

Gaslit Nation Transcript

21 February 2024

“Trump Backers Kill Navalny”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/trump-backers-98906178>

[opening clip]

Emad El Din Adeeb (00:01:00):

I'll use the devil's advocate.

Tucker Carlson (00:01:03):

Advocate away.

Emad El Din Adeeb (00:01:04):

Yes. Okay. I'll tell you. You should challenge in the role of an interviewer—and you are a master in your business. It's not for me to give you a lecture about that. But you should challenge some ideas. For instance, you didn't talk about freedom of speech in Russia. You did not talk about Navalny, about assassinations, about restrictions on opposition in the coming elections.

Tucker Carlson (00:01:38):

I didn't talk about the things that every other American media outlet talks about.

Emad El Din Adeeb (00:01:41):

Why? Yes.

Tucker Carlson (00:01:43):

Because those are covered and because I have spent my life talking to people who run countries in various countries and have concluded the following: that every leader kills people, including my leader. Every leader kills people—some more than others. Leadership requires killing people. Sorry. That's why I wouldn't want to be a leader; that press restriction is illegal in the United States. I know because I've lived there. Ask my former... I've had a lot of jobs and I've done this for 34 years and I know how it works. And there's more censorship in Russia than there is in the United States, but there's a great deal in the United States.

Tucker Carlson:

So at a certain point, it's like people can decide whether they think... You know, what countries they think are better, what systems they think are better—

Emad El Din Adeeb (00:02:22):

So, I—

Tucker Carlson (00:02:23):

I just wanna know what he thinks. That was the whole point.

[opening theme music up and under]

Andrea (00:02:33):

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*, about Stalin's genocide famine in Ukraine; the film the Kremlin does not want you to see because it exposes the Kremlin's decades-long history of killing journalists and political opponents. And as you heard in our opening clip, traitor to America, likely bought-and-paid-for shill for the Kremlin, Tucker Carlson was justifying off of his recent interview with Putin, which was just an infomercial of justifying Putin's brutality. And we are recording this on February 20th, 2024. I'm with my dear friend, Terrell Starr, of the essential *Black Diplomats* podcast. And we're going to talk of course about the Kremlin murdering Navalny after torturing him for years, after harassing him for years, after trying to assassinate him and his wife using chemical warfare. And we're gonna get into all of what this means in the 2024 election where you have the very likely Republican nominee, Donald Trump, being a walking, talking Russian propagandist and normalizing Russia's genocidal imperialism among his base.

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:04):

So Trump normalized the harassment of Obama with birtherism, right? Demanding that Obama with his silly foreign-sounding middle name, Hussein, being the first Black president; having a beautiful, lively, all-American family that happened to be Black, couldn't be a U.S. citizen and is therefore an illegitimate president. And that was years of normalizing essentially what was effectively a public lynching that put a giant target on the head of President Obama and his family. And now Trump is doing it again and this time his targets are Ukrainians who are increasingly dying because Trump's movement inside Congress that holds all the cards, that holds all the power, they're deliberately blocking aid to Ukraine. And if you are someone out there who does not understand what Ukraine has to do with you as an American voter, please know there is a global war going on right now, whether we like it or not, where Russia is a global fascist leader, uniting the far right around the world, consolidating power and they are trying to pass all these restrictive laws where we live here in the US and justify further authoritarian control. We're gonna get into all of that in this episode. I'm gonna kick it to Terrell. Terrell, what are your thoughts on the horrible news cycle that we're trapped in, and most recently, the murder of Alexei Navalny?

Terrell Starr (00:05:32)

When I heard about Alexei Navalny's death, I was pretty saddened by it ultimately because, as you know and many of my followers know, I had a lot of strong critiques of Navalny as far as his embrace of nationalism and his convenient PR shift to this clean-cut, Western-friendly Russian opposition leader when it suited his needs. And so I definitely am mindful of the Central Asians, the people from Caucasus and the Ukrainians who felt like he would not have really prevented Russia from continuing its colonial path if he were to have miraculously taken power. That still does not mean that I wish that he had died, right? You know, and I think there's a distinct difference in that. And as far as this greater—

Andrea Chalupa (00:06:22)

Yeah, you don't believe in killing people that disagree with you. [laughs]

Terrell Starr (00:06:25):

No, no, no. I believe in debating people with whom I disagree, and in the case of politics, having fair elections where everyone is able to actively participate in the process. And through that process, once the people in that fair political process decide who they want to invest their trust in, then that is the way that I deal with political differences: at the ballot box, not in a torture chamber where you put someone for years to die in the case of Alexei Navalny. That is the wrong way to disagree. And so this cycle that we're in right now is one where we really have to reaffirm our values as people; we have to decide who we are. And this is a foreign policy election year. And so even though many of us don't really engage in foreign policy, foreign policy engages us inevitably. And I think that's the number one lesson that people need to take from this episode and just from the election going on and then beyond.

