

## Gaslit Nation

Roy Cohn White House: The Mueller Report Special, Part II

Andrea Chalupa  
Sarah Kendzior

### *Theme Music*

- Announcer: [00:00:00](#) KPX 5 political reporter, Melissa Kaine joining us now. So Melissa, what are some of the other major takeaways from this report?
- Melissa: [00:00:05](#) Well, one of the things I brought my prop here. It's double sided. It's a lot. So one of the things to be clear about has to do with the redactions. Now we saw some pictures and some redacted pages and there are a number of pages that are heavily redacted, but they really have to do with the Russian hacking scheme. And so what we're not seeing are a ton of redactions as they relate to the president and his actions. Those are those pages that you see that are blacked out, really have to do with the internal workings of the Russian apparatus that was used to try and interfere with the 2016 election and sort of an indicator that the FBI and other agencies are continuing to look at those issues.
- Melissa: [00:00:44](#) So I want to make that clear. The second thing is, I know for me one of the things I was looking for here was why did Mueller punt on the issue of obstruction? What is the problem here? And here's what this report says. Way down in volume two. It says that the reason that the Mueller team did not say whether or not the president had committed obstruction, which is a crime, is because a sitting president cannot be dragged into criminal court. That's where a person could be exonerated, be found not guilty. They said it wouldn't be fair to say the President committed a crime and yet he doesn't have an avenue to exonerate himself by going to criminal trial. So for that reason, they said, we're not going to make a decision. We're not going to say he committed a crime because that would be unfair because we don't allow an avenue for him to, to clear his name.
- Melissa: [00:01:32](#) So it was not a lack of evidence or confusion about that. So then later Barr used all this evidence to say that there was no obstructions. So just want to be clear where the disconnect is between the two.

Anchor: [00:01:43](#) Sure. So are criminal charges against President Trump a possibility moving forward?

Melissa: [00:01:47](#) So right now the house is the only body that could charge a sitting president. Otherwise the president would have to sort of be out of office before these charges could be brought any charges based on this or anything else. So we're not going to have criminal charges against a sitting president when it's a sitting president. The only thing you can do is impeach.

Sarah: [00:02:14](#) I'm Sarah Kendzior a journalist and scholar of authoritarian states and the author of the book, The View From Flyover Country.

Andrea: [00:02:21](#) I'm Andrea Chalupa, a writer focused on Ukraine and Russia and the writer and producer of the upcoming journalistic thriller, Mr. Jones.

Sarah: [00:02:30](#) And this is Gaslit Nation, a podcast covering corruption in the Trump administration and rising autocracy around the world. And this week we have our long awaited Mueller reports special.

Andrea: [00:02:42](#) I want to just help, especially listeners who are not American, who are watching this and thinking, Holy Hell, how is that all unfolding there? And so going back to the Mueller report itself and the legal positions taken, I'm going to do a rundown just so you see how this is, you know, long story short. Mueller was conservative in his report. There are a lot of places where he was very strong confirming, backing up all the great investigative reporting that exposed this coalition of corruption that got Trump elected.

Andrea: [00:03:12](#) But he did follow the DOJ precedent that you can't indict a sitting president. And he did hedge in places, potentially leaving things open for interpretation and essentially punted a congress. And now congress is essentially punting to the American people for us to out vote Trump in 2020 even though he stole the election the first time around. So that's, that's the gamble. That is the David Cameron level gamble that Nancy Pelosi has taken just like David Cameron gambled by calling the Brexit referendum, which of course backfired. Nancy Pelosi is gambling by leaving it all up to 2020 even though the previous presidential election itself was stolen and in the end, the same players, many of them are still in power and, and we could just have another repeat of history. So now let's dive into, especially for listeners who are not American to understand sort of the

thinking here of why we're stuck with a Russian mafia asset as President of the United States. So Mueller writes in his report, collusion is not a specific offense or theory or liability found United States code, nor is it a term of art in federal criminal law.

Andrea: [00:04:17](#) So this whole word collusion, everyone's been throwing around, it's not a legal term, it's not at all. And so when Trump says no collusion, I mean that's not even what like Mueller was investigating. He was looking at the legal standards of conspiracy. So Mueller goes on for those reasons, the office's focus in analyzing questions of joint criminal liability was on conspiracy as defined in federal law. There's a great piece in Vox that breaks all this down. And I'm going to quote that, "What Mueller is saying is that there is insufficient evidence to prove that the Trump administration was directly involved in Russian crimes like stealing Clinton's emails. But did the Trump campaign actively work with the Russian government to improve his electoral chances? If that's the standard, then the report provides plenty of evidence to suggest the answer is yes." So basically no, Trump himself who was not a hacker, who probably doesn't have any useful computer skills.

Andrea: [00:05:14](#) He did not hack the DNC himself. Trump did not fly to Saint Petersburg or anywhere in Russia and manage those troll farms himself. Trump did not use Photoshop to create any sort of memes to be blasted out across social media. Trump didn't have his hands on any of this. As everybody's been reporting. And as Michael Cohen reminded us in his testimony before Congress, Trump essentially operates like a mob boss where he operates from a position of plausible deniability. He does not tell you directly how to do something, but he as Michael Cohen explained, you know what he means. You know what he's talking about. Putin himself operates the same way, and that's why Russia is often called a mafia state. And as we've even seen the report Mueller report himself, it's not Putin going out there directly and calling up Trump and then creating a whole email thread and leaving a whole paper trail of the two of them, Trump and Putin masterminding this whole thing, they're rolling up their sleeves and doing all the work.

Andrea: [00:06:13](#) No, they're delegating it to their allies, to people who are beholden to them whose actual survival and financial survival depends on them. Like Putin's core of oligarchs and all these business leaders. And so he's sending out those guys instead cutouts and others. So that creates plausible deniability. But what's really interesting though is that there is a section on how the campaign itself could have, the way they did have sort of direct and indirect coordination. There's where there's many

instances of that throughout this report. So I'll go on in this Vox piece. First Russia repeatedly reached out to the Trump campaign to establish a connection to the Kremlin. Quote, the Russian contacts consisted of business connections, offers of assistance to the campaign. Invitations for candidate Trump and Putin and meet in person. Invitations for campaign officials and representatives of the Russian government to meet and policy positions seeking improved U.S. Russian relations, Mueller writes.

Andrea:

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Second, the Trump campaign was receptive, sometimes going beyond what was an offer from the Kremlin. Some of the examples of this are egregious. Take Manafort's meetings with Konstantin Kilimnik, a Russian political consultant with a history of connections to the GRU intelligence agency. That's Russian intelligence. The FBI believed Kilimnik had links to the Kremlin, a view shared by Manafort's right hand man Gates. Quote "Gates suspected that Kilimnik was a spy a view that he shared with Manafort" Mueller writes. Yet despite Gates suspicions Manafort, repeatedly met with Kilimnik, worked with him to develop a pro Russian Ukraine policy that Trump could implement if elected and regularly shared polling data with him. From the report itself. On August 2nd, 2016 Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort met in New York City with his longtime business associate, Konstantin Kilimnik, who the FBI assesses to have ties to Russian intelligence. Kilimnik requests that the meeting to deliver in person a peace plan for Ukraine that Manafort acknowledged the special counsel's office was a backdoor way for Russia to control part of eastern Ukraine.

Andrea:

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Both men believed the plan would require candidate Trump's ascent to succeed, so Trump had a win and become present in order for this plan to even stand a chance. They also discuss the status of the Trump campaign and Manafort strategy for winning democratic votes in Midwestern states. Months before that meeting, Manafort had caused internal polling data to be shared with Kilimnik and the sharing continued for some period of time after their August meeting. So what's really interesting there is that days leading up to the election, Manafort we all thought was pushed off of the Trump campaign. You had this Sergey Leschenko, this Ukrainian investigative journalist who came out with proof of this book of payments made by Yanukovych, Putin's puppet, directly to Manafort. Millions of dollars being paid to him. That was published in New York Times and that helped of course establish a direct link between Manafort and Kremlin interests with these off the books payments going to Manafort from Yanukovych.

