

# #1457 GOP Authoritarianism Will Likely To Get Worse Before It Gets Better

Intro 11-24-21

[00:00:00] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left Podcast*, in which we shall take a look at the state of the ever increasingly authoritarian Republican party, as they hack the media by being too terrible to hold to account, hack the democratic process through gerrymandering, and endlessly rebrand because in their core, they stand for nothing.

Clips today are from *The Majority Report*, *Amanpour and Company*, *The Bradcast*, *Citations Needed*, *the Muckrake Political Podcast*, and *All In with Chris Hayes*, with additional members-only clips from *Amanpour and Company* and the *Rational National*.

## Lauren Boebert Condemned For ‘Cruel, False And Bigoted’ Politics By Colorado TV Anchor - The Majority Report - Air Date 11-19-21

[00:00:39] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Lauren Boebert congressperson from, from Colorado. This is really important. And, and, you know, actually you wonder, cart before the horse, Colorado is like, it's not teetering in the way that like Virginia is. And I, and I don't think that's a coincidence based upon like, sort of like, uh, the history of things like racism and whatnot.

[00:01:03] **MATT LECH:** Yeah. My understanding is the CRT stuff, particularly didn't do terribly well in Colorado.

[00:01:09] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Yeah. And I think, you know, I think if there was a way to map and it probably is like, what was it? Um, uh, the routes, what was that book that we had where you could

actually see voting patterns based upon the number of slaves to slave owner ratio?

Um, deep roots, I think it was called, but one wonders. The changes in Colorado bringing this about or what the cause and causation is for a local newscaster to have this sort of revelation and articulate it on local TV in Denver. Uh, this is a guy named Kyle Clark. I don't know anything about him, but this is I think a very good point.

And it's a good point with the Republicans broadly speaking. And it is a real, regardless of, of how inept or how ideologically, um, uh, corrupt you perceive the Democrats. There is like a baseline that is not achieved here. And you have polling that showed that like, people think that the Democrats have gone further left from the center than the Republicans have gone right from the center. This is a helpful corrective.

[00:02:26] **KYLE CLARK:** It's time that we acknowledged something that may be obvious by now. We hold Republican, Congresswoman Lauren Boebert to a different standard than every other elected official in Colorado. We hold Congresswoman. To a far lower standard. If we held her to the same standard as every other elected Republican and Democrat in Colorado, we would be here near nightly chronicling, the cruel false and bigoted things that Boebert says for attention and fundraising.

This is not about politics. Assuming politics is still about things like taxes, national security, healthcare jobs, and public lands. This is about us. As journalists recognizing that we'll hold a politician accountable if they say something vial once, but we won't do it if they do it every day. Our double standard is unfair to all the elected officials in Colorado, Republicans and Democrats who display human decency.

[00:03:26] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** That's about as accurate as you can get. Like, it's hard to talk about politics, when you have that type of dynamic going on.

[00:03:38] **MATT LECH:** Very concise and well put that.

[00:03:40] **SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Yeah. Yep. That type of thing is helpful because we're getting more and more of this. Now look, I think there's an argument from a political perspective as to, is, was this the most sort of like effective thing for Democrats to do in censuring Paul Gosar? You know, I don't know. I'm agnostic as to that. Um, on some level, I

think there is. I think it's important to say, like we shouldn't have lawmakers sort of joke around about killing each other. That's probably unhealthy long-term as a political matter. I also think that Democrats sometimes trying to isolate one bad actor as if, uh, you know, on the Republicans as if they're, um, dispositive, like they're, they're accepted.

Like when the Republicans focus on one Democrat. They're saying that because that Democrat is representative of all the Democrats, when Democrats focus on one Republican, they're saying that guy is out of balance because even the other Republicans are better than that.

## **General Stanley McChrystal Sees Parallels Between Jan. 6 and Nazi Germany - Amanpour and Company - Air Date 10-13-21**

[00:04:53] **WALTER ISAACSON - HOST AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** Let's talk about the January 6th insurrection, cause in your book, you talked so much about "The enemy is us," in some ways. We've got to figure out what to do in our Republic.

Tell me how communications and technology led to that, in the risks you see coming out of the January 6th uprising.

[00:05:09] **STANLEY MCCRYSTAL:** Yeah, we'll start first with communications.

We, I believe are a society that is ahead of ourselves, technologically, than we are in terms of maturity. Meaning, we have more technology than we are yet comfortable using.

So we can communicate faster than we can think. And we usually do.

We also have given opportunity for people who would leverage communication, because the cost of passing information is essentially zero now. And so there's no barrier to entry in how much communication you can pass.

So someone who wants to leverage that, to get people to do something, particularly people who are already misinformed, or are open to being misinformed, is pretty dangerous.

In the book we described Adolph Hitler. He literally just takes a series of very basic messages and hammers them. And the scary part is not that some fringe part of Germany followed Adolph Hitler, it's that parts... massive parts of the German population did. And until the day he died in 1945, he was still relatively popular.

And so the power of this should be daunting to us.

[00:06:18] **WALTER ISAACSON - HOST AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** Also, let me ask you, tell me about the parallels you see. Do you see a parallel with that?

[00:06:23] **STANLEY MCCRYSTAL:** Well, I do. Because, when people use the ability to inform an influence in a form of, I'll call it, political opportunism-- what they do is, they leverage up people who are relying upon pretty limited forms of in... input information, in some cases. You can get them to do things that... like the January 6th insurrection.

I don't believe that everybody who went to the Capitol was a bad person. I don't believe that they were racist. I don't believe that they were, uh, trying to do something they thought was wrong. And that's the part that should give us pause. Because they did something that, I view, as extraordinarily wrong and dangerous, but they did it believing that they were doing something that was right.

[00:07:08] **WALTER ISAACSON - HOST AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** So who was the blame for that?

[00:07:11] **STANLEY MCCRYSTAL:** I think it's the people who used, uh, the power. I think President Trump is at the top of that list, but he has an entire group of people around him, all of whom have seen some benefit for themselves, either politically or otherwise, to align themselves and use that.

And I get...

[00:07:27] **WALTER ISAACSON - HOST AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** What is the ongoing risk and vulnerability to our society coming out of January 6th'

[00:07:33] **STANLEY MCCRYSTAL:** Well, the fragmentation of our society. I think we come out of January 6th... It should... just like COVID-19 should have been the ultimate unifying factor, January 6th should have been a wake up call. It should've been like getting cold water dumped on us and saying, "Wait a minute, what are we doing? We need to stop. We need to sober up. We need to do whatever we have to do to come back to some kind of rational political discourse at the highest levels." People who are in the political sphere. And then the rest of us have need to get out of some of our tribal camps, and we start to interact.

And the danger is, I think, in the aftermath, we haven't done that.

[00:08:11] **WALTER ISAACSON - HOST AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** At the recent rally in Des Moines, former President Trump insisted that he won the 2020 election, and he won the whole lot of the state. Which is of course, incorrect.

Does that concern you, that it's almost like a coup, and what do you expect for 2024?

[00:08:32] **STANLEY MCCRYSTAL:** I think first, I'll answer it in two parts. First, Walter, I think we need to look at our processes, and we need to very transparently communicate that to the American people, so that the absolute facts, as best we can know them, are known to a number of officials, and then potentially to every American. So the truth is out there. The reality is out there.

Then the question is, "How do we treat people who just claim something that isn't so?" I think if a person propagates the Big Lie-- and we've had the Big Lie propagated for years, American tobacco refined the process for decades, and they did pretty well with it.

And so we know how dangerous it is. We've got to have the courage to call it out. We've got to have the courage to say "That's just not true."

And if you say things that are not true, you are, in all terms, a liar.

And our society can't celebrate that. They can't say, "Yeah, that person's a liar, but they're a good person, or they do good things. I can't connect the two."

You know, there's a lot of people say, "Don't pay attention to what a certain leader says, pay attention to what they do, because what they do is good. What they say doesn't count."

I think what they say matters. Because, if you can't pay attention to that, how do you know what they're going to do?

And so I think this is a societal norm issue, and it's one we're going to have to all take on.

