

Gaslit Nation Transcript

13 March 2024

“The State of Our Union and How to Fix It”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/state-of-our-and-100243255>

[opening clip from [Biden’s 2024 SOTU address](#)]

President Biden (00:01:30):

Mr. Speaker, Madam Vice President, members of Congress, my fellow Americans, in January, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt came to this chamber to speak to the nation. And he said, “I address you at a moment unprecedented in the history of the Union.” Hitler was on the march. War was raging in Europe. President Roosevelt’s purpose was to wake up Congress and alert the American people that this was no ordinary time. Freedom and democracy were under assault in the world. Tonight, I come to this same chamber to address the nation. Now, it’s we who face an unprecedented moment in the history of the Union. And yes, my purpose tonight is to wake up the Congress and alert the American people that this is no ordinary moment either.

President Biden (00:02:30):

Not since President Lincoln and the Civil War have freedom and democracy been under assault at home as they are today. What makes our moment rare is that freedom and democracy are under attack both at home and overseas at the very same time. Overseas, Putin and Russia is on the march, invading Ukraine and sowing chaos throughout Europe and beyond. If anybody in this room thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine, I assure you he will not.

[audience applauds]

[opening theme music up and under]

Andrea Chalupa (00:03:10):

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 doesn't want you to see so be sure to watch it. And, of course, our opening clip was President Biden at the State of the Union. Terrell Starr of the essential *Black Diplomats* podcast and Substack joins me for an unforgettable discussion of the State of the Union unlike you’ve ever heard before. In 1941, Dorothy Thompson’s essay for *Harper’s*, ‘Who Goes Nazi?’, about a morbid game you can play at your next dinner party to tell who among you would go Nazi, went viral in 2016 when Trump came to power with the help of the fascist regime, the Kremlin

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:05):

In that essay, Dorothy Thompson describes the party, the party goes, and she introduces you to a woman. Let’s read from that now: “Mrs. E would go Nazi as sure as you are born. That statement

surprises you? Mrs. E seems so sweet, so clingy, so cowed. She is. She is a masochist. She's married to a man who never ceases to humiliate her, to lord it over her, to treat her with less consideration than he does his dogs." [sighs] And with that, be sure to stick around for Terrell Starr and I to discuss Alabama Senator Katie Britt.

Now, a quick look at some of the meaningful moments at the Oscars this year. Ukraine won its first Oscar, *20 Days in Mariupol*. You can watch it for free. Look for the link to [20 Days in Mariupol](#) in the show notes for this week's episode. It shows why Ukraine simply cannot surrender. Surrender means torture, dehumanization, and certain death. The only hope for Ukraine—and the only hope for the rest of us to preserve international law, to preserve the borders as we know them so that it doesn't become survival of the meanest dog in the fight, which is what the Russian mafia has built in Russia and globally where they have influence—the only way to stop that is by giving what we can, urgently, now, to Ukraine, including the defensive aid they desperately need.

Andrea Chalupa (00:05:45):

Ukrainians are being killed. More are dying because of Mike Johnson and Donald Trump (more on that later). Navalny opened this year's In Memoriam at the Oscars. Just last year, his wife and daughter accepted the Oscar for Best Documentary for the film, *Navalny*, about how the Russian opposition leader investigated his own poisoning. Another highlight includes Jonathan Glazer winning for a film you heard me and Terrell rave about here on the show in an episode called 'Queen of Auschwitz'. And that was, of course, for *The Zone of Interest*. Here is Jonathan Glazer accepting the award for Best Foreign Film.

[begin audio clip]

Jonathan Glazer (00:06:27):

All our choices are made to reflect and confront us in the present, not to say what they did then, rather, what we do now. Our film shows where dehumanization leads at its worst. It shaped all of our past and present. Right now, we stand here as men who refute their Jewishness and the Holocaust being hijacked by an occupation which has led to conflict for so many innocent people—[audience applauds]—whether the victims of October the 7th in Israel or the ongoing attack on Gaza; all the victims of this dehumanization. How do we resist? [audience applauds] Aleksandra Bystroń-Kołodziejczyk, the girl who glows in the film as she did in life, chose to. I dedicate this to her memory and her resistance. Thank you.

[end audio clip]

Andrea Chalupa (00:07:22):

Now, it's important to note that standing right behind him is the Russian oligarch, Len Blavatnik, one of the financiers of *The Zone of Interest*. I praise Jonathan Glazer for saying what needed to be said. It was one of the few remarkable, meaningful moments at this year's Oscars. And thank God, many of the people in the audience clapped. We needed that to break through all the froth. But the reality is that he left out another significant genocide going on right now, and that is Russia's genocide in Ukraine. And maybe he couldn't mention it. Maybe he thought of it, but couldn't mention it, even though he's been really promoting this film as a warning for us today. This is not a historical film; it's about the banality of

evil today that's being carried out in many countries in the world, including our own here in the US, including in Congress.