Andrea: [00:09:21](#) And so that when it was published in New York Times, finally got Manafort pushed off of the Trump campaign and then Steve Bannon came in. So Manafort never left because Manafort has a long history with Donald Trump. They are very old friends along with Roger Stone and Roy Cohn and they would all hang out. I think that there's even like pictures of them in studio 54, right, Sarah?

Sarah: [00:09:41](#) I'm not sure, I think Trump was introduced to Manafort in the early eighties like along with Stone. But there are pictures of Trump of course with Roy Cohn and with Roger Stone going all the way back to that era. And also Manafort lived in Trump tower. He moved there in 2006. So contradictory to what the New York Times claims they did not magically meet in the elevator in 2015, this is an actual thing that they claimed. They knew each other for decades.

Andrea: [00:10:06](#) Right. And so also in 2006 when, when Manafort buys a condo for himself in his friends building in Trump tower, that same year, he takes on a \$10 million a year contract with one of Putin's closest oligarchs, Oleg Deripaska to advance the interests of Putin's government. So that begins in 2006 and then Paul Manafort gets right to work on that, including the work that we mentioned earlier that he did in Crimea. So even though he's pushed off the campaign and humiliated and even Trump threw some cheap shots at him for good measure as Trump likes to do, cause he's the mafia boss. Paul Manafort never goes away as we learned later. And he even advises the transition team, which Gates his partner is a part of and which Ivanka Trump and Mike Pence are leading. So Manafort resurfaces publicly with a tweet on November 4th, 2016 just a mere few days before the election itself where he makes a prediction that goes against all, nearly all of the polls out there. All of the polls that are saying Hillary's going to win, Hilary has in the bag, Manafort's prediction is that this is what he writes. Battleground states moving to Trump en mass. Media not liking the pattern. By Sunday, Trump will be over 270 in the polls. This sounds absolutely bonkers. Like why would he make such a bold prediction? That's not like the polls are just simply not even saying this. He's like, what is he basing this on? But it turns out that he's basing it on a strategy that he had in place, which he discussed with Kilimnik who was connected to Russian intelligence and polling data that he's sharing with the Russians, which have this massive sweeping, deeply organized operation and so forth. And they've hacked voter rolls and they've hacked election infrastructure in all 50 states as we're going to find out, and for anybody who thinks, well, you know, how could a bunch

of bots or how can this, the sweeping social media strategy that the Kremlin's had so well funded and so organized, how could that make a difference?

Andrea: [00:12:11](#) Well, we have on the Gaslit Nation reading guide, a really, really great book. We have a reading guide on asymmetrical warfare and authoritarianism and all of it and how it works. And there's one book by a Professor Kathleen Hall Jamieson called "Cyber War, how Russian hackers and trolls helped elect a president. What we don't can't and do know." And she goes through all of it, how massive this operation was and how effective it was. And she's not alone in credible researchers making that conclusion. So yes, it wasn't just a couple bots pretending to be Christian moms in Ohio with MAGA hats on. It was an asymmetrical warfare plain and simple and it was done cheaply. And it's a great underdog story for, for military history of how the, how the Russians succeeded in 2016 and by electing their guy. So with all of this said, you're probably wondering, dear non American Listener, well what the hell, what are you guys gonna do about it now?

Andrea: [00:13:13](#) Well let's go on from breaking down the Mueller report and what we can and cannot do about it based on just what Mueller is presenting here. So why not indict a sitting president? So from Washington Post quote "Mueller felt bound to follow two justice departments legal opinions from 1973 and 2000 that found prosecutors couldn't prosecute a sitting president. The special counsel concluded those opinions also meant he couldn't even reach the threshold question of deciding whether Trump had engaged in a crime according to people familiar with the prosecutors thinking requested anonymity to describe the private deliberations. And as we said earlier, AG Eric Holder tweeted "any competent public corruption prosecutor to bring obstruction charges against Trump and win, only reason Mueller did not was because of the flawed DOJ restriction against indicting a sitting president he said so congress now has a constitutional responsibility." And as we've seen, obstructing justice pays off whether you do it in private or out in the open.

Andrea: [00:14:06](#) Dangling pardons pays off. According to Mueller Manafort assured gates that Trump's own personal lawyer said, quote, "will be taken care of." The word pardon was not explicitly used but the message was clear. Do not cooperate with the feds, it'd be stupid to cooperate. Stay strong. From page 343 of the Mueller report, quote "with respect to Manafort, there's evidence of the president's actions had the potential to influence Manafort's decision whether to cooperate with the government. The president and his personal counsel made

repeated statements suggesting the pardon was a possibility. The legal expert, Joyce Vance points out from the report quote "in the charging decision section after acknowledging key witnesses lied to investigators, Mueller concluded quote, "the office cannot rule out the possibility that the unavailable information would shed additional light on or cast a new light on the events described in the report." So Manafort, the rapist of American democracy rapes us even further by refusing and to basically provide information that would have strengthened Mueller's investigation into the conspiracy charges, which maybe, could have made a difference.

Andrea: [00:15:13](#) And he even tried with bringing Gates to his team on his side. So if he hadn't have done that and Manafort flipped, which we said from the very beginning, Manafort would never flip because he's too dirty. But if somehow the cruel AI simulation that we're all apparently stuck in had written a different script and Manafort did flip, then who knows whether we would have had further indictments and so forth and what this would all look like. So as we predicted back in early 2017, Manafort held strong and Mueller is saying what we just read off that that made a difference here in Mueller's position.

Sarah: [00:15:51](#) It's so frustrating cause you know when that happened, when Manafort made that bullshit fake cooperation deal, it was extremely obvious that that was a fake deal. Like I went all over the news and all over Twitter and on TV and on this show and I was like, this is not an actual cooperation deal. He's doing this because Papadopoulos fake cooperated and walked away with two weeks. Whereas Manafort had just, you know, despite his attempts to threaten a jury and a judge into compliance had been sentenced. So of course he's going to do a fake cooperation agreement. And what blows my mind is that Mueller, the big experienced prosecutor either genuinely could not understand what was happening, which should concern everybody or worse was complicit in Manafort's actions. I mean, I'm honestly, I've been baffled by this since it happened, you know, and we all learned that of course Manafort did not actually cooperate with Mueller.

Sarah: [00:16:46](#) I was not surprised even though a lot of other people were. And it still remains a mystery. And with the release of the full report, as you just said, you see how badly this damaged the investigation itself, you know, more broadly outside of Manafort. And you know, back to what you said about Manafort tweeting out which states basically they were planning to flip or in his words, you know, he thought there would be this sudden swing to Trump and those three states, you know, which

happened to be the ones where he's giving the data to Kilimnik. I mean they can't resist showing off. It's like what I said before, they love to be caught. They don't want to be punished. And that's their weakness. It's this autocratic flaunting. They need everybody to see that they are beyond control. They need everybody to see that they've pulled one over on the system, both to frustrate people, to intimidate people and because their egos are just so enormous that they can't resist doing this.

Sarah: [00:17:44](#) And if you're a prosecutor, if you're an investigator, I would think that that kind action, those sorts of tweets in the public domain would be of interest to you. That perhaps that would be something you would pursue immediately because you'd be able to situate them in the context of a broader threat. You know, by the time Manafort posted that in November 2016 he was under FBI investigation. You know, he had had to leave the Trump campaign during the summer because word of his illicit activities in Ukraine came out and he was forced to step down. Not actually, he was forced to step down as a public face of the Trump campaign and Bannon stepped in. But you know, he was being investigated when someone being investigated tweets that, and you know that Russia has been interacting with Trump to the extent that Trump is asking them at press conferences to get him Hillary's emails.

