

## **The Fumes of an Empire: UK Chaos and the U.S. Midterms**

### **213 Final Transcript**

Gabriel: I had always been convinced that this country would absolutely lose its s\*\*\*. Can I say that? Am I allowed to say that?

Jon: You can say whatever you want. Absolutely.

Gabriel: I was convinced that this country was gonna lose its f\*\*\*ing s\*\*\*.

Jon: Whoa. Hey. Slow down there.

Robby: Okay Gabriel, take it easy please.

[GABRIEL LAUGHS]

Tocarra: It sounded really intense.

Jon: This isn't the BBC. [LAUGHTER]

Robby: We have standards here.

[INTRO MUSIC]

Hello everybody, my name is Jon Stewart, and welcome to the podcast of The Problem. The show is back on Apple TV+, I think we're, I don't know if we're three episodes in or four episodes in. Uh, I don't watch it. I don't care for it. I find it very pedantic. Uh, but it's on right now. And then we got a little something up on YouTube there. We got the, uh, Attorney General of Arizona Mark Bernovich little conversation we had for our election show, and that is, I believe it's up online now. You can watch it and you can comment about it and how pleased you are that the investigations into the 2020 election are ongoing and that they are going to run it to ground. How far into ground they're going to run it, I'm not sure. Uh, on the podcast today, we're very delighted. We've got our writers Robby Slowik and Tocarra Mallard. Hello.

Robby: Hey Jon.

Tocarra: Hello.

Jon: Very nice to see you. And I announce this right now. Our special guest star is an old friend, Gabriel Gatehouse who is joining us from a foreign land, a land of great tumult, a land that we once violently separated from: England. Gabriel, as you know was uh, on the program discussing his journalism on the QAnon on phenomenon. He was the one who

did, uh, *The Coming Storm*. It was that great QAnon, podcast and, and sort of how it started in America and where it's gonna be going. But England is going through the throws of just chaotic six weeks of losing your monarchy, your democracy, your prime ministers, your finance ministers, your ex-checkers. Your...I mean, it's amazing what is happening overseas and two weeks before our midterm elections, it's hard not to believe that we're gonna be holding on by just a fingernail when all this is said and done. When you watch other countries and in similar positions in what they're going through.

Robby: I feel like normally we are in the lead of the uh—

Tocarra: Mm-hmm.

Robby: -of the falling apart and then other countries are following our model. So this is nice to be back in the “England's in the driver's seat” a little bit here.

Tocarra: Silver lining though.

Jon: Mm-hmm?

Tocarra: Season eight of *The Crown* is gonna [JON LAUGHS] be so good. Who will play Liz Truss? I'm invested.

Jon: Oh. I actually, I believe Liz Truss will play Liz Truss [TOCARRA LAUGHS].

Robby: Yeah. There's a good chance.

Robby: Okay. So Liz Truss, who was the UK Prime Minister, Head of the Conservative Party, who just had to resign after, I think 44 days in office.

Tocarra: She's got the time.

Jon: Yeah, she certainly, she certainly got the time. I kind of like the idea of just everybody gets six weeks. Just let's see what you can do in six weeks. Throw your best cuz you know what it would do? It means you gotta throw your best f\*\*\*ing shot.

Robby: You gotta really bring it.

Tocarra: Yeah.

Robby: You gotta really bring- And Liz, God bless you, she really did. “No more taxes for rich people.” Come on that's a shot. That's taking a shot.

Tocarra: Yeah.

Jon: It is taking a shot and it's one of the few times that you really see someone live their values [LAUGHTER] They, they talk this way all the time. And you're like, when she gets in there, she's obviously gonna be like, "I can't do that because there will be a, there will be a proletarian revolt." And then she just gets in there and like, she's "rich people."

Robby: "You see the money, it will trickle."

Jon: "Money."

[TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Jon: Uh, so, so it's gonna be exciting. Is there anything else going on that you wish to bring to the fore?

Tocarra: Well of course there's something else. The news—

Jon: Bring it!

Tocarra: -is newsing Jon, um, I don't know if you saw, but I think after two weeks of, uh, intense prayer circles and getting their money in order, uh, Adidas has terminated their relationship with Kanye West.

Jon: And it seemed like such a solid relationship too.

Tocarra: Yeah, they were very much in love.

Jon: Yeah.

Tocarra: Uh, the press release, uh, was I think, very transparent. They said it's expected to have a short, Adidas is expected to have, um, a short term negative impact above €250 million euros, on the company's net income.

Jon: But I think if you look further down in the release, it says, "But we're hoping that the Jews kick in to make up that shortfall."

Robby: I guess we got [JON LAUGHS] some shoes to buy Jon.

Jon: The shoe kabal. Do Jews—do we also control the shoe kabal? I don't even know anymore what we control.

Robby: It's hard to say. They say it's very funny cuz they were like, uh, you know, because of Q4, this is happening in Q4, which is Christmas—

Tocarra: Yeah.

Robby: –there's a bunch of Adidas executives just like, “Come on Kanye, hold it till January.”

Tocarra: Yeah.

Jon: I can't wait till Adidas goes overboard in sort of, reclaiming the Jewish sneaker buying audience.

Robby: Uh-huh.

Jon: And like Nike has “Just do it.” Uh, Adidas is gonna come out with, “It couldn't hurt.” [LAUGHTER] Jews is trending on Twitter today, which is really—

Tocarra: Oh, I will not look at those top tweets.

Jon: -unless it's Hanukkah. That's not, that's never a positive sign. Uh, Robby Slowik, I'll ask you.

Robby: Yes.

Jon: You are also, as I am, of the Hebraic faith.

Robby: That's right.

Jon: On a scale of I'm just gonna f\*\*\*ing eat matzah in front of all my colleagues to I've got the go bag packed. How nervous are you about all this that is, that is going down? Because it has clearly exposed a very deep vein of, “Boy that you shouldn't be able to say, Jews control all that. Although...” Everybody who even says, I, “What Kanye said was out of bounds. Although...”

Robby: “Although.” Yeah.

Jon: They, they do, you know, “They're overrepresented.”

Robby: Right. There was that. Like New York Post writer who even said that same thing. He was like, “But we do need to discuss why Jews are overrepresented.”

Jon: Why the f\*\*\* is that?

Tocarra: Wow.

Jon: Why, you know, when a group tends to have an over representation in any kind of area, and which happens, why isn't there any, like those Irish motherf\*\*\*ers and all their

policing. Why the f\*\*\* is it always anybody that f\*\*\*ed you over in entertainment, “Well, that's, if he's Jewish clearly he goes back to the group and they all talk about it.”

Robby: Right. Yeah.

Jon: What is that?

Robby: I try to think about how I ended up here, cuz I guess I'm part of this now, right? But I'm like, I don't know, a kid who I grew up watching Mel Brooks movies and Seinfeld. I mean, I was a Jew who was influenced by Jewish stuff, and I got into comedy and I submitted a blind packet and here I am. But I could—

Jon: You don't need to defend or justify your participation in an industry that was created by people who were excluded from other industries. And that's where, you know, this is such an insidious road to go down because it's a self-defeating loop.

Robby: Right.

Jon: “Jews control everything.” “That's outrageous to say that we don't wanna do business with you anymore.” “See? That is evidence that I am correct, because if I wasn't correct, I could say whatever the f\*\*\* I want and nothing would happen to my business.” Which is obviously like they make a cost benefit analysis at Adidas. Adidas, by the way, a German company.

Robby: Mm-hmm.

Tocarra: That's right.

Jon: So I, it's a, we're in a really insidious timeline and boy does that dude have influence.

Robby: That was actually shocking to me. I was, I wasn't quite like prepared for the level of influence he had. To see Nazis holding a sign in Los Angeles—

Tocarra: Over the 405.

Robby: -that said, “Kanye was right.” I found that genuinely shocking.

