terrell, what are your thoughts on all that?

Terrell Jermaine Starr (00:13:42):

So, when I was watching this film and sitting in the theater, I just thought about how mundane and how just regular their existence was. And so it just shows you how easily you can normalize hatred and normalize brutality and humanity. And so the failure of humanity that was really cinematically told so well was that it was just so unpronounced. And I think that we need more films like this that really show how the perpetrators of this violence, of this genocide, truly exists, because I think it's a mirror of the typical Trump supporter. These are folks who, if you didn't see their actual acts or you didn't go into their minds to really comprehend what they truly believe on a day-to-day basis, you would think just for a split second that these were "normal people," but in fact they weren't. And I think a lot of people who may have been complaining about the fact that it may not have spoken to the victims, I think that this particular film was not designed for that. You have *Schindler's List*, you have a wide range of films that focus on the true victims. of this Holocaust. However, if we don't really take time to really interrogate the inhumanity of the people who are perpetrating this, then we really aren't going to understand or really prepare ourselves for what our world will become. Because what we saw in this film is not, to me, it was a film of a real event, but I think that it's a mirror of what America can become.

Andrea Chalupa (00:15:33):

A trillion percent. I was thinking about my kids, my future, because everything feels like it's escalating, it's spiraling. We've been headed towards/tipping towards World War III for so long now with the Russians and now with Iran, with the US soldiers getting killed just now. Just everything feels like it's spiraling and escalating, getting more and more out of control. And so this feeling that we're just going to lose control and reach this tipping point of just an explosion of mass violence coming. And hopefully the center holds and the progressives clean house on this all-important state level where we really need them to be energized and active, and we can build another world, because another world is possible. But I wanna point out—because it is Oscar season and I'm a filmmaker and Terrell has some film projects of his own that he's developing—we are really paying attention to this extraordinary wealth of powerful films.

Andrea Chalupa (00:16:28):

We have a buffet of good films out right now. It's hard to keep track of the so many good films out there. This is unusual. I don't know if this is because a lot of these films were held up because of the pandemic and writer's strike, and suddenly they're all coming out at once. But I can't recall another time as there's been just such an extraordinary, long list of powerful films that are all deserving, equally deserving of these Oscars. And so many that were also deserving that weren't even nominated or make the cut. One film I'm gonna remind everyone that listens to this show and loves the show that has to watch is *Anatomy of a Fall*. And the reason why I bring it up is because that film stars Sandra Hüller, who's a wonderful German actress. She also stars as the Queen of Auschwitz in *The Zone of Interest*. She plays Höss' wife. And it's amazing to compare those two roles because in *Anatomy of a Fall*, she plays a badass, powerful woman who's put on trial. And her lesbian fantasies are put on trial and her lesbian affairs are put on trial. And she's, like, unapologetically powerful in the way she carries herself. Take her or leave her, you know what I mean?

Andrea Chalupa (00:17:33):

She's not there for you. She's there for her own self satisfaction. She's a strong woman coming into her own and she gets a lot of public heat and scrutiny for that. And then to watch her play the perfect ideal Nazi wife in *The Zone of Interest* and watching her walk around in these scenes, bow-legged, like she's shot out too many children for the Nazi state... It's just so perfectly done, just the contrast between these two characters and how she physically embodies them so differently. So these are two films you absolutely have to watch for just her alone, for these character studies, playing two very different women; one woman was mind-fucked, told "your body belongs to the state, you're only good for bearing us children." And she physically portrays that beautifully; and in this other movie, *Anatomy of Fall*, she's literally put on trial for daring to satisfy herself as a woman. And so just stunning performances. And I think those two films, those two roles, really have to anchor this Oscar season, more people need to pay attention to her. So that's my take as a filmmaker.

Terrell Jermaine Starr (00:18:38):

And what's unfortunate is that there are films that got a lot of nods, but the women who directed them did not get the nod.

Andrea Chalupa (00:18:46):

Oh, fuck yeah, we talked about that.

