

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EPISODE 435 TRANSCRIPT

Tom Morello: I'm Tom Morello and you're listening to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*.

Dr. Bandy Lee: What we have failed to address over decades is that when society is made vulnerable through escalating levels of inequality, which means that large portions of the population will be deprived and essentially it means concentration of power in the hands of very few, that not only is that economic and material deprivation, it harms the emotional and mental health of the population. And so, we've had a population that has been primed and made vulnerable to someone of predatory psychology as Donald [J] Trump would be. And also, they share his psychology. I often term this phenomenon narcissistic symbiosis.

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan. David Feldman is off on a personal matter. We hope to see him back next week. And we have the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph. Welcome back.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, Steve. Welcome, everybody

Steve Skrovan: On today's program, we welcome back Dr. Bandy X Lee, a forensic psychiatrist, specializing in violence, who's been warning us about Donald Trump since publishing the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 37 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President*.

A lot has happened since then for both Donald Trump, Dr. Lee, and the country. Her new book is entitled *Profile of a Nation: Trump's Mind, America's Soul*. In that book, she asks, "Why does Donald Trump have such a hold on his followers? Why must he provoke violence? What is going on in the minds of those who support and follow him after so many scandals, failed policies, and even a deadly insurrection? What caused his ascendancy? And how can we prevent another one?" We'll also discuss her take on what has been revealed in the January 6th hearings and the latest on her own travails in academia speaking out on those subjects.

Afterwards, Ralph and I are going to expound upon what we've been learning in the latest January 6th hearings. And as always, somewhere in the middle, we'll check in with our corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber. But first, let's talk about this Svengali-like hold Donald Trump has on so many.

Dr. Bandy Lee is a medical doctor, a forensic psychiatrist, and a world expert on violence, who taught at Yale School of Medicine at Yale Law School for 17 years before transferring recently to Columbia [University] and Harvard [University]. She became known to the public by leading a group of mental health professional colleagues in breaking the silence about the immediate past US President's dangerous psychology and publishing the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 37 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President*. And her latest is entitled *Profile of a Nation: Trump's Mind, America's Soul*. Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Dr. Bandy Lee.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Thank you for having me

Ralph Nader: Welcome back indeed, Bandy. Tell our audience the brief history of how you spoke out and received the support of dozens and dozens of other psychiatrists around the

country after observing intensively the behavior and the words and the outbursts and the actions of Donald J. Trump.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes. Thank you. I was first worried during the campaign that Donald Trump was resembling, more so than a political candidate, one of the patients I have seen. I treat violent offenders as a specialty in forensic psychiatry. And his interactions with his followers matched very much what I have observed in street gangs or prison gangs. And I was concerned that the public was not quite recognizing his dangers.

But the day after election, starting at around eight o'clock in the morning, I was flooded with phone calls, emails, messages from people in civil society organizations I had been working with mainly in prison reform. And then they were worried about the violence that was to come in this country. So, I would say that citizens and the public were actually quite in lock step with our concerns despite politicians and perhaps the media not so much being as on par.

While I was trying to get this known, or initially I tried to write to Congress members. And when I spoke with colleagues, there was almost a unanimous consensus that he was dangerous, but they weren't willing to put their names, their signatures, to letters. So, I did a conference at Yale, a conference on the professional responsibility to warn of danger. And that happened in early 2017. The book, *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump*, came out late 2017. And by early 2018, we were the number one topic of national conversation. It was an unprecedented *New York Times* bestseller because seldom do we have multi-authored specialized knowledge on the bestseller list, but it was an instant bestseller. And we felt that the momentum was really in place to bring attention to this issue.

But then the American Psychiatric Association [APA], the establishment organization of psychiatry, which we thought would lead the way in societal responsibility because we have a public health duty as much as we do have a duty to individual patients. But surprisingly and alarmingly, they came down and called us unethical and said all kinds of names, calling us armchair psychiatrists, using psychiatry as a political tool.

In fact, they had modified what's called the Goldwater Rule, which is restrictions on speaking about public figures because there is an ethical guideline that we educate the public about public figures, but then there's a guideline as to how to do it. And they were breaking their new guideline, which was essentially a gag order. They put that in place right after Donald Trump got inaugurated. So, it was very odd that they were basically slandering us falsely and breaking their own rule. So that's how we were silenced.