Andrea Chalupa (00:08:15):

I mean, think about it. If Len Blavatnik were not a Russian oligarch, but an Iranian oligarch close to the regime, a Qatari oligarch close to Hamas, a Chinese oligarch close to Xi, it's the same terrorism. And the reason why guys like Blavatnik invest in films like this—Oscar bait—is because they're trying to launder their image, they're trying to put a softer face on the regime they ultimately serve. Blavatnik grew his fortune with the gang of oligarchs that pollinate Putin's corruption around the world, including in the US; that helped bring Trump to power and helped bring George Santos to power. Through and through, he's part of that regime. He's an apparatus. He is like a PR force, a softening if you will, a glossy, posh face of it. And having him on the Oscars stage normalizes Russia's brutality. And it was a big oversight for Jonathan Glazer not to call out Russia's genocide in Ukraine as well.

Andrea Chalupa (00:09:20):

I'm mentioning all this as an important reminder to all of us that we don't need to pick and choose who we show solidarity for, and that we must, must, must more than ever in this time of chaos, confusion and gaslighting, have moral consistency. Moral consistency is needed now more than ever. And in this oligarch-driven game of survival, it's not about pitting the victims of genocide against each other. We need to have shared solidarity for our shared liberation and safety. That's the only way we get through this time.

Andrea Chalupa (00:09:53):

Now, speaking of getting through this time, let's look at the Chuck E. Cheese state dinner at Mar-a-Lago with Orbán and Trump the other day. The... [laughs] Yeah, I'm pretty gobsmacked by that. So, according to a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Orbán claims that Trump told him that if Trump becomes president stealing the slave monument to the electoral college system created to appease the slave states, the large agricultural regions of the young America, the budding America, that Trump will be gleeful in not giving Ukraine a penny should he come to power again. He was developed over time to deliver this way. Go to Gaslit Nation's YouTube page. Featured on the homepage there, you'll see our first three episodes, which look at the 2016 election like a crime scene, and all the decades that went into the Kremlin developing Trump like an asset. What did it take to do that? Nothing. Just easy, dumb Russian money. That was enough, okay? It's not a mystery here. Trump, just like his father, came up doped up on that easy Russian cash.

Andrea Chalupa (00:11:12):

So let's take a tour now of the whole love affair of the Republican party when it comes to Viktor Orbán. They emulate him. They celebrate him at CPAC and on Fox News. Tucker Carlson is a major fanboy. Viktor Orbán is Superman for the Republican party now. So, what is the end game of what the Republicans want for America? Well, let's look at their hero, Viktor Orbán, and what he's done to Hungary over the years. What's life like in Orbán's Hungary, the most corrupt country in the EU? It's miserable, especially if you're a child (there's high malnutrition rates for children), a young adult, a woman, an LGBTQ+ person or ally, or a refugee. According to a recent study, Hungary is the most corrupt country in the EU, a trend

that accelerated under Orbán. Transparency International produces something called the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), a global corruption ranking that measures how corrupt each country's public sector is according to experts. Let's look at Hungary's CPI. Orbán came to power in 2010. The Corruption Perceptions Index worsened as Hungary became increasingly corrupt under Orbán's autocracy. In the last ten years, as Orbán entrenched his dictatorship, half a million people left Hungary in an ongoing brain drain.

Andrea Chalupa (00:12:40):

According to the Borgen Project, a non-profit that addresses poverty and hunger, citing a report by the Save the Children Foundation, "For every 1,000 Hungarian children, 6.1 die before their 5th birthday." That's above the EU average and higher than Libya, Cuba and Macedonia. Hungary, under Orbán, suffers from falling birth rates. The regime heavily promotes financial incentives to entice people to start families. It's not working because Orbán's Hungary is oppressive. People don't seem eager to bring a child into a dictatorship. LGBTQ+ communities are targeted in harassment campaigns, much like the terror scapegoating by Ron DeSantis in Florida and Libs of TikTok. The crackdown on LGBTQ+ people has had an enormously chilling effect in Hungary, according to a researcher in Budapest for Amnesty International.

Andrea Chalupa (00:13:38):

Unsurprisingly, the far-right leaders of Orbán's party crackdown on LGBTQ+ people by day, and enjoy gay orgies by night. According to a *New York Times* report, "One was caught in an all-male orgy in Brussels that violated covid restrictions, and fled down a drainpipe. Another was caught on video at a mixed orgy on a yacht." Welcome to Orbán's Hungary; come for the corruption, stay for the hypocrisy. Speaking of hypocrisy, Pope Francis, who recently said that trans people—not the climate crisis, not Russian terrorism, not Iran's terrorism, not oligarchs all over the world treating people like the shit they grow their money in... No, trans people, according to Pope Francis, are the greatest threat to humanity. The Pope also said that Ukraine should wave the white flag of surrender. I kid you not. The land Russia currently occupies in Ukraine now holds Soviet-style prisons where people are disappeared, systemic rape and torture are carried out, their homes robbed and seized. The list of Stalin-level terror goes on and on.