Andrea Chalupa (00:07:34):

Without question. And I want to point out that you wrote a very brave piece for *The Washington Post* years ago, calling out Navalny's more chauvinistic, far-right, Russian imperialist attitude towards Ukrainians. He was all in favor initially of Russia keeping Crimea, which it seized, invading another country and just seizing some of his land as Hitler did in the 1930s. And Navalny's like, "Yeah, no, Crimea's ours now." And he got a lot of pushback for that, including in your piece, which you got a lot of heat for because the West has a tendency of wanting to put opposition figures, who are of course risking their lives and being very brave, on pedestals and sort of just simplify their story, where you presented Navalny as more complicated than that. And so thank you for doing that, because when his murder was announced, you had a lot of leading Ukrainian journalists and civic society leaders going, like, "Let's be real here. This one man's death doesn't overshadow the fact that every single day Ukrainians are being slaughtered and civilians are being slaughtered." Two sleeping, I believe, last night were just killed in a Ukrainian city. So thank you for doing that.

Terrell Starr (00:08:42):

Yeah, thank you. I appreciate that because there are many obituaries about Alexei Navalny. And really when we think about Alexei Navalny's death and the many obituaries that are written about him, that are tweeted about him, that are Instagrammed and TikToked about him, it really is a microcosm of life. And during death, because that person is no longer here to defend themselves, we tend to say, we want to give deference to the dead, right? However, if you are a public figure, in the case of Navalny, you no longer have that cover. You took the pledge of being a public figure and particularly one in his case where he took a very, I think, very brave moral high ground that I think that we all can learn from, which is fighting kleptocracy. And so many people say, "What can we learn from Navalny's death?" And I think there are a couple of things.

Terrell Starr (00:09:35):

One, Navalny did... I wish that he had lived long enough to show that he could be a better human being than he actually was, that his actions betrayed. So, for example, notice that most of the people who are

giving cover to his racism to his nationalism and his xenophobia are white men in the West and people who are banned from going to Russia. And these are people who have grievances with Putin and I think they have such a strong tunnel vision that they can't see anything else. I remember having a very vigorous debate about his nationalism at a think tank here in DC. And one person that was in the Zoom call basically said, "Well, I know he says some racist things," and then he just said, "That said..." and he just kind of brushed it aside. And I'm like, "Okay..." It was as if I was not even in the room. And what if someone that you like said some racist things about Black people. Are you just gonna say, "Well, he said these things in the past," but he kind of acknowledged it, but then we're just gonna move on. And so Navalny did not make himself accountable to his strongest critics and the people with whom he claimed that he wanted to lead a better Russia with, i.e. the Central Asians who were colonized, the Georgians, the Armenians, the Ukrainians.

Terrell Starr (00:10:55):

Those are the people who I wish that he could have proved that he was a better human being to. But then moreover, when we think about kleptocracy and Biden saying that, "Well, Putin is responsible for his death and we need to pay tribute to Navalny." You know what we can do? We can stop the kleptocracy here in the United States of America. We can really reverse some of these laws that make it so easy for money, PAC money, to influence our elections. We could do a better job of stop washing oligarch money in our country. There's a really great researcher, his name is Casey Michel, who does a lot of work on this. In his book, he talked about this, about Ihor Kolomoisky, who was buying industrial businesses in the Midwest, really didn't care about the workers, really did not care about their safety, but it was just a place where he could wash his money, he could hide it.

Terrell Starr (00:11:48):

And because those local communities were so cash-strapped and desperate for investment, they didn't care about the origins of this money. And so if we really cared about kleptocracy, we could at least do that. And I think that's one thing that we can honor Navalny for, by being... But that all comes down to being better human beings to each other. And what do we value most? Do we value human rights? Are we bloodthirsty capitalists who don't care about the moral fabric about where the money comes from? So, we really want to invest in Navalny's legacy? Why don't we start there?

Andrea Chalupa (00:12:20):

Oh, without question. It's just America is one of the largest money laundering paradises for the corrupt. We have all the oligarchs from around the world hiding their money in our real estate. You have this one insanely rich woman from China who bought an apartment, like a \$6 million apartment, that's sitting empty because it's for her two-year-old child. That's who we're competing with for real estate here in New York City is all of these corrupt oligarchs laundering their money in cities like New York. And that's just one place. It's happening all across the country. And then you have our easy LLC shell company system, where anybody from anywhere can just open up a company and park their money here. And so as a result, you have these corrupt officials from around the world laundering their money across the US, further entrenching their influence with their money across the US. And then we're wondering why Donald Trump is just a heartbeat away from becoming president of the United States: because there's this larger culture of corruption that has gone unchecked for too long because of hyper capitalism. And

the most amazing thing people are... especially Republicans, especially conservatives are pulling their hair out going, "How did my beloved—" and I'm speaking from their point of view, I'm not speaking for myself because Reagan is a mass murderer in his own way, but they're saying, "How did my beloved Reagan, you know, mourning in America, how did the party of Reagan become the party of Putin?" And it's so simple. Reagan laid the groundwork for that with greed is good. The Kremlin took advantage of that. The Kremlin's like, "Yes, greed is good. And we are going to invade your country through the front door, through your greed." And that's what they're doing now.