[00:10:00] **WALTER ISAACSON - HOST AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** But it comes down to the question that, as a military person, you know very well, which is, "collaborationism," people who are tempted to collaborate. And you have a lot of Republican Senators, people, you know, and Congressmen from leader McCarthy to Senator Graham, who just seem to go along with it.

How dangerous are the people, including Republican leaders, who collaborate in this Big Lie?

[00:10:27] **STANLEY MCCRYSTAL:** Well, I think to the degree any of us is tempted to collaborate, we become, uh, dangerous, all, uh... even more so, because we give credibility to it.

I would, uh, give a quote that, I believe, was used by Senator Cruz some years ago. He said, 'History will not be kind to the people who held Mussolini's coat.'

And... and so I think history is going to be really hard on those of us who don't stand up to our values when we know what's actually right.

## **The Unmistakable Drumbeat of Authoritarianism - The BradCast w/ Brad Friedman - Air Date 11-16-21**

[00:11:02] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Georgia legislature passes gerrymandered State Senate map, giving GOP 59% of the seats in a state that Biden won by 49 and a half percent.

100% of the population growth, he notes, in the past decade in Georgia is from communities of color, but maps create no-- zero-- new majority-minority seats, and entrench white GOP power for the next decade.

And then this, today, from Ari Berman, again, breaking: Ohio Senate passes extreme gerrymandered congressional map, giving Republicans 80% of seats in

a state that Donald Trump won with just 53% of the vote. Ohio and Georgia, of course, are just the latest to take already gerrymandered maps from 2010 and make them even more extremely so, following the 2020 census.

Now that the Supreme Court has lifted the otherwise long-standing protection of the Voting Rights Act to prevent extreme partisan gerrymanders. You can't rely on the Voting Rights Act anymore to stop that. And it is just the latest example of why-- at least in lieu of reforming the Senate filibuster to allow passage of the Freedom to Vote Act, which bars partisan gerrymandering in all 50 states-- in lieu of that, I believe that Democratically controlled states, as much as I hate saying it, as much as I hate holding this position, I believe that those states controlled by Democrats should now do the same wherever they can, to at least try to counter this in-plain-sight takeover of at least the U S House, such that, as we prove as previously reported, even if America votes exactly as it did in 2020, when it cast seven more million votes for Joe Biden over the other guy, and 5 million more votes for Democratic candidates to the U S. House than Republican candidates to the U S House, even if America votes exactly that same way in 2022, guess what? Republicans will take majority control of the House, thanks to this extreme partisan gerrymandering now going on all over the country in states controlled by Republicans.

And with it, with that majority, that they will win in 2022 at this rate, they will be able to then steal the 2024 Presidential Election if they so choose, in a way that they were not prepared to do in 2020, but they are clearly preparing to do right now.

So please pay attention.

And to that end, I'm finding the drum beat of authoritarianism is, sort of, underscoring pretty much everything that I'm looking at with concern today. A drum beat which Republicans, for some reason, seem to have an easier time, uh, dancing to than the rest of us.

We ended yesterday's Broadcast following the, uh, signing of Joe Biden's landmark \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill, about which Desi Doyen will have a few more details later today for us, in her green news report.

[00:14:17] **DESI DOYEN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Yes.

[00:14:18] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** But, uh, we... we ended, uh, following that signing, on the death threats that the few Republicans in the House who voted for that bill have been receiving of late,



particularly since the authoritarian so-called Freedom Caucus in the House began calling for their fellow Republicans who voted for the bi-partisan bill to lose their seats on House committees.

And since Georgia's Marjorie Taylor Greene, for example, described the bill-- an Uncontroversial, by the way, uncontroversial and wildly popular bipartisan infrastructure bill, you know, to build roads and bridges, a bill supported by 19 Republican U. S. Senators, including Mitch McConnell and Lindsey Graham. She decided to describe that bill as "A communist takeover of America," before she then went on to publish the phone numbers of the 13 Republicans in the House who voted for it, resulting in folks like Michigan's Fred Upton, receiving death threats. Death threats over an infrastructure bill, for Christ's sake, that sounded, uh, some of those calls that sounded in... in part like this:

[00:15:31] **ARCHIVE CLIP:** Traitor. Piece of [expletive deleted]. Piece of trash. I hope you [expletive deleted] die. I hope your [expletive deleted] family dies. I hope everybody on your [expletive deleted] staff dies. You [expletive deleted] piece of [expletive deleted] TRAITOR!

[00:15:45] **DESI DOYEN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Over infrastructure.

[00:15:47] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Yes. Because Republican Fred Upton of Michigan voted to spend money to fix crumbling roads and collapsing bridges.

Appearing on CNN on Sunday, uh, Upton said, "It's a sad day," when he faces threats for a bi-partisan agreement on infrastructure, as some House Republicans have now turned against their own 13 colleagues who voted for that bi-partisan bill, which they paint as, "The pathway to socialism."

Now the Democrats have scored a legislative victory that the Trump administration failed to score for four years in office. I guess pathway to socialism is better than communist takeover of America, maybe? But give them time.

Republican Anthony Gonzalez of Ohio on Sunday also lamented the threats that he also received after both he and Upton broke ranks from former President Trump and their colleagues, with the votes that they cast in the past year, on both the infrastructure bill, and, if you think that was terrible, the votes they cast for Trump's second impeachment after he incited the January 6th riot at the U. S. Capitol to try and steal the 2020 election.



As a bi-partisan 57-43 majority in the U. S. Senate agreed that Trump was guilty of having done during his second impeachment trial.

Donald Trump has already endorsed a primary challenger for Fred Upton for his sins. Gonzalez, for his part, has decided not to run for reelection. He was asked during an interview on Sunday by Jake Tapper on CNN about receiving death threats after voting for Trump's impeachment earlier this year, and about Trump's attempt to steal the 2020 election, including yes, on January 6th:

[00:17:39] **JAKE TAPPER:** He came very close to overturning an election through various methods. How worried are you the next time he'll be better positioned, and he'll undermine democracy?

[00:17:50] **REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY GONZALES :** It looks to me, and I think any objective observer would come to this conclusion, that he has evaluated what went wrong on January 6th, why is it that he wasn't able to steal the election, who stood in his way.

Every single American institution is just run by people. And you need the right people to make the right decision in the most difficult times. He's going systematically through the country and trying to remove those people and install people who are going to do exactly what he wants them to do, who believe the big lie, who will go along with anything he says.

Um, and again, I think it's all pushing towards one of two outcomes, He either wins legitimately, which he may do. Um, or if he... if he loses again, he'll just try to steal it, but he'll try to steal it with his people in those positions.

And that's then the most difficult challenge for our country.

You ask yourself the question, do the institutions hold again? Do they hold with a different set of people in place? I hope so, but you can't guarantee it.

Um, the country, as much as I despise almost every policy of the Biden administration, and we could talk about that for, you know, six hours. Um, the country can survive a round of bad policy. The country can't survive torching the constitution. We have to hold fast to the constitution. That needs to be the bedrock upon which we build our party and our movement. Uh, we have to be a party of ideas. We have to be a party of truth. And the cold hard truth is Donald Trump led... led us into a ditch on January 6th.

The former president lied to us. He lied to every one of us. And in doing so he cost us the House, the Senate, and the White House.

I see, fundamentally, a person who shouldn't be able to hold office again because of what he did around January 6th. But I also see somebody who's an enormous political loser. And I don't know why anybody who wants to win elections going forward would follow that.

I simply, like... I don't get it ethically. I certainly don't get it politically. Neither of them make sense. If he's the nominee again in '24, I will do everything I personally can to make sure he doesn't win. Now, I'm not voting for Democrats, but whether that's, find a viable third party, or whether that's try to defeat him in primaries, whatever it is, um, that's going to be where I'll spend my time.

[00:20:16] **JAKE TAPPER:** Because you're worried about what he'll do to democracy?

[00:20:18] **REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY GONZALES :** Yeah. I don't trust him. January 6th was the line that can't be crossed. January 6th was an unconstitutional attempt, led by the president of the United States, to overturn an, uh, an American election and re-install himself in power illegitimately. That's fallen-nation territory. That's third world country territory.