Andrea Chalupa (00:14:48):

The Vatican covered up generations of systemic sexual abuse and the genocide of countless people across North America. For generations. So they are not an authority on how to stop genocide, considering they literally carried one out. Pope Francis himself is somebody who has his own dark history of being complicit with Argentina's brutal dictatorship from the mid 1970s to the early 1980s. Pope Francis was formerly Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio in Argentina, where countless people were tortured and disappeared. He was a leader in the Catholic church which called on the people to back the military dictatorship and their nationalism. When two Jesuit priests dared to carry out their ministry in the slums of Argentina, which was considered subversive at the time, Pope Francis gave his tacit approval to the military dictatorship to arrest those two priests. And they were, of course, tortured and kept in inhumane conditions.

Andrea Chalupa (00:15:55):

One reformer from that time who knew him back then said that Pope Francis is “a man of power and he knows how to position himself among powerful people. I still have many doubts about his role regarding the Jesuits who went missing under the dictatorship.” So, there you have it. Pope Francis has a long career of being a handmaiden to corrupt regimes. Why do you think they made him pope? In... When was it? Like, the late 1970s, the US heavily pushed for Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope in 450 years, a cardinal from... So the Polish pope was a cardinal of a Soviet-occupied country, and the US aggressively lobbied for him to become the new pope. Why? It was part of their larger mission to try to take down the Soviet Union. So, whoever is selected for pope, it's on the side of the powerful, right? So, Pope Francis, stop... If you're not going to call on the Russians to get the hell out of Ukraine, then just don't say anything at all. You're just making it worse by justifying a genocide.

Andrea Chalupa (00:17:15):

Speaking of dictatorships and complicity, Haiti has collapsed. Violent gangs have taken over, sending countless thousands fleeing abroad, worsening the refugee crisis. What is the root cause of the collapse of Haiti? US foreign policy. If you thought that George W. Bush was terrible, you're about to learn that he was a whole lot worse. So, under Bush, the US joined with France to remove a popular, democratically-elected prime minister, Aristide. Why? Because he was calling for reparations for generations of terror/enslavement by the French, so he had to go. So they removed him, sent him into exile, and in his place the US has been installing all these leaders in Haiti and the chaos has been getting worse and worse and worse, and now the country has gone on to full collapse. So yes, Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti are all part of George W. Bush's evil legacy.

Andrea Chalupa (00:18:14):

Currently in Haiti, there's a child malnutrition crisis amidst all this chaos, so the US needs to step in and do everything it can to ensure transparency, rule of law, and yes, democratically-held elections and investment in whatever can be supported for a strong civil society of self-agency for the Haitian people. And yes, France, pay those reparations. Alright, everyone, just a couple quick announcements. We're having a Make Art Workshop on April 11, 7pm Eastern. It's going to be live. I'm going to be sharing all of the business side of things; getting your art out into the world. I hope you'll join me there. And that is exclusively for our community at the Truth-teller level or higher on Patreon. And you can get your ticket by signing up there. Just look for a link in the show notes of this week's episode. A special thank you to independent journalist Jonathan M. Katz for exposing the lie that Katie Britt used to frame her response to President Biden's state of the union.

Andrea Chalupa (00:19:22):

Try to blame the president for a horrifying human trafficking crime that happened in Mexico when George W. Bush was in office. And now, what you're about to hear is unlike any other analysis of the state of the union. It opens with a clip of Suge Knight, the co-founder and former CEO of Death Row Records at the 1995 Source Awards.

[begin audio clip]

Suge Knight:

And one thing I'd like to say. Anyone who's out there that wanna be an artist, that wanna stay a star, that don't wanna have to worry about the producer trying to be all in the video, all on the record, come to Death Row.

[end audio clip]

Andrea Chalupa (00:20:12)

I'm here with my dear friend Terrell Starr of the essential *Black Diplomats* podcast and Substack, which you can find in the show notes for this week's episode. Hey, Terrell.

Terrell Starr (00:20:21):

What's going on? Welcome, from Oxford, Ohio.

Andrea Chalupa (00:20:26):

Where he's speaking. He is on a national speaking tour. Thank you so much for making time for *Gaslit Nation*. So, obviously I've wanted to chat with you about this. You and I were sending each other clips back and forth about the State of the Union. You sent me a Suge Knight clip to capture how you felt Biden's performance went. So far, Biden has raked in \$10 million in fundraising dollars following the state of the union. And that's already on a massive war chest advantage that the Democrats have going into this election up against a career criminal who is a fake billionaire who owes half a billion dollars in legal fees, including to a woman he raped, out of the many dozens of women that credibly accused him of rape. Now, I want to just go into a bit on some of the highlights real quick of the state of the union. Biden stared down the Supreme Court justices to their faces and basically challenged their very legitimacy, which they hate. The mullah justices, the extreme Supremes, are giving all sorts of speeches, trying to reassure people they're not actually extreme ideologues, but they are. So they hate the fact that they're seen as totally illegitimate and hated and that their approval ratings have never been this low, ever.