Terrell Starr (00:14:06):

Isn't it ironic that Ronald Reagan, who we both abhor, was totally correct about blunting the expansion of the USSR, but he was completely wrong about everything else that helped them to really insert themselves in our democracy financially. Isn't that ironic?

Andrea Chalupa (00:14:23):

Oh, it's the Reagan Revolution led us to Trump, you know? Putin's Trump on a leash and so on. So I want to just share, for the history books, to preserve in this time capsule of this episode, in this moment in time, my feelings of Navalny's assassination, because I got a lot of flashbacks to the assassination of Boris Nemtsov. Nemtsov was the hope of Russia. He was an honorary Ukrainian. He was charismatic, handsome, he gave these powerful speeches. He mentored Navalny and others like him. Nemtsov would give speeches in the heart of Ukraine saying, "Crimea is Ukraine." He united Russians and Ukrainians. And on the eve of his nationwide anti-war march where Nemtsov was working with Russian soldiers and their families that were risking their lives to bring Boris Nemtsov proof of Putin's ongoing invasion of Ukraine at a time when so many useful idiots, including so-called respectable journalists at leading outlets around the world, were publishing nonsense saying, "Oh, it's Russian-backed proxies invading Ukraine, not Russia itself."

Andrea Chalupa (00:15:39):

So these Russian soldiers and their families risked their lives to get Nemtsov the proof that it was the Russian military invading Ukraine. This was at a time when, yes, straight-faced, so many journalists like Christopher Miller and others would write "Russian-backed proxies" in respectable outlets instead of just saying, "It's the Russian military." Which it was. And so Nemtsov was coming out with all this proof that it's the Russian military invading Ukraine and he was going to do this with these anti-war marches. Russian friends here in New York City reached out to me to join their Nemtsov march here in solidarity with Nemtsov. And we were going to go to that and have a big roundtable discussion afterwards with Ukrainians and Russians together, fighting to stop this war. And what happened? Days before that march, they assassinated Nemtsov in the shadow of the Kremlin. And when I first got that news, I was editing my screenplay for *Mr. Jones*. I was following around my real life hero, Gareth Jones, in the shadow of the Kremlin, where he was taking on the powers that be, including useful idiots in Western media.

Andrea Chalupa (00:16:40):

And he was going to expose how the Russians were destroying Ukraine with this artificially engineered famine that Stalin created. And I took a break from writing and I checked Twitter and right away, I get the news: "Boris Nemtsov killed in the heart of Moscow," where I was mentally, physically, spiritually with

Gareth Jones in Moscow. And I get this news. I felt it, like, reverberate in me. And so at that moment, you know, when I went to that anti-war march with all these Russians, all my Russian friends and saw the haunted look in their eyes, just like the pain and grief in their eyes, where their hope was gone, that was when I redoubled my efforts to get *Mr. Jones* made. I did like a page one rewrite. I wrote the angriest draft. And I wrote a draft where I grabbed the readers by the throat and said, "How dare you not care what is happening today, what happened back then? It's happening now." And I sent that draft off to the great Agnieszka Holland, who I happened to get access to because we have a mutual friend, the historian Tim Snyder. And there's no way in hell Agnieszka Holland, who has three Oscar nominations and was busy directing *House of Cards* and all sorts of great TV and film, was ever going to take a chance on me, an unknown screenwriter. And I sent my angry draft of my screenplay, *Mr. Jones*, to her, and right away she said, "Yes."

Andrea Chalupa (00:17:54):

And the reason why she said yes was because she was as angry as I was. And so we went, got together and made our very angry film. And in *Mr. Jones*, you have one of the characters who's killed with four bullets in his back, just like they killed Boris Nemtsov. So for me, all of that came back this week. And the same Russian friend here in New York, who all those years ago reached out to me to join his march, days before Navalny was killed, this same Russian friend reached out to me to join a roundtable discussion with other Russians on what to do to end the war. So they're still at it for all these years, despite all of their heroes being deliberately silenced by Putin. If anyone wants to join our virtual event organized by Russians—anti-war Russians—that roundtable discussion will be in English. You can join it on Thursday, February 29th at 1 p.m. Eastern. Look for a link for that in the show notes. I'll be there with these extremely brave and tenacious Russians on how to fight back and organize against Putin's war no matter where you live in the world.