Ralph Nader: Yes. The American Psychiatric Association is known to be very close to the drug companies. That's one of the models of psychiatric treatment and the drug companies see the psychiatric association or what's called the APA as a major marketing instrument for their pharmaceuticals. And you quit from the American Psychiatric Association in 2007 because in your words, "I felt this trade association was too beholden to the drug companies."

Dr. Bandy Lee: That's right.

Ralph Nader: It seems that you were vindicated even though you were abandoned by the major professional society. But you and scores of other psychiatrists who signed on to your declarations and petitions have been vindicated by recent disclosures. Explain that.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes, I am again flooded with messages from members of the public saying that we were vindicated and that we had been right all along. And in a sense, that's unfortunate

because what we predicted was quite dire and that would be the consequence of no intervention. So, in fact, no intervention has happened. We had warned, in fact, my second book was written so that it would warn that an election will not take care of a dangerous presidency, that the presidency will not end with a normal election, that an intervention commensurate with the problem had to happen. And so, yes, you can say it's vindication. It's not a happy vindication.

Ralph Nader: Well, there are millions of people who know that Donald Trump is an unstable personality. He fabricates his own so-called reality and then bullies people to accept it. He often sues people for what he calls challenging his declaration, his views of things. He is in litigation with several women for sexual abuse and assault that are pending now in the courts. His lawyers are delaying and delaying year after year, even his being deposed. And of course, he's a pathological liar.

Now, if somebody was of that characteristic in a workplace or in a neighborhood, people would not want to have anything to do with this person. They would call the police. They would take his menacing words at their dangerous value. But because he was selected by the Electoral College to be president, he seems to be getting a pass. There's been no president who has come close to his instability, his threats, his accusations, his fabrications, never mind his bigotry. You think he's above the law? You think what's going on in Washington is just condemnation, but not indictment and prosecution?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Well, I think absolutely he should be indicted, and he should be prosecuted. We had noted that these would be the means to healing society and curbing the public health danger he poses. I mean, public health not just in terms of the COVID pandemic, which he very well may have caused a vast majority of the deaths and still ongoing, but also the psychological dangers that he has posed and continues to pose. And yes, I very much hope that our country will turn around. And if they've ignored our warnings all along and ignored all other persons who have raised alarms, then now they will recognize just how severe his danger has been and that he needs to be contained, and that is through indictment and prosecution, as you say.

Ralph Nader: Well, there are criminal laws against people, not to mention people in power, for incitement to violence and you can't count the number of times he has incited his crowds and his supporters to violence, whether it's against public officials or reporters covering his speeches or generally the way he speaks. It's always some kind of incitement or support of violent people.

And the June 28th hearing of the January 6th committee brought out sworn testimony by the special assistant to Mark Meadows, who was Donald Trump's majordomo in the White House, about how he was inciting the crowds to inflict mayhem on his vice president and say, that's a good idea to hang Mike Pence. I mean, any ordinary person would be prosecuted or institutionalized. If the defense was an insanity defense that the court recognized, they would institutionalize the person because they would accept that as a defense against prosecution and imprisonment.

Why do you think he's getting away with all this? It happens again and again. It's not a single episode like the [Richard] Nixon's Watergate episode. It's week after week, day after day--what comes out of his mouth, what comes out of his speeches, what comes out of his tweets. Why does he get away with this? What kind of society are we living in here?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes. And I think the society has been greatly shaped by placing such a mentally unstable person in the position of president. As you stated, his happening onto the presidency in

the first place was the most dangerous act. We had warned that not containing his psychological dangers would spread into social, cultural, geopolitical, and civic dangers. And that's exactly what has happened. There's almost no area he has left untouched as a president and that includes Supreme Court justices. We've also said that an incompetent president is likely to gravitate toward and appoint incompetent, legally unfit individuals to different offices.

So, not only did we see that he is verbally violent and sexually violent and threatened nuclear war as well as threatening to all manner of vulnerable groups, but he is also behaviorally violent. And it's extraordinary how the special aid Cassidy Hutchinson's testimony had to be such a surprise in order to protect her safety and to protect her from witness intimidation.

And so, it's clear how dangerous Donald Trump is as an individual with the kind of influence he has now as a past president, not to mention the dangers that have spread and are ongoing since his presidency. And also, finally, there's phenomenon of contagion that happens when you have a person with severe mental symptoms in a position of great influence and exposure to the population then the symptoms spread. The symptoms themselves can spread like a contagious disease. And that's something that's often underplayed and especially underplayed by the pharmaceutical industry driven psychiatric industry. And I think that's important to note because we have all clearly witnessed how that can happen.