Andrea Chalupa (00:21:48):

And then Biden led a call and response over oligarchy's high taxes. He came out the gates swinging on Ukraine. He announced the Gaza pier did not give us the permanent ceasefire that we desperately need. And then he stayed until the lights turned off. And all the time, Mike Johnson, Kremlin tool, was turning red and shrinking behind him. It was like a British Prime Minister question time; you know, very fiery, very... A lot of one-two punches that we needed to see obviously from Biden and he's been rewarded with the fundraising dollars. So how do you feel the State of the Union went? What were some highlights for you?

Terrell Starr (00:22:32):

I thought about *Jungle Fever*. There's this scene where Flipper, the architect, was getting fired. And when he was leaving the office, he was just pointing to all the stuff that belonged to him. He said, "Mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine, mine." And when he was walking past... Whatever it was, he said, "Mine. See that? Mine, mine, mine, mine." And this was... It has been the talk, the address to the American public that we have wanted from him since his presidency, because we both talked about all

the great things that he has done during his first term, but they don't really promote it a lot. And so a lot of the American public don't understand all the things that he's doing so well. And this State of the Union address was one of the best that I've seen in a very long time. And so this was him just showing people who he was. And that Suge Knight, and I wish we could pull it up, but like that Suge Knight clip that I showed you all, if you all are '80s or '90s babies, and if you're all somewhat familiar with hip hop, you all can recall the Source Awards, and I forgot which year it was, but basically Suge Knight came up on stage and said, you know, "If you don't want the producer dancing in your videos and trying to be the main event, da da da da, come to death row." And so that was Biden saying, Hey, if you don't want to get all this kleptocracy and all this fascism and this racism and this anti-womanness and literally having somebody that's been incredibly accused of rape multiple times representing y'all, vote for Joe Biden, right? Like, it was like the most gangster shit—

Andrea Chalupa:  
[laughs]

Terrell Starr:  
—that I saw coming from a State of the Union address. And it was very much needed. And he needs to keep doing it because that's the fire with which we want to show. And so for those folks who thought that he was this feeble-minded person who was slow, he was very spry with his language. He was very energetic and he was very fiery and that's what we're looking for. And that's the type of fire that's going to be needed to match the fervor of the MAGA horde that's going to be going to the polls in November. And so I thought that was a really great job. And it left Senator Katie Britt in shambles, right? Beyond the sexist way that her State of the Union was set up in a kitchen... Because despite how much I despise that woman and her ilk, she is a United States senator, 40 years old. I believe she's the youngest senator or at least one of them. I think that the gentleman out of Georgia may be the youngest one. I think he's 39 or something. I forgot his name.

Andrea Chalupa:  
Jon Ossoff.

Terrell Starr:  
Yeah, yeah. John Ossoff, right. I think he's like 39 or something. But at any rate, the way that they put her position... We're going to talk about it, but I think that his speech was so good it made hers look... I think it made her response look incredibly weak.

Andrea Chalupa (00:25:42):  
Katie Britt's performance looked like a hostage video—

Terrell Starr:  
[laughs]

Andrea Chalupa:  
—and the hostage-taker is white male patriarchy. She was like, "Help me. Help me!" [laughs]

Terrell Starr:

Right, right, right. I mean, 'cause here's the thing, right? Like, it just shows you how pathological the white male patriarchy is because that's how much that they can minimize a United States senator. That's the whole thing. So if you want to be a United States senator, and if you want to fall within that MAGA category, be Katie Britt.

Andrea Chalupa (00:26:20):

[laughs] Yep. Into the kitchen for you.

Terrell Starr (00:26:21):

Right, into the kitchen for you, and so if you saw the photos of her husband just... And her kids towering over her. Now, an important thing to note, however, is that her delivery was not targeted towards me or you. It was targeted to that very specific group of MAGA women who make up a large portion of their electorate. And so in that regard, I think she was very effective. Now, but what that should tell us is that the people who are drawn to Biden's speech, we need to come out in droves, right? We are the ones that really need to come out in record breaking numbers because for as many of us that were turned off by Senator Katie Britt—and I'm going to keep on saying again, despite how much I despise her, she's a US senator, and I just have to keep calling her a US senator because the way in which she was presented, you would think that she was nothing of the sort, which speaks to the power of their patriarchal construct is that no matter how great you are, we're going to relegate you to the kitchen. Now, here's the thing. There is nothing wrong with being a stay at home mom. In fact, the people who made me... Look, my mother, my grandmother, the one who raised me was a domestic mate. Okay? She had a third grade education.