Terrell Starr (00:18:48):

There are too few women who did not get nominated for Best Director, and I think the biggest tragedy in all of that is we don't encourage—at least from the award standpoint—we don't encourage new ways of looking at the world and just looking at ourselves and looking at society. And so while you talked about this incredible performance by this German actress, I think what is missing is that there's so many women who are behind the scenes who are really crafting the stories for these actors to tell them to us. And I just hope that next year, we will see more women being nominated from all backgrounds.

Andrea Chalupa (00:19:31):

Absolutely. Amen to that. And now this brings us naturally into Project 2025. Trump posted a

three-minute video listing all the ways he plans to massively purge our government and destroy his enemies, namely our system of checks and balances, which is barely hanging on as it is and absolutely will not survive Trump back in power. This is a campaign video. In it, he outlines what's known as Project 2025, his plan to do a mass purge of our government, replacing tens of thousands of non-political government employees with Trump loyalists. We will play the first two minutes of this now.

[clip of Trump's unhinged video]

Donald Trump:

I plan to dismantle the deep state and reclaim our democracy from Washington corruption once and for all. And corruption it is. First, I will immediately reissue my 2020 executive order restoring the president's authority to remove rogue bureaucrats and I will wield that power very aggressively. Second, we will clean out all of the corrupt actors in our national security and intelligence apparatus, and there are plenty of them. The departments and agencies that have been weaponized will be completely overhauled so that faceless bureaucrats will never again be able to persecute and target conservatives, Christians, or the Left's political enemies, which they're doing now at a level nobody can even believe possible.

Donald Trump (00:21:08):

Third, we will totally reform FISA courts which are so corrupt that the judges seemingly do not care when they are lied to in warrant applications. So many judges have seen so many applications that they know were wrong, or at least they must've known... They do nothing about it. They're lied to. Fourth, to expose the hoaxes and abuses of power that have been tearing our country apart, we will establish a Truth & Reconciliation commission to declassify and publish all documents on deep state spying, censorship, and corruption. And there are plenty of them. Fifth, we will launch a major crackdown on government leakers who collude with the fake news to deliberately weave false narratives and to subvert our government and our democracy. When possible, we will press criminal charges.

[end clip]

Andrea Chalupa (00:22:04):

Trump is literally campaigning on carrying out a dictator's purge. In this video, he throws in some catnip for anyone with common sense saying that he will end the revolving door of corruption in Washington by banning government workers from taking jobs in the industries they were tasked with regulating. That of course sounds great. We're all for that. But here's the thing: Trump made these sorts of promises back in 2016 when he promised to take on Wall Street. He framed Hillary Clinton as the Wall Street candidate. Meanwhile, he comes to power on this fake populist message, fools everyone. And who does he hire? One of the first hires was Gary Cohn, Mr. Wall Street himself. Gary Cohn being the president and chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs, otherwise known as Government Sachs because they have their executives, former executives in governments around the world. And Gary Cohn becomes Trump's longtime serving chief economic advisor.

Andrea Chalupa (00:23:09)

Goldman Sachs representing the swamp that Trump promised to drain. So even this catnip that he puts in this fascist video is gaslighting because of course he's not going to do that. He's going to do the opposite of whatever he's claiming. What Trump's going to do in the White House is energize, increase the revolving door of corruption and everyone at the very top is going to make money selling out our democracy, selling out countless innocent lives because dictators ultimately lead to war and genocide, as we're seeing with Netanyahu, who's been the longest serving wannabe dictator of Israel. So what are your thoughts on that, Terrell?

Terrell Starr (00:23:46):

Here's the thing. I think that this guy is literally giving us the playbook and he is really daring the country to stop him. And if there's any indication from the previous election where he got more than 70 million people via popular vote, we're lucky that that wasn't enough for him to win, is that there is a fervor, there is an enthusiasm in America for people who don't want democracy and what they want is fascism. And the way that the Democrats have been framing their campaign run, particularly with Biden, is that this is a fight for democracy. And while I think that they are correct in that standpoint, the larger question is you're fighting against a whole group of people who don't want it at all. And so I would say that this is a fight against fascism because the people who are going to support Biden obviously want a democracy and want to improve it.