Terrell Starr (00:18:52):

And I just want to add to all your great points that Boris Nemtsov and Navalny were two vastly different people. For those who don't know, right? Because even the emotional response that you're giving should really indicate to folks that Boris Nemtsov was a different beast. They were in different stratospheres as far as their morality and as far as their political acumen. And Ukrainians and other people outside of the countries that were colonized by Russia responded to them soft vastly differently than they did to Navalny.

Andrea Chalupa (00:19:29):

Yeah, without question. And that brings us to the news that Yulia Navalnaya, Navalny's wife, has pledged to carry on her husband's fight. And some put a lot of hope in her because she's seen as a unifier. And we want to now play her message to Russians now. And I will play that and I will translate as we go along.

[audio clip of Yulia Navalnaya addressing Russians played as Andrea translates]

Andrea Chalupa [translating]:

"Three days ago, Vladimir Putin killed my husband, Alexei Navalny. Putin killed the father of my children.

Putin took away the most precious thing I had, the closest and most beloved person. Alexei died in prison after being tortured and tormented for three years. He was not only imprisoned as others are imprisoned, he was tortured. He was kept in their punishment cell, in a concrete box. He starved for three years. And not only did he not give up, he cheered us up the whole time. He laughed. He made jokes. He encouraged us. Never for a split second did he question what he was fighting or suffering for. My husband was unbreakable. And that's exactly why Putin killed him. By killing Alexei, Putin killed half of me, half of my heart and half of my soul. But I still have the other half that I have no right to give up.”

Andrea Chalupa [translating]:

“Don't be silent, resist, go out into the streets. No one can protect us but ourselves. And there are so many of us that if we want to accomplish something, we will. I will continue the work of Alexei Navalny. I will continue to fight for our country. And I encourage you to stand by my side. Do not just share the grief and endless pain that has enveloped us and will not let go. I ask you to share this anger with me; anger, rage, hatred for those who have dared to destroy our future. I address you with the words of Alexei in which I firmly believe it is not shameful to do little, it is shameful to do nothing. It is shameful to be intimidated. We must use every opportunity, fight against war, against corruption, against injustice, fight for fair elections and freedom of expression. Fight to take back our country.”

[end audio clip]

Andrea Chalupa (00:22:10):

Wow, that was incredible. What do you think, Terrell? What are her chances? What difference do you think is going to happen now?

Terrell Starr (00:22:19):

Those were really powerful words. And, you know, just from a human standpoint, I just cannot comprehend what it is like to be the partner of someone who was tortured and who was abused for so long as Navalny has been. And so I just wanna just really respect her tribute, right? Because I think, again, it's just so easy for us to kind of get into our critiques and be analytical and not really understand that humanity. I don't care what critique that I had about Navalny. I think he was a prisoner of consciousness, and that was something that I wrote in my article and actually in defense of the decision to take him off of the prisoner of conscience list. I also think that for people like her, I think that the Russian society needs to step up. And that's the bottom line. And I think that's what many Ukrainians are saying. And so it's very difficult for me to respond to that very emotional and passionate plea that she mentioned without relying on the years and all the time that I have of living in Ukraine and what... How they are responding and how my friends are responding to her and their response is, “She needs to do what he wouldn't.”

Terrell Starr (00:23:52):

I think that is the best that she can do. Beyond the kleptocracy and fighting Russian greed and fighting Putin, who is she going to be for those people that her husband could not? Because if she maintains this very insular and rigid trajectory and focus on Putin and not uniting around those that Navalny divided, frankly, then I just have serious concerns about how strong she could be. And so my response is that I

want her to be a stronger opponent of Putin by uniting around others who are equally invested in ending the colonial rule in the imperial political framework of Russia. And if she can do that, then I think that plea that she made will ring much farther than she could ever imagine.

Andrea Chalupa (00:25:06):

Hundreds of thousands of Russians have fled abroad with Putin's total invasion of Ukraine. So since 2022, hundreds of thousands of Russians have relocated to countries across Europe, North America, and so on. In all of those now Russian diaspora communities, you don't see anti-war organizations sprouting up. My Russian anti-war friends in New York, for instance, are underfunded. They are starving for resources. Meanwhile, Ukrainian diaspora groups, their numbers are swelling. And so with all of these Russians that have fled abroad... Yulia Navalnaya has an opportunity to consolidate the Russian diaspora now and to provide some sort of political infrastructure for them to amplify their voice during a time of growing Russian disinformation. *The Washington Post* just reported that Russia was undergoing this massive disinformation campaign against Ukraine to really finish Ukraine off globally, to totally destroy all sentiment for support and hope.