Ralph Nader: Well, I'm sure some of our listeners are saying: Wait a minute, Dr. Lee, apart from his words in foreign policy, he has actually been less belligerent in his deeds than his predecessors, Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton--that he's been wanting to pull out of Afghanistan. He hasn't started any new wars. He participated and extended the half dozen wars that he inherited – Somalia, Yemen – but he hasn't really shown his belligerent danger side overseas compared to domestically. And he met with the dictator of North Korea after threatening him with nuclear weapons.

But if you separate the words from the deeds in terms of foreign actions, how do you explain that? He actually is less belligerent, except toward Palestinians. He really wanted to have Israel annex the West Bank. But in other areas, he has been belligerent, but there's a case to be made that he is nowhere near as belligerent overseas as he is domestically. And he is probably less belligerent in some areas than his presidential predecessors who were considered stable.

Dr. Bandy Lee: I think that's one of the reasons why some have elected him, that the establishment is so belligerent and warlike that someone from outside the establishment, - whatever his stance, would be better. And he did and others have believed his words that he would want to end endless wars and that he opposed the Iraq War and things like that. Even though we have no evidence of that.

But I, as a psychiatrist, look at the psychological effects and in some ways the wider scale cultural effects, more so than his specific policy and the fact that he had broken several treaties, failed to renew others, renewed a nuclear arms race, heightened tensions between nations, elevated brutal dictators around the world, and overall increased the culture and legitimacy of belligerency and supporting belligerent nations. I would say that that actually far exceeds any specific policy or specific bombing or warring that one can do. And that few have rivaled him in terms of increasing the climate, intention and breakdown of international order to the point where many more wars are to come.

Ralph Nader: Well, it's interesting how our levels of expectation come to these conclusions. I mean, he slaughtered many, many people overseas illegally, just the way his predecessors did. He wanted to pull out a NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] at one time. He pulled out of the Paris Climate Accords. He cut off funding for the World Health Organization. He was intent on pulling us out of that international group. So, there's no sugar coating what he did overseas, but the rest of the story, I think, will astonish our listeners.

What happened is that your own faculty at Yale, the head of the department, where you had a long-term appointment, which are typically renewed indefinitely, asked you to leave the university. He obviously couldn't take the heat from the Trumpsters. And he asked you to leave the university. You then sued Yale in March of 2021, arguing that you were “unlawfully terminated from your faculty appointment in violation of your free speech rights and in violation of your right to academic freedom and other rights contained within Yale's faculty handbook.” Can you describe that?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes. There's a limited amount I can speak about the specific lawsuit because it is ongoing. And some strange things have happened such as the judge being replaced and the judgment stalling for over six months. But this kind of removal of voices that are – I've been called a whistleblower of both of Donald Trump and the psychiatric profession. And these kinds of voices that highlight the truth are suppressed during times of authoritarianism. So, journalists and intellectuals are especially vulnerable. So, when this happened without warning, without discussion, and in fact, it took me quite some time to try to get an explanation as to why my contract was not renewed as expected, because it's not supposed to be simply discontinued after one has been in the institution for over a year, let alone 17 years. And I only got an explanation four months after I was dismissed. And it was the Goldwater Rule, the American Psychiatric Association's revision of the so-called ethical guideline; although it in its current version it violates the core tenets of medical ethics as well as the Geneva Declaration [Declaration of Geneva], which is a universal physicians pledge.

Ralph Nader: Explain the Goldwater Rule. It's not really a rule. It's just sort of a doctrine that was adopted by some people in your profession. But explain it to our listeners. How did it arrive?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes, you're absolutely right. I'm always impressed at your precision because that it's a rule is a misnomer. It's a guideline. It's a principle. Because ethics are supposed to be – well, first, one is supposed to have agency. And secondly, it's not a rigid rule. So, the Goldwater Rule is a nickname for principle that states that psychiatrists have a responsibility to protect public health and to better the community. And under this guideline, one of them, is that if we are asked about a public figure, we refrain from diagnosis. And if we do diagnose or speak about diagnosis, to get authorization, to be able to speak about it. That's actually very matter of course. Diagnosis is about private assessment and treatment. So, there's no real reason to diagnose a public figure. And if you are publicizing it, then you certainly need authorization from the person who was diagnosed, but danger is not a diagnosis. And that's actually not of concern to the individual, even. It's of concern to society. We are always obligated to warn persons or society who might be in danger. And that is one of our core public health functions: informing and educating the public about dangers it might be exposed to. And so, to treat a public figure like a patient was never our goal. But the American Psychiatric Association, shortly after the inauguration of Donald Trump, revised the rule to say that under no circumstances is anyone/any psychiatrist, allowed to make any comment on a public figure. So, they went from just diagnosis, which legally it's called professional opinion, but professional opinion is not the same as any