Terrell Starr (00:24:44):

But Trump is very effective in showing us that this country is not the beacon of liberty and justice for all that many folks in the intelligentsia have been telling themselves it is; Black people, minorities, people of color, have long talked about this. It hasn't been framed as fascism, but Trump has gone for fascist, but because we don't believe we as in a lot of the folks who are in the intelligentsia of groups and the people who talk to themselves in Washington, DC don't think that their stuff stinks. They don't think America can plunge that deep into the abyss of hate and Mussolini and Hitler, but in fact we can. And I think a lot of that is due to the fact that so many people who are in positions of power to actually unleash the money to the groups that will really bring out voters and to really fight this are from privileged positions where if the worst gets worse, they have the complexion for the protection, whereas many of us don't. And so Trump is speaking from a sense of urgency. And even though he's an older man himself, like Biden, there is a vigor in his hatred that is lacking in Biden's communications to the rest of us about how important this election is.

Andrea Chalupa (00:26:10):

Mhmm (affirmative). Without question. It's going to be fascist history again for everyone. And it's obviously fascist history is what built this country with slavery and the enslavement and genocide of Native American people and so on. But it's going to be like that on a whole new level and on the global stage because you have, unlike any time in history, this even exceeds what we saw in World War II, the global war of fascism against democracy. People have to wake up, that World War III is here, it's just different. It's asymmetrical warfare. It's what we're seeing with Bibi Netanyahu working both sides. He's friends with the Russians. He campaigns with Putin posters to stay in power, but at the same time, Hamas is being propped up by Russian money, Russian weapons, and is linked closely with Iran. It's like

what Orwell predicted in *1984*: We're at war with Eurasia. We've always been at war with Eurasia; how you just have this perpetual forever war. It's just this weird dark obliqueness of who's on whose side. And all of that needs to be closely examined and brought to light and put pressure on because people need to really wake up that what we're fighting for here in the US to keep Trump out of power is part of a much more urgent and global war.

Andrea Chalupa (00:27:33):

It's not just Ukraine. It's not just Bibi's political future and clinging on with his desperate forever war that he needs to stay in power, his coup, his genocide that he needs. It's much larger than that. It's literally the fate of the world at a time when technology is exponentially advancing. So if the fascists win this round, if Trump gets in, a lot more fascists around the world are gonna be emboldened and come to power and stay in power.

Terrell Starr (00:28:01):

That's already happening now, though.

Andrea Chalupa (00:28:04):

I'm talking about the trend accelerating at a time when technology is accelerating. So if the fascists increase across the global stage and they stay in power during a time of mass tech advancement, I don't know how we get past that as a civilization.

Terrell Starr (00:28:22):

I don't think so either. And you know the thing, you brought up this whole point of how Bibi is playing both sides... I feel like Biden is doing the same thing with Benjamin Netanyahu by sending the weapons to Israel in order to essentially arm them to white Palestinians out of Gaza, because their whole point is that they want to finish the job. I feel like Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump are operating from the same premise of, "I have to finish the job." And so Trump is pretty much calling for a complete fascist purge of what is left of our democracy here, right now. And people don't think that a lot of damage can be done in four years, but in fact they can, they just have to look at his first term. But when we look at Benjamin Netanyahu and the both sides that he's playing, Biden is trying to do that but he's not doing as good a job of it because Benjamin Netanyahu is a lot more evil than Biden is sympathetic. The thing with Biden is that I do believe that he genuinely comes from a place of sincerity, but his politics and the way that he came up through the Senate has not built him to be the person that he needs to be in this time.