Jon: I thought the weird part was the other sign that said, “College Dropout Rules.”  
[ROBBY LAUGHS]

Robby: Yeah. Big fans, you know, what are you gonna do?

Jon: Yeah. It's such an interesting, uh, conundrum because any pushback is seen as evidence of the efficacy of what he says. But what I think has been the, one of the, the tougher things is to read the comments.

Robby: Yeah.

Jon: And especially online, people are not shy about sharing their belief.

Robby: No, it's, it's everywhere.

Jon: You know, it's, it, here's, here's what I would say, it always f\*\*\*ing sucks when your demographic becomes part of a hashtag campaign.

Tocarra: 100%

Jon: When, when you're the ones where the black square is being put up for you, you know, the s\*\*\* has hit the fan somewhere and God bless but, you know, I don't need. Anytime you see celebrities suddenly posting like, "I stand with Jews, you really just want to say like, it's not about necessarily standing with and having that moment on Twitter. It's about understanding just how deep division goes and how it's used cynically for, for power. As it's being done now.

Robby: Yeah.

Jon: You know, I'm curious Tocarra this, this is completely, uh, and, and pardon me if this is insensitive, but during the George Floyd protest in the Black Lives Matter, when those, you know, people put up the black squares and all that stuff. What was your feeling about that? Did you feel supported or did you feel like, I feel, not condescended to, but a little bit, it leaves me cold in a way that I didn't expect. "Oh, now I'm, I'm the prop, now I'm the--"

Tocarra: Yeah

Jon: "--it's my turn in the cement mixer."

Tocarra: Yeah. Well, to anyone who Venmoed me during the summer [LAUGHTER] of 2020 um, I appreciated it immensely and it meant a lot. Uh, however, yes, I agree that I think, uh, seeing it didn't do much for me and it left me feeling a little numb.

Jon: Yeah. That's where I'm at.

Tocarra: And not really taken care of. Uh, it just, it made me feel, think even more exposed.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Tocarra: Especially if you remember during this time, Jon, uh, this is the summer where everyone was finally willing to say Black Lives Matter.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Tocarra: And I sort of went on a diatribe online because I was like, I needed you to say that when, Mike Brown was laying in the middle of the street in Ferguson. I needed you to say that, uh, with Tamir Rice. I needed you to say that all these other instances of times personally and in the world where I really needed you. And I just think even now, you know, not Jewish and I'm seeing all my friends and posting their stories and on Twitter I support my Jewish friends and I'm like does that make them feel any less exposed in this terrible, terrible time that we're living in? I'm sure it does for some people.

Jon: You know what it does Tocarra for me? It makes me feel more like the other. To be honest—

Tocarra: Yeah. It is othering.

Jon: - it makes me feel more separated. It makes me feel as though, uh, I belong to just a different, a different category of human that that needs to be tended to. And it, more than anything, it's isolating. For me.

Robby: I will say a few comedy clubs posted that, that meme as well. And I, so I sent them all my avails. I said, We'll see. [LAUGHTER]

Jon: You're using this to get spots? At clubs?

Robby: I gotta do what I gotta do because there's no kabal getting me spots Jon.

Jon: Let me tell you something. And this is what I always respect about comics [LAUGHTER. They are more comic than man.

Robby: [ROBBY LAUGHS] That's true. We can't turn it off.

Jon: In this situation. Well, let's just listen. This is it. It's, uh, an ongoing conversation. Uh, #tobecontinued. But more importantly, we have a guest to get to. We're gonna welcome back to the podcast Gabriel Gatehouse.

MUSIC

Jon: Are you in, are you in England right now, Gabriel?

Gabriel: I am in London, England. Jon. Hello.

Jon: And how is the new Prime Minister ?

Gabriel: He's literally just, he's hot off the press. Uh, how is he? Well, it's early to tell. He's only our, uh, third prime minister—

Jon: Yes.

Gabriel: – in, as many months almost.

Jon: So this is, Rishi Sunak.

Gabriel: Rishi Sunak, yes. I very much hope that he'll still be the Prime Minister by the time you air this podcast,

Jon: Uh, I have heard that he has resigned. [LAUGHTER]

Gabriel: Stop it. Don't say that.

Jon: He has been replaced by Neville Chamberlain. [LAUGHTER]

Gabriel: It's peace in our time. If only. Sanity in our time maybe.

Jon: Sanity in our time. So many firsts in these past few weeks, you had Boris Jonson who was uh, deposed. because he drank he threw a party—

Gabriel: Well, no, he threw a party but I think he was deposed because of his, uh, creative, elastic, relationship with factuality.

Tocarra: Wow.

Jon: Oh. See, that's why we elect people now. So that's apparently something that doesn't fly in England? Because here it's considered, I think, uh, the prime prerequisite—

Gabriel: A plus.

Jon: For running for office.

Gabriel: Yeah. I have been sort of thinking about like what are the differences and what are the commonalities in our politics right now? Because they both seem pretty crazy. And I think one of the things that gives me hope, about our politics is that, uh, yeah, we - I have to be careful about what I say. By the way I left the BBC did I tell you that, Jon? I've left the BBC so—



Jon: No I did not know you left the BBC. What were you fired by? Is the BBC controlled by a Jewish cabal, or is that just the American media?

Gabriel: Of course it is.

Jon: Oh it is? Ok good. I wasn't sure if we had international reach or if it was merely a United States phenomenon.

Gabriel: No, no, no. You're, you're totally international.

Jon: Thank God. Alright fair enough.

Gabriel: I was fired for trying to expose the kabal, obviously.

Jon: Oh, well done.

Gabriel: [GABRIEL LAUGHS] Uh, no, no, I decided to go freelance. I thought, uh, you know the BBC is a great place and I love public service broadcasting, and I think it's very important. Um, and you guys would really do well to have a BBC. Because it is quite good for the health of your sort of public media.

Jon: Now we do have a public media, we have a PBS.

Gabriel: I know. I know.

Jon: But it's no match for the, the histrionics of our 24 hour-

Gabriel: Yeah.

Jon: -news channels and the cable universe, the sober, analysis and direct to camera factual presentation does not make, It's-

Gabriel: It's not as much fun.

Robby: No one's watching.

Jon: We're talking about a culture that loves to supersize.

Gabriel: Yeah...

Jon: We'd like to throw a little cheese on it, see how it goes.

Gabriel: So, I left because I wanted to try a bit of supersizing. But I so officially I can now say whatever I like. But having been institutionalized - for 21 years, I worked for the corporation-

Jon: 21 years.

Gabriel: 21 years!

Jon: Oh boy.

Robby: Gabriel, this is a big moment. Let it rip. Say something f\*\*\*ing crazy. Let's do it.

Gabriel: So I did almost say something crazy, right? I said one of the positive things that I think I have identified out of all the craziness in our politics over the past few months is that we had a Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, who had a, uh, let's say a sort of tenuous relationship with the truth.

Jon: Mhmm.

Gabriel: And our governing party, the conservatives, instead of kind of doubling down and going, "Don't believe the evidence of your eyes, this man is telling the truth." They were all just like, "actually, do you know what this can't stand. You're fired." Now, I thought that was very positive.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: Uh, I probably like wouldn't be able to say that if I was working for the BBC, because you have to be very, very, very careful about—

Jon: Wait, you, if you were working for the BBC and there was a Prime Minister who was lying about, all manner of things in terms of, uh, the hypocrisy of his pandemic behavior and, uh, the cover-ups for various, uh, let's say harassment scandals and those, and those types of things. And the BBC, you would not be allowed to say, "Yeah, it's a net positive that the lying guy has-has been called to account."

Gabriel: Yeah. Right. We, you know, you could talk about it in, in terms of saying, "Well, the evidence shows that, that something else happened."

Jon: Gabriel, we're gonna have to rewire your brain.

Robby: Yes.

Tocarra: Yeah we're gonna have to—

Robby: There's only so many struggle ways you can say a lackadaisical relationship to facts.