Terrell Starr (00:27:42):

The smartest person I knew who helped me to be who I am was that mother who was a domestic maid and who taught me how to cook and taught me how to work a stove when I wasn't even 10 years old. So, but it's not about that. It's not the issue of her being a stay at home mom that is the issue. It's how they relegate stay at home moms as if they are supposed to be the guardians of the house and nothing else. And that you're supposed to be the guardians of the house and you're not supposed to go beyond that. And even if you do, we're going to remind you of where you belong. So it's a pejorative... So the way that they describe the stay at home mom and the people that they were targeting, it was a very pejorative manner in which they framed them, which fits under their patriarchy.

Andrea Chalupa (00:28:30):

I knew we were entering The Twilight Zone when the national news anchor, I believe it was for ABC News I was watching, introduced Katie Britt by saying this—this was his introduction to her, he said, “And now here's Katie Britt, a mother of two.” And that's when I was like, “Oh no, oh no, America, you're in trouble.”

Terrell Starr:

[laughs]



Andrea Chalupa:

And then they go to Katie Britt and she just terrifies all of us. Like, our wombs were shaking, you know what I mean? They're going to take away our wombs' freedom—

Terrell Starr:

Right.

Andrea Chalupa:

—and our lives. You know, when I was pregnant with my second, it was a high risk pregnancy. My doctor sat me down and said, “Hey, you know that vacation you had planned where you're gonna get on a flight? That's over now, that's canceled. You might bleed to death. You have a high risk pregnancy. We may need to abort it to save your life. And just so you know, I'm morally obligated to tell you, if it comes down between you and your unborn child, we're gonna save you, alright?” And when I conveyed all that to my husband, my husband was like, “Of course, without question.” And the way the doctor delivered all the news was just so smooth, so just, like, matter of fact, the weather report, you know? And this conversation that we're having is criminalized right now in many parts of the country and growing. And that is what Katie Britt wants to do to all of us everywhere. Mike Pence says he wants all of us here, wherever we live, to live under the rules of Mississippi. This is like some real...

Andrea Chalupa (00:29:55):

I know you've heard it a million times before, but it is some real handmaid shit. Like Alabama is where the Supreme Court says, “We're going to criminalize IVF” and then they choose this Alabama senator. And guess what her colleague, Tommy Tuberville, who, along with Mike Johnson, is one of the Kremlin's biggest helpers in weakening our democracy from within, where he had that ridiculous, horrible, just so demoralizing protest in the Senate where he refused to do promotions for months—for months—of our military service men and women, holding up their hard-earned cash for months and slowing down all these appointments we needed for our national security. And Putin was just licking his chops at this and making advancements in Ukraine while his buddy, Mike Johnson, is holding up Ukraine aid, right? This is all like a one -two punch by Putin against us.

Andrea Chalupa (00:30:45):

And Tommy Tuberville, when he was asked about Katie Britt, Tommy Tuberville, a traitor to our country, he said, “Oh, she's great. She's a housewife.” You know what I mean? That was the first thing out of his mouth. Like, that's what they want for us. And it's been forever. It's been generations that they've been building towards this. I remember back in 2004, my first job out of college, I was a community organizer in a battleground state. And the campaign I was working for sent me, a young kid, to go undercover to a Republican fundraiser and just have a listen, right? And so I put on my conservative best. I had, like, a red, cute little sweater, like a sparkly shirt underneath. I had my hair all smooth. I got my pink—

Terrell Starr:

Do you have a photo of yourself?

Andrea Chalupa:

Sure, I'll do some cosplay next time you're over. I'll be like, "Here's GOP Andrea." But like, so I show up there looking, you know, very Pollyanna-ish, more than usual. And I go, you know, but I can't, I betray myself. I go immediately for the food and I'm just shoving my face at the food. And I look around and I'm the only woman eating. [laughs] And so I finally sit down next to a group of GOP women who are all gossiping together. And this is what they're talking about. They're talking about how to get a husband. And they're saying, "Oh, you don't cut your hair if you want a husband." And I look and none of these women are eating. I'm the only one eating. And I'm like, Oh my God, I'm going to give myself away as a liberal, like a hairy feminist hippie by just being the lone woman in this party shoving my face. They're going to catch me. [laughs] But it gave me so much insight into the prison that these women are trapped in mentally. And it's like you have to be a damaged, insecure human being to subject yourself to that. And you have to be a damaged, insecure human being to desire that. So the men who are doing this are just as pathetic as the women who allow it to be done to them.