Andrea Chalupa (00:26:22):

And on top of that, you've Elon Musk taking over Twitter and turning it into, like, the largest Russian disinformation platform in the world, according to an EU report. And there was even, when Navalnaya launched her Twitter account, it was banned suddenly on Twitter for a while, you know? And then it got restored, but my point is that she needs to stay in the diaspora. She needs to organize in the diaspora because those Russians need it. I know from when I was visiting Warsaw in preparation for making *Mr. Jones*, a group of Russians heard I was going there and they asked to meet with me and they were a group of Russians living in exile. And they had the most basic questions for me. They asked me, "How do Russians talk about our history? We don't know how to do it," because they're so mind-fucked from the oppression that they're under. And part of it is also cultural.

Andrea Chalupa (00:27:13):

It's like this cultural embedded pride in genocide and imperialism and being the number one, where might makes right. That's generational. That's cultural for them. When you are the seat of power in a great empire for centuries, you don't want to give that up. And it's hard for you to... You see equality, you see historical justice, historical truth as a threat to your standing in the world and that you matter in the world. We're really up against that attitude as well. But many Russians just need basic help, basic unbrainwashing. And they are under greater threat even abroad. There are reports that a Russian soldier who hijacked a Russian helicopter and flew over to Ukraine and turned himself in, he was just killed in Spain, riddled with bullets in Spain. So the Russians will get you no matter where you are. So her life is in danger no matter where she is, so she might as well stay abroad where at least it's relatively safer and she has so much important work that she could be doing to really raise a new generation of Russian activists.

Terrell Starr (00:28:12):

Do you remember that there was a journalist who was doing a lot of reporting on corruption in Russia... I think he was a member/he was a reporter at *Novaya Gazeta*. And he fled to Ukraine and the Ukrainians

created this elaborate plot to say that he was killed, but he actually wasn't.

Andrea Chalupa:
Mmhmm <affirmative>

Terrell Starr:
You remember that story?

Andrea Chalupa:
Mmhmm <affirmative>

Terrell Starr (00:28:36):
Right? But my point is that the Kremlin goes to great lengths to find people who they feel betray them, right? And they've been doing that for centuries. They've always been very good at regulating and punishing diaspora abroad. It's something that they've become quite efficient in. And when I hear you talk about the Russians who sought you out, I'm wondering about ways in which I can have that opening for myself and even my platforms. And I think that those doors need to be open. So I'm happy that you did it. And I think so much of this needs to happen on their part, right? They almost need to act like white people here in the United States who are like, "Okay, I know my people did some fucked up shit," because it's the same dynamic. You know, "We did some fucked up shit." Or like the Israelis who took me on the tours of the West Bank and said, "Yeah, the Israeli government's doing some fucked up shit." And their terms, they used the terms "Jewish supremacy." They were like, "This is what this shit is and we're fucking, you know, doing all this shit to Palestinians and it's fucked up. My people are doing some fucked up shit. And I'm calling my people out on their fucked up shit and their fucked up attitude." And so the Russians need to do the same thing. And so there really needs to be a moral reckoning in themselves, because, you know, my whole thing is about moral consistency. You know that in my reporting and my commentary, when I'm talking to you all the time, it really is about how invested are we in each other's safety and security? How invested are we in each other's humanity? And Russians collectively need to take that step. And again, if Navalny could not do it, they do. It's up to them to continue that legacy because I think when we talk about him, it's really about what can the living do that the now departed Navalny couldn't or refused to? That's the best way that we can honor that.

Andrea Chalupa (00:30:58):
Mmhmm <affirmative>. And sanctioning, what, the 6,000 or so individuals that his organization pinpointed make up the architecture of corruption across Russia. That's what we could do; we could clean up our own damn house of corruption and we could stop giving all this money to Putin ally and fellow war criminal Netanyahu, who built a whole coalition government of terrorists who are now unleashing collective punishment and genocide in Gaza. And Russia being the war criminal machine that it is, is allied with both sides in that evil, evil war. They're allied with Hamas. They had Hamas leaders visiting over the last year or so. They're allied with Netanyahu. One of the first phone calls Netanyahu made after October 7th was to Putin. He campaigned with giant billboards of shaking Putin's hand. So we need to, the US really needs to take a harder look at Netanyahu who was in bed with the Russians and, like, stop normalizing him and his government of terrorists. And yes, Gaza is central to this global

war of dysfunction and mass murder that we're in because too many people are getting away with it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:32:17):

War criminals are being normalized right now, including by the US. And that's why we're going to have more of this if we don't call it out and don't stop it. I want to just say, you know, history doesn't repeat, but it does rhyme. And right now in Russia, there's a movie adaptation of the great classic Soviet-era *Alice in Wonderland* novel, *The Master and Margarita*, one of my all time favorite novels. And this was a film that was produced with funding from the Russian state and it's out now. And it's significant to what's going on with Navalny and his wife because the novel, *The Master and Margarita*, was written by one of the great Russian playwrights. He was born in Kyiv. His name's Mikhail Bulgakov. There's a beautiful, enchanting museum to him in the heart of Podil, the ancient cobblestone street neighborhood of the heart of Kyiv.