My family left Cuba to avoid that fate. I will not let it happen here. Can I stop him? I have no idea, but I believe as a citizen of this country, who loves this country, and respects the constitution, that's my responsibility.

[00:20:50] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Congressman Anthony Gonzalez, Republican of Ohio, calling Donald Trump a political loser, saying he will do anything he can to prevent him from being elected, except of course, voting for a Democrat.

You know, one point, uh, "despise," congressman Gonzalez? You "despise" every one of Joe Biden's policies? How about, you "disagree" with them? How about you "might do things at different way?"

Yes, as much as I'm happy to hear Gonzalez speak the way he's speaking, uh, at least in regard to Donald Trump, Republican Congressman Anthony Gonzalez is also part of the problem that he now decries, that has now come back to bite him. That world that he lives in, where he doesn't disagree with the Democratic president's policies, he "despises" them.

But that's how authoritarianism works.

As Joni Mitchell might say, "You don't know what you got until it's gone."

## **The GOP's 'Rightwing Populism' Rebrand (Part II) - Messaging Wars in 'White America' - Citations Needed - Air Date 11-10-21**

[00:21:53] **ADAM JOHNSON - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** If you poll things like war or imperialism, they're not popular at all. And so as long as you sort of do the rhetoric of that, you can kind of get away with not having followed through. And a perfect example of this is Josh Hawley, the senator from Missouri, who during the Trump administration constantly said, I support Trump's withdrawal from Afghanistan. Early Biden years, Biden announced they were pulling out, and he criticized him for this. As Alex Shepherd, who wrote in the New Republic, his headline pretty much sums it up. Quote, "Josh Hawley was in favor of withdrawing from Afghanistan until Joe Biden did it. For a hot minute, the Missouri Senator, an insurrection advocate, was a critic of the forever war, but then changed." I would not use "hot minute" in a sub headline, but whatever. "Josh Hawley for months had boosted Trump's May 1st withdrawal deadline, tweeting in April, 2021 quote, 'President Biden should withdraw troops in Afghanistan on May 1st as the Trump administration planned, but better late than never. It's time for the forever war to end.'"

This is after Biden announced that they were going to pull out troops at the end of August. So Biden actually did pull out troops. And of course this was where things -- this goes to show you that it, then it reverts back to partisanship. So Tucker Carlson, Josh Hawley, all these people who claim they supported the withdrawal of Afghanistan when Trump did it, or sort of in theory, when Biden actually did it -- withdrew the military, obviously we still have drone strikes, but that's not what he cares about -- they revert back to their default state, which is a partisan hack, because they're fundamentally Republican messaging organs, and they couldn't praise the president for doing it, so what did they do? They did the process criticism. Where, oh shit, he actually did it. I can't believe it. Didn't see that coming. I guess now I have to reverse engineer to hate or oppose them cause they can't say anything positive about the president. Cause then that's not an option. So he actually did it wrong or he didn't do it racist enough. He was too woke to refugees. And so they go find these old things to pick on which politically is utterly useless.

This is why you can't really build a coalition with these people outside of maybe some explicit legislation, because rhetorically or at least from a PR standpoint or morale standpoint, they're always going to find some bullshit reason to throw you under the bus because you're a Democrat, even though had Trump pulled out with the exact same conditions and the exact same outcomes, they would have absolutely defended him because they're fundamentally just partisan hacks.

And so he said, when Biden finally pulled out, he said, quote, "Biden has now overseen the deadliest day for US troops in Afghanistan in over a decade. And the crisis grows worse by the hour." So they tried to create a sort of Bengazi scenario. And other supposedly people who supported the withdrawal, like Matt Gaetz and Tulsi Gabbert, who also claimed to support pulling the troops out of Afghanistan, did the same Bengazi routine as well, because of using a sort of thin process criticism.

And as we talked about in our news brief on Afghanistan, there was no way you are going to ever pull out of the war, which you lost, without there being some confusion, chaos and people dying. There was just no way that was going to happen. Now we can, again, I think there's some debate about whether or not you processed enough refugees, whether or not you give enough forewarning, but the whole thing was based, and has been for several years, was based on a house of cards. It was always going to fall.

And so it's not totally clear what the political utility of the supposed support for withdraw if there was no plausible scenario where there was going to be withdrawal where they were to support of it.

[00:24:58] **NIMA SHIRAZI - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** Tucker Carlson has done this a lot. You know, during the Trump years, he was allegedly in favor of pulling out of Afghanistan. But then of course, when Biden finally did earlier this year, Carlson dedicated countless hours of his Fox News show to criticizing Biden on flimsy process critiques as we've discussed. And of course, on the refugee issue, as you mentioned, that at not being adequately discriminatory.

[00:25:23] **ADAM JOHNSON - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** And one thing people like JD Vance always do is they always -- again, JD Vance jumped on this too. He tried to Bengazi it as well. They all did because they all read from the same talking points.

They constantly talk about needing to refocus on China. Which of course is not really an anti-imperialist or anti-war position. It's simply refocusing the largest

empire in the history of the world away from bombing Muslims, into building up hostilities and some kind of cold war, and presumably some proxy war with China, who are viewed as more meaningful threat or a new sexier threat from the right.

Don't get me wrong; they still want to keep our military bases in the middle east, and they still want to help support Israel carpet bomb Gaza. All that goes without saying. But maybe let's shift some focus away from Afghanistan to the Eastern part of China and Japan and Taiwan. So again, this supposed anti-war rhetoric has always coupled with -- and the reason we know that is because things like NDAA votes, the National Defense Authorization Act, where you basically vote for \$800 billion to a trillion dollars in military spending, people like Josh Hawley, supposedly anti-military Josh Hawley, support the bill. His major objection to the bill, Nima, was what? It was two things. It was new policies around inclusion of trans people and renaming military bases named after Confederate generals. This is what he was opposed to. And before that had always voted for NDAA's. So our supposed anti-war right, when it comes to actually funding the military, always votes yes.

[00:26:46] **NIMA SHIRAZI - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** Now the final trope that we want to discuss is this idea of the ever-renewed, same old, same old that we've been seeing from the John Bircher right. So like the repackaging of these tried and true right-wing tropes as something now new, this kind of new populism that is emerging. And we saw this, of course, via the astroturfing of the tea party patriots in 2009 and 2010, very early in the Obama administration.

[00:27:21] **ADAM JOHNSON - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** Yeah. Cuz here's the deal, right? The fundamental problem with right-wing ideological production and reproduction is that a lot of people don't want to feel like they're defending the big guy, the big corporation, like very few people, except for Alex P Keaton types, the people go and intern for Marco Rubio, those like Georgetown psychos who get internships at the Heritage Foundation and have pictures of Ronald Reagan on their wall growing up, you know, outside of those people, most, I feel like a lot of people sort of want to view themselves as being supportive of the little man.

[00:27:53] **NIMA SHIRAZI - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** Fighting the good fight.

[00:27:54] **ADAM JOHNSON - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** And one of the fundamental problems with American empire is the same for the Republican

party, which is how do you make the big, bad guys who are well-funded seemed like the underdogs? Just like, how do I write a TV show and make America the sole superpower of the world? How do I make them seem like the underdogs is one of the hardest parts about writing an action movie for the last 20 years or writing for 24 or writing the various Rambo sequels.

[00:28:15] **NIMA SHIRAZI - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** That's why aliens became so popular [chuckling].

[00:28:19] **ADAM JOHNSON - HOST, CITATIONS NEEDED:** How do you make the big guy seem like the little guy is the fundamental propaganda question they have to figure out.

We've talked about numerous ways to do that, including this kind of warped class language, a total ontological trick with respect to how we define elites, the sort of taking vague anger towards the media and channeling it into hatred for a very specific subset of media: MSNBC, NBC News, versus again, Fox News, right?