Terrell Starr (00:32:37):

Absolutely. And, you know, the tough thing, another thing about her response that really was so ironic was the way in which she talked about undocumented people. And one of the constant refrains of the GOP when they're referring to the undocumented is illegal. And we all know that we don't refer to human beings as illegal, right? But she just joined a tradition of conservatives and folks who are very xenophobic towards immigrants by talking about crime rates and bringing up some case in which some woman was sexually assaulted, even though she was fact-checked and said at the time that that particular assault didn't happen during Biden's administration. But she fear mongers about the undocumented. And I'm really happy that NPR brought up some much needed research. And I'm just going to say, you know, name out some of these numbers. It's coming from a recent NPR article that came from a couple of days ago when it talked about crime and the undocumented. And it stated that between, you know, The New York Times and the Marshall Project, they found that between 2007 and 2016, there was no link between undocumented immigrants and the rise of violent crime or property crime, you know, in certain communities.

Terrell Starr (00:33:57):

And they had also talked about the fact that—this is something from the Cato Institute—they looked into Texas in 2009. They found that undocumented immigrants were 37 .1 % less likely to be convicted of a crime. And so these numbers can go on and on and on to show you that there is not a direct correlation between undocumented immigration and crime. And for those who are intellectually honest within their party, they genuinely know that, but they don't care about honesty. They care about the fear mongering, which is why it's so effective. And so when I listened to her talk about this—and you see the tears, like, it almost looked like she was going to break down and cry. And so it was just a heavily scripted talk .

Andrea Chalupa (00:33:42):

It was like that moment in *Get Out* where the Black guy at the party is like, "Get out," with the tears going down his face. The real her was trying to break out.

Terrell Starr (00:34:48):

Exactly. But here's the thing. After watching her talk, I didn't fear the undocumented. I feared white women like her. Those are the ones that are going to get my Black ass killed.

Andrea Chalupa:

The Queen of Auschwitz, yeah.

Terrell Starr:

Auschwitz, but also there was this film, and I forgot the name of it. It was a depiction of slavery and it was directed by a Black British director. You know what I'm talking about, right?

Andrea Chalupa:

Yeah, brilliant film. *Seven Years a Slave*.

Terrell Starr:

*Seven Years a Slave*.

Andrea Chalupa:

Steve McQueen, gorgeous film, powerful.

Terrell Starr:

Steve McQueen, right. And you know that there was that white woman who was the mistress of the wealthy, you know, owner of the enslaved people? She was talking to the main character essentially saying, "Well, if you do so and so and so, you'll get, I guess, X amount of lashes." And so, she reminds me of the slave owner's wife. She was a very terrifying person in that film. And when I think about Katie Britt, I think about the slave owner's wife. She is a person that evokes fear in me more so than this wackadoodle story about undocumented, you know, about undocumented people who are more than likely to commit crimes against us than anyone else.

Terrell Starr (00:36:08):

And so, here's the thing, if she's doing that for the undocumented, when it's politically convenient for her, she'll do it for Black people. I mean, the person that's the altar of Donald Trump, Donald Trump uses Black people to ratchet up. He talks about Chicago all the time. And so she left me not fearing the undocumented. She made me terrified of her. And the way that they package it—she's this young, kind of unassuming white woman that [inaudible]. So it really encapsulates the type of "purity" of the woman and of the white woman, right? And so that's the type of white woman that the Republicans like. They don't like white women—and I think I brought this up in the last episode—they don't like white women like Gretchen Whitmer or the women that are running the state of Michigan. They, via their vigilante MAGA supporters, want to kidnap them and kill them. That's where they go. And so I think that this message that we take from the State of the Union is that Katie Britt really reinforces the fact that we ought to be terrified not only of MAGA, but even the people who may not say that they're MAGA, but this white contingency that aids and abets them, which is quite frankly, the rest of the GOP because they're not doing much at all to defend themselves against them because they don't care about the country. They don't love America. They love their whiteness. And Katie Britt is a prime... She is exhibit A

of that.

Andrea Chalupa (00:37:41):

And another connection to slavery. So, the Confederacy, the centuries of slavery, these so-called Christians perverted the very concepts of Christianity to justify their enslavement of human beings, to justify their torture, dehumanization, separation of family, systemic rape, and so on, of human beings. It was a total perversion of Christianity. I am fascinated with studying the historical Jesus, the establishment of the church as a social movement history of how this ragtag group of Jews, these radicals, took on the Roman Empire. That's a fascinating story. And so I've read a lot of historical books on this, like, how did they do it? And what it comes back to is the historical Jesus was a radical who was introducing... So whether you believe in the spiritual aspect of that story or not, it's undeniable that the historical Jesus was a radical for promoting that the poor mattered, that you and I mattered, that all were welcome, and that we must feed the poor, we must help each other, we're all in this together. It was that philosophy that put a target on his head.

Terrell Starr:

Right.

Andrea Chalupa:

And there she is sitting with a diamond cross. And it's like... Oh, that's so Christian of you with your diamond cross, and all these people are lining up at food banks right now and the refugee crisis is growing.