Terrell Starr:

My favorite neighborhood ever.

Andrea Chalupa (00:33:10):

It is enchanting. It gives you these beautiful... It's very hilly, full of cobblestone and old buildings and beautiful cafes and restaurants, very Parisian, and overlooks the river and beautiful old churches there. So Bulgakov grew up there. That was his childhood home. And there's now this very Tim Burton-esque museum dedicated to him. And he wrote this novel, *The Master and Margarita*, which is this fantastical story of the devil and his entourage, which includes a homicidal giant black cat that loves to drink vodka... Or cognac. Cognac. And they go together to Moscow and they fuck with all the atheists. And it's just this hilarious story that includes a giant party in hell with all these historical figures. And it's an addicting, beautiful novel. And the author, Bulgakov, wrote it quietly in his home at the height of Stalin's Terror, where his own friends across the arts were being arrested, tortured, killed. So his own circle of friends were disappearing and he still risked his life, his freedom, to write this novel. And the strain, the terror, the deliberately engineered terror of what Stalin was doing to everyone drove him mad to the point where he burned the entire novel in his oven because he couldn't... He was so worried of it even existing.

Andrea Chalupa (00:34:34):

And after he did that, he came to his senses and just wrote the whole novel over again from heart. And after he did that, he included in his novel, the now immortal words, "Manuscripts don't burn." Manuscripts don't burn. And that's become a rallying cry for dissidents around the world. And he died. He died a horrible death being basically psychologically tortured by Stalin because of the Great Terror, like all his friends disappearing. And so his wife, Yelena, carried on the novel for him and she finished it. And she miraculously got some of the pages... She got the novel serialized in some magazines after Stalin died. And when the Russian public, the Soviet public, was reading this fantastical book that was so openly in your face critical of the regime, they were shocked, absolutely shocked. And it's now become this wonderful story of resistance against totalitarian idiocy. And the fact that it's coming out now, when Putin has turned Russia into a totalitarian state, it's like creating an uncomfortable moment right now for the Russian authorities. But they're just gaslighting and pretending that nothing's wrong, because that's

what happens with hyper normalization with these regimes, where everything's falling apart, everything's getting worse and worse, but you just carry on like it's not, even though everyone has that unspoken knowledge that none of this is normal, just like we have here in the US increasingly. And so I just wanted to share that because it's just such a poetic time that you have Navalny's wife doing what Bulgakov's wife did and succeeding. So I do hope that there is... That that is a sign of better days to come, not just for the Russian opposition that has been sorely lacking on so many fronts for too long, but for the world, because a free Russia is a safe world.

Terrell Starr (00:36:16):

All I could do is second it and second it and second it some more. And then, you know, when women... It's important for us to talk about and acknowledge the role that women are playing in really strengthening and building our democracies and how much that weight has fallen on their shoulders.

Andrea Chalupa (00:36:38):

Mmhmm <affirmative>. Speaking of, let's go to Tish James. And let's thank Tish James, New York State AG, for winning her fraud case against Trump, where Trump inflated his properties to unlock bigger loans. And she got him. She got him. And with another woman, E. Jean Carroll case, Trump owes like half a billion dollars, which is wonderful. And that's, you know, he doesn't have the money. We know it because he's a fake billionaire with this fake tan. And so he's desperate to raise that money. He just created some god awful ugly sneaker that looks like Hulk Hogan. If Hulk Hogan was a sneaker, like all gold and oiled up and blonde, that's what the Trump sneaker looks like. And of course this ugly ass sneaker was purchased enthusiastically by a Russian man for \$9,000, put in Trump's pocket to pay his legal bills. And then you have like a group of hardcore Scientologists who are fundraising for Trump, I kid you not. They raised half a million dollars on GoFundMe, which goes against the terms of service of the site because you're not supposed to use it for legal bills. And good on them, because that's less money going into these Republican races in the 2024 election because if people want to just set their money on fire, especially Republicans, they should.