Terrell Starr (00:29:34):

While Trump, I believe, is built to be the person that he is for this time. Trump is better built to rally people around his fascist vision than Biden is around the world in which all of us can exist as ourselves. And in order for Biden to really truly do that, he has to speak up against people like Benjamin Netanyahu and then Russian President Vladimir Putin in ways that his disposition and his Cold War caution is not preparing him for in the 21st century. And for that, not only do we suffer as Americans here at home, but the Ukrainians suffer, Palestinians suffer, and hell, even Israelis suffer because this is not gonna benefit them. This forever war that this type of fascist ideology or this indifference to it perpetuates isn't gonna make any of us safe. And, you know, I think that there's so much time to prepare before November, but

all of the things that you're talking about really speak to the fact that we have to be as devoted to fighting fascism as Donald Trump is to leading a next term with it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:30:46):

The war is really empathy versus a proud rejection of empathy. That's what the war is about. Whatever ideology you want to put on it, it's really empathy versus a proud disdain for empathy. And so just the activism that we all need right now from all of us listeners coming together, the Gaslit Nation community, doing our phone banks, writing our letters to get out the vote, donating whatever we can, setting auto donations right now for groups like Run for Something. Those are acts of empathy. Activism is empathy in action. So we need to show greater empathy for ourselves and others, our community right now. Empathy is our flag. Empathy is everything we stand for. We need to just spread that love far and wide, and that's how we're going to ultimately win and get through this. You heard the brilliant young woman speaking at the start of the show in that clip.

Andrea Chalupa (00:31:40):

She is a beacon of empathy in this world. So empathy is ultimately going to win because there's more of us than there are of them. And they use these terror tactics to try to convince us otherwise, but ultimately we are going to win and we are very much in the fight of our lives right now. It's scary as hell. And so Biden trying to be all things to all people and just sticking with the status quo, and senators famously being too consensus-driven when they get into the executive leadership position of the White House, where governors are more decisive... And people like somebody that's their leaders to be like, "This is where I stand, I'm taking a stand." And here with Israel, Biden continues to say one thing while right in his face gloating, Netanyahu is just unleashing collective punishment against Palestinians, driving them off their land. And he's been increasingly emboldened by a movement of Israelis physically blocking aid into Gaza when there's a famine—a growing famine—in Gaza and the hospital system has collapsed. Amputations and all sorts of emergency surgeries are being done without anesthesia, including on children and pregnant women and so on. And you have Israelis physically blocking these aid trucks going into Gaza.

Andrea Chalupa (00:33:00):

And Americans are watching this because we've become so accustomed to watching our wars on social media as these things play out. And so Biden cannot escape from this. He's being hounded by these protesters saying, "For the love of God, you're the United States of America. You can stop this genocide if you want to. Why aren't you stopping it?" And the US very well could. And I think Biden has very much made the calculation, as he always has—with some famous exceptions—that the status quo remains. The status quo remains and the US is an extension of Israel, that we unconditionally stand by Israel. But right now Israel is being led by a wannabe dictator who is using this war to finally have his way of staying in power. And that is what all dictators want. So Trump coming in, he's going to start wars. He's going to accelerate wars.

Andrea Chalupa (00:33:54):

Remember what he did as president. He dropped the mother of all bombs on Afghanistan. He killed the second most powerful person in Iran that US intelligence had considered untouchable because you just

don't go there. And no, but Trump had him assassinated. He released 5,000 Taliban fighters in Afghanistan, which basically allowed Afghanistan to be game over and basically gave the Kremlin what it wanted, which was American humiliation on the global stage and for Afghanistan to fall to their allies, the Taliban, and so on. He's going to be disastrous in leading us into wars to stay in power and die in power. His 2025 purge is not going to be enough because America is so spread out as a country. We have so many competing power centers across this country. And you're going to have a lot of resistance to Trump should he get in again, even against his 2025 plan. So he's going to need some sort of war to have an excuse to have all sorts of war time powers, to mass round up his enemies, to heighten this atmosphere of paranoia, to crush people and distract people and so on. And yes, he'll get his nuke fetish worked out some way as well.

Terrell Starr (00:35:04):

Well, he manufactures problems, he doesn't solve them.