Sarah: [00:18:37](#) You know that from the last few years they had hacked the State Department, the DOD, they had infiltrated the Treasury in 2015 or that we didn't find that out until 2018 they had hacked the DNC. They had hacked the RNC, which is still not being addressed is what happened to those emails. You know, that Trump has this decades long ties and relationships with Russia. You know, people in his circle have them and you know, everything that's been going on with Wikileaks and Wikileaks' relationship to Russia, and Wikileaks' obvious interest in having Trump win. You would think when Paul Manafort tweets that out, maybe you'd give a little more attention to, you know, what's going to go on in these states and to the integrity of the election and to whether our machines are in fact secure. But not only was it ignored then, it continues to be ignored. I think it was like maybe the fourth episode of the show, you know, we interviewed Barbara Simon, right? The specialist on election integrity and hacking.

Andrea: [00:19:36](#) She was the computer scientist who'd been, Barbara Simons was the computer is the computer scientist that has been trying to warn us for 10 years that our election systems can be hacked. And therefore the integrity of our elections come under attack by any motivated actors like Russia, China, Iran, anybody, the

GOP for instance. And she did a whole rundown on how that all works and how it's still vulnerable and that not enough is being done. And so nothing's changed.

Sarah: [00:20:04](#) Yeah. She said on the thing that basically it was too late for 2018 and to focus on 2020 you know, she's very adamant about that. Like start right now and focus on 2020 because they are going to hack these machines or at least try to hack these machines. The machines are vulnerable. You need paper ballots. You know, she gave a number of suggestions, but one of her suggestions was to start right away and to tackle this. And of course, you know, you can't separate this from our own US born voter suppression problems with new ID laws, with the partial repeal of the VRA in 2013 you know, it's easy to exploit an existing problem. You could hack voter rolls, for example, which we know that Russia did. And just, you know, knock people off the list, they show up to vote.

Sarah: [00:20:47](#) Their vote doesn't count. They can't get through. You know, there, there are many ways that you can combine all of these different weaknesses in order to achieve your goals. And you can do it with selective margins, you know, narrow margins that make it harder to trace. And we have not seen a concerted effort from, certainly not from the Republicans but not really from the Democrats either. You know, we've seen some groups and later on you're going to read the guide that we made. If you're interested in protecting election integrity, we've seen groups like let America Vote run by Jason Kander. We've seen Stacey Abrams to be a strong advocate for fighting voter suppression, but there isn't this kind of concerted, organized effort that we need to protect our elections in 2020 and so again, that is why it is so mind boggling and frustrating that people's solution to this problem of a transnational crime syndicate occupying our government and living above the law and violating the law and desecrating human rights.

Sarah: [00:21:43](#) Their solution is, oh just wait until November, 2020 and we'll vote them out. It's like what the fuck? Like what reality are you living in?

Andrea: [00:21:50](#) Yeah. And we will present today on the show our action guide, which outlines all the ways we can refuse to wait until 2020 and start strengthening our democracy now and how all of us have to channel the anger that we're feeling into grassroots power. Because no matter who your lead candidate is in this crowded democratic field, and there's a lot of great candidates to choose from, of course, no matter who it is, if that person wins, let's all hope that person wins and Trump is no longer president. But

even if that person wins, they're still going to need our backup. They're still going to need grassroots power to undo all of the conditions that gave rise to Trump. So we have a lot of work ahead of us and we have to think bigger than Trump cause we have the growing crisis of income inequality, which is going to be worsened by the automation boom, which are going to take away more jobs in place of the growing industry of robotics.

- Andrea: [00:22:49](#) We have global warming, of course, that is coming for us. We have, I kid you not a space race a military industrial complex space race of killer robots, which
- Sarah: [00:23:01](#) I was going to say, don't forget the killer robots.
- Andrea: [00:23:04](#) Don't forget the robots.
- Sarah: [00:23:05](#) It's not Gaslit Nation without killer robots.
- Andrea: [00:23:08](#) Exactly. So China, Israel, Russia, the U S, they're all competing now for that multi billion dollar market share of who will be the first to bring market ready killer robots out there and which can also not only be used for a war, but also policing. So we've got a big confluence of crises hitting us all at once. So all of us, all of us, if we care about, it's like all of us have to be involved now because if you're like, Oh gee, how did it get to this point? It's because we were on autopilot. It's because Americans have a tendency to believe in Hollywood endings.
- Andrea: [00:23:43](#) And when we had that beautiful election of Barack Obama in 2008 and Beyonce singing at his inauguration, we all just went home and over the course of Obama's two terms, Karl Rove stepped in and engineered an entire strategy to start flipping states. And turning them all red from top to bottom. And so now we have to reduce that and get really good people running for office and, and empower them with a progressive infrastructure from state to state. So we're going to be introducing our Gaslit Nation action guide on how to do that. And don't be overwhelmed, just choose one little garden and start sowing away and planting seeds and just choose one project that you can handle incorporating into your busy lives. Just like Sarah and I do with the work we do, it's up to all of us to literally save the planet together and that is what we will be doing cause we have absolutely no choice anymore.
- Andrea: [00:24:32](#) So we'll get to that in a bit. And I love how people call us like merchants of despair when really what we've been advocating for this entire time is like there's no lose weight fast pill. There's no get rich quick scheme that making this all go away. There's

only hard work and everyone's like Sarah and Andrea are depressing. It's like we liked to work hard. We have ambitions for the kind of country want to live in and we're inspired by moonshots. We don't say like let's take on income inequality because it's easy. We want to take it on because it's hard. We don't say let's stop global warming and and save any more species from being endangered because it's easy. Let's do it because it's hard. It's like we believe that it makes it worse if you choose to do nothing and stay in your despair too long.

Sarah:

[00:25:18](#)

Are you using social media sites to stay in touch with friends and family only to discover that these sites are monitored by autocratic governments and transnational networks of spies? Well, Gaslit Nation fans, we have an alternative way of documenting your life and staying in touch with the people you love and it makes an excellent Mother's Day or Father's Day gift too. It's called Storyworth. Here's how it works. First you purchased a subscription for someone you love and each week Storyworth sends them an email with a question about their life. Then they simply reply to this email with their story. All stories are private and only shared with people that you choose. Finally, after a while, their stories will be bound into a beautiful keepsake book. Data on Storyworth is secure and everything is private by default, you control who sees your stories. Take that Cambridge Analytica. Storyworth is a great way to record your family history without nosy data mining companies getting in your business. Visit [Storyworth.com/gaslit](http://Storyworth.com/gaslit) for \$20 off when you subscribe.

Sarah:

[00:26:33](#)

Today, we're talking about forhers.com, a new women's wellness brand putting your body back in your control. Getting birth control is a hassle. The time it takes to go to your doctor's office, the stress of receiving your new pack on time or the phone calls you make to find out why your insurance is no longer paying for it is absurd. Your birth control should be delivered to you when you need it, where you need it, without judgment and with your physician available to answer questions you might have. You're not alone. More than 10 million women in the U.S take the pill and the struggle to receive it is real. It is time to level the healthcare playing field. forhers.com is helping women across the country get convenient and affordable access to birth control. They access licensed doctors online who can evaluate you and if appropriate, prescribe you birth control that can be delivered direct to your door. Listeners can get their first month of birth control from forhers.com for just \$5 right now while supplies last and subject to doctor approval. See website for full details, go to [forhers.com/gaslit](http://forhers.com/gaslit), restrictions apply. See website for full details and safety information.

Sarah: [00:27:54](#) Hey Gaslit Nation ladies and general fans of bras. Today we're talking about Third Love. A company that lets you buy your bras online with ease. We at Gaslit Nation know, you have enough going on. What with the rapidly consolidating autocracy and steady erosion of our rights to want to waste your time in the mall hunting for bras. Thanks to Third Love's convenient online technology, you can get your bra shopping done fast and go on to fight for freedom and style using Third Love's online fit finder quiz, you can order your bras and try them on at home. Third Love uses data points generated by millions of women who've taken the fit finder quiz to design bras for a perfect fit and premium feel. You just answer a few simple questions and find your perfect fit in 60 seconds. Over 12 million women have taken the quiz today. Third Love offers a 100% fit guarantee. Every customer has 60 days to wear it, wash it and put it to the test. If you don't love it, you can return it and Third Love will wash it and donate it to a woman in need. Third Love's team of expert fit stylists are available everyday to help via text, chat or phone returns and exchanges are free and easy. Third Love knows there's a perfect bra for everyone. So right now they're offering our listeners 15% off your first order. Go to [thirdlove.com/gaslit](http://thirdlove.com/gaslit) now to find your perfect fitting bra and get 15% off your first purchase. That's [thirdlove.com/gaslit](http://thirdlove.com/gaslit) for 15% off today.