Terrell Starr (00:39:05):

Yeah, but here's the thing. That's why I made the correlation with the slave owner's wife. She sleeps with the slave owner. She watches as the field hands whip the enslaved peoples and she's perfectly okay with it. To me, I saw danger. So, remember that the people that she's speaking to, they actually want that type of America where we regress. And that's the thing that draws a correlation with Putin. And we talk about Putin's henchmen and people who are in Putin's pocket, essentially. Putin is a regressive leader. Biden, what he showed in his State at the Union, he is a progressive leader. He is thinking forward. The GOP is thinking backward. They want to go back to the days where women essentially have fewer powers, they have less autonomy over their body. That's what *Roe v. Wade* is about. Yes, it's definitely about a woman's right to choose, but more specifically, it's about a man's right to choose for them.

Andrea Chalupa:

Exactly right. Exactly right.

Terrell Starr:

So that's really what this is about. And we have this nut job that won a GOP nomination in North Carolina. And his name is, I believe his name is Mark Robinson. He's the current Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina. And he is a person who, you know, who is extremely regressive, has said anti-Semitic things. And the thing is that he is a Black person. He's like the Trojan horse, so to speak. But he is just so regressive, so sexist, so anti Black, so anti-thing that is not white that the Trojan horse through which his

Blackness was supposed to operate, his cover is blown, right? Because he is so extreme.

Andrea Chalupa:

Mmmhmm <affirmative>

Terrell Starr:

But this is what they want. So they take these white women who would come across as innocent, at least to their own particular contingencies within the Republican party. They take Black people like the current Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina who are Black, and they take all these other people across the racial spectrum and parade them as being progressive simply because they're women or simply because they're people of color, right? But Senator Britt, even though she is a woman, is actually doing more things to harm women's rights and women's autonomy than any man ever could, all because she is that white suburban mom. And, you know, you reminded me of that table that you were sitting at when you were operating as an op. And I definitely wish that there's a photo taken of you because I would just love to see you as a GOP op in 2004, right? But those are the types of women... They are participating in their own oppression. And the reality of it is that I am not sure what could be said to flip those women. I don't genuinely know.

Terrell Starr (00:42:15):

And the only thing that I know is that we must defeat them. And just like we have to defeat people like the current Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina, like we have to defeat all of these MAGA candidates that are running off racism, that's running off sexism, they want to create this world in which every leader is in the likes of Donald Trump and Viktor Orbán and Le Pen in France and the far right. That's what they're doing. And I think for the first time in his presidency, Joe Biden told everyone, "This is what we're up against. Let me show you why I am the better choice." And he made an incredible case for himself. And so what I hope will happen is that they'll continue to build off of that. We want the ceasefire for Gaza. And so we want him to build this coalition of diverse groups within the Democratic party to coalesce around him the way that the rabid contingencies are galvanizing around Donald Trump.

Andrea Chalupa (00:43:18):

Mmmhmm <affirmative>. So two things I want to say to all that. Number one, when people dig up old clips of Joe Biden; stuff he said early on in his career when the status quo in Washington was far more conservative than it even is today. And people are like, "Oh, look at this. This is the real Biden. Look at what he said." Like Anita Hill. Obviously what he did to Anita Hill was horrible. And he's apologized for it.

Terrell Starr:

Oh, it's beyond horrible. Yeah, that was one of the worst. Yeah.

Andrea Chalupa:

It's beyond horrible. It's beyond horrible. It's beyond horrible. But my point is, we need more white men across America to move in the direction that Joe Biden has in recent years, even if they're still not perfect. You know what I mean? Like, Joe Biden could have gone the other way, you know? He could have gone the other way. And the fact that he... He's learning, like a lot of men, white men of his

generation. He's learning. He can be pushed. He can be pushed, everybody. We've experienced that. Ukrainians have experienced that. The fact that he came in punching opening the State of the Union in 2024, the most important State of the Union he will ever give in his life, he opened it swinging for Ukraine with Mike Johnson shrinking and turning red behind him.

Terrell Starr (00:44:36):

So what do you think about Mike Johnson? So, I'll tell you what my little view is of him. There were so many positive things that Biden said about what he's done for the country. And by and large, the fact checkers from all the major outlets, you know, they can say, "Okay, certain things were out of context and certain things weren't 100 % true," but you can't say that everything that he said was just a flat out lie, right? And so generally speaking, it was very difficult to refute Joe Biden on [the fact that] the progress of this country is definitely better now than when he took it over in 2020. So you can definitely say that. And so if you are Mike Johnson and you're sitting in the back and he was kind of squirming around, he was kind of smiling.

Andrea Chalupa:

Right.