Andrea Chalupa (00:35:06):

Absolutely. That's what dictators do. There was a glimmer of hope, a bit of enjoyment, where a judge just ordered Trump to pay E. Jean Carroll \$83.3 million in her defamation lawsuit. That's in addition to \$5 million he already owes her in a previous case where a jury found that Trump, yes, did sexually abuse her and then defamed her. Trump literally grabbed Carroll by the pussy. How many other women has he done this to? Carroll, of course, has the means. She has the celebrity. She has the money. She has the support network to go after someone like Trump. She has the war chest to go after the war chest, and that's how she was able to do it successfully. But Trump himself has admitted in that infamous Access Hollywood tape from 2016 that he grabs 'em by the pussy. How many more women out there who do not have Carroll's means have their own cases that they could win against this serial rapist?

Terrell Starr (00:36:06):

Well, I mean, think about this, Andrea, like, even though she has the resources to go after him, does she have the energy and the emotional bandwidth to continue doing this? Because he's going to appeal. And this woman, I believe she's in her late 70s to early 80s. She's right around that range. I'm pretty sure that this lady, if she has grandchildren, would rather spend that time doing that or hiking or whatever it is that she's doing, as opposed to dealing with this sexist, egotistical maniac in court. I don't think she wants to spend her remaining days reliving this very traumatic, horrible experience. And so at some point, we really have to have a larger conversation about how easily people dismiss misogyny in politics. But, you know, misogyny is a part of the fascism. The movie that we saw, this character, I forgot her name in the film, but essentially—

Andrea (00:37:13):

Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Terrell Starr (00:37:15):

Okay, Marjorie Taylor Greene, her whole ideal was to exist for a man. That was her existence. She was producing children for this population of German children. She was a vessel and nothing more. She was

not a full human being. And Mrs. Carroll was not viewed as a human being in all of this. And so while I definitely admire her courage and her tenacity, I just wish that there would be something that would make him stop. And unfortunately we do live in a country of laws where you do have the right to appeal. It's just that unfortunately with Trump, none of this is going to stop him because one of the questions that her lawyers posed during this trial was how much will it take to make him stop? And we would hope that \$83 million would be enough to make him stop, but he has enough to appeal in which I don't know if it could go all the way up to the Supreme Court, but he's going to continue to try.

Terrell Starr (00:38:15):

And none of his supporters care because he is manifesting their white supremacist fantasy because they too want to be in a situation where women, the MAGA women, will continue to be birth vessels, they'll be vessels producing babies for his MAGA state. And so that's the whole objective and him disrespecting this woman during her trial is a manifestation of that. It just brings so many parallels to the film. And I really think that this manosphere environment that we're living in right now, where the Andrew Tates of the world are literally going across the world, going to Romania and exploiting the economies of those locations for their own gain, it is something that is... And I hate to frame everything as a national security environment, but just for our own security as human beings, men and their sexism will be the death of all of us because this type of sexism, they think it's sustainable for them, but it's not sustainable for a healthy environment for a nation, for any of us.

Andrea Chalupa (00:39:26):

No, it's self-destructive. Societies have been shown to decline when half the population, when women are abused—psychologically abused, physically abused—meaning they're cast into the role of second-class citizens. Their rights are denied. They have these restrictive laws and those restrictive laws are a form of emotional/mental abuse because you're denying their humanity. You're trying to treat them less than. And that sort of hate becomes internalized. And it sort of inflicts this mental health crisis on the women that are subject to that. And society as a whole starts to decline because you're losing half of your population and their potential for advancing society, for advancing solutions across all fields. And so that's what we've seen throughout history is once you contain the women, that's game over for you. And that's what Marjorie Taylor Greene, Amy Coney Barrett, and these other queens of Auschwitz are trying to dismantle our democracy, that's what they're leading us towards.