Gabriel: Okay. He lied.

Robby: Oh, there we go.

Tocarra: Release, release.

Jon: Gosh, welcome to America.

Gabriel: Right, but so they got rid of him, um, which was kind of, uh, which surprised me and was positive. But then unfortunately in the process of getting rid of him, they had the ruling party, the governing party, the conservatives had a kind of collective convulsive nervous breakdown, uh, during which they elected, uh, somebody else through just the members. So like a couple of tens of thousands of people in England elected the new process.

Jon: Boris Johnson was elected by millions of people. The Conservative party, and then he was appointed by the Conservative Party when Liz Truss was selected, that was just who, who was voting then? Just the MP's or who, who was voting?

Gabriel: It was - No, no, it was the MPs who, who came down to the last few candidates, that was Liz Truss and, uh, Rishi Sunak, but then it went out to the Shires—

Jon: You always have to ask the Shires.

Gabriel: -so it was the, conservative, the Shires.

Jon: When do the Hobbits vote? I know the Shires vote, but when do the hobbits weigh in?

Gabriel: When they depose uh, Rishi Sunak, that's when the hobbits get to go. [JON LAUGHS] and that's when Golum is installed in number 10.

Robby: Precious

Gabriel: So the best is yet to come. But Liz Truss was, was elected by conservative party members in the Shires. Um, so that's kind of, uh, you know, Deep Middle England, um, very middle aged people. Very white, very middle aged, uh, constituency. Um—

Robby: Gabriel what gives them the right? Cause there's like 160,000 people, right?

Gabriel: Something like that.

Robby: How are they chosen as the ones who get to vote? Who, who are these people?

Gabriel: So they're members of the party. They are members of the Conservative Party and members of the conservative party have a right to choose their leader. And if the

previous leader also happened to be the Prime Minister, then they effectively get to choose the next Prime Minister.

Robby: Got it.

Gabriel: And remember that, you know, the conservative party. And the Labor Party aren't really kind of mass membership organizations in the way that you have, you know, mass membership of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the United States. These are very small numbers of people, so effectively, a very small number of people in the tens of thousands chose our previous Prime Minister, Liz Truss.

Jon: Liz Truss, now she had a very tenuous relationship with economic cohesion.  
[LAUGHTER]

Gabriel: Wait, wait. But you've, you've skipped, you skipped the main thing that happened.

Jon: Yes.

Gabriel: So she was elected prime minister and then she went off to see the queen, and the queen said, "Hey, would you like to form a government?" and then dropped dead.

Jon: Yeah.

Robby: Mm-hmm.

Jon: Yeah. She knew, she knew, she knew what was coming. There are very few people who know when to exit at the right time, but I think that was one of those where, where she was like, "so this ship is called the Titanic, then?" And then Liz Truss is like, "Yeah." She goes, "I'm just gonna get off here."

Gabriel: Yes. I'll hand that over to, to, uh, to you Charlie Boy. Good luck.

Jon: Good luck, sir.

Robby: How many Liz's do we need in power at once?

Gabriel: Well there was all this kind of talk going around about the grim reaper being sent down to fetch Liz and, you know, coming back with the wrong one.

Tocarra: Oh my gosh.

Jon: Oh, brutal.

Tocarra: That's horrible.

Jon: Brutal. [EVERYONE LAUGHS]

Gabriel: Anyway, so that happened, and I'd always thought that when the queen dies, I had always been convinced that this country would absolutely lose its s\*\*\*. I'll tell you why. Because basically, um, this country has kind of been cooking on fumes since the 1950s, right? We've been cooking on the fumes of Empire since 1952. Because we've had, uh, this really magnificent person on the throne who was like, You, you can't imagine a more dedicated public servant, right? This, woman was dedicated to public service. Come rain or can, can shine.

Jon: Well let's - she was well paid. It wasn't volunteer work

Gabriel: It wasn't what volunteer work.

Jon: This is not a Mother Teresa situation.

Gabriel: Fine, fine. Point taken, point well made. [LAUGHTER] Wait, I thought Americans loved the queen. What are you talking about? Americans love the queen. We're the ones—

Jon: She seemed lovely, but I don't know if you know this, but we had a whole, uh, to do. This was years ago—

Gabriel: You did?!

Jon: Uh, about escaping this type of monarchy system. Yeah. I'll, You know what, I'm gonna send you some articles.

Gabriel: Okay. You know, that doesn't work. "I'm gonna send you some articles" "Covid is fake. Use the vaccines."

Jon: I'll send you some articles.

Gabriel: That'll work.

Jon: I'll you some articles. [GABRIEL LAUGHS] Gabriel, do your own research. Do your own research.

Gabriel: Okay. I'll come back to you at the end of my rabbit hole.

Jon: Perfect.

Gabriel: Um, actually, funny enough, I've met, uh, I've met some people who, uh, in your country, who believe that there was some kind of shenanigans that happened, uh, in the mid th century, which meant that, which means that America is actually still a colony of England and that it's, uh, it's an outpost of the city of London. There are quite a few people who believe that in your country,

Robby: Do we get healthcare?

[TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Gabriel: Such a good point. Such a good point. I'll ask, I'll ask about that. At the moment, our finances are a little stretched, but I'll see what we can do.

Jon: That, that is true. Uh, I had not been aware of that, but, so now—

Gabriel: I was supposed to be explaining to you—

Jon: Oh, I'm sorry.

Gabriel: Why were we gonna lose our s\*\*\*? Yeah. So, so we were kind of cooking on the fumes of Empire since 1952 because we'd had the queen on the throne and quietly without our noticing it, the Empire had disappeared, but we hadn't noticed because the queen was still there and it kind of looked like the same kind of very powerful country where—

Jon: Right. All the traffic

Gabriel: People announced the news like this. Yes, the queen opened parliament and very northern was lovely. And, and so we hadn't noticed that the Empire had quietly faded and Britain had quietly turned into a basket case. Um, and then so I was convinced that when the queen died, everyone would suddenly go, “Oh, wait, we, ooh, where this kind of insignificant little island.”

Tocarra: Where are we now?

Gabriel: “Who are we?” Um, but actually. It seems like we didn't have time to do that because the politics of Truss, the Truss-onomics went so berserk so quickly straight after the queen died, that we've, we've kind of deferred that reckoning.

Jon: Hasn't she done a grand service then to the kingdom? You know, rather than facing an existential crisis, you can now just, stand to what seems to be something more ephemeral, which is, “oh right if we're trying to tame inflation, we shouldn't also at the

same time just give rich people another tax break.” And you can, you're back into a much more modern kind of reckoning as opposed to the existential reckoning, which by the way, and I can tell you this from experience in America, will never come. There will always be something that comes along to distract the populist from an existential reckoning.

Gabriel: That's depressing. But I think I agree with you. That's what they say about climate change, right? Every time you wanna do something about climate change, it's like, “oh, but no, but there's this politics thing that's more urgent” and like we never actually get to it.

Jon: That's exactly right. The urgency of, you know, when you can say, well, the planet may ultimately, uh, flood. And people are like, “I know, but \$3.25 a gallon? I mean, what the f\*\*\*?” By the way I understand it, you know, people deal with their day to day and the economics of the day to day almost always supersede, you know, the existential.

Gabriel: Exactly. Exactly.

Tocarra: So Gabriel, I'm curious, speaking of the day to day, how do like the Truss-onomics affect the day to day for everyday folks?

Gabriel: Okay, So, my mortgage was coming up for renewal just as Liz Truss launched into her euphemistically called Mini Budget. It was like a mini hand grenade budget. Um, so, uh, the Mini Budget landed, mortgage rates went [shooting sound] up through the roof. Uh, I quickly, quickly, quickly managed to renegotiate my mortgage. So I'm now only paying two and a half times as much as I was before.

Jon: Get the f\*\* outta here

Tocarra: Oh my goodness.