Andrea Chalupa (00:37:50):

And so yeah, thank you, Tish James. And I want to say what's been happening lately that's really scary is that you have the media continuing to normalize Trump. They're putting out reports saying, like, "Don't worry, Trump favors 'a less restrictive abortion ban' of 16 weeks," which is still very restrictive. And I wanna just point out once Republicans get their nationwide 16-week abortion ban, they're coming for our birth control next. We're already seeing signs of that. Authoritarian states want to control our bodies and our minds through these restrictive measures. They want total dominance, which is why they will stop at nothing until they are stopped, just like dictators. Putin and the GOP will stop at nothing until they are stopped. And so I want to just... Speaking of trying to stop them, this brings us now to Fani Willis. And if you want to know why Terrell and I have been talking about Fani Willis so much, it's because we have to because Trump and his goon squad have launched this disinformation campaign against her.

Andrea Chalupa (00:38:58):

She volunteered to show up at a hearing, which was basically a show trial, which, okay, yeah... What they did was they outed that she has a boyfriend, Nathan Wade, and I wanna just say from the

testimony, which is very powerful and galvanizing for getting out the vote for Fani Willis, Nathan Wade sounds like a lot of men, just like my own husband has pulled this shit. So I wanna play this clip for Terrell, because we're gonna discuss it now, because the culture demands that we discuss it.

[begin audio clip]

Fani Willis:

Let's go on and have the conversation.

Lawyer:

I'm just asking whether or not it was a coincidence—

Fani Willis:

It had absolutely nothing to do with this. It's interesting that we're here about this money. Mr. Wade is used to women that... as he told me one time, the only thing a woman can do for him is make him a sandwich. We would have brutal arguments about the fact that I am your equal. I don't need anything from a man. A man is not a plan, a man is a companion. And so, there was tension always in our relationship, which is why I would give him his money back. I don't need anybody to foot my bills. The only man who's ever foot my bills completely is my daddy.

[end audio clip]

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:07):

[laughs] Oh, man. My husband tried that, "Make me a sandwich" bit one time and I grabbed a loudspeaker and I just blasted an episode of *Gaslit Nation* in his face. That was my answer to that. So Fani Willis, it has to be pointed out, has the most sprawling, damning case that is pardon-proof. So if Trump manages to get in, he cannot pardon himself and his 18 co-conspirators that literally tried to violently overthrow our election in 2020. They had this plan laid out for many, many months. It included several rallies, not just the violent attempted coup on January 6. It included a war room in the Willard Hotel steps from the White House where Giuliani (Trump's lawyer at the time) and Steve Bannon commanded their agents across the country to do this fake elector scheme. They had all these documents in preparation for this. They were preparing to lose the election. And as Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime goon squad lawyer who had flipped on him said before Congress under oath, leading up to the 2020 election, that Trump was going to try to stay in power like a dictator and that is what we saw play out.

Andrea Chalupa (00:41:20):

And *Gaslit Nation* even announced a pre-coup special leading up to January 6th. And Fani Willis has the case that is pardon-proof to bring all of these clowns to justice, which is why they're going after her, which is why we're talking about it. And I think she really solidified her reelection campaign this fall with these video clips. I saw the great Zerlina Maxwell, who Terrell and I love. Zerlina on her Instagram was saying how Fani Willis' testimony gave her new life. I think that's the reaction of a lot of women out there, especially the independent women in states like Georgia that the Republicans need to win, not

just in the presidential, but in the congressional elections as well.

Terrell Starr (00:41:58):

You know what's interesting about Fani Willis is that when she was testifying—and again, she volunteered—what she did was she said, “Okay, I'm going to tell you how full of shit you are,” but also it's cultural too. And again, just being a Black man, growing up, being raised by Black women, she gave that look that your mom gives when you know you fucked up. And it's a particular type of, you know... It's a real cultural thing and all of Black Twitter was talking about it. And so clips from that hearing are gonna be memes forever. And everyone will use them because even though there were these very nuanced Black dynamics to it, it's something that we can all relate to. And that look on her face was, “You done fucked up.” You know? And also she sounded like a very sympathetic witness. Right? And so she had the right amount of passion and frustration and all of her emotions were consistent with somebody who was just tired of being messed with. And so—

Andrea Chalupa:

Which is all women everywhere, especially non-white women. [laughs]

Terrell Starr:

Yeah, and the thing with Tish James, I think we also have to acknowledge that the people who are holding Trump accountable are Black people, whether it is Bragg in Manhattan, Tish James at the state level, Fani Willis in Georgia, it's really been Black people who have been guardians of this democracy. And so we've heard about, we've heard this wording when it comes to voters. And it also shows the importance of prosecutors and electing the right prosecutors to do this job. Because with Fani Willis, remember this is not the attorney general of the state of Georgia that has decided to run this case. This is at the county level. I don't think people understand the magnitude of what this means. She does not have the resources of the state at her full disposal. She's doing this from Fulton County. And so we just need to honor that. And it really tells us how fragile our democracy is because with all the damning evidence against him in the various convictions against this man, he has a legitimate shot to win. And I can only imagine how the United States will be covering all of this if this was in a so-called third world country. Trump does not... He is an authoritarian leader, even though the United States' systems of justice and legal systems don't allow him to be an authoritarian, which is why he's attacking those very institutions so that he can be. And we have to give a shout out to Fani Willis for saying, “No, you cannot.”