opinion of a professional. And we may not be able to render a full professional opinion, but we can certainly speak about our opinion based on years and decades of clinical knowledge and research awareness of specialized knowledge from the field. And in fact, we're obligated as citizens to share this knowledge where it can be beneficial for society. But they were saying that all this was not allowed even in the case of a national emergency. And that to me was very alarming. And that to me was the reason why I held the conference, in fact, at Yale School of Medicine. It was an ethics conference to discuss the ethics of following this newly revised Goldwater Rule versus our core duty to protect public health and safety as well as to keep with the Geneva Declaration, which came out shortly after the experience of Nazism, which beholds physicians to protect humanity above following orders by a destructive regime.

Ralph Nader: So, just to back up, Dr. Lee.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes.

Ralph Nader: We're talking to Bandy Lee, doctor of psychiatry, former member the faculty of Yale, who would like to go back there after she is vindicated in the court of law. But describe the episode that led to the so-called Goldwater Rule because we didn't answer that.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes, of course. No other ethical guideline has a politician's name attached to it, even though it's a nickname. And that's because the rule came out of a political compromise. When Barry Goldwater was running for president in the 1960s, a magazine often called a tabloid magazine called *Fact* put out a survey to all members of the American Psychiatric Association. So, about 12,000 members were surveyed on whether or not Barry Goldwater was psychiatrically impaired and was fit to run for the presidency.

And so, about half of them responded irresponsibly, meaning they made all kinds of diagnoses and comments that couldn't really be made at that time without a personal examination. Now, that itself has changed since. Since about 1980, diagnoses are possible to make based on observation behavior alone, not requiring an introspective interview. But at that time, making diagnoses was not possible without an interview.

And so, *Fact Magazine* publicized it in a wildly sensational manner, stating that more than a thousand psychiatrists say that Barry Goldwater is unfit to be president. And after that, he lost by landslide and he sued the publication, not the psychiatrists. He sued the publication for libel and won and the publication went bankrupt. And after that, the American Medical Association, actually, which was much more politically aligned with the Republican Party at the time, pressured the APA into putting this into their ethical guidelines.

So, it went on the books in 1974 at which time people were already saying it's outdated; it's no longer relevant. And in fact, the American Psychiatric Association is the only mental health association right now that has the rule, probably the only association in the whole world that has the rule, which accounts for 6% of American mental health professionals. And yet this was touted publicized during the Trump era as if it were a rule that no mental health professionals should violate. And so, because they also recruited the *New York Times*, which is heavily funded by the pharmaceutical industry, all media organizations followed suit and were worried that they may be sued or that they could not ethically have a mental health professional on their programs to be speaking about the president when the exact opposite is true; that it is our public health duty by all the main tenets of medical ethics and that this Goldwater Rule is actually a very

controversial rule, that since the Trump era, the majority of psychiatrists disagree with, according to one informal call.

Ralph Nader: The media blackout was remarkable. You were all over the press in the first year or so of your declarations supported by dozens of other psychiatrists around the country. And then suddenly you couldn't get any attention. *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, NBC, ABC, CBS.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes.

Ralph Nader: And they all folded. And of course, the bullying by Trump generally intimidated them on other fronts as well. If you put out your declaration today as you did right after Trump was selected by the Electoral College, would all those psychiatrists who signed on--tell us the number by the way. Would they still sign on or have they been intimidated as well?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Oh, I think they would certainly sign on. When the first impeachment trial was going on, we circulated a statement and that gathered almost a thousand signatories. And right now, our organization, that is mental health professionals who have joined our efforts, not only from within the country, but around the world, the last time it numbered several thousand in ways that that was too numerous for us to count.