Andrea: [00:29:19](#) I just want to give a little overview from the Mueller report, specifically on election hacking because we're going to go into that in this episode and we'll continue to cover it as fundamental to national security and the security of our democracy of course. We just want to let our audience know because we're stuck in the purgatory of 2016 and will be for some time until we make our democracy Trump proof and Putin proof. We're going to continue to cover the Mueller report in future episodes. It's of course going to help further a lot of discussions around all these key issues for some time. First, some highlights from the report on election hacking. From CNN. "The recent Muller report contained the first ever public us government claim that hackers successfully compromised a county's network in the lead up to the 2016 election." The report states, "the FBI believes that its operation enabled the GRU, Russian intelligence to gain access to the network of at least one Florida county government.

Andrea: [00:30:17](#) That county has never been identified. Florida officials who have long maintained that Russian efforts had not been successful there tell CNN that they were shocked by the claim." So Florida officials can't even tell you which county was hacked.

So how do we know there weren't more successful breaches in other counties and other states? So back to Florida, Kyle Griffin an MSNBC producer points out on Twitter that Democratic Senator Bill Nelson said last year Russians had penetrated some Florida county voting systems. His campaign rival then Florida Governor Rick Scott, at the time called Nelson's remarks irresponsible. From NPR, "It has been known for some time that a company that supplies many Florida counties with voter registration systems was the target of his spear phishing campaign by the Russians in 2016. The hackers then used the information gleaned from the company's network to send malicious emails to more than 120 of its customers in Florida.

Andrea:

[00:31:19](#)

The company identified elsewhere as VR systems based in Tallahassee has said that it warned customers shortly before the 2016 elections to be on the lookout for the fake emails and not to open any attachments. The Mueller report said that a document attached to the emails was coded with malicious software, commonly referred to as a Trojan that permitted the GRU to access the infected computer and VR systems told NPR in 2017 that to the best of its knowledge none of its customers had opened the malicious emails. This special council's report also said that Russian intelligence had installed malware on the vendor's network, something VR systems denies." So in regards to the wider hacking the Russians did of state elections in 2016 NPR notes quote, "some cybersecurity experts have raised the possibility that hackers planted malicious software that remains undetected." So basically our election security is at the mercy of for profit companies and election officials who want to avoid an embarrassing scandal.

Andrea:

[00:32:29](#)

So we depend on them to self report when they've been anything that might look like a security breach. And also looks like these breaches are very difficult to spot in the first place. So this is all just great. The way around all this. Basically the best solution here is for us to make sure that our voting systems rely solely on a paper ballots based system. So to see what you can do about election security in your state because clearly it's up to us, do not rely on the authorities and corporations to protect us. We need a paper ballot movement in every single county across the country. Do what you can to ensure that your own county relies on paper ballots. Check out our action guide on [gaslitnationpod.com](#) on how you can do that. So a bit more from the Mueller report also on Manafort and Gates.

Andrea:

[00:33:19](#)

I want to recap and include some more highlights on those two knucklehead campaign operatives. The web of criminally linked ties from Bloomberg. Manafort's former aide Gates said the

polling data was intended for Putin ally Deripaska. The report doesn't conclude why Manafort, as chairman of Donald Trump's campaign directed the handover of polling data about the key battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Minnesota. Now here we should note in connection to election hacking that Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania were the states that were the focus of Audit the Vote, a movement driven by computer scientists that Sarah and I helped amplify demanding a vote audit to check for possible election hacking in those states, which of course launched the recount efforts in those states. Where we're pointing out here is that there's all of this that was coming out in the Mueller report is just raising more and more questions again from Bloomberg.

Andrea:

[00:34:15](#)

The report also spells out new details about how Kilimnik pushed a plan to enlist Manafort's support for a peace plan in eastern Ukraine after the Russian invasion of Crimea. Under that plan, Yanukovich would serve as head of a newly autonomous region in Ukraine, Kilimnik pushed Manafort to secure Trump's support if he was elected. They discussed this peace plan for months. So Yanukovich, the ousted Putin puppet, president of Ukraine, forced to exile in Russia, would have gotten a sweet deal for himself out of this, if Manafort and Kilimnik had been successful. As I've always said, Russia's attack on our democracy in 2016 always felt to me like the bigger bolder sequel to Ukraine's revolution, Putin's revenge. According to Mueller, Manafort, longtime consultant to Yanukovich, would have been the special representative to manage this peace process. According to the email Kilimnik wrote to Manafort on December 8th, 2016 as Trump was getting ready to take office. Manafort and Kilimnik continued to communicate into 2018 long after Manafort had been arrested.

Andrea:

[00:35:18](#)

Sections of Mueller's report about Manafort and his relationship with Kilimnik have been redacted, leaving a lot more questions to be answered, hopefully by congressional investigations. Let's now go to speaking of Congress, let's zero in on Deripaska and some of his highlights from the Mueller report, from Bloomberg, Deripaska used Manafort to install friendly political officials in countries where Deripaska had business interests. Mueller's report says, citing an FBI interview with Manafort's former right hand man, Rick Gates. At the same time, he worked for Deripaska Manafort advised pro Kremlin politicians in Ukraine where he helped Viktor Yanukovich win the presidency in 2010 Manafort also grew close to several wealthy businessmen in Ukraine. The relationship between Manafort and Deripaska soured after Deripaska invested 26 million in a failed cable television venture backed by Manafort and Gates.

The billionaire later sued the men. After Yanukovich fled to Moscow in 2014 Manafort, Gates and Kilimnik began to work for a party known as the opposition block, but that work petered out as well.

Andrea:

[00:36:27](#)

By the time Manafort joined the Trump campaign on an unpaid basis in March, 2016 he had quote "no meaningful income," but believed that reviving his us career could help him in the future. According to the report, Manafort said that joining the campaign would be "good for business." Gates told Mueller. Gates also said that Kilimnik and Manafort discussed how to use the appointment to try to collect his Ukrainian political debts and persuade Deripaska to drop his litigation. Well, alright, so Manafort was willing to sell out democracy of course for his own enrichment. Yeah. I mean that's pretty much falls into a pattern with the whole entire Trump clan and how they operate. As we've been saying on this show. Now, this is what makes that recent vote in Congress allowing for Deripaska's sweet sanctions deal all the more nefarious. Deripaska has been trying for years to get into the U.S. to be off the US blacklist and Mueller essentially points to that in this report.

Andrea:

[00:37:26](#)

Remember what Welsh investigative journalist, Carole Cadwalladr told us in her interview with Gaslit Nation called Brexit and Trump Are the Same Crime. Conservative British MPs are impotent in stopping Brexit in part because they're wearing Deripaska's golden handcuffs. Deripaska enjoys legitimacy in the UK, throwing his money around. It's been reported that for years he tried to gain a foothold in the U.S. Where he's been blacklisted essentially for corruption, like the corrupt and violent tactics that made him the winner of Russia's bloody aluminum wars of the 1990s and for being close to Putin. Deripaska may finally achieve his long held dream of being openly welcomed in the U.S. and gain a strong foothold here thanks to Republicans. After the Republican led Senate allowed the lifting of sanctions of his company, Rusal, as long as Deripaska lowered ownership and his company to under 50% which he did by allocating many of his shares to close allies.