And the way they do that, as they kind of redo the same things over and over again. Now, there are twists and there are other more organic currents. But what we saw with the tea party, which we think is worth honing in on when talking about this kind of repackaging John Bircherism, because it was so obviously bullshit and astroturfed and also racially charged, as the New York Times would say -- I would say racist -- is they took this genuine outrage and anger after the financial collapse in 2008, which of course the recession in 2009, and this is largely a failure of liberals and the left so-called Democratic party to capture that anger. And they swooped in and they just did a warmed-over version of John Bircherism with the tea party -- largely funded by in many ways the Koch brothers, whose father Fred C Koch founded the John Bircher society in 1958, along with other right-wing millionaires, like the Bradley foundation or the Bradley family foundation that you've heard a lot about on the show, they fund a lot of the charter school stuff -- that these tropes and these images and this language and this rhetoric were just recycled from other astroturf, right wing, populous movements up to, and including many of the people who finance the rise of Ronald Reagan. And the way you do this is you make it seem like it's this spontaneous thing. And I want to say that in many ways, the tea party fed off of, and basically co-opted, much of the Ron Paul support in 2008, which as odious as I may find it to be, I think was probably a little bit more organic. Again, the anti-war stuff people latched on to, skepticism about the Fed people latched onto. These things are never entirely astroturfed.



But I do think that the degree to which the tea party movement was astroturfed by billionaire donors was continually downplayed and obscured by corporate media, for reasons we'll get into. But we think that with the latest iteration, that kind of Oren Cass, JD Vance, the Hudson Institute, the Claremont Institute, even the American Enterprise Institute, the way that these forces are trying to talk about this new right, this new pro-labor right, new populist right, I'm looking at myself and I'm like, this is the same shit we did 10 years ago the last time the Republican brand took a hit, right? Because the Republicans didn't do that well in 2020, obviously they lost the White House. They have been overrun by QAnon and Trump weirdos. Just as in 2008, they were sullied by Bush and his wars and the economic recession in his name. So there's a bunch of people in a white boarding session like, how do we sort of rebrand our party, which is all they're doing.

Now there are various currents, various interests. These things are never that binary. But that's basically why that what the tea party was, and why the tea party is a good thing to re-examine from that context, because you see the ways in which they took this genuine anger and confusion about the state of the economy and they swooped in and they took this mantle of quote unquote "populism" while Democrats sat there and twiddled their fucking thumbs.

## **Bannon Puts Out The Signal For Potential Violence - The Muckrake Political Podcast - Air Date 11-16-21**

[00:31:28] **JARED YATES SEXTON -HOST, THE MUCKRAKE POLITICAL PODCAST:** Steve Bannon turned himself over to the authorities has been found in contempt of Congress. He handed himself over to the FBI.

He is now out and free and has basically thrown down the gauntlet and says that he's going to make life hell for the Democrats for, uh, putting them in this situation.

[00:31:47] **NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE POLITICAL PODCAST:** Yeah, it's strange. Cause it really wasn't, uh, him surrendering, you know, there was no bail pay. There was no formal processing of that. So he was just kind of like, Hey, what's happening guys?

And then, you know, let's, let's do a press conference. Um, you know, it was funny because I noticed this listened to a very brief sexual, his press conference,



where he kept saying the phrase stand by. And um, apparently a lot of people notice this. I wasn't the only one that.

[00:32:14] **JARED YATES SEXTON -HOST, THE MUCKRAKE**

**POLITICAL PODCAST:** Yeah. And this has turned into, of course, if, if, if people might remember back during the presidential debates between Trump and Biden, uh, Trump was very specifically asked about the proud boys and paramilitary groups and in the right wing.

And he said very specifically, uh, standby and the proud boys and these other right-wing paramilitary groups, uh, they heard them loud. They knew exactly what Trump was saying. They started using standby as sort of a catch phrase. Obviously Bannon is doing that as well on one hand. And by the way, like immediately he got out and went on a livestream.

He went and podcasted, uh, has already basically said that this means more, which is his favorite type of thing. Um, this feels along with a lot of other things, like an escalate. Uh, it feels like Bannon is going to take full advantage of this. Obviously he gains power from being prosecuted. He gains power from having to face this thing.

Uh, and, and he's getting exactly what he wants. The right wing is getting exactly what they want with their desire and lust for martyrdom. Uh, it's the right thing. It's what should be happening, but it does feel like we're kind of waiting on another shoe to drop at this point.

[00:33:29] **NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE POLITICAL**

**PODCAST:** You know, um, he also directly references, uh, you know, Nancy Pelosi as a threat, uh, that he wants to go after these people, which so we'd expect to start seeing some sort of rat fucking going on with them, but he also referenced Hillary Clinton.

So this is what's interesting because these people are not really, you know, the brightest people. And is that a. That he is saying, you remember what happened to Hillary and what we did to her. We are now going to do that to Biden and Pelosi and whatever, you know, it doesn't take a huge stretch to, to imagine that what he's saying is like all the things that they made up about Hillary.

Um, from pizza gate and all the Russian interference as well, could easily be turned as a fire hose on to them. Um, which has probably already happened in the past as it is. And so this is an interesting tell, like, is he now sort of almost

confirming that they are, they've worked together with Russian and misinformation this whole time?

I don't know, but.

[00:34:26] **JARED YATES SEXTON -HOST, THE MUCKRAKE POLITICAL PODCAST:** Well, you know, we, we talked a couple of episodes ago. It was when the, uh, the realtor, the Maga real realtor went to January sex, obviously. And, and, and live-streamed, and, and used it as a way of advertising herpes. That's not who Bannon is. There are a lot of people in the right wing ecosystem who are, it's part of a grift right there.

And by the way, don't get me wrong. Bannon is grifting people. I mean, he is taken the, uh, an amazing amount of money from these people all along the way. Uh, Bannon is an actual ideologue. Bannon has contacts all around. He has worked extensively to build anti-democratic ties in every region of the world.

He has actually started one anti-democratic, uh, neo-fascist stick training school in multiple countries to the point where even right-wing countries have said, you know what? This is a bit too extreme for us. You need to go, this thing is going to get worse. This is exactly the type of thing that abandoned.

I mean, he, he didn't, he didn't defy the, the committee, you know, just happenstance. It wasn't something that he took lightly, but he wanted this fight. He wanted it to seem like he was going to war in order to marshal resources in order to radicalize people. Um, you're exactly right. I think which is there is going to be.

Some sort of escalation, whether or not it's misinformation, whether or not it's some sort of attack, whether or not it's some sort of a call to arms. It is almost a certainty at this point that something from this is probably going to. Uh, a switch is going to get flipped. Something somewhere is, is in motion at this point, because this is exactly what Bannon and all of his cronies, this, this is what they dreamed of.

[00:36:21] **NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE POLITICAL PODCAST:** Right. And I went by the way, take a misinformation campaign any day over inciting the proud boys to violence, which, you know, at this point, as it's growing as a movement, uh, could very well be a really severe thing where they will plant stuff. And again, they were emboldened, not scared of. Uh, January 6th, this was a, this was a test.

And, uh, it was very organized with weed. Now we keep finding out more and more information than we will, uh, about how the politicians were involved. And again, it was all the piece of the puzzle. They needed, uh, a insurrection of violence, you know, a tent on the, on the Capitol. To facilitate the delaying of the counting of votes so that they could then, you know, uh, convince, I guess Mike Pence to, you know, not accepted lecturer.

So anyway, the point being that like that, this is all part of a process and, you know, yeah. Bannon sounds like, you know, there'll be one thing he's like, strike me down. It'll be more powerful than you'd ever imagined. And this is sort of what he sounds like he's trying to do. And if he's not gonna accept being arrested as the thing, he will continue to be as active as you can, but this is going to be the rallying.

It it's, it's really concerning. I think the problem with the Democrats is they're treating this, like, you know, everyday politics, we're going to follow the exact letter of the law and do it. Everything we've always done in the past to deal with a completely new and other situation that does not apply to what we have had.

And I think that's my fear is that they're going to get screwed here, uh, and taken advantage of.

[00:37:46] **JARED YATES SEXTON -HOST, THE MUCKRAKE**

**POLITICAL PODCAST:** It was a no win situation for Merrick Garland and the Democrats, um, you know, on, on one hand, if Bannon was going to just, you know, basically throw up both middle fingers to the commission and the subpoena and they weren't going to do anything at that point, as Trump has shown us time and time again, if there are no consequences for your actions, well, I'm going to do whatever I want.