Ralph Nader: Given recent disclosures about Trump on January 6th, are you thinking of an open declaration and soliciting the names of many of these psychiatrists?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes. We have been considering making a statement after these hearings and perhaps the press will be willing to pick it up now. And yes, I do hope so. The first time we spoke up, more than 50 members of Congress met with us. And some luminaries in journalism stated that they believed we had gotten to the point in the press, where Congress members may now be able to do something. And so, in other words, we had arrived in their view. And then that was exactly when we were promptly shut down.

If we could gain the interest and education of the public despite the disinformation and de-education on the part of the public, because there's now just like the criminality and violence of Donald Trump became acculturated because of lack of action and because of normalization in the press, so has the lack of voice of mental health professionals in this area. It's become normalized and the public has come to accept it. And for a while, it might be viewed as odd to have mental health professionals speaking up again, but I believe it's critical and necessary, because in my view this is still a mental health issue.

And even when it becomes time for indictment or prosecution, it would be critical to involve mental health voices, not because he is eligible for an insanity defense or incapacity to stand for trial, which he is not, but because many are fearing the dangers that might come from insurrection by his followers, the revolt that might come because they have had such sufficient time with him to essentially become his cult-like followers and that they have gone beyond reason and beyond their normal decision making to essentially worshipping him to the point where any kind of accountability to him would be unacceptable to them.

Ralph Nader: It should be added that the New York attorney general is initiating legal action against the Trump group that solicited all kinds of Trump supporters over the last year and a half for money and the money didn't go to where it should have gone, given the words in the solicitation. They solicited money to a group that didn't even exist and it was diverted for other

purposes. So, that's another problem that Donald Trump will have under conventional criminal fraud laws.

We've been talking with Dr. Bandy Lee, who for many years taught at the Yale School of Psychiatry and at Yale Law School. And before I have Steve come in on this discussion, I just want to quote what the well-known constitutional law expert, Professor Lawrence Tribe, at Harvard Law School said about your case. He said, "A university does have the right to fire someone whose work is substandard, but it is hypocritical for Yale to punish Lee simply for criticizing a couple of powerful people, namely Trump and [Alan] Dershowitz. That endangers the whole academic enterprise. Lee has a strong case – period." Steve?

Steve Skrovan: Yeah. Thanks, Ralph. Dr. Lee, you started to touch on this a few moments ago and I just wanted to have you expand and elaborate on it. What is the hold that somebody who I consider a snake oil salesman, a clown, an ignoramus, which is Donald Trump have such a hold on his followers?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Well, what we have failed to address over decades is that when society is made vulnerable through escalating levels of inequality, which means that large portions of the population will be deprived and essentially it means concentration of power in the hands of very few, that not only is that economic and material deprivation, it harms the emotional and mental health of the population. And so, we've had a population that has been primed and made vulnerable to someone of predatory psychology as Donald Trump would be. And also, they share his psychology. I often term this phenomenon narcissistic symbiosis. And that the narcissistic traits, Donald Trump's inability to tolerate any kind of reminder of his inadequacy and what he deems to be his worthlessness, what he has a given, although he would never admit to it consciously, that this would be shared. And the dynamic that happens is that individuals with such conditions no longer look for leaders who would actually help them and actually be able to correct the realities and policies that would assist their wellbeing and welfare, but they gravitate toward individuals who would exaggerate and claim and overcompensate for their lack, so as to project this strong idealized persona--cartoonish in our view, but compelling in those who are thirsting for this kind of personality.

And so, while they do this, we know because they are demagogues, and they never intend to deliver what they say. Anyone who claims that "I alone can fix it" is likely to be a person who is incapable of fixing anything. But these are exactly the psychological profiles that they are attracted to.

Ralph Nader: Well, also the divide and rule strategy of Trump--and he's very good at that--creates scapegoats. And so, Trump taps into mass resentment against say certain minorities or certain fabrications that Trump hoists on them. That's part of it, isn't it?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes. He will be mobilizing the anger, sense of resentment, and the desire for revenge that is harboring in people because that's how he feels. But I would also say that it's not simply tapping into, but expanding and stoking the kind of paranoia, the division in the population and the fragmentation of society. Because scapegoating is inevitable when we place such persons in powerful positions. Because they are unable to deliver any real goods, they will in the end always need a scapegoat and that will be the direction in which they will eventually go. And so, that's how genocides happen. That's how civil wars happen.