Andrea:

[00:38:23](#)

Rusal recently said in a statement, according to the Washington Post, it would take a 40% stake in a Kentucky aluminum mill in exchange for a 200 million investment, Kentucky, the state of Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell. Mitch McConnell, you may remember famously threatened to politicize Russia's attack on our democracy in 2016 when President Obama asked him to stand united in addressing it with the American people. This would be the largest aluminum plant built in the U S in 40 years. This is quite a windfall for Kentucky, and as we know from

following the golden handcuffs stories out of Ukraine and out of the UK, windfalls like this one tend to come at a price. So yes, Republicans are complicit with their Deripaska sanction votes. Only three more votes were needed to stop that sweet deal for Deripaska. As we've noted previously on the show, this was the Russian oligarch's sanctions vote that Senator Bernie Sanders missed after having voted against Russian sanctions, including the Magnitsky Act two previous times. More from the Mueller report on this as reported by Bloomberg, Deripaska wanted a visa to the U.S. Mueller's report says, Gates said that having Manafort in a position inside the campaign or administration might be helpful to Deripaska. And that Manafort's relationship with Trump could help Deripaska in other ways according to Mueller. Well, despite Manafort being in prison, Deripaska seems to be doing just fine. So now that we're on the whole topic of Manafort himself and Gates and all of it, I want to go back to election night itself, November 9th, 2016. This was our very first podcast Sarah, if you will recall.

- Sarah: [00:40:11](#) Oh the 3:00 AM podcast?
- Andrea: [00:40:13](#) You slammed into my DMs.
- Sarah: [00:40:15](#) One that I'm sure an intelligence agency got a great kick out of. But yeah, this is the first time I ever talked to you on the phone. I hadn't actually spoke to you on the phone.
- Andrea: [00:40:24](#) Yeah, it was in the early hours of November 9th, 2016 when somebody, somewhere redacted in Mueller's report, wrote a message to the head of the Sovereign Bank of Russia saying Putin won. At that same time you and I are on the phone cause you and I just knew each other from Twitter and you popped into my DMs and asked for my number and then called me immediately and said this doesn't look right. And I said, no it does not. And a beautiful friendship was born. And at that same time my sister was crafting a memo, very commonly using her lawyer skills to craft a memo to run it as high up as she could to anybody who would listen in the Clinton campaign or whomever, and she put this online immediately and it was basically ringing the alarm that despite that New York Times story on October 31st, 2016 saying that the FBI saw no link between Trump and Russia despite all that which had put that to bed and just made Hillary Clinton going on and on about Trump and Russia seemed like a campaign tactic. My sister took it upon herself to outline what she knew from all the research she did on Manafort and just knowing Ukraine for all these years and how the dark arts, Manafort's dark arts worked in Ukraine. My sister took it upon herself to write this memo and

she posted it on Facebook and you and I put it on Twitter and that's what led to this Audit the Vote Movement.

Andrea: [00:41:54](#) And I want to read that memo again because it's a lot of what we're seeing is getting confirmed and all the details are coming out of what she called in those early hours on November 9, 2016 right when Trump was announced president elect, a lot of what she's saying here in this memo in those wee hours are flushed out in the Mueller reports. I'm going to reread it again because we covered this in one of early episodes.

Sarah: [00:42:16](#) Go for it.

Andrea: [00:42:17](#) Regardless of Hillary Clinton's concession, a close analysis must be done of the actual voting results, machine tabulations and paper ballots cast, versus the vote reporting to the board of elections and Secretary of State offices. Some important facts collectively warrant this. One. Russians have heavily influenced this election for the past six months and have successfully hacked the election systems of more than half the states in the country that we knew of at that time. Two. Major public polls and the Clinton campaign's internal polls were historically off the mark and in the campaign's case didn't match the voter file records, which is unheard of to this level. This is especially odd considering that Clinton's campaign manager, Robby Mook, is one of the most brilliant in politics when it comes to microtargeting and voter analysis. Even GOP strategist and pollster Frank Luntz called the 2016 exit polls, the worst and least accurate we've ever seen. In a tweet sent on election night. Three. Homeland security, DOJ teamed up with a group that is part of Anonymous based in Washington, DC called the protectors. This group saw a lot of activity during election day from the Russians and believe that the voting results projected don't match the internal and public polls because their voting results were manufactured in favor of Trump and heavily republican counties in key states and voting results may have been decreased for Clinton in key democratic counties via malware that was placed by the Russians when they hacked the election systems of more than half our states. Four. Trump and Manafort set up the rigged election narrative months ago preparing for exactly this scenario. This is straight out of Manafort's playbook and Putin's too. Accuse the other side of doing what you're doing so that you cannot be accused of doing it. There's no short supply of examples of this. Putin regularly accuses the U.S. of meddling in Russia's affairs when he annexed Crimea, invaded East Ukraine and hold sham elections in Russia. Five. Kellyanne Conway, an expert conservative pollster, was selected as Trump's campaign manager when Paul

Manafort took too much heat about his Russia connections and resigned. Though he has likely continued to be involved behind the scenes and continues to have a residence in Trump Towers and Conway helped lead messaging that polls were all wrong and that Trump has quote, "shadow supporters" a term that mainstream journalists echoed as the election results began to favor Trump.

Andrea:

[00:44:43](#)

Six. Paul Manafort who has heavy ties to the Kremlin, is being federally investigated for his work in Ukraine. He was virtually silent since resigning from Trump's campaign a few months ago, but sent his first tweet since resigning last week saying that by Sunday before the election, Trump would have the 270 votes needed to win despite internal and public polls saying otherwise. Now when we made that Facebook post go viral. On Twitter, you and I, Sarah and our whole gang of friends like every, you know Liam McElduff and a lot of great people on Twitter. What then happened was BuzzFeed came out and in a piece by Shira Frankel and BuzzFeed, which was shared by BuzzFeed Ben as a nothing to see here folks, we've solved it here. Here's our one single article on it. And what they do is they grab my sister's memo and they dig around and they talked to some sources and the article says, rumors that election results were altered in favor of president elect Donald Trump had been mounting since he defied nearly every pre election poll to win the presidency. But officials who monitor the vote on a state by state basis as well, officials who work at the Department of Homeland Security and oversee the national tally of votes told BuzzFeed news that they saw no irregularities, nor had they received any official complaints, from the Democratic Republican Party regarding the vote. Now when that story came out, basically saying that, you know, my sister's full of shit, right? Remember Sarah, when that came out, we were like, wait, what? No, there was all this hacking so that was so demoralizing to see that. Right. And so now what has come out on April 10th, 2019 just a few weeks ago, DHS, FBI say election systems in all 50 states were targeted in 2016. In all 50 states. Okay. We keep finding out it's even bigger than it was initially reported. So, and I want to say one thing we have never shared on the show before is that when my sister's memo went viral, you and I, Sarah got to work with others in launching Audit the Vote and we put up a Facebook page for it.

Andrea:

[00:46:54](#)

We created an email account for it. You and I were on Twitter and what was really interesting in that very, very early period before it was heavily publicized, we received from our Twitter account, from our Facebook page through Twitter, all because of Audit the Vote that we were just getting ready. We're just

putting the pieces in place, you know, by we receive Twitter messages with phishing links for us to click on from people pretending to be friends of ours, like some mysterious looking bots that were trying to convince us that they were on our same page, they all looked weird, they all looked like grossly suspicious, like the bots that have been exposed from the Kremlin sweeping social media operation. They were desperately trying to get us to click on links. Here we made this for you. Click on this, click on this. And it's sort of like, first of all, where the hell did you come from?

Andrea:

[00:47:46](#)

We haven't even publicize audit the vote yet. How are you like so closely monitoring this? Well, it's because while the American mainstream media was not taking us seriously, the Kremlin who was taking us seriously, and what was really flattering to confirm that is that Putin's chief propagandist on the heels of the Steele report dropping and BuzzFeed, he did an entire segment on how my sister created the Russiagate scandal and how I helped her. And so my sister and I always joke that the US mainstream media as a hard time telling us apart and sometimes they don't even realize that there's two of us, like I'll get a journalist trying to set up a meeting with me thinking he's talking to my sister and vice versa. Meanwhile, the Kremlin knows exactly who we both are. I can tell us apart. So it's really flattering and nice. The Kremlin takes us far more seriously than American media does, especially in those early weeks of course. And so all of this is to say that we are up against the same forces and nothing has changed. And that's why we cannot afford to wait around for 2020, we have to use every lever of power that we have now.