Terrell Starr (00:40:31):

I just can't believe you're calling them the queens of Auschwitz. I'm just still thinking about that. [laughs]

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:40):

[laughs] Well, I mean, that's how I see them. When we were watching *The Zone of Interest*, I was like, "Oh my God, I'm gonna make 5,000 phone calls this year to get out the vote," you know? I was like really doubling my quotas for myself and for all of you *Gaslit Nation* listeners, because failure is just not an option this year for us. It is not an option, everybody, okay? I know Biden is falling so heartbreakingly short when it comes to Gaza and Palestine. I see all the protests and I greatly admire all the people who are standing up to him, including to his face, because that is so urgently needed. And those people are on the right side of history. And people that don't understand that are clearly not watching the horrific

videos of children being buried alive and rubble in Gaza. It's not right what is happening there. And the whole judgment of history in the eyes of the world are on that. And that is the global consensus right now and will be forever anywhere that honest historians exist.

Terrell Starr (00:41:40):

I think the best thing that we all can do is while we definitely respect their positions and, you know, for my newsletter, I've written extensively about this issue and how much I support them and how I actually admonish those who confront them with these reductive talking points of, "Trump will be worse." These people know that. I think the best thing that we can do as supporters and standing in solidarity is recognizing their agency and not insulting their intelligence and being like most people who respond to them with reductive talking points that don't speak to the heart of who they are as human beings, which is what the Biden administration is failing to do. And in the interim, we definitely want Biden to win but we also want him to be held accountable for his poor decision-making. And so we can hold space for them while not insulting them. And we've done a great job of that since this whole thing started. And then we can also do what we can, get on the phone banks—I'll be helping you—and getting people out to vote. So I think that multiple things could be true at once. Now, I wish that more people would exercise the intellectual and emotional dexterity to realize that.

Andrea Chalupa (00:42:51):

What we have to understand is that this election is bigger than Biden. It's bigger than Biden. And the reality is the way our government works is the all-important quality of life issues; funding for public schools, safety in our environmental regulations, clean drinking water, gun control laws, on and on the list goes, those all-important quality of life issues are determined on the state level. So our phone banks this year are going to be driving to get out the vote on the all-important state level and flipping governments from red to blue and denying the far right any power in the states. That's what we're going to be focusing on, the all-important state level, because that's where you can protect voting laws, strengthen voting laws. You can fight back against the Nazi-level lawfare being waged against LGBTQ+ people, especially trans people. And so that's where we're really focusing, on quality of life issues in the all important state level and thinking bigger than Biden, because another world is possible. All this doom and gloom you hear all the time in this increasingly grim news cycle, that's one alternative. But we are building another alternative and that is a palpable alternative. It's happening.

Andrea Chalupa (00:42:12):

If you heard my interview with Lala Wu, one of the founders of Sister District, what that exemplified was that the 2018 blue wave isn't over. It started in 2018. It created a sea change in 2018. And it built progressive infrastructure up and down this country that's still there, that is remarkably growing and expanding their victories. So remember that. Remember what we all did together here at *Gaslit Nation* in the fall of 2023. Glenn Youngkin was licking his chops, thinking that he was gonna take over both government chambers in Virginia. Instead, we flipped a chamber and we elected the first trans woman to the Senate in Virginia. And we humiliated Glenn Youngkin. We dog-walked Glenn Youngkin. It was beautiful. We did that. We did that. And so just remember, another world is possible. We are building another world and I cannot wait to be an old ass woman with my whiskey bottle and my missing teeth and just cackling to myself, looking at this extraordinary world that we built and all these bad-ass women

and all these bad-ass non-conforming people and just all of this extraordinary technology used for good, used for empathy to make a livable planet and making a safe, sustainable future for all life on this planet. Life is going to win. Creativity is going to win. Good is going to win. Empathy is going to win, okay? That's what we're building here together. Don't ever lose sight of that. Another world is possible.

[song feature, "[I Don't Wanna Be Dismembered](#)" by th'sheridans]

[closing theme music, roll credits]

Andrea Chalupa:

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

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Gaslit Nation is produced by Andrea Chalupa. Our production managers 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.

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

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

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