Ralph Nader: Well, we shouldn't conclude this conversation without noting, of course, that Donald Trump was the chronic serial lawbreaker of all time in the White House. And that's saying something, given the previous lawbreaking by his predecessors. He violated the Constitution in so many ways and repeatedly defied subpoenas from Congress, violated the Hatch Act by using federal property in the White House premises for overtly brazenly reelection campaigning. He took appropriated funds here and put them there in violation of congressional mandates. He violated all kinds of health and safety regulatory mandates by dismantling regulatory agencies. And of course, like his predecessors, he violated all kinds of constitutional statutory international restraints on using armed force overseas in numerous countries with lethal consequences.

The lack of observance of the law and the fact that that did not upset many of his followers, say his more moderate followers, is something to be looked into, because he made the statement two, three years ago, which we have quoted again and again on this program. And here's a statement, "With Article II, I can do whatever I want as president." Really? I mean, that's the statement of a megalomaniac wannabe dictator. Of course, he can't do whatever he wants under Article II or under Article I or under Article III of the Constitution.

So, that ought always to be kept in mind because when there's a concentration on his bullying, his fabrications, his pathological lying and his delusions, it often detracts attention from his daily lawbreaking as president of the United States. Do you want to have any follow-up questions, Steve, before we thank Dr. Lee for her time?

Steve Skrovan: Sure. Just the observation that Barry Goldwater would be considered a moderate today. The thing has shifted so far to the right. And the other way that it was explained to me, the hold that he has, getting back to that, is that he hates the same people I hate. That was kind of a simple formulation. Does that resonate with you?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Hating the same people as in hating the same groups or hating the same –

Steve Skrovan: Yes, the same – yeah. Whether he hates the elites, he hates the immigrants. Usually, it's about the elites, I would think. He hates the same people I hate. And so, people identify with that. And I would also think that he himself, even though he's supposedly this multimillionaire, even billionaire from New York, seems to have an authentic outsider persona in that his father was the king of Queens. He wanted to take over Manhattan, but the Manhattan society saw him for what he was, which was this kind of mook. And so, he always felt that grievance, always felt like an outsider. And I think that authenticity, you could see that in rallies, comes across. Even though he's this multimillionaire, he's been unaccepted, and people can identify that, that came across authentically. Would you agree with that?

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes, absolutely. The idea of being a victim, even as one perpetrates; the idea that one is not given a fair chance, even as one is given all kinds of privileges, is very much something that his followers resonate with. The problem is they have much more reason to and he doesn't. Except as a psychiatrist, I would say that that speaks to how much he is impaired psychologically as a result of psychological deprivation.

Steve Skrovan: Right, right. But it comes across, yeah.

Ralph Nader: Also, his close associate, anti-terrorism foreign policy advisor, John Bolton, when he left the White House, wrote a book and said that obstruction of justice was a way of life in a White House. I mean, that's a serious criminal offense. It was a way of life. We must remember

these aren't singular episodes that are not repeated. These are daily recidivist violations of the law of the land. And that ought to always be included in any analysis of his state of mind and how dangerous he can be.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes, absolutely. Criminality, violent rhetoric, violence instigation, violent policies, and violent mentality are all interconnected. And they showed up in his policies and actions and those he aligned with. Because his cabinet was actually of the most corrupt multimillionaires there are.

Steve Skrovan: What seems to me, psychologically - as an amateur psychologist - that's different from other fascist dictators in history, is that he appears to have no ideology other than his own survival, self-aggrandizement and therefore, he will do whatever is good for Donald Trump. And if that happens to line up. He's got the instincts of an entertainer. He knows what the crowd wants. And this is probably, again, overreaching my own qualifications-- his trying to please his father and knowing how to do that, especially after his brother was kind of stomped down by his father, as he observed that and said, this is the lane that I can take; I need to please this person. And so, what seems to me is that what could be more dangerous for the country is his successor who actually has a lot of these same qualities, can tap into the same grievance, but actually has an ideology to back it up.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Yes, absolutely. We think of what he has done as a playbook or a dictator's formula, but it's actually rooted in psychology. And the psychology is consistent, that is psychopathology. And so, if someone of a similar psychopathology were to come on and is better organized and more disciplined, then of course we would be in much greater danger.

Ralph Nader: Well, we're out of time. We've been talking with Dr. Bandy Lee, formerly of the Yale Department of Psychiatry and who also taught Yale Law School. You've come out with a new book. What's the title, Steve?

Steve Skrovan: The title is *Profile of a Nation: Trump's Mind, America's Soul*.