Sarah:

[00:48:53](#)

Yeah, exactly. And I just want to clarify something for those who don't know what Audit the Vote was, Audit the Vote was a cry for the vote to be audited. For people to inspect the integrity of the election to make sure that votes were not changed, to look at, technological infractions. I mean we wanted an investigation. We didn't know what had happened. This was not something that was spearheaded by Jill Stein. Jill Stein, after this movement was launched as a grassroots movement came in saying that she supported it and money was given to Jill Stein, not by me and then Jill Stein I guess used that money later to pay her lawyers or something like that. She basically pocketed money that was given from vulnerable people experiencing intense anxiety and a longing for justice and accountability in this election and you know Jill Stein as among this cast of characters with her own associations with Russia.

Sarah: [00:49:51](#) She was of course at the RT gala in late 2015 with Michael Flynn, with Putin, with other implicated parties. And I was just thinking of this as you were telling the story, how she was someone, a lot of folks thought Mueller was going to look at. She's in this long list of people that just sort of has fallen off the radar and if she had a role in this, it doesn't seem to have been investigated. There are people who much more obviously had a role in this who also weren't interviewed. Among them was of course Julian Assange. I was wondering, maybe this is a good time to talk about that part of the Mueller report and the Seth Rich stuff that you wanted to bring up cause I know you mentioned that earlier.

Andrea: [00:50:31](#) Dear goodness. Okay. So Julian Assange has finally been arrested for long standing charges against him for his role in the hacking of sensitive military information, exposing cruelty and the destruction of the war in Iraq. And that of course has raised moral issues about journalists rights and so forth and how journalists can be targeted, which are very serious and should be taken seriously in consideration. But the fact clearly is that Julian Assange has long ago given up any acting role of being a journalist, he is in fact an unregistered agent of the Kremlin. You know, and acting like Manafort in every way. He's very much an important node in the coalition of corruption that allowed Donald Trump to win the White House. And he did that deliberately. These are all morally corrupt individuals who are all aligned and all believe that they will get a return on their investment. Putin thought he's going to get sanctions dropped. Julian Assange thought that he could finally come out of his cubby hole inside the Ecuadorian embassy, which he was sticking up for so long. And just to show just his total like lack of morals, There've been several reports showing that when he did have all that leaked material that he wanted just to release it raw without redacting any names of people whose lives would be on the line. He simply did not care. And the editors who are working with him were stunned by his callousness. And so it started to emerge over time that, you know, here's maybe Assange is just an Egomaniac who like Trump likes to live above the law. And we saw that he very clearly took sides here and he has a track record also just like Trump and those around Trump of blatant anti semitism too.

Andrea: [00:52:20](#) So there is an ideology to that, of white supremacy and racism that, that unites them as well. So Assange comes in crystal clear with some really damning moments in the Mueller report. Julia loffe points out that Wikileaks asked Russian military intelligence operatives to give them stolen DNC documents

ahead of the Democratic convention, specifically to inflame tensions between Hillary and Bernie supporters. The Mueller report confirms a pattern of the Trump campaign having advanced knowledge of Wikileaks releasing damaging information to hurt Hillary Clinton and help the Trump campaign. The Mueller report points out that Assange smeared Seth Rich, the murdered DNC employee who was murdered blocks from his house in Washington DC, after coming home from a bar, he was shot dead there. The murder remains unsolved. And Assange smeared Seth Rich to cover for the Russians, so what happened was, Assange implied that Seth Rich could have been murdered for having provided the hacked DNC emails. He implies this in an interview, yet Seth Rich's murder took place days before the emails were even given to Wikileaks by Russian intelligence.

- Anchor: [00:53:34](#) Donald Trump has had a disastrous few weeks. If you look at the polls, he needs a miracle. Um, in the American political lexicon there is such a thing as the October surprise, the stuff that you're sitting on is an October surprise in there? Can we know what you're sitting on.
- Assange: [00:53:54](#) Wikileaks never sits on material. Our whistleblowers go to significant efforts to get us material and often at very significant risks as a 27 year old that works for the DNC who was shot in the back of murdered, just two weeks ago for an unknown reasons as he was walking down the street in Washington.
- Anchor: [00:54:14](#) So that was, that was just a robbery, I believe, wasn't it?
- Assange: [00:54:17](#) No, there's no finding.
- Anchor: [00:54:19](#) So, what are you suggesting?
- Assange: [00:54:25](#) I'm suggesting that our sources, take risks and they are, they become concerned, to see things occurring like that.
- Anchor: [00:54:36](#) But was he one of your sources then?
- Assange: [00:54:37](#) We don't comment on who's our sources.
- Anchor: [00:54:40](#) Then why make the suggestion about a young guy being shot in the streets of Washington
- Assange: [00:54:44](#) Because we have to understand how high the stakes are, in the United States and that our sources are, you know, our sources face serious risks, that's why they come to us so we can protect their anonymity.

Anchor: [00:55:03](#) That's quite something to suggest a murder. That's basically what you're doing

Assange: [00:55:08](#) Well that others have suggested that. We are investigating to understand what happened in that situation with Seth Rich. I think it is a concerning situation. There is not a conclusion yet. We wouldn't be willing to state a conclusion, but we are concerned about it. And more importantly, a variety of Wikileaks sources are concerned when that kind of thing happens.

Andrea: [00:55:37](#) And that whole conspiracy blew up. You had Sean Hannity and the whole far right propaganda machine spreading this horribly abusive conspiracy theory that Clinton or anyone associated to Clinton murdered Seth Rich as punishment or to silence him because it was him who was this DNC mole. It was him that collected all this hacked material and not the Russians. So what you see among all these Russiagate skeptics, you know the far right and they're strange bedfellows is this whole resistance to even acknowledging that the Russian government hacked the DNC when in fact the Russian hackers were hanging out inside DNC servers for several months, several months, and just collecting volumes of material. And of course that was all digested and blasted out at a key moment as the Mueller report confirms to deliberately cause the most amount of damage possible driving an even deeper wedge between Bernie and Hillary.

Andrea: [00:56:43](#) At the same time exposing a lot of sensitive information of private individuals, including their phone numbers and addresses and social security numbers. It was a typical Assange nuclear bomb of destruction. He doesn't care who he hurts, he simply does not care who he hurts. Here was the Ecuadorian embassy giving him asylum and he was smearing the walls of the Ecuadorian embassy with feces. And so like he is basically like Bannon's hipster brother in terms of grossness. So Assange does not get the benefit of the doubt here. As a journalist, we have enough credible journalists to build the obvious strong case that Trump and those like him are making the world a far more dangerous place for journalists. So we do not need to hold Assange up at all as any poster boy for that cause he's, he has put far too many people in danger and has helped bring to power an aspiring autocrat who shares his racist ideology of hate. So no, Assange is not some muckraker hero here. He's actually a very troubling node in this entire coalition of corruption.

Sarah: [00:57:55](#) Yeah, I agree. And just to put Assange in context a little, for those who don't remember or didn't pay attention when Wikileaks first emerged, Wikileaks initially said that it was going to target any government that practices abuse of human rights, war crimes, imperialistic ambitions, you know, and there was some nobility in exposing those crimes. You know, we all lived through George W. Bush, we all watched what happened in Iraq. You know, we watched the use of torture, the abuse of people there. You know, it was something that needed to be uncovered. And the media had failed, but Assange pretty quickly turned into somebody who was only looking at human rights violations and abusive power in western states, in democratic states, not looking at them in Russia or China as he had initially proclaimed he was going to. And in late 2010, there was a really interesting essay in the Atlantic by Jaron Lanier who was a computer scientist, you know, very influential in inventing AI.