Not absolutely nothing will stand in my way. Bannon like a lot of really good chess players had multiple moves here on one hand, if he wasn't going to be brought to task, that was going to make him more powerful in a different way. And he'd be able to act with impunity, however he wanted in this case. Um, Um, I want to be very clear about this, cause we're going to get into some, some deep water here today.

Steve Bannon is a revolutionary that's. That's how he patterns himself. That's what he believes. He really, truly honestly believes this guy who, by the way, made a ton of money off of Seinfeld syndication. Money. I mean, that's, that's where a lot of Bannon's money comes from for those who don't know, he really fashions himself as some sort of a revolutionary figure.

In this case, revolutionary figures love the escalation. They love whenever a culture war gets hot and all of the ingredients are happening right now to turn this culture. Up a couple of notches and, and this was happening everywhere from revolutionaries, like Bannon, the ideologues on the far right who are, who were calling of course for Cesarism and the suspension of democracy who were writing memos.

We just found out by Eastman. I don't know if you saw this Eastman, didn't just write a memo that said how to try and overturn the election in Congress. He wrote a memo to Trump on how to use the military and, and how to basically bring the country to heel in a military coup well, we're going to talk more about that for those of you who tuned in to hear his talk about Michael Flynn.

Don't worry. We're going to talk about Michael Flynn in just a minute and how this whole thing plays into it. The Bannon absolutely welcomes this. And it was a no win situation for the Democrats. There was nothing they could do one way or another. There was going to be a problem that was sown from this.

And I think we said this last week, he had to be brought in. He had to, you had to go ahead and press charges against him and you had to hold them accountable. But you also have to understand that this is not, this isn't just political theater right now. You know what I mean? These aren't symbolic actions.

These are. These are steps right now that at any moment the ice could break through and that's, that's, that's what people at home need to understand, but that's, especially what politicians at this point need to understand is they're they're playing with live ammo right now. That's, that's where we are here.

## **What Rising Tide Of GosarLevel Threats Says About Health Of Democracy - All In w/ Chris Hayes - Air Date 11-17-21**

[00:40:36] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN :** Article One, Section Six of the US Constitution immunizes members of Congress for the things they say on the floor of the House, or Senate. Quote: "The Senators and Representatives... for any Speech or Debate in either House... shall not be questioned in any other Place." They cannot be questioned in court or by the president, for example. That's called the "speech and debate" clause. And the founders included the speech and debate clause because they recognized how important it is for

members of Congress to be able to speak freely, especially in arguments or in the course of legislative affairs and democratic conflict, speech and debate are at the center of what it means to be a member of Congress. It's what they do.

And sometimes it gets nasty, not just in the year 2021, not just in our time. Founders knew that. Things got very, very nasty between them all the time.

Now, more broadly outside of those congressional chambers, of course we, in constitutional law in American society, we've got a distinction between speech, which is rightly protected by the First Amendment, and then all kinds of actions, particularly violence, which of course are not.

There's a middle space between those two, between speech and action, between speech and violence. And that is speech that hints at violence, or flirts with it, or threatens or incites it. And there's a whole complex set of legal questions and jurisprudence about the nature of that speech.

But putting that aside, just talking as citizens, I think we can all agree that a civic culture in which prominent mainstream politicians are constantly engaging in that kind of speech is not a healthy one.

A culture where prominent political leaders are constantly fantasizing about the use of violence against their political enemies, or sharing cartoon versions of violence against their foes, not great for American democracy.

And that was the subject of debate on the House floor today. Members of the House took up the question of whether to censure Republican Paul Gosar of Arizona for posting a video that showed a Photoshop animation of him killing his Democratic colleague, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and attacking President Joe Biden.

During the debate before that resolution passed, stripping Gosar as well of his committee assignments, the subject of that anime film that was posted, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from New York stood up to lay out the broader case of just how dangerous this all is.

[00:43:05] **REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDRA OCASIO-CORTEZ:** It is a sad day in which a member who leads a political party in the United States of America cannot bring themselves to say that issuing a depiction of murdering a member of Congress is wrong. And instead decides to venture off into a tangent about gas prices and inflation. What is so hard? What is so hard about saying that this is wrong? Our work here matters. Our example matters. There is

meaning in our service. And as leaders in this country, when we incite violence with depictions against our colleagues that trickles down into violence in this country. And that is where we must draw the line independent of party, identity, or belief.

[00:44:14] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN :** Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was not alone. Other members also rose to speak about the increasing threats they have faced recently.

[00:44:23] **REPRESENTATIVE JACKIE SPEIER:** I am a victim of violence. I know what it's like. I also was in the gallery clamoring for life when the shots rang out in the Speaker's lobby. Violence against women in politics is a global phenomenon. A 2016 survey by the Inter-Parliamentary Union found that 82% of woman parliamentarians have experienced psychological violence and 44% have received threats of death, rape, beatings, or abduction.

The intent of these online threats against women is clear: Silence them. Strip them of their power. And discourage them from running for office.

[00:45:11] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN :** Congresswoman Jackie Speier of California is also the sponsor of the resolution to censure Paul Gosar. She'll be joining me alongside the co-sponsor of the resolution, congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas in just a bit. But threats and violence are, as best we can tell, becoming more commonplace in politics. In a recent New York Times piece, Debbie Dingell, a Democrat from Michigan, said she was threatened by men with assault weapons outside her home last year after she was denounced by Tucker Carlson on his Fox News show. She also shared a portion of a voicemail, one of hundreds of threats she's received saying, quote, "They ought to try you for treason. I hope your family dies in front of you. I pray to God that if you got any children, they die in your face." Earlier this year, the Capitol police, backed up with data what has seemed to be anecdotally the case, which is that there has been a 107% increase, a doubling, in the threats against members year over year, compared to 2020, a doubling.

And of course threats, people leaving voicemails, showing up outside your home, showing up with guns in the Michigan state house, as they did last year, quite famously, it's not all abstract. I mean, now it comes in the aftermath of January 6th. The day that Paul Gosar sent this tweet saying Joe Biden should concede and threatening, "Don't make me come over there" with a picture of the mob. And of course that was the day that thousands of rioters descended on the Capitol, both threatening violence against members, and even then vice president Mike Pence, and also engaging in violence against police officers.



They brought a noose they displayed on a gallows and they chanted "Hang Mike Pence." Not, you know, as a joke, as far as we know.

The threat of violence was everywhere that day. What do you think is the semantic purpose of the construction of a gallows outside a place?

Just listen to this clip, the mob, stalking the halls looking for speaker Nancy Pelosi.

[00:47:18] **ARCHIVE CLIP:** Where are you Nancy? We're looking for you! Nancy, oh Nancy. Nancy.

[00:47:19] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN :** What do you think that would have done if they found her? What's implied in that "Nancy," you think they want to meet her?

Over the past several years, this threat of violence has seeped into political rhetoric on the right much more broadly. There was this -- this is what I'm picking, essentially at random, this menacing statement from Congressman Matt Gaetz of Florida, who was just angry about social networks, allegedly censoring conservatives earlier this year.

[00:47:43] **REPRESENTATIVE MATT GAETZ:** Silicon Valley can't cancel this movement or this rally or this congressmen. [cheers] We have a Second Amendment in this country, and I think we have an obligation to use it.

[00:48:03] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN :** What does that mean? What's it mean, you have a Second Amendment? You're going to shoot Twitter?

Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia. She's -- this is sort of par for the course for her, made all sorts of disturbing threats like there was this image that she posted on Facebook last year, posing with a big gun next to pictures of Democrats Ilhan Omar, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Rashida Talib captioned "Squad's worst nightmare." This, that kind of iconography, the conservative politician with the big gun. That's everywhere.