Ralph Nader: Let's hope that the news blackout on your activities over the last two or three years has lifted, so people can once again receive a wide-angled evaluation of this personality known as Donald J. Trump, who wants very vigorously to run again as president in 2024. Thank you very much, Dr. Lee.

Dr. Bandy Lee: Thank you very much, Ralph and Steve.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Dr. Bandy Lee. We will link to her work at ralphnaderradiohour.com. When we come back, Ralph and I are going to talk about the January 6th hearings. But now, let's check in with our corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber.

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, DC, this is your *Corporate Crime Reporter* "Morning Minute" for Friday, July 8, 2022; I'm Russell Mokhiber. Katia and Brendan Holmes spend their predawn hours and evenings overseeing the milking of 60 cows, and then throwing the milk away. The couple found out earlier this year that their herd's milk contains long-lasting toxins known as forever chemicals. They traced the contamination to hay grown on ground near their farm in Central Maine, where material from wastewater treatment plants was spread years earlier as fertilizer. That's according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. Until recently, few farmers realized that the material could seed toxic chemicals into their ground. Sludge from treatment plants have been spread on farms across the country, partly to add nutrients to the land. The sludge sometimes contains PFAS chemicals

[Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances]. For the *Corporate Crime Reporter*, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russel. Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. I'm Steve Skrovan along with Ralph. Ralph, let's pick up a little bit where we left off with Dr. Lee because I want to talk a little bit about the January 6th hearings, and I have an observation from a show business point of view. Being a writer, I've never seen hearings that are so slickly and efficiently produced. And that's not a bad thing; it's actually made, I think, for compelling television. And I'm old enough to remember the Watergate hearings, the Iran-Contra hearings. This, they've obviously used a documentary news producer who puts in the clips. Everything seems to be scripted. So, from that point of view, it seems to be very watchable, and they have a cliffhanger. Next week, we're going to do this. It's really kind of conformed with how people consume television these days in order to get this story out. And seems to me, from a legal point of view, to resemble a grand jury proceeding where the prosecution presents all this evidence to the grand jury, which is us, the American people, to see if a crime has been committed. What's your take on all of that?

Ralph Nader: Well, it is getting rave reviews in terms of how smooth and compelling and concise the presentations are of the hearings. No doubt about that. Even from people who don't like what the content of the hearings are, they're pretty impressed by the professionalism. And what's missing is the two main characters. And the January 6th committee is mum about the question: Why aren't you subpoenaing Donald J. Trump and Mike Pence? They're the two main characters in this insurrection that they're investigating and nobody in the media has been able to get an answer.

I'm not saying they try very hard because we're trying to get reporters from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and elsewhere to ask, but they just get stonewalled. Well, when the media says, maybe they don't want to show their hand; maybe it's a tactical silence; maybe they will subpoena Trump and Pence after they've laid the foundation. And Trump will defy the subpoena and try to end up in terminable judicial proceedings to ring the clock out. But so, what? The fact is, if they do not call Trump and Pence, the supporters of Trump and Pence will say, see how unfair the committee is? They wouldn't let former President Trump and former Vice President Pence come to the committee and defend themselves. So that is one vacuum that has to be filled in the waning days of this committee because they're supposed to be putting out their report before the end of the summer.

Steve Skrovan: But do you think that would just be a gesture? Because like you said, they would not appear, they would fight it or take the fifth like everybody else who has been close to it. And they just don't want to get involved in that sort of procedural wrangling, which will muddy the waters?

Ralph Nader: Well, all they have to do is give them an opportunity to respond. They're not required to drag them in chains into the hearing room. But if they don't say, we invited former President Trump, former Vice President Pence, how are they going to explain the accusation that the hearing did not let the presumed defendants come and defend themselves?

Steve Skrovan: Right, so, you're saying they should at least reach out to them, knowing that it will be, just like they've reached out to all these other people who refuse to comply such like Mark Meadows.

Ralph Nader: Right.

Steve Skrovan: And so, you think they at least need to make that gesture in order to say, we asked; you didn't want to be put under oath. And so, it seems to me it's been more effective to talk to all of these people around who would not distort or who have every reason to tell the truth, no reason to lie, whereas the other people would have big reason to lie.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. But they also have big reason to feel perjury charge because they're under oath. That's why Trump would never reply to a subpoena or just an invitation to come up and testify because his lawyers know that the minute he opens his mouth, he's going to start a stream of perjury. But just to cover themselves, they should say, we invited them to testify or we subpoenaed them to testify, and they defied the subpoena, extending their career of lawlessness to the present day.