Sarah: [00:58:57](#) He had written a book called You are Not a Gadget and he has a humanistic look at technologies role in a lot of skepticism about social media companies and about Assange. So I'm just going to read a few excerpts of this. This is nine years old, but I think it summarizes very well, not just what people should have looked out for then, but how we should consider Assange and Wikileaks and similar organizations today. He says, and these are just some excerpts, "the interesting similarity between Assange and a typical financier who overdid it here," he's talking about a Wall Street criminals, "is that both attempted to align themselves with the perceived godlike perspective and method made possible by the flow of vast information on the Internet while both actually got crazy and absurd. Wikileaks and similar efforts could do for politics approximately what access to a lot of data did for finance in the run up to the recession." And then he goes on to say the Wikileaks method punishes a nation or any human undertaking that falls short of absolute total transparency, which is all human undertakings, but perversely rewards an absolute lack of transparency. Thus an iron shut government doesn't have leaks to the site, but a mostly open government does. If the political world becomes a mirror of the Internet as we know it today, then the world will be restructured around opaque, digitally delineated power centers surrounded by a sea of chaotic underachieving openness. Wikileaks is one prototype of a digital power center, but others include hedge funds and social networking sites. This is the world we are headed to it seems since people are unable to resist becoming organized according to the digital architectures that connect us. The only way out is to change the

architecture." And so that essay is called The Hazard of Nerds supremacy published on December 20th, 2010 so once again this is predictable. That was a warning and we are still dealing, you know, with the ramifications of that, we began to see what Lanier warned about come to pass, especially in 2014 when Russia and other governments were basically mapping the social media landscape in terms of American politics, in terms of perspective electoral politics, seeing which groups could be targeted, be manipulated, you know, seeing what kind of memes of inflammatory information raises emotion. I mean honestly of all the crimes Russia or Russia affiliated actors may have committed, this one is kind of like low on the list to me because you know everyone does propaganda. Everybody manipulates people's feelings to try to back a candidate. It's the embrace of the support of a dictatorship that marks, this is notable, but beyond that, the financial illicit transactions, the back channels, the lying, the perjury, the hacking, you know, there are more serious crimes but nonetheless Assange is just not a journalist, he's not a publisher.

Sarah: [01:01:45](#) I think a lot of the folks who initially were drawn to Wikileaks because they felt it was going to expose human rights infractions around the world came away gravely disappointed. We've seen many of those folks on Twitter express their regret that they got involved. They felt it was under false pretenses. And you know, one thing that remains unanswered for me about all of this is the timing of Assange's arrest, which is interesting because you know Assange had been in the embassy for a long time. We'd also been waiting for the Mueller report for a long time and you know, those are both events that could have happened anytime.

Sarah: [01:02:36](#) But what we got was the Barr memo and then a couple of weeks later Assange finally gets arrested after the point that Mueller could have interviewed him, Mueller never interviewed Assange despite his pivotal role. And then we get the Mueller report laying this out. And so, you know, there's a lot of strange timing. There are a lot of holes there. People may be listening saying, oh, how conspiratorial, but come on. I mean, if you've listened or paid attention to anything that's happened over the past decade and to the effort that these individuals have put into their conspiracy, then you know, of course this is something you should be looking at. I think that folks, they want to think of everything as a coincidence because it makes them feel comfortable. You don't want to think that you're up against someone formidable. This kind of goes back to what we were saying before about folks acting smug about Trump and his crew kind of looking down at them like, oh, this, you know, group of,

you know, yokels and goons, they're so obvious about all their crimes.

Sarah: [01:03:33](#) They can't cover their tracks. It's like they don't want to cover their tracks. They want to flaunt it right in your face. And so I'm curious about that. This is one of the many, many reasons I wish Mueller would testify or at the least give a press conference, but quite honestly, I want the Democrats to put him under oath or the Republicans to put him under oath. I'm not sure completely that they like him either, but he needs to speak out. These are the sorts of questions that he should be answering.

Andrea: [01:03:57](#) Before we leave off on Assange, Roger Stone, whose trial date has been set for November 5th where he faces seven charges from the Muller investigation and having been arrested late January for lying to Congress and for obstruction and witness tampering in a congressional investigation on Trump Russia collusion Stone worked to get a pardon for Assange. This is according to texts with his friend Randy Cretigo the radio host Stone had claimed was his back channel to Wikileaks. In an email to Mother Jones, Stone himself confirmed trying to get Assange a pardon from Trump. Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime lawyer and fixer claimed Trump knew Stone was in contact with Assange during the 2016 election. Trump repeatedly praised and brought up Wikileaks during the election. After Assange's arrest, Trump now claims "I know nothing about Wikileaks." And another thing I want to point out is Trump's own obsession with Hillary Clinton's emails as we all know, and as the Mueller report confirmed it again when Trump gave that speech out in the open saying Russia if you're listening find Hillary's emails and within hours Russian hackers attempted to hack Hillary Clinton. Within hours and if you're wondering God, that's so obvious, it's so on the nose well as we've been saying, yeah, our enemy is shameless. Our enemy is cartoonish. Like look, the Salisbury

Andrea: [01:05:18](#) poisoning with those Russian agents on TV that attempted to murder Skripal, they went on TV saying that they were in Salisbury for a vacation because they heard about this great cathedral there and nothing united the British public more than when they said that, it's like everyone started making fun of them and making all these Russian agent vacation jokes. Rightfully so, and then British humor at its best was on display in that morbid dark moment. But the reality is our enemy is that cartoonish. Whether it's Putin's court or Trump's court, it doesn't matter. It's like we're up against idiots and the idiots are winning. And so I wanted to just point out again from the Mueller report how obsessed Trump was with hunting down

Hillary's emails. So here's a thread I wrote Barbara McQuade on MSNBC regarding the Mueller reports so that Trump asked individuals within his campaign to find Hillary's emails. Michael Flynn acted on this, including asking Republican operative Peter Smith. Peter Smith is the guy who said that he had tried to obtain Hillary Clinton's missing emails from Russian hackers. He'd killed himself in a Minnesota hotel room days after talking to the Wall Street Journal about his efforts, public records show. The president's son in law Jared Kushner brought militarized propaganda from Cambridge Analytica founded by Robert Mercer and Steve Bannon into the Trump campaign. Alexander Nix, the head of Cambridge Analytica said he asked Julian Assange, the Wikileaks founder for help finding Hillary Clinton's 33,000 deleted emails. So no Trump did not sit in a troll farm in Russia running bot operations. But his campaign relentlessly sought Hillary Clinton's emails even reaching out to Russian hackers and Wikileaks, which has been called a hostile intelligence service helped by Russia, according to former CIA director, Pompeo. Journalist Michael Weiss points out that by late summer 2016 the Trump campaign was planning a press and comms strategy based on forthcoming Hillary Clinton emails Wikileaks said it possessed, but which it did not, but it didn't matter.

Andrea:

[01:07:15](#)

The Trump campaign was already doing all this coordination between Wikileaks, which was doing coordination with Russian intelligence, which was all being serviced and the Trump campaign itself was being serviced by Cambridge Analytica, which one whistleblower has said was working with Russian intelligence. So again, you have a coalition of corruption here. It's in the public domain. The investigative reporting has been solid. Mueller's report consolidates so much of what we already know and confirms what we've long suspected. So pointing to all this, you know, we're going to talk further about impeachment. We're going to talk further about Elizabeth Warren and how she's a Nazi hunter in a time of Nazis because we think those are two very important topics to stay on. Doris Kearns Goodwin who wrote several biographies of US presidents was on MSNBC, reminding journalists and the public that these are not normal times and that nothing is normal and no one knows anything.