I mean, you can pull up primary Republican ads at random right now and the flirtation with the endorsements of political violence is increasingly mainstream among conservative Republicans. And it's not good. And my thinking about that, aside from common sense, is informed by a book I read about the period leading up to the civil war. It's by historian Joanne Freeman. It's an incredible book and she documents this period. It's called *The Field of Blood* and in it,



painstakingly, it took her about 10 years to write I think, she tracks how often debates in Congress about slavery became heated and then past heated, how often there were threats, explicit threats of duels and violence and even actual violence. The most famous of course, the caning of Senator Charles Sumner, which took place in the Senate chamber in 1856 after he criticized slaveholders.

But even before that caning and amidst that time, the specter of violence loomed. The rhetoric of it. And all of that represented the breakdown in the democratic culture of the nation as it moved towards a cataclysm of war on behalf of the slavers.

We're in a very different place right now. Very different place. Thankfully. But the lesson there is important. There is every reason in the world to take this stuff seriously and to be alarmed by it. Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez is right. It's wrong. It's wrong. We should be concerned about what it means, in terms of the safety members of Congress, sure, the nature of the modern Republican party. But what it means for the very health of American democracy at this moment.

## **“Red Flags Everywhere:” Why Did the FBI Dismiss Jan. 6 Warnings? - Amanpour and Company - Air Date 11-10-21**

[00:50:09] **MICHEL MARTIN -HOST, AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:**

You write, "While the public may have been surprised by what happened on January 6th, the makings of the insurrection had been spotted at every level. From one side of the country to the other, the red flags were everywhere."

What were some of those red flags?

[00:50:24] **AARON DAVIS:** We were able to document that it wasn't just uh, random tipsters calling into the FBI. There was a network of former national security officials tied in with researchers and academics who had been studying online extremism, and they were feeding information directly to, uh, to prosecutors, to the FBI, to DC officials.

We found that confidential informants that the FBI had tied directly into militias, had been monitoring them for years, we're also saying, "This is different," and sending them alerts of what they were saying.

Um, social media companies, even Parler, which had gotten a pretty bad reputation for, uh, hosting a platform where white supremacists and neo-Nazis would gather, far-right extremists would talk about their plans; even Parler sent in 50 warnings to the FBI in the days leading up to January 6th, uh, in what they believe were clear examples of criminal behavior.

We know that, in a broader sense, social media companies and Silicon Valley were sending dozens of such reports to, uh, what's called a "Fusion Center" in California, and that's, uh, one of the, uh, post 9/11 kind of construct that was built around the country.

So, we can go through the list, but there are lots of ways that warnings were coming into authorities. And we started at the next question, our reporting was, "What did they do with all of these warnings?"

[00:51:46] **MICHEL MARTIN -HOST, AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** There is this argument that, "I just got caught up in it!" Like, a number of the people who've been arrested, a number of the people who were detained, or who have been locked up, "I just got caught up in it. I mean, it was just, it was just a spontaneous thing that happened in the crowd!"

What you're saying is, "That is not true." Certain people always intended to mount some sort of a violent attack. Is that accurate?

[00:52:09] **AARON DAVIS:** There were certainly elements within the crowd of people who showed up on January 6th who were talking about very explicit, violent acts that they wanted to conduct, weeks ahead of January 6th. And you can almost demarcate the time leading up to January 6th as "Pre- December 19th" and "Post- December 19th."

December 19th is when President Trump tweets, "It's almost statistically impossible that I lost this election. There's going to be a massive protest in DC on January 6th. Be there, will be wild."

And there was a clear and immediate response by president Trump's followers, and those on the extreme far right, who had already been inclined to violence, began plotting a very specific, uh, plans for, "Here's where we're going to meet. Here's what time we're going to leave the DC. Who is bringing their guns? Where are we going to store guns, when we get there? Should we keep them across the bridge in Virginia so that they don't get confiscated when we get there?"

Those kinds of discussions are going on beginning, basically, on the night of December 19th and December 20.

[00:53:10] **MICHEL MARTIN -HOST, AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** A lot of sources of intelligence, credible sources of intelligence, were telling the FBI this. In fact, one of the people who you write about, who you start the series with, is the head of the District of Columbia's Home-- Homeland Security Office, was basically begging the FBI to pay attention to this. And some of the FBI's own informants were.

So what are the FBI do with all that? What happened to all that intelligence?

[00:53:33] **AARON DAVIS:** We were able to get a hold of internal FBI documents that document two tips that came into the FBI, one on December 19th, one on December 20th. And those were, again. Talking about this idea.

But it came with a little bit more specificity. They specifically were talking about, "We want to go to DC. We want to overrun police. We want to take lawmakers. And we want to hold them, and put them on public trial for their, uh, messing with the election, and Donald Trump's, uh, version of events."

The FBI had that warning, had another one follow-up that night.

The FBI took those two warnings, ran those posters through their internal databases of concerning posts, and previous messages that they've looked at, found that there was no evidence of prior criminal, or... or other things that might immediately trigger an investigation. And they closed that case within 42 hours.

The tip came in on a Saturday afternoon. By Monday morning, they said "There's nothing to see here."

And I think a lot of the law enforcement agencies in the DC area took their cues from the FBI, uh, putting the green tag on these internal warnings, saying, that, "This is the closed case. No need for further investigation."

[00:54:48] **MICHEL MARTIN -HOST, AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** Why is that? I mean... forgive me, I'll just say it... I mean, I think the FBI has taken a very different position with Muslims. There are stories about, you know, activists in numerous cities, where social justice, uh, protests have taken place being questioned.

Um, you know, I'm sorry, one can't help but notice the difference in response. And why... why is that? And what does the FBI have to say about that?

[00:55:12] **AARON DAVIS:** Well, you're exactly right. We went back and forth with the FBI a few times on this. One of their final set responses to us... they used a term we hadn't heard before in discussing these pro-Trump protestors, called that... the actions that they were seeking, that they were discussing about January 6th, were "aspirational." Meaning that they were "aspirational acts," that they hadn't had enough specifics to actually show that they were going to carry out.

Now, they're... to your point, there are a lot of, uh, Muslims in the country, uh, who hear the word "aspirational" and think very differently about that. There are people who are serving prison terms right now, federal prison terms, for being convicted for "aspirational" plotting of a terrorist acts in the days and years after September 11th.

You know, one thing I was struck by in all of this was that, you know, the... the FBI, DC police, capitol police... it wasn't like this was the first time this ever happened. Uh, this... you know, many pro-Trump protestors came to DC twice, between when the election happened on November 3rd, and on January six: first on November 14th for a MAGA rally for President Trump; and then again on December 12th.

And each of those times, we were able to document that the things that they were talking about doing online in the days leading up to those two earlier protests, they came, and did as advertised. And what... and before December 12th, they said, "We're going to bring 700 Proud Boys, and we're going to go after Antifa."

Well, the after-action report from the DC police pegs it at about 750 Proud Boys were in DC that night. And there were stabbings, and arrests, and DC police officers who were... were assaulted.

Um, so to... to say that it was aspirational, when you've got these two examples of it already happening, to a lesser degree, but there clearly have been violence by this group, by elements within this group.

[00:56:59] **MICHEL MARTIN -HOST, AMANPOUR AND COMPANY:** So, Aaron, I'm just going to put the question to you: Is it because these are white men, mainly white men, that they did not take it seriously?

[00:57:05] **AARON DAVIS:** The Bureau pushes back very hard on this idea, that we didn't... we treated them somehow differently. Uh, you can only have to look as far as some of the warnings that... and how they moved within the FBI, even the night before January 6th... if you remember, there's this one that comes in from the Norfolk field office, and it says, you know, here, "The MAGA Calvary is going to ride... Is riding tonight to DC." And same kind of thing: they're going to meet; they're going to go after the Capitol, the Capitol itself; the Congress is the target.

And they bend over backwards in this alert that comes in from the FBI field office in Norfolk, saying, "This is all just First Amendment protected speech. We think there's really nothing we can do here."

And that was used over and over again, uh, with these... uh, characterizing these internal, uh, warnings that were passed around about January 6th.

To boil it down... and yes, there clearly was an element within FBI that could not believe that President Trump's supporters, that a lot of middle-aged white men would do what they did on January 6th, to physically attack the police, uh, to go in, um, and, and try to take control of the government.