Terrell Starr:

I think that even when, in his mind, he wished he could stand up, but he couldn't because he's in MAGA's pocket. He couldn't do it. But I could see that being a very difficult hour or so to sit through because there's nothing much that he could say to refute what Joe Biden said. He made a better case for the country and why he ought to lead it than anything that he could conjure up in his mind at the moment. And so usually you can see people kind of shaking their heads like, "No, no, whatever." Right. Then when he was talking about American jobs staying here in the United States and that we're going to keep them here as opposed to sending them abroad. And, you know, and also he was going after Donald Trump, you know, about people being true to who they are. If you care about America, you keep jobs in America, you know, all of those things. And he brought up Ronald Reagan, tear down this wall. And I know for certain people in that room who actually care about this stuff that had to hurt. Now, here's the thing. I think Ronald Reagan—

Andrea Chalupa:

[laughs]

Terrell Starr:

—generally speaking from a domestic side and even internationally, he sucks, right?

Andrea Chalupa:

Right.

Terrell Starr:

But, he did have good Soviet policy. I will never take that away from him. He had effective Soviet policy and he was the perfect person during the close of the Cold War to be the President of the United States.

Tear down this wall will be one of the most symbolic statements and moments in US political history. That was the glory days of the tough on Russia GOP that we have not seen since. And so they basically called them a bunch of punks and said that Reagan would be turning over in his grave if he were alive. And the only thing that Mike Johnson can do was squeal in his seat. And so I think that this was a really fine moment. And so what we have to do with our platforms is we have to move with this and stress the importance of going to the polls and voting for Joe Biden. And so I know that New York's primary is April 2nd. That's when our primary is here in the state of New York. I am going to go to my primary voting location with bells on. I am going to spend that day on my social media talking about the importance of why I supported Joe Biden.

Terrell Starr (00:47:52):

He's going to win this state anyway. It's a heavily Democratic state. But I am going to proudly support Joe Biden. What I also want him to do is to speak to those people who are uncommitted and to speak to their hearts, right? And so as much as I am going to support Joe Biden, you are supporting Joe Biden, we're going to vote for him, I want Joe Biden to earn the respect of the rest of America who are uncommitted because they definitely have a legitimate reason to not be committed to him based on how he has responded to Benjamin Netanyahu's overreach in Gaza. And so I think that multiple things could be true, but I think that what he did was say... What he proved is that he could be pushed. That's the main thing. He is movable if we force him. So that's why I think this uncommitted movement has been effective. And so for people like us who are gonna vote for him, we're gonna do it fine. But we also need to push him to bring him into the camp with the rest of us so that they can have the same belief in him as the rest of us right now because we know that he can be moved. And so we need to do the best in our due diligence to move him even further so that the rest of us can coalesce around him in November and keep this racist, xenophobic, sexist, serially accused of rape, fraudster out of the White House.

[transition music]

Andrea Chalupa:

And now, the *Gaslit Nation* 2024 Survival Guide. This election is here and it's happening, and it's bigger than Biden. We have the chance to hack away at corruption at the root by building our power at the all-important state level, where crucial quality-of-life issues, from voting rights to environmental protections to LGBTQ+ rights and more, are decided. Karl Rove ran this same strategy for the GOP during the Obama years, laying the groundwork for Trump to come to power in 2016. Now we're reversing this dangerous trend, securing key victories in swing states to protect our elections and advance progressive laws in states like Michigan and [Wisconsin](#). Another world is possible when we unite and build together. Here's how:

1. Join Andrea at State Fair, a giving circle that collects small dollar donations among friends and family to build big power in key state races. If 1,000 *Gaslit Nation* listeners set-up a \$5 recurring monthly donation, that's \$5,000 we're sending to turn so-called red states purple, and so called purple states blue. Some of the races we've supported won by only a few votes! Your \$5 monthly

donation will make a huge difference. Join Andrea and friends at State Fair today! [You can sign up here.](#)

2. Are there any young people in your life, GenZ or younger? Give them the gift of the excellent book [Run for Something: A Real-Talk Guide to Fixing the System Yourself](#). It helps people of all ages run for office – so if you’re thinking of running yourself, be sure read this inspiring and practical guide. Both the book and the organization, [Run for Something](#), encourage, recruit, and train young people to run for office and flex their power. Inspire a young person, and anyone you love and trust, with empathy in their hearts and science in their minds, to run for office today.

3. Help the helpers! [State Bridges](#) is a Sister District Action Network (c4) program in which volunteers from across the country fundraise for organizations doing year-round power-building in key battleground states like Arizona, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin. State Bridges supports organizations engaging communities underrepresented at the polls, like mothers of color, rural voters, and latinx voters. [Sign up here to attend a virtual fundraiser](#) and [donate now](#) to help the helpers at State Bridges.

4. Write letters to voters in swing districts with Vote Forward. [Check out any of their easy letter writing campaigns](#) that have already started, and write letters as you listen to *Gaslit Nation!* We’ll be keeping you company.

5. Most importantly, check your own voter registration now at election protection site [Vote.org](#). Make sure you’re registered, and check in with your family and friends to confirm their voter registration, too. Commit to helping five people in your life make a plan to vote, and bring them along to a Gaslit Nation phonebank this fall. Because the only ones coming to save us, is us. Grassroots power is the most reliable power we have left.

[closing music, roll credits]