Robby: Woah!

Gabriel: There you go. Personal, true story.

Jon: She did that in six weeks?!

Gabriel: Yeah. You know, what they say about storytelling: “get in late, get out early” Boom.

Robby: And she tried to wash her hands of that, right? She tried to say, “well, we don't politicians, a Bank of England sets mortgage rates” trying to divorce her policy choices from what they had to make up the budgetary impact of losing the taxes. Is that right?

Gabriel: Right. Yeah. So there was a big, uh, a big sort of to and fro between, uh, the Truss government and the Bank of England. Uh, the Bank of England has been independent of the government since 1997. So there was this kind of back and forth between, uh, you know, Liz Truss and her chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, who were like uh, lobbying these kind of grenades into the market, and the markets were going mad—

Jon: And the pound is crashing.

Gabriel: The pound is tanking

Gabriel:

Jon: By the way, I looked at it and I was like, “I should travel.”

Gabriel: You should come over.

Jon: I should really travel now.

Gabriel: Come over, I'll take you for a drink.

Robby: You'll be paying. [LAUGHTER]

Gabriel: And so then the Bank of England was, was buying up guilts and trying to, um, shore up the market and trying to stock pension funds from imploding. It, it was like, it felt, it, it generally felt, it genuinely felt like we were kind of holding on by our fingernails, um, for a while. Um, and the interesting thing was it wasn't just that, um, the Truss government was blaming the Bank of England and The Bank of England was kind of blaming the government. And this wasn't just coming from Liz Truss, but people in her circle, the people who were kind were saying “this is a coup, a coup by the market.” So suddenly we started to hear that American language about kind of coups and kabals and elite, “a coup by the elite, a coup by the market.”

Jon: A January 6th of the doubloon.

Gabriel: Well, not so much the January 6th kind of coup but the kind of coup that they believe on the right that's been happening. You know the deep-state plot against Donald Trump.

Tocarra: Yeah the quiet takeover, the shadow government.



Gabriel: Exactly. Exactly.

Jon: Now by the way we should point out Liz Truss never actually enacted any of this.

Gabriel: No. She just, all she had to do was open her mouth.

Jon: All she did was say it. She said, “this is what I'm going to do.” There was no change. It's just this is what's coming.

Gabriel: But, but you know what—

Jon: That's what happened.

Gabriel:-the reason why went so berserk is because, um, Kwasi Kwarteng went out and announced it.

Jon: That's her finance minister. And they were tied at the hip?

Gabriel: They were tied at the hip. Yeah. Yeah. You gotta. Careful about. They, they were, they were good friends.

[LAUGHTER]

Jon: BBC One, BBC Two. [LAUGHTER]

Gabriel: Yeah. So they came up with this kind of, uh, this policy together. It was a whole bunch of tax cuts that were unfunded. Like they announced the tax cuts, but they didn't tell anyone how they were gonna pay for it. So obviously the markets went mad.

Jon: That's what we do. Now you're, now you're just stealing the Republican's ideas on economics from our country.

Gabriel: I know I like to think we do just follow slightly in your slip stream, [LAUGHS] but what happened there after announcing this Kwasi Kwarteng, then, uh, went for some drinks with some, finance people and let it be known that actually that was just the beginning. It was gonna go further still. And of course that came out and then the markets went even more berserk.

Jon: Oh wow.

Gabriel: And then, you know, then Liz Truss went on the BBC and my colleague asked her, Are you committed to cutting tax for the richest people? And she looked into the cameramen and said “Yes.” Like then, I'm sorry. Okay, so the markets went brr. Um, and then like 24 hours later she was like, “Okay, No.”

[LAUGHTER]

Jon: And then she, didn't she, she fired Kwasi Kwarteng.

Gabriel: Then she fired Kwasi Kwarteng, for, maybe this is the first time that a Prime Minister has fired her finance minister for agreeing with her.

Jon: Yes.

Gabriel: but she, so she fired him,

Jon: "You knew I was stupid when I took the job!"

[LAUGHS]

Gabriel: But she fired him without saying, "actually the policies that he announced were a mistake." She fired him saying, "I think the presentation was left a little bit to be desired", but, you know, she basically implied that she was gonna keep going. So like, she just, they just kept doubling down until, it became, completely unsustainable. It feels like a lifetime ago now, but I think it was in the last week. One of my colleagues said, "are you going to be Prime Minister at the time of the next election?" And she goes, "yes." 24 hours later it's like, "I resign."

Jon: Wow.

Gabriel: So—

Jon: So exciting!

Gabriel: I know it's like the 12 days of Christmas song. You know, we've had, um, in the past three months, we've had four chancellors exchequer, three prime ministers, two monarchs, and a partridge in a pear tree.

Jon: Wow. So what an exciting time

Gabriel: To be a journalist.

Jon: To be a journalist, but to be living there. Now the, the new gentleman that came in, uh, who was a, a finance minister and is I think could maybe take care of this from his own savings account. From what I understand. [LAUGHS]

Tocarra: My goodness.

Robby: My introduction to Rishi Sunak, cuz I shouldn't know who he is as an American, but I remember like four months ago his, that whole scandal with his wife, right? Where she has 700 million pounds and claimed non-domicile status. So she could not pay taxes in England despite being married to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Is that right?

Gabriel: Right. And one of the richest families in India.

Tocarra: Yeah.

Gabriel: Um, and in fact Rishi Sunak had a green card with you guys, until that came out and then he had to renounce it.

Tocarra: That I didn't know.

Gabriel: So yeah, maybe we'll send him over to you once he's done here. Once his term's done.

Jon: Well, so you're saying he's coming in six weeks, Is that what you're saying? Because now, isn't it—

Gabriel: Six days.

Jon: -every Six weeks.

Gabriel: Six days.

Tocarra: He'd fit right in. We love, we love our Goldman Sachs in politics here.

[GABRIEL LAUGHS]

Gabriel: Yeah. That's a conspiracy right there.

Jon: Oh boy. I gotta, I'm gonna have to tap out on this one. Cause , I don't know if, you know, it's been kind of a rough week for my guys down here too, so. We'll, we're, checking out, on that, but, have things stabilized?

Gabriel: Uh, I mean it's been like a matter of hours literally, um—

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: -since he came in. Uh, I think—

Jon: Have you had to renegotiate your mortgage again?

Gabriel: No, my mortgage is now fixed at this eye-wateringly high rate for the next five years.

Tocarra: Oh my gosh.

Jon: Wait, you have to renegotiate mortgages every five years?

Gabriel: Yeah. Or even like every two. Like, it just depends on how you yeah.

Jon: Like a car lease? It's basically—

Gabriel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: -a car lease for a house.

Gabriel: Basically, basically.

Jon: They, they prefer a “you pays your money, ya takes your chances.”

Gabriel: Right? Yes. It's the market, the tyranny of the market.

Jon: Gabriel, I have to tell you something. Because we spoke, six months ago, seven months ago.

Gabriel: Something like that.

Jon: Uh, you were back then, if I may. Handsome, confident. [GABRIEL LAUGHS] Uh, a young, a young man full of vigor, full of life.

Gabriel: I don't like where this is going.

Jon: Looking forward to the horizon of a future that you knew you were the captain of. And now I feel like this is a group therapy session. [ROBBY LAUGHS] Your world has spun out in a very interesting way because you were so ensconced in the world of conspiracy theories and those who believed that there were you know, secret, uh, forces at play that we're controlling and now you're living through a moment of true instability within your own country. That's not necessarily conspiratorial, but very real.

Gabriel: But you know what, Jon?

Jon: Yeah.

Gabriel: I've just come back from Florida, um, where I attended [LAUGHTER] something QAnon.

Jon: Is that, was that to feel better about your situation?

Gabriel: I totally.

Tocarra: Wow.

Gabriel: I am just batting this away. I am sidestepping the question. I'm doing a politician on you.