## **Sen. Kennedy's "Comrade" Stunt Proves Republicans Are HUGE Liars - The Rational National - Air Date 11-19-21**

[00:58:17] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** I don't know whether to call you professor or comrade.

[00:58:23] **DAVID DOLE - HOST, THE RATIONAL NATIONAL:** If you are ever looking for a video to show people just how blatantly dishonest Republican lawmakers are, this is the one to do it. As Republican Senator John Kennedy made a complete fool of himself while attempting to hammer Biden's pick for bank regulator by bringing up the fact that she joined, or was a part of, the Young Communists growing up.

Now to some that may sound scary. Oh, she was a part of the Young Communists? She grew up in Soviet Kazakhstan where it was essentially required.

Quickly just to break down Saule Omarova's timeline here or her background, this is the pick, Biden's pick for bank regulator. So she grew up in Soviet Kazakhstan, is now a law professor at Cornell University, is a well-known scholar of financial regulation, and is Biden's pick to head the Office of Comptroller of the Currency, the OCC, which is responsible for regulating the banking industry.

Now, let me get to the first clip here where this questioning starts.

[00:59:15] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** You used to be a member of a group called the Young Communists. Didn't you

[00:59:25] **SAULE OMAROVA:** Senator, are you referring to my membership in the youth communist organization while I was growing up in the Soviet Union?

[00:59:34] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** I don't know. I just, I wanted to ask you that question.

[00:59:38] **SAULE OMAROVA:** Well, Senator, I --

[00:59:39] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** There was a group called the Young Communists and you were a member. Is that right?

[00:59:46] **SAULE OMAROVA:** I'm not exactly sure which group you're referring to.

[00:59:49] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Well, the formal name of it is the Leninist Communist Young Union of the Russian Federation. And it's also known as the Leninist Komsomol of the Russian Federation. And it's commonly referred to as the Young Communists. Were you a member?

[01:00:10] **SAULE OMAROVA:** Senator I was born and grew up in the Soviet Union.

[01:00:14] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Yes ma'am. But were you a member of that org?

[01:00:16] **SAULE OMAROVA:** Everybody in that country was a member of the Komsomol which was the communist youth organization, because that was -

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[01:00:24] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** You were a member?

[01:00:25] **SAULE OMAROVA:** That was a part of normal progress in school.

[01:00:29] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Did you, have you resigned from the Young Communists?

[01:00:35] **SAULE OMAROVA:** You grow out of it with age automatically.

[01:00:39] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Did you, did you, did you send them a letter though resigning?

[01:00:45] **SAULE OMAROVA:** Senator, this was many, many years ago. As far as I remember how the Soviet union worked was at certain age, you automatically stop being a member of that organization.

[01:00:56] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Could you look at your records and see if you can find a copy of --

[01:00:59] **SENATOR SHERROD BROWN:** Senator Kennedy I don't, I don't interrupt. I almost never interrupt these, but.

[01:01:02] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Well you always interrupt me Mr. Chairman.

[01:01:04] **SENATOR SHERROD BROWN:** Actually I don't, not nearly as many times as I'd like to. She renounced her Soviet citizenship.

[01:01:10] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** Well I understand that.

[01:01:12] **DAVID DOLE - HOST, THE RATIONAL NATIONAL:** Man, this is so dishonest. Even after Omarova explains that she grew up in Kazakhstan, Soviet Kazakhstan, and that's what you had to do growing up there. He still plays dumb and it's like, oh, so you joined the Young Communists? Do you have your resignation letter? Resignation letter? It's like, do you have a resignation letter from high school? It's such a stupid line of questioning here. But he understands and it's going to become even more clear in the second clip and the third clip that he knows he's being dishonest, but he understands that his voters are dumb. Republican voters are largely not all that well-educated. So they don't know about any of this. And look, a lot of people don't know about the Young Communists, that's fine. But this Senator clearly does. And he's misleading the public about what this nominee is all about.



Now, a little more here on the Young Communists. So this is from the Washington Post. It's an article actually from 1991. So they write here: "In the early years after its founding many joined willingly, hoping to further the aims of the October revolution and eventually to join the communist party. But more recently, the major incentive for joining Komsomol was fear. Those who stayed away often were denied spots at good schools and universities and thus suffered in their careers. So people joined, sat through tedious political propaganda meetings, helped with the harvest as part of a Komsomol student brigade. And when done with school, dropped out."

And to make it even more obvious about how common this was at the time, "Komsomol membership reached a maximum of about 40 million," 40 million children, "in the 1970s and early eighties. In Soviet society, its members were frequently favored over non-members in matters of employment and scholarships."

All right, let's get to the second clip now where it's going to become even more clear that Kennedy is not simply ignorant, but he is being dishonest.

[01:02:56] **SENATOR JOHN KENNEDY:** I don't mean any disrespect, I don't know whether it'll call you professor or comrade.

[01:03:02] **UNKNOWN SPEAKER:** Oh my goodness.

[01:03:03] **SAULE OMAROVA:** Senator I'm not a communist. I do not subscribe to that ideology. I could not choose where I was born. I did not, I do not remember joining any Facebook group that subscribes to that ideology. I would never knowingly joined any such group. There is no record of me ever actually participating in any Marxist or communist discussions of any kind.

My family suffered under the communist regime. I grew up without knowing half of my family. My grandmother herself escaped death twice under the Stalin regime. This is what seared in my mind. That's who I am. I remember that history, I came to this country. I'm proud to be an American, and this is why I'm here today, Senator. I'm here today because I'm ready for public service.

[01:04:03] **DAVID DOLE - HOST, THE RATIONAL NATIONAL:** This entire thing is a show because he understands his base. The Republican base is not going to look into this. They don't even care about the facts. They just see a Biden pick who was part of the Young Communists. That's enough for them. This is a crazy far left communist pick. I can't believe Biden picked this person. Look, she's a communist. It's just, it's all dishonesty. And it shows you just how

they use fear to mislead people. And they do this on a consistent basis. And they do it while acting. A lot of it is just acting. These people know better. Kennedy knows better. But he's just acting through this entire thing.

Now a little more on why Republicans historically would like someone like this. So this from MSNBC: "While Kennedy and others insinuate that she's the reincarnation of Vladimir Lenin himself, Omarova's life story is one that would have made for ideal anti-Soviet propaganda. Quote, 'My grandmother was orphaned because Stalin sent her entire family to Siberia and they died there,' she told the Financial Times. Her family was destroyed because they were educated Kazakhs who didn't join the party."

Again, normally this is someone that Republicans would like, but it doesn't matter, because it's a Democratic pick. It's a Biden pick. So it must be terrible. She must be a communist. It's all disgusting.

## Aging and Conservatism - Quai from North Carolina

[01:05:15] **VOICEMAILER: QUAI FROM NORTH CAROLINA:** Hi, Jay!, this is Quai from North Carolina. I was just thinking about the question you raised about the tendency of people when they get older to become more conservative. And I wanted to give this some thought, cause I'm the opposite.

To give you some context, I'm 56 years old. And I started out, actually when I was in high school, I was a Christian conservative. Now I'm neither. I am a no longer Christian and I'm actually becoming more and more progressive as I age.

So I started thinking about my peers in my age group and older that are my friends. And what are the, some of the common features that lean people towards conservatism. And I think the first thing that probably everybody thinks of is fear of loss. Which is that, you know, as you age and get closer to finding your mortality, you think about the things that you have gained in life. And when you see change and people talking about change, it does become more scary to certain folks. And they are reluctant to embrace change, particularly when you're talking about, as they get older, they acquire more wealth sometimes. And people talk about re distribution of wealth. That idea is scary to them.

Spirituality and mortality. I think about some of my friends that, as they get older, they also engage in more spiritual practices. Some lean more into

Christianity, some among them that do other paths like general spirituality, paganism, Buddhism, that kind of thing.

They do this thing that I call "changing the world" -- however they might imagine it -- through peaceful practices that is prayer, mindfulness, meditation, that kind of thing. I think this happens as they see themselves approaching their mortality and they feel less effective at the ability to change or effect change in the world. And so they can convince themselves that change is possible by meditation or other practices like that -- prayer and so forth.