Doris:

[01:08:11](#)

Yeah, I certainly hope that what we're going to look at are the leadership qualities we need in our next president to heal a country that's more divided than it's been since the 1850s. The really interesting thing about that NBC poll was that it rated president Trump on eight leadership qualities and in all of them he was below majority in terms of approval, steadiness,

trustworthiness, character, integrity, ability to negotiate, ability to communicate. So I hope that as we separate these candidates on both sides, if someone challenges him on the Republican side and all these many Democrats that we're not simply looking at who can get what share of the pie, African Americans, southerners, working class, gender, but rather who has exhibited already in their lives the leadership qualities that we need really now to bring us through a time that I do believe is different.

Andrea:

[01:09:01](#)

This is Doris Kearns Goodwin, a historian. So as we say, trust history. History are the tea leaves we are reading. When an esteemed historian like Kearns Goodwin tells you nothing is normal anymore so don't cover this like a normal election anymore, that goes to the Democratic Party. Do not trust normal electoral politics anymore. It simply does not apply. We are living in an abnormal times right now and you need a new strategy and you to evolve and you need to confront the challenges face on, not come out with is outdated strategy that makes you look so tone deaf to the crisis that not only the US but the world is up against right now. So to deal with these abnormal times that we find ourselves in, we here at Gaslit Nation take a strong stance of saying no to savior syndrome. The only thing that's gonna get us out of this is self reliance and holding our leaders accountable. And the only power we have left that we can rely on is grassroots power. To illustrate our point here is Cher providing a useful metaphor for these times. Rely on no one by your own hard work and dedication. That's the only way out of this. Awaken your inner Cher.

Interviewer:

01:10:16

You said a man is not a necessity. A man's luxury like dessert.

Cher:

Yeah, man. It's absolutely not necessity.

Interviewer:

Oh, did you mean that to sound mean and bitter?

Cher:

Oh, not at all. I adore dessert. I love men. I think men are the coolest, but you don't really need them to live. My Mom said to me, you know, sweetheart, one day you should settle down and marry a rich man. I said, mom, I am a rich man.

Andrea: Welcome to the Gaslit Nation action guide available on our website, [gaslitnationpod.com](http://gaslitnationpod.com). Democracy is a lifestyle. Trump is a symptom of the corruption, institutional failure and indifference that we can no longer tolerate.

Sarah: Okay, so number one, get a guide. Stride toward freedom, the Montgomery Story by Martin Luther King Junior is an essential guide to self management, managing others and building teams. This inspirational case study of resistance written by a young MLK after successfully leading the Montgomery bus boycott shows how smart organization took on the authoritarianism of the Jim Crow south. Never forget the MLK was considered a radical in his day, even though there's nothing radical about demanding human rights and dignity. Today, the same remains true. It's not radical or socialist to demand that corporation stop polluting for profits and to call for an end to tax breaks like for sending jobs overseas that worsen the income inequality crisis. To help communicate these urgent issues, another essential guide is the all new Don't Think of An Elephant. Know your Values and Frame the Debate by George Lakoff.

Andrea: Number two of the Gaslit Nation action guide. Focus on state races. States decide key quality of life issues and local candidates help drive votes up ballot for federal races. EveryDistrict and Future Now are two excellent groups working to build a progressive infrastructure and turn states blue from the bottom up. Get involved by donating what you can or join or start your own group with their help in your state. We provide in our action guide interviews with EveryDistrict and Future Now for more background.

Sarah: Number three, join. Grassroots power is one of the strongest forms of power we have left in America, especially with Mitch Mcconnell and Trump packing the courts. Don't succumb to savior syndrome by expecting Alexandria Ocasio Cortez or whomever else you admire to do all the work. Representatives are human and need our help fulfill the far right's worst nightmare by creating generations of AOC by helping build a more progressive union. Join a local group from any of these great national organizations for important action alerts like demonstrations or getting out the vote Indivisible, Swing Left, Sister District, MoveOn, Flippable.

Andrea: Number four, fight global warming. Sunrise Movement is a grassroots organization demanding a green new deal. There are a lot of other groups working to adopt urgently needed green initiatives. C40 cities connect cities around the world committed

to taking climate action. 350.org helps activists rise to the challenge of the climate crisis and there are more trusted organizations that need our support linked to on our action guide.

Sarah:

Number five. Unionize. In the age of Trump, there should be no more fear of starting or joining a union. Just tell your boss that you saw how unions protected workers during the universally unpopular Trump shutdown. Fight for 15 and its local variants are working to ensure a fair wage and strengthen unions in the service sector. Don't know how to get started? Read organizing to win: new research on union strategies and No Shortcuts: organizing for power in the new gilded age, both of which are linked to the Gaslit Nation website.

Andrea:

Number six: run for something. There are a lot of great groups out there that demystify the process of becoming a candidate and running a campaign. Run for something is one of our favorites. There's even a book to help you get started. Run for something: a real talk guide to fixing the system yourself by Amanda Litman. If you believe in facts and science and are a compassionate human being, you need to run for something and recruit others to as well. Even if it's a long shot, you can still create urgent conversations and treat your campaign like a platform for discussions you care about helping bring together like minded people to work for change even long past the election. Just look at what a refreshing discovery long shot Mayor Pete has been and all the great work Andrew Gillum continues to do to register 1 million voters in Florida.

Sarah:

Number seven: protect the vote. EveryDistrict action fund just launched a quote "report card" identifying states with enough progressive support and local governments to push through important voting reforms like automatic registration and the abolishment of racist voter ID laws. Is your state on the list? You can click a link and find out. If so, EveryDistrict action fund empowers you to help your state reach the gold standard of voting. Concerned about vote hacking and Ivanka Trump branded voting machines? Yes, that is a thing. Secure Our Votes provides background information and other resources to take action. Other groups to check out are Spread the Vote, Let America Vote, and Project ID which helped people get the information they need to register, vote and get an ID. And again these are linked to on our site.

Andrea:

Number eight: launch ballot initiatives and laws. Why not launch a ballot initiative? Kate Faghe turned her Facebook post into the movement Voters Not Politicians to end

gerrymandering in Michigan. It passed overwhelmingly. We have a link on our action guide for you to read more of her story or you could build a grassroots coalition to get a law passed in your state. In our episode "how to pass a law," I interview my mother about how she, while pregnant with me and a young mother already without any political experience, mobilized a grassroots army to pass the child car seat law in California. Yes, it can be done.

Sarah: Number nine: End terrorism in America. Moms Demand works to elect candidates and lobby for sensible legislation to stop the gun violence epidemic driven by the blood money gun lobby, the NRA. Southern Poverty Law Center exposes white supremacy, a leading terrorist movement in America to help immigrant communities deliberately terrorized by Trump's cruel border policies. We have a list linked here of groups that you can support.

Andrea: Number 10: make art. To say that art cannot make a difference stems from a tone deaf attitude of privilege. Ukraine's Euromaidan Revolution of 2013 to 2014 relied on art and artists of all kinds to sustain protesters living in Arctic cold temperatures and under the threat of government sanctioned violence. North Korean dissident Yeon Mi Park said the Orwell's Animal Farm helped her heal after escaping the cult like dictatorship. And in our episode The Blue Wave continues, Kansas rising, we shared Davis Hammett's account of how painting a Rainbow house created a ripple effect in Kansas leading to major electoral victories. We need the artists and storytellers of all kinds more than ever.

Sarah: So this is not a comprehensive list of suggestions of how you can create a more progressive America and stop entrenched corruption. There are many paths you can take and we encourage you to think for yourself and to work together. There is no one solution whether you're in a blue state or a red state. These ideas apply to you. Do not take any of the freedoms you have left for granted. Never underestimate the power of hard work. Additionally, we have a reading list linked to you from there because it's essential to read widely to understand how we got here and the best ways to navigate the challenges of the 21st century. So again, all of this is available on our site, GaslitNationpod.com

Andrea: Gaslit Nation is produced by Andrea Chalupa and Sarah Kendzior. If you like what we do, leave us a review on iTunes. It helps us reach more listeners. And check out our Patreon. It helps keep us going. Our editor for this was Karlyn Daigle,

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