Jon: Beautifully done.

Gabriel: I've just been to Florida where I attended a conference called NatCon3. NatCon stands for National Conservatism.

Jon: Oh. Do all those, do they just have conferences in the conservative party? They're CPAC and NatCon. And what—

Gabriel: NatCon makes CPAC look like a teddy bear's picnic.

Tocarra: Wow.

Jon: Really?

Tocarra: That's scary.

Gabriel: So NATCon, I went there because, uh, my, if you remember, what we were talking about last time was The Coming Storm, this podcast series that I found.

Jon: Correct. Terrific podcast, by the way, for those who, uh, have not had gotten a chance to check it out. It's Gabriel's coverage of the QAnon phenomenon here in the United States and around the world really.

Gabriel: Yeah. The long roots of, of January the sixth, and we can go all the way back into the nineties. Anyway, we're making a few extra episodes, which are gonna land, in, the first half of November around your midterm elections.

Jon: Oh.

Gabriel: So I thought I would go to this NatCon conference to find out what had happened to this QAnon energy, like the, this energy that had kind of fueled January the sixth, um, and this whole kind of election denying movement. What's happened to it and where is it going?

Jon: And you're about to say, if I may, and I hate to jump the gun on this, I don't want to give spoilers: completely gone. Everybody's come back to Earth.

Gabriel: It's gone, it's completely gone. Everyone's back to normal. Everyone accepts the election results. Joe Biden is the legitimately elected president.

Jon: Boy, Gabriel. I'm so glad you had a chance to look into that.

Gabriel: Aren't you relieved? Aren't you relieved?

Jon: Yes, I am.

Gabriel: Uh, sadly. Jon, it's the opposite. I mean, I think we all know that half the country doesn't believe, uh, that your president is, uh, legitimately your president. Uh, but, uh, there were two things I took away from this conference of Proud conservative nationalists. What has happened to - QAnon kind of split into two things. Or had kind of two main components. One was the election was stolen and two, it was stolen by a kabal of Satanic pedophiles. Now the election was stolen-

Jon: Wait, wait. Whoa.

Gabriel: You don't wanna just let that pass?

Jon: No. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] So there is a kind of a more grounded part of the QAnon movement that's like, "yeah, the election was stolen, but not by a kabal of satanic pedophiles." So the, the argument amongst QAnon is "we both agree it's stolen, but where we part ways, my friend is who stole it. I say, a kabal of Satanic pedophiles. And the other people say just a kabal." [GABRIEL LAUGHS]

Gabriel: Um, that's kind of one of the arguments amongst QAnoners. I mean, there are other arguments amongst QAnoners, like, uh, which random weird guy is actually the, um, reincarnation of John F. Kennedy Jr. who, is still alive. I mean, those are other arguments that are going on, uh, in those spaces.

Jon: This is discussed openly.

Gabriel: Yeah, sure. But you haven't, you haven't ever wondered which random guy that you know might be John F. Kennedy's dead son?

Jon: I have not.

[EVERYONE LAUGHS]

Gabriel: Jon you haven't lived.

Jon: But I'm not tech savvy, so I can't do my own research.

Gabriel: Okay. Boomer. Okay. Boomer [LAUGHTER]

Robby: Gabriel. Isn't it more than a QAnon on split, isn't it? I mean, QAnon, they continued down the, you know, Satanic blood drinking cult, and then rank and file Republicans seem to just think the election was stolen by a kabal.

Gabriel: Right. Exactly. Exactly. So, so the, the idea of the deep state stealing the election has just been absorbed into mainstream America's main politics.

Jon: Yes, that's right.

Gabriel: It's a, it's a mainstream opinion now. In fact, it's quite hard to get on in the Republican party if you don't at least publicly subscribe to that opinion.

Jon: I believe the word is impossible to get on in the Republican party. And, not only is it hard to get on, they will actively destroy you.

Tocarra: Mm-hmm..

Gabriel: Indeed. Indeed. Um, but so the Satanic pedophiles bit seemed to have disappeared. But they were all talking about something else, which I think has replaced the idea of the Satanic pedophiles.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: And that is one word: groomers.

Jon: It's not metrosexuals you're talking about. It's not—

Gabriel: It's not metrosexuals. It's not taking a poodle to the doggy hairdresser.

Jon: All right.

Gabriel: It is people doing gender education in schools. It is drag queen story hour.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: It is chest surgery for minors in hospitals. This is what is consuming and firing up and energizing all of that part of the political forest.

Jon: We did an episode on gender where we tried to figure out, uh, what exactly was, uh, driving that. And it seems like they're latching onto very small communities and taking this as a writ-large existential threat to their primacy.

Gabriel: I think that's right. But the thing that struck me was that actually, uh, this has become an incredibly potent force—

Jon: Mhmm.

Gabriel: —and much more potent than this idea of a kabal of Satanic pedophiles.

Jon: What happened to that? How did that go away?

Gabriel: Well, you know that just sort of felt a little far-fetched and like no one could find any evidence that it was actually happening. But—

Jon: They could find a little bit of evidence of it, but it was mostly Republican operatives who keep getting arrested [GABRIEL LAUGHS] for pedophilia.

Gabriel: Well, there was also Jeffrey Epstein, but anyway—

Jon: Yes. As well.

Gabriel: — as well. so this, this idea of groomers—

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: —um, you know, at least has the advantage of referencing something that is actually happening. Right? It is true that there are drag queen story hours in which the stated aim is to, uh, you introduce children to, um, queer role models, and if you think that that is evil—

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: — or grooming in effect, then, then you're like, “ha!, this is actually, actually happening.”

Jon: So that is, it's somehow conflating drag with sexual proclivity.

Gabriel: Yeah...

Jon: Yeah. Like what's, I'm not, I'm not exactly sure what the connection is.



Gabriel: I mean look, what's happening in, in what's happening in, in those spaces is that people will see videos of drag queen story hour where somebody is dressed maybe in quite a suggestive manner that they don't think is appropriate for children.

Jon: Okay.

Gabriel: And these things do happen. Let's not pretend that they aren't. And then they go, "Hey, what the hell is this?"

Gabriel: Right?

Jon: Have you seen, have you, have you ever seen child pageants?

Gabriel: Yeah. It's a very, very dodgy thing. It's weird.

Jon: But that's a phenomenon in largely conservative areas.

Gabriel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: Where children are dressed up in very provocative ways and paraded around. And so I'm just trying to wrap my head around why one creates a panic and the other is like, good clean American fun.

Gabriel: You are completely right. It's a moral panic. It's absolutely a moral panic.

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: I think that a lot of people, not just on the right, who are there are absolutely people who are using this issue cynically for electoral gain, and they are, they're using the word groomers because they know that groomers says pedophiles. And it's like, it's just a dog whistle and it's the kind of next incarnation of Q, Right?

Tocarra: Yeah, absolutely. I feel like, you know, if, if you're in the United States of America and you really are worried about pedophilia and, uh, you know, the safety of children, you go to stewards of children, uh, the website and you figure out how to take those classes and all that stuff, but in my mind, like gender binary and all that stuff, it really is, I think in combination with the great replacement theory. And thinking about, you know, like if I'm a white man and they're trying to say that, "Oh, you can be anything. They're getting rid of masculinity and they're getting rid of uh, whiteness" and it's sort of this thing that is sort of threatens your position within the United States of America. And I imagine there, there's some similar feeling, uh, across.

Jon: You're saying Tocarra that they're suggestion is there's no ceiling on that, that this—

Tocarra: Absolutely.

Jon: It's a contagion rather than a subset of actual people who are merely now expressing themselves and society is trying to figure out how to adapt to that complexity.

Tocarra: Oh, absolutely.

Gabriel: Yeah. And I think a lot of people feel like you are taking away the boundaries of my life. I now feel unmoored. Like if you're suddenly saying to me "all these years, I thought that there were men and there were women", and now suddenly you're saying, "Hold on a second, there are like all these other genders and men can become women and women can go- again." And people are like, "ah, I feel lost. Where the hell am I? Where, where are the boundaries of my, of my world?"