And the other thing that I thought of is toughness psychology. And when I think about that, I'm thinking in terms of, if you been through life, you've been through a lot of different experiences and you've gone through some hard times and you've made your way through, it builds a kind of strength or toughness within you. And when you see the younger people coming along talking about more different kinds of respect and more different kinds of empathy and consideration and compassion -- you know, if you lean liberal or progressive, that actually sounds good to you. But at the same time, you have a tendency to view it from a lens of, Hey, I didn't have this kind of consideration when I was coming up and I'm stronger and tougher because of it. And so why don't these young people sort of grow a spine and stand up to any kind of name calling, it'll make you stronger, that kind of thing. And this is where I think some of the contradictory- type terms come up, like black conservative, gay, lesbian, conservative. It's rare, but it happens. And I think part of it has to do with that toughness and survival.

And of course, Jay!, you mentioned the wave theory, which is that if I'm reached a point where I was liberal or progressive at a certain point in time, I might've been ahead of the curve or ahead of the wave. And then at some point I was right there with the wave and, you know, had all these points of views. But if I don't keep up and keep learning, then the waves going to pass me. And when it passes us, when I say "us," I mean people as they age, there's a tendency to feel a little bit resentful or a little bit like hey, wait, things are going too fast. So, they got to a point where they feel like they were right and that's where they should settle. But I don't obviously feel that way.

And the other thing I mentioned that I thought of was having put in the work, which I think about the trouble that Bernie Sanders ran into, I think early in his campaign, when he was interrupted I think by, I'm not sure if it was Black Lives protestors, or the Movement for Black Lives interrupted his speech that he was giving. And although he is progressive or, you know, relatively speaking, he had what I think is a white fragility moment where he just wanted them to shut

up. Let him speak and be polite and so forth. Hopefully he's learned something since then but. He was one of those that pointed to having marched in the sixties with Dr. King. So he put in the work. And so now it's time for everyone else to focus on what he was.

And so some of us, as we aged, we feel like we've put in our work. And why should we have to work anymore? And shouldn't be time to start looking at retiring.

And then the final thing I think is realism versus crushed dreams. Which is where, as you go through life and you have these dreams of doing certain things career-wise or artistically, wealth-wise for some people, and you realize how hard life is to get through, then -- and maybe this goes back to the toughness thing -- you realized that many of your dreams have gotten crushed or have become impossible to achieve. And looking at young people and their ideals about how they want idealistically the country to be, or the world to be, it feels like they don't know, that they don't understand what realism is, and that their dreams are going to get crushed. And there's almost an instinct to want to protect them by saying, Hey, slow your roll. You're not going to achieve what you think you're going to achieve. And so that can stand in the way or can be an obstacle to actually achieving those dreams by people trying to be what I call too realistic.

I say, let people support people as they try to change and make things more ideal. And if you can do that, then at least you're not standing in the way. And if they're gonna have their great dreams crushed, then you know that I hate that could happen, but it does happen. And it will make for stronger characters.

So for me, all of these things haven't been so much of an issue for me because I realized that my core thing that's been the case ever since I was a teenager, is that I value truth over being correct. That is to say, if I have a position and that position is challenged and I will think about it. And considered a logic of it, and consider the evidence. And if I realize I was wrong, I say I was wrong. And it's painful and it can be embarrassing, but I'd much rather have truth over being correct.

So, thanks, Jay! and crew. Stay awesome.

## **Final comments on toughness philosophy vs the ever-raising baseline**

[01:12:33] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as a VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 202 999 3991, or write me a message [tojay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:tojay@bestoftheleft.com).

So thanks, of course, to Quai for calling in and leaving his series of thoughts on age and political affiliation. I really don't have anything to disagree with, with what Quai said, so I just have a couple of things to, sort of, tack on top.

The first is, that I realized after that previous conversation on the... on the subject, that I could have summed it up better than I did if I had chosen the right words.

And I think what I was going for is, the difference between "relative" and "absolute" conservatism and liberalism.

And so it seems that absolute conservatism goes down over time, or you could say absolute liberalism goes up over time; but relative conservatism goes up, whereas relative liberalism goes down.

That is, I think, the fastest way to describe the difference between, even though we are all moving towards liberalism, society moves faster relative to us. Generally speaking. Quai, as he described, might be an outlier, because he moved very quickly from his old life and old ways of thinking, and has moved very far to the left from where he started. But, I mean, he said he was in his fifties, or something. He's got a long way to go. We're going to see over the next, you know, 20, 30 years, if... if that wave of mainstream societal thought catches up with him or not. We'll see.

The second thing that I wanted to jump off from, was his discussion of "toughness psychology." and I thought that was definitely an interesting insight, and I can think of examples of people in my own life, or stories I've heard, about people, sort of, appreciating the benefits that they got from society, or even appreciating the progress that was made in their younger years, and then starting to think, "Ah, I don't know that we need more progress. We did such a good job before, and overcoming some obstacles is good. So, you know, I had to fight for it. Maybe the younger people should have to fight for it, too, whatever it is in any given scenario."

And to that, I would say, I don't really think that we need to worry about there not being enough obstacles for people to overcome. Humans are great at

struggling, at fighting amongst themselves, at creating obstacles where really none need to be. And I just don't see life getting too easy for people anytime soon.

Now, the exception to this might be, the passing along of excessive wealth, generation to generation. You know, there are a lot more examples of the children of great wealth being pretty messed up by it than wealthy children ending up perfectly well-adjusted.

But for general life difficulties that need to be overcome, you know, we're not running short on those any time soon. And taking that thinking to its logical conclusion really starts to take us backward.

You know, people who grew up on a farm recently might think, "Well, you know, city life makes you soft." But people who use an old tractor might think that using a modern GPS-controlled mega tractor makes you soft. Then there's the people who have had to use an ox-pulled plow, who might think that using any kind of tractor makes you soft. You see?

So, I would always be very wary of that "Things Are Getting Too Easy For The Next Generation" line of thinking. Because, what progressives would consider making the world better, things like reducing discrimination, or universal health care and safety net programs, and universal college, and just generally making life easier for people by removing barriers, is basically a way of raising the baseline for everyone.

So, whereas I would warn against individual wealth transfers to kids, I actually fully endorse a, sort of, societal wealth transfer, from each generation to the ones that follow, in the form of everything I just mentioned: universal programs, and cultural changes that generally make life easier, so as to continually raise the baseline one generation to the next, from which people get to start out in life.

So, if you can understand the instinct to want to give your own child every possible advantage in life, then it should be a very small leap of logic to understand the benefits of organizing society in such a way as to give entire future generations every advantage in life.

And from there, it's an even smaller leap in logic to think that, if giving every advantage possible to the next generation is good for the members of one country, then it would likely be good for the members of all countries. So we

don't get confused into thinking that this is a advantage over other people in the world, I'm talking about getting advantages over previous generations.

You know, the... the world community of humans can be crabs in a bucket, always fighting with each other, and pulling each other down; or we can be collectively, you know, building humanity together, with the goal of perpetually raising that baseline for everyone to enjoy the benefits of.

As always, keep the comments coming in at 202 999 3991, or by emailing me to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com).

That's going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show, and participation in our bonus episodes.

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And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support) through our Patreon, or from right inside the Apple podcasts app. Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good bonus episodes, in addition to there being extra content and no ads in all of our regular episodes, all through your regular podcast player.

So, coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [bestoftheleft.Com](https://bestoftheleft.Com).

## Summary 11-24-21

[01:19:35] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with The Majority Report, highlighting how viral politicians are held to a lower standard than the rest I'm important company spoke with general Stanley McChrystal about the legacy of Trump supporters.



The broadcast explained the consequences of gerrymandering and the plans to steal the 20 24 11.

Citations needed to discuss the attempted rebranding of populism by the GOP and their process. Critiques of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the buck rake political podcast explained the revolutionary tactics of Steve Bannon and all in with Chris Hayes looked at the trajectory of rising political violence.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips, including Amanpour and company discussing the numerous red flags that should have signaled trouble. Leading up to January 6th and the rational national highlighting, a recent example of bad faith GOP red bay. To hear that and have all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your new members.

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