Andrea Chalupa (00:45:13):

Absolutely. And we need more like her. We need more like her across the board. So thank you, Tish James. Thank you, Fani Willis. And as Terrell pointed out, it's *The 1619 Project*, which is all about how the history of America, finally trying to achieve the promises of the slave-owning founding fathers, which, you know, the John Lockean ideas of equality, that we were working towards progress all these generations, after centuries of enslavement not just of black people, but also of Native Americans, after their centuries of genocide that they suffered. And so all the progress of America was driven by non-white communities, namely Black, just literally trying to protect their children, just literally trying to protect their children. That's the progress of America. And so that's why you have Black people sticking their necks out against a full-on Russian-backed mafia transnational crime syndicate, which is the Trump

mafia, right? That's what it is. It's a mafia state backed by a mafia regime. And as I've pointed out many times on this show, in November, 2016, an expert connected to the Pentagon who spent years working in the Pentagon, an analyst there, said to think of the Trump election of 2016 as the Russian mafia of the East marrying the Russian mafia of the West. That's what it was. It was the Russians and the Trumps coming together. And even the own idiot sons, Eric and Don Jr., have said their businesses are dependent on Russian money. And Tish James just pulled the plug on those businesses in New York state where they're no longer welcome. Thank you, Tish James.

Terrell Starr (00:47:03):

Yeah, you know what's interesting about her is she cannot do her job, she can't do criminal charges. They can only be civil. That's an interesting thing, right? So all of these cases are civil. And I just want to remind all of the listeners that that's an important distinction to make here in the state of New York. But what was particularly egregious about the cases that Tish James brought forth with Trump is that he did not exaggerate the worth of his properties by, like, 3%, 5% or something like that. They were in the double digits.

Andrea Chalupa:

[laughs]

Terrell Starr (00:47:40):

I mean, if something was worth \$5 million, he made it \$30 million. I mean, he just... He wasn't trying to skim, in other words. But, you know, with these cases, it's important to know—and I got this from legal analysts who are analyzing the results of—it is that there are plenty of ways in which Trump and his entities can try to create loopholes so that they can conduct business. Even if it's not in New York state, they could do it elsewhere. And so theoretically, you would hope that because of this ruling that no one else would want to do business with him, which leads us to the conclusion of who would, and we really need to know the “who” that will be interested in engaging in Trump. And once we find out who those people are, then we need to expose those people because none of those people care about our democracy. So I know that we're happy about the ruling with Trump, but we need to figure out who else are going to be his parachutes or his lifeguards or his safety nets. And I'm pretty sure a lot of that money and a lot of that support is coming from abroad.

Andrea Chalupa:

Mhmm. <affirmative>

Terrell Starr (00:48:45):

You have to remember that Kushner, his son-in-law, was the one that struck a multi-billion dollar deal with the Saudis. Are they going to be involved in being his safety net? What about the Russians? I mean, they bankrolled Marine Le Pen in France. So how is he going to get by these laws? How will the laws of super PACs impact all of this if they can? Those are the questions I have.

Andrea Chalupa (00:49:11):

And we're going to continue with those criminals in further episodes. And I want to end with quoting the

judge in Tish James's case in New York, Judge Engeron, who was threatened, by the way, by Trump's goon squad. And the judge wrote in the ruling about the Trumps, "Their complete lack of contrition and remorse borders on pathological. Defendants are incapable of admitting the error of their ways." We're going to put that quote on a *Black Diplomats/Gaslit Nation* t-shirt. [laughs]

Terrell Starr (00:49:48):

[laughs] That's gonna be... Yeah! We need to do some *Gaslit Nation/Black Diplomats* stuff. My logo is cool. And so is yours. That'd be nice. But yeah, that's a great way to end this. We have to remind ourselves about how important foreign policy is and that whether we engage foreign policy or not, foreign policy will engage us.

Andrea (51:06.884)

Yeah, absolutely. It's their oligarchs joining forces with our oligarchs—

Terrell Starr:

Exactly.

Andrea Chalupa:

—and trying to turn the world into a crime spree. They think they can escape us all in their billionaire bunkers that they're building and their super yachts because they're that dumb and short-sighted. And now we're going to go out with this clip of protesters outside the Russian embassy in Belgrade chanting "Putin is a dickhead", because he is.

[audio clip of protesters outside the Russian embassy in Belgrade chanting "Putin is a dickhead"]

[outro, roll credits]