Jon: But the boundaries still exist. It's merely suggesting there is this other, you know, there is a subset, there's a venn diagram and it's men and women and, and they're gigantic, but there is a little area that for some people exists. And that's, I don't know why that's so complicated. And, and the crazy part is like, if you really wanna protect children, you know, the poverty rate for children in this country is astonishing. The food insecurity for children in this country is astonishing. And the numbers are astonishing. And so it's this incredibly virulent, volatile focus on this one kind of ancillary issue that doesn't throw, like I would think that your world be, would become unmoored if someone said to you, "We let children starve in a f\*\*\*ing country of wealth and prosperity", I would think there'd be nothing more to unmoor you than that. That's the thing that is upsetting.

Gabriel: Yeah. I think that's a very, very valid point, but I think that sadly, in America and also in Britain, we also have, you know, people who if they don't get their lunch at their free school meals, they're not gonna get a meal.

Gabriel: Right.

Tocarra: Yeah.

Gabriel: Kids. Um, so we also have this problem, sadly we're kind of what are we inured to this? We hear this on our news bulletins and it washes over us, like a sort of-

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: -lukewarm, dirty bath water thing. And we're like, "that's just the way the world is."

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: But this issue, which is now being channeled into this kind of QAnoners groomers thing—

Tocarra: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: It's electrifying. It's electrifying everybody. It's firing people up.

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: And that I think is where that segment of the QAnon energy has gone.

Jon: Gabriel, how extensive is it? Because I would think that energy is not just QAnon. That that energy is more widespread. Listen, there's no easier target than trans people or, you know, it's just easy.

Gabriel: I think that's right. And that's why it's so powerful, um, and so dangerous because you not only manage to pull in a lot more people who are worried about this issue than would normally kind of go down a QAnon on rabbit hole. But you are also saying that the institutions of the state, specifically the ones that are there to look after your children's education and your children's healthcare are in fact what? Pedophiles.

Gabriel: That is what groomer says. Right? And—

Jon: Wow.

Gabriel: And that word, that pedophile word is so strong, so awful, so hideous—

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: -that it kind of just drives people nuts. And that's the danger of it.

Jon: And also there is a certain, listen, there is a reality to when you send a kid to school, there, s\*\*\*'s gonna go down that you don't agree with.

Gabriel: Right, or that you don't know about.

Jon: I mean, that's, you know, we, well, that you don't know about that either in, you know, an overreach on liberal policy and overreach on conservative policy. Like there's all kinds of s\*\*\*, an overreach on grading policy. Like there's all kinds of s\*\*\* and there's nothing more powerful than “these people are in charge of your children.”

Gabriel: Yeah, absolutely

Jon: Where do you see this going, Gabriel?

Gabriel: So look, so I was at this conference, uh, and the one thing they were all talking was groomers. And then the other thing they were all talking about was they don't, do you know this? They don't call the, uh, Biden administration, they don't call it "the illegitimate Biden administration." They don't call it "the government that we hate." You know what they call it? *The Regime*. They call it *The Regime*. Right? And it's not just the government. By *The Regime* they mean the government, the journalists, me, um, Facebook, Twitter, Silicon Valley—

Jon: Oh wow.

Gabriel: —the Justice Department, the FBI, basically, they are running hard on this idea that *The Regime* has gotten everything sewn up. And again, they've got something, they've got a Trump card. If you'll excuse the pun.

Jon: I won't.

Gabriel: Which, Okay, [LAUGHTER] I'll take it back. Take it back. Um, they've got a card, which they believe shows everyone that they are right, that there is a regime and that there is a deep state effort to stop Donald Trump or whoever his heir and successor might end up being, um, from ever, uh, achieving the White House again. And it is Hunter Biden's laptop.

Jon: Wait, what?

Gabriel: You know, Hunter Biden had a laptop?

Jon: I'm, I'm not aware [ROBBY LAUGHS]. No. of course. Okay. But why is that so - that is evidence of a cover up is that what the suggestion is?

Gabriel: So let me tell you that, let me tell you the story in brief. Okay. So, um, in October 2020 um, the New York Post published the story saying that Hunter Biden had left his laptop in a Mac repair shop in Delaware. Uh, never picked it up. And they'd got hold of it. And they published some stories, and their stories basically suggested that, um, Hunter Biden was making money for the whole Biden family through a bunch of corrupt companies.

Jon: That's right.

Gabriel: In Ukraine and China.

Jon: The, the big guy gets a cut. The big guy.

Gabriel: 10% for the big guy.

Gabriel: Right? So that was one of the emails on there when they were figuring out how to divvy up, um, this Chinese joint venture that was working with a company that was sort of connected to the Chinese Communist Party.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: And it was like, there was this line that wasn't written by Hunter Biden, it was written by one of his business partners, but they were suggesting how to divvy it up and it was 10 % to be held by "H", that's Hunter, for the "big guy." And the assumption was that that was Joe Biden.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: So the picture that emerged, this is, remember three weeks out before the 2020 election, was that there was some kind of distinctly stinky, money stuff going on, and the evidence was on this laptop.

Jon: Mm-hmm.

Gabriel: Now, I dunno if you remember what happened to that story at the time. It got squished.

Jon: Yeah, people said this is Russian misinformation—

Gabriel: They said it was Russian misinformation.

Jon: Something along those lines.

Gabriel: Correct. That's right. That's right. And I remember, I remember when I was going around America trying to kind of gather my stuff for the coming storm, and I was trying to figure out what the hell Qanon was. There was this other conspiracy theory that was going on, and everyone was going, "What about Hunter Biden's laptop man?"

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: And I remember exactly what I thought. I was like, I don't, I just don't have the bandwidth for another conspiracy theory. [JON LAUGHS] I'm not even gonna, I'm not even gonna touch this. This is, this is such bulls\*\*\*. Right. I'm not, I am literally not even gonna go there.

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: And that's what I did. I ignored it. Well, big mistake. It turned out the laptop was real.

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: Facebook, uh, essentially censored the story. Twitter locked the New York Post out of its account. Uh, 50 former national security experts and officials came out and said it was Russian disinformation. Turned out that not only was it real, but the FBI had the bloody laptop all this time.

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: Hadn't really looked on it.

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: Um, hadn't figured out. And it took the establishment media—

Jon: Uh Huh.

Gabriel: – um, in the US the, the New York Times and the Washington Post, Let's say the kind of, you know, the big boys.

Jon: Yes.

Gabriel: The serious boys and girls[JON LAUGHS]. It took them nearly two years—

Jon: Yeah.

Gabriel: -to go through the laptop as you expect, they would do like some serious journalism, uh, showed some cyber security experts and go, “Huh? Do you know what actually turns out this thing is real.”

Jon: It's real!

Gabriel: But. Like that wasn't big news. There was no kind of, “Oh my God! we really, we really, really f\*\*\*ed up there because we suppressed this story three weeks out from an election” It was just like, “Yeah. But we looked at it and it's just kind of oof business as usual.”

Robby: Well to some degree, isn't this, you know, and I don't wanna excuse the media cuz in general they are terrible at what they do, but aren't, isn't this the consequences of boy who cried wolf from Qanon? I mean, if you're firing off conspiracies constantly,

eventually you're gonna say, “this is probably another bulls\*\*\* lead. I don't have time for it 10 days before an election.”

Gabriel: 100%. As Steve Bannon said, Flood the zone—

Tocarra: Oh my goodness.

Gabriel: With s\*\*\* Right?

Jon: Right, right.

Gabriel: Uh, So, and you know how the laptop made its way into the media via Steve Bannon. So kind of—

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: -I assumed this was. Steve Bannon flooding the zone with s\*\*\*. And that's why I ignored it.

Jon: Let's say it was real and people just thought, well, the one thing in it maybe is 10% to the big guy, which is circumstantial at best. But as far as like, look, Hunter Biden being on the board of—

Gabriel: Barisma.

Jon: Uh, To me, that's corruption straight up off the bat. Like you don't—

Gabriel: They always call it—

Robby: Yes.

Tocarra: Right.

Gabriel: They always call it “a corrupt Ukrainian gas company” that's like, you don't need to say that all Ukrainian gas companies are corrupt. [LAUGHTER]

Jon: And by the way, all American gas companies are pretty corrupt.

Tocarra: There you go.

Robby: How dare you sir?

Jon: So it's all f\*\*\*ing corrupt. But—

Gabriel: But what are we are saying, we're saying, but that is, we're not surprised.

Jon: It's not even that, I'm not surprised. It's that it's corrupt on its face. I don't need a laptop with like a hint of circumstantial evidence. Now, tying Joe Biden to it? Yeah, that's gonna take some digging. And if it's real, you know, that's a thing. But the idea that nepotism would allow much larger amounts of money to flow into the hands of people unqualified, uh, to be in the positions that they've been accepted because you think those countries are trying to buy influence? Yeah. Welcome to the f\*\*\*ing world. And I think it's a huge problem on its face. Forget about any secret laptop.

Gabriel: But you know, the problem is, for the, uh, American media and, and the British media as well. Is that it is true that we collectively spent the entire Trump administration trying to figure out if Donald Trump had ever been to Moscow, let alone peed on a bed with some prostitutes in the Ritz Carlton [JON LAUGHS]. Right? And, about, you know, whether or not, um, Donald Trump's children were using the White House to kind of pump up their own brands and profit from, like, we literally, that consumed the whole of America.

Jon: They were.

Gabriel: They were absolutely. Which consumed the whole of America for four years. Um, and it turned out there wasn't a pee tape. But anyway, nevermind. Um, which was a shame because I would've loved to have seen [TOCARRA LAUGHS] that, but, um, not ever, not in a weird way, just in a political way.

Tocarra: Sure, sure, sure. in a political way

Jon: I don't need to know that you wanted to see that tape.

Tocarra: In an evidence way.

Jon: I don't need to know that.

Robby: I have similar tapes I can send you.

[TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Gabriel: Oh, can I just tell you something—

Jon: Yes.

Gabriel: -I have seen —

Jon: No, no!



[LAUGHS]

Gabriel: I have seen the contents of Hunter Biden's laptop.

Jon: Okay.

Gabriel: And I think that it is, uh, so the, you know, the email about 10% for the big guy, it's there.

Jon: Yeah.

Gabriel: The email that kind of seems to suggest that Joe Biden, um, went to a restaurant in Washington DC and met a representative of the Ukrainian gas company, uh, which he then said he didn't. It's there, right?

Jon: Right, right, right. So there is some there, there, there's no question.

Gabriel: There is, there is absolutely some there, there. Let me also tell you what else is there. Like, this is also a picture of a guy who is going off the rails, right? He's got addiction problems. His brother has died, his marriage is falling apart. He's having an affair with his sister-in-law and he is addicted to drugs. Right? And so in, in a way, you, you are looking at this thing for the kind of, for the politics of it and trying to figure out, you know, are they right in saying that there is a deep state, um, conspiracy to hide high level corruption? I mention this because if you type in Hunter Biden's laptop into Google, you will find lots of suggestions that there was child porn on there. I have looked through this laptop. There's a lot of dodgy stuff on there. There's a lot of porn on there, there's a lot of emails suggesting fishy deals with corrupt companies. There is no child porn on Hunter Biden's laptop. Just for the record.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: Well, thank you Gabriel, for setting the record straight on that.

Robby: With the lowest bar imaginable.

Tocarra: Yeah.

Gabriel: Yes.

Jon: Well, it's kind of —

Robby: A banner falls behind confetti.

[LAUGHS]

Gabriel: But the point of saying that is that, you know, this one crime would blow all the other potential crimes out of the water.

Jon: Let me say this, all conspiracies have hints of truth.

Gabriel: Mm-hmm.

Jon: Some end up being true, some end up not. But they're very convenient in that any hint can be used to justify any accusation that you wanna level against it. And there has to be a certain bar of reality that goes along with the aroma of corruption and cover up and deep state. I don't think I would ever push back on the idea that powerful people do incredibly corrupt things for their own benefit and cover the f\*\*\* up out of it. Like, no question in my mind, but that doesn't mean there's always that logical jump that becomes fallacious, and because of that, everything is real.

Gabriel: That's right.

Jon: And you could go back and if you wanna criticize the media, you could go back and say, boy did they make a meal out of Hillary Clinton's emails. And I mean, obsessively day in and day out. And maybe the thought was, Hunter Biden isn't running for president. He's a troubled guy. Maybe there is some stuff on there in corruption and it's certainly worth looking out for, but the idea that anything that's thrown like a hand grenade into an election three weeks out must be, uh, covered wall to wall in the way that they did those emails. Like, I don't agree with either. So we're at kind of a weird point.

Gabriel: But the problem is that it's happened now. It's a bit like the stolen election thing. Like, um, you know like once, once you've let that, once you've done it, once, it's like for fairness, you've gotta do it again. Right?

Jon: But now you've got this thing like Hunter Biden's laptop wasn't covered right, so the election was stolen from Donald Trump. That's my point, is you can have things that are absolutely justifiable and real as —

Gabriel: Yes, but can I just put a counter factual for a second because—

Jon: Please.

Gabriel: -Hillary Clinton believes that, um, she lost the election to Donald Trump in 2016 because of the reopening of the investigation into her email server. Right?

Jon: Right.

Gabriel: And that kind of, that basically it was really tight, tight election that happened. Um, James Comey announced that he was reopening the investigation and that lost it for her. That's what she believes. Right?

Jon: That's correct.

Gabriel: Now it is not inconceivable that if the press had made Wall to wall meal out of Hunter Biden's laptop and 10% for the big guy, and the Barisma meeting in the weeks running up to the 2020 election given how close the result was in the key states that decided it, it isn't inconceivable, not as a conspiracy theory, but just a psephology, It is not inconceivable that we would have a different result. I think.

Jon: I guess so. I mean, it's one of those things where you say, right, and if they had made a wall to wall coverage of, you know, the children of Donald Trump's business dealings, and it been much more Yeah. You know, then couldn't that have been the, I mean, isn't that if, uh, ifs and buts were candy and nuts?

Gabriel: It is. But it's also like, that's where we are now. We're in the world of, uh, you know, you did it, so we've gotta do it back to you. And you know, we we're in the world where, you know, the Republicans, you can't see a way in which they're ever gonna accept another election that they lose. Like how how do you put that genie back in the bottle?

Jon: But do you really think that - honestly, Gabriel - do you think that their inability to accept an election that they lose is all tied back to media malpractice on Hunter Biden's laptop?

Gabriel: No, no, no, no, no, no. Absolutely not. You misunderstand me. To clarify, they don't accept the election because they didn't want to lose. That's what I'm saying

Jon: But that's my point.

Gabriel: Yeah, absolutely. But what I'm saying is that is like, regardless of Hunter Biden's laptop or the state of the media or anything else, the stolen election is the genie that cannot be put back in the bottle. Like, you cannot, whatever happens—

Jon: Oh good. We have midterms coming up in two weeks. This is exciting.

Gabriel: Good luck trying to stuff it back in. Um, like, they're not gonna accept elections that they lost. Right? You can't walk back from that. And how do you coexist in a democratic ecosystem where one half of the game players do not believe in the rules? Like, how do you play that game anymore? Well, the only way you can play that game is

by meeting them by reinventing the rules and meeting them on that playing field. And I've just seen a clip from Hillary Clinton where she says, "Folks, they're preparing the, the Republicans, they are preparing to steal the 2024 election. Mark my words. They're preparing to steal it." Now what did we hear from Donald Trump in the run up to the 2020 election? "Folks, they're preparing to steal the election." Right? I think, and this is where I think just to go back to the beginning of our conversation, where I think that politics in our country, chaotic and messy, though it is, hasn't quite caught up with the nightmare that is politics in your country. [JON LAUGHS] Is that, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Tocarra: Must be nice.

Gabriel: It's not nice because I, partly because I love America and partly because I know that everything that happens, uh, where you are, comes to us sooner or later.

Tocarra: That's true.

Gabriel: Yeah.

Jon: We are patient zero in a lot of, in a lot of ways. [GABRIEL LAUGHS]

Tocarra: Yeah.

Gabriel: But I just don't see how the game can be played anymore. I think it's over.

Jon: Democracy is at some level, is a gentleman's agreement. It is —

Gabriel: Right.

Jon: — consent of the governed. And if the governed do not consent, then you no longer have the fabric of a democracy to fall back on. And the hope is that we have enough civic infrastructure to withstand what maybe is a temporal disruption and not a permanent fissure. You speak about maybe crossing a rubicon, I still believe in a pendulum and maybe that pendulum is swinging wildly in a way that seems broken and chaotic. But I do hope that if we get to a certain point, and I don't wanna say cooler heads will prevail, but the abyss will be so devastating to peer into that people will step back. That's as optimistic a version of it as I possibly can muster.

Gabriel: I hope you're right.

Jon: And it's not as though we haven't been in this place in previous eras. Look, everyone thinks it's a fait d'accompli that we joined up with the allied powers and we battled

fascism, but that was not predestined. But that's not to say that if that battle was repeated, we would join that same side.

Gabriel: Could have ended up in Philip Roth, "The Plot Against America."

Jon: But when I look at it now, when you see that half the country is lining up behind, you know, Putin and Orban and other people that are more ultra nationalistic and, uh, have different views, I'm not so sure that we do join up to defend democracy or we just redefine what we think defending democracy is and join up with whatever that is. So those fulcrums are always tenuous. And, uh, I think I have more faith ultimately in people's ability to walk that tightrope. I wish I had something to back that up for you. I wish I had, I wish I had a reason other than a deep abiding belief that most people want to be left the f\*\*\* alone and have peaceful, prosperous lives. That's it.

Gabriel: Sometimes a bit of faith is enough.

[JON LAUGHS]

Jon: Gabriel, you're killing me. You're killing me here.

[GABRIEL LAUGHS]

Gabriel: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Well, I was trying to be supportive.

Jon: Well, thank you. I appreciate that. Boy, Gabriel, it's such a pleasure to talk to you as, as always.

Gabriel: It really is

Jon: Uh, fascinating stuff and your insights into that are really fantastic. And so I truly appreciate it. Uh-

Gabriel: Thank you so much. It's been a real joy as ever and, uh, Tocarra and Robby too. Thank you.

Robby: Thank you Gabriel.

Tocarra: Thank you.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Jon: Holy s\*\*\* guys. What we, what are, we've gotta do one with like, uh, we gotta find like a happy light.

[TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Robby: Uh-huh,

Jon: By the end of it, I really, I thought Gabriel was gonna go, “All is lost”.

[LAUGHS]

Robby: Yeah. You really brought the optimism at the end. And I bit my tongue on my thoughts. Cause like, let's let this end with some light.

Tocarra: Well, as soon as he brought up Florida, I felt so much shame. I was like, Just be quiet. [JON LAUGHS] Don't do it for your hometown. Shut up.

Jon: It struck me that he was saying like, “Well, geez, if there weren't. These kernels of truth in what they were saying, then this wouldn't have power.” And that's probably an oversimplification, but I do disagree with that in the sense of do you remember when Dana Loesch, who was the sort of right wing uh, commentator after the Herschel Walker situation came out where it was, he had paid for an abortion and he's pro-life and the hypocrisy and all those other things. I thought she really laid the game out though pretty clearly. She said, “I don't give a s\*\*\*.”

Robby: Yeah.

Jon: If he paid for, I believe the quote was “some skank's abortion.”

Tocarra: Yeah.

Jon: “I want control of the Senate” And ultimately trying to discern the roots, isn't as important as understanding the goal. And the goal is power. And any lever will be pulled in pursuit of said power. I mean, the idea that, uh, the status quo and the establishment is corrupt? Yeah, no f\*\*\*ing kidding. But to then utilize that as your pretense —

Robby: Yes.

Jon: —for these much larger conspiracies. That's when it gets cynical.

Robby: The movement toward just stating of the goal is that's shocking. Even that is shocking. Cause even Dana Loesch is media savvy enough to know. She wouldn't have said that some years ago, but now they're really just laying it out. They're very comfortable saying “what we want is power and control”. I don't think this is unique to Dana Loesch. I think we'll be hearing more and more of this from more and more mainstream voices.

Jon: I was just really surprised by that. I mean, you guys are from Florida. I mean, for, from your friends that are down there, are they the ones who are calling you and going like, “Hmm”

Robby: They were calling me from the floor of NatCon. “You gotta, you gotta come down here.”

[LAUGHTER]

Tocarra: I think it's very easy for people to sort of get that ear worm. Like even my brother, I, I'll bring up something political no matter what it is. He'll say, “Well, what about Hunter Biden’s laptop?”

Jon: Oh, that's interesting.

Tocarra: He'll bring it up.

Jon: Everybody needs an ear worm. Do you, is there a, what would be the liberal equivalent of that, of that ear worm? Is there one?

Robby: Uh, well, it was Russian misinformation for a long time.

Tocarra: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Robby: It was, This is Russia. This is Russia.

Jon: Right, right, right. It's fascinating.

Tocarra: “Trump’s gonna get indicted.” That one, that song.

Jon: Right. I'm just truly hoping that this is kind of the temporary madness in the crucible of an upcoming election and that in the post-election now, that's suggesting that the election will come off like elections we've seen in the past. People will concede, the Congress will go, like, I have a feeling that may not be the case. So this may be another one of those never ending stories, but I am hoping that perhaps this is a little bit of like, the stress before finals and then after finals everybody's gonna be like, “Whew.”

Robby: I hope so. Cuz the rhetoric is, it's outta control. Last night, uh, Tucker Carlson, as a throwaway line, talking about the Democratic party, he said, “and you know they're a religion, they're, a child sacrifice cult.”

Jon: Child sacrifice, cult and pro-union.

[ROBBY LAUGHS]

Robby: Yes.

Tocarra: Speaking of mainstream voices saying ridiculous stuff out loud with no consequence. That's wild.

Robby: Yeah.

Tocarra: Okay here we are.

Robby: And, and the game I always feel is like, Oh, you called us Nazis. “Okay, well look, now we're gonna do Nazi s\*\*\*.” [JON LAUGHS] On the Democratic side, it's never like, “Oh, you call us a child sacrifice cult, bring me a baby.” You know? It's like–

[LAUGHTER]

Jon: Uh, that's, if that becomes a bumper sticker, I think we're gonna have real problems.

Robby: We're gonna have issues.

Jon: Well guys, what a conversation today. Uh, a lot of emotions up down. Uh, I laughed. I cried. I mostly cried. I'm still crying, there's gonna be a lot of crying. Uh, but thank you guys very much for being here. Robby Slowik, Tocarra Mallard. I wanna thank Gabriel Gatehouse. That is The Problem Podcast for this week. Please join us for the Apple TV+ show, uh, that'll be coming out on, elections and how we can best, uh, securitize them in a way that that makes our democracy function. I believe it's out on Friday. Uh, so we will see you next time.

Tocarra: Bye!

Robby: Bye everybody.

Jon: Buh Bye.

[OUTRO MUSIC]

Jon: “The Problem with Jon Stewart Podcast” is an Apple TV+ podcast and a joint Busboy Production.