Steve Skrovan: Right. Well, in the last hearing where Mark Meadow's assistant to deputy chief of staff, Cassidy Hutchinson, all of 25 years old, by the way, which is kind of amazing at how poised she was in testifying, there were some remarkable revelations. One being that Trump knew the crowd was armed, said, "They're not here to hurt me," which begs the question, who did he think they were here to hurt? And despite that, exhorted them to march to the Capitol. Do you think that's going to be enough for the Justice Department to bring criminal charges?

Ralph Nader: There's a lot more than that. They're already sending federal agents to the homes and offices of suspects. So, I think [Merrick] Garland is already underway investigating it at the lower levels of the violators, whether he's going to take the grand jury, if there is a grand jury, and it increasingly seems like there is, which is always shrouded in secrecy, by the way. Whether he's going to take the grand jury all the way to the level of Donald J. Trump is still unanswered. But clearly now federal agents are moving to acquire evidence under warrants.

Steve Skrovan: So, it seems like they've been making a pretty good case for incitement. And now they're making a case for possible witness intimidation too. That's another prong of this.

Ralph Nader: And obstruction of justice and appropriating federal property illegally, and, and, and. There's no end to the number of counts. The question is, is Merrick Garland going to go down in history as the attorney general who defended the assault on our Constitution, our electoral process, our rule of law--brazenly and openly and repeatedly by Trump and his cohorts? Or is he going to go down as someone who inched along, prosecuted a few lower-level violators, and let Donald J. Trump get off scot-free?

Steve Skrovan: Ralph, give us a little historical perspective here. Because in 1973, when the Saturday Night Massacre occurred, which was Nixon wanting his attorneys general to fire Archibald Cox, who was the independent investigator in the case. And I believe you were part of the lawsuit that brought all of that to head legally. Compare Watergate to what you're hearing today.

Ralph Nader: Well, Watergate was a one-time violation. It was a conspiracy, but it wasn't like Nixon was involved in burglarizing Democratic Party property regularly. And yet the full force of the law came down on him. You had very thorough hearings in the House and Senate. Nixon violated four subpoenas by defying them. And he was charged with one obstruction of justice. And that was going to be enough by everybody concerned to impeach him in the House and convict him in the Senate. But he resigned before the impeachment in the House. The votes were all there to impeach and convict.

And compared to Nixon, one obstruction of justice and four subpoenas defied, Trump made obstruction of justice a daily way of life in the White House, according to his foreign policy advisor, John Bolton, in his book on his experience at the White House with Donald J. Trump, (*The Room Where it Happened: A White House Memoir*). And at last count, he defied over 120 congressional subpoenas, not including all kinds of former requests for testimony--over 120. And still the Congress was unable to convict him in the Senate, thanks to his GOP backers.

Now compare the multiple outrages ending in an insurrection on January 6th. Compare Trump's recidivism, his constant criminal violations, his civil violations openly day after day brazenly, basically saying, with Article II, I can do whatever I want as president. As Bruce Fein once said, that statement alone should have been an impeachable offense. That's a statement of dictatorship and Trump backed it up with daily activities and obstruction of justice. So, the result is now in the hands of Merrick Garland. This all comes down to the attorney general of the United States and the federal prosecuting attorneys. And we're just waiting and seeing. There's no way we can find out what happens. It's all shrouded in secrecy except when federal agencies get a search warrant and seize computers and iPhones and the rest.

Steve Skrovan: Well, we'll see after I believe the first couple of hearings Donald Trump actually put out on his own social media platform, "I want equal time!" I don't know what he's asking for is his own separate hearings because obviously he wouldn't want to be put under oath there. So, we'll keep a watch out on this and give you Ralph's perspective, especially since Ralph has got such an historical perspective on this and we'll continue on. Thanks, Ralph.

I want to thank our guest again, Dr. Bandy Lee. For those of you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you, podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material we call "The Wrap Up". A transcript of this program will appear on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website soon after the episode is posted. Subscribe to us on our *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* YouTube channel. And for Ralph's weekly column, it's free. Go to nader.org. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

The American Museum of Tort Law has gone virtual. Go to tortmuseum.org to explore the exhibits, take a virtual tour, and learn about iconic tort cases from history. And be sure to check out their online gift shop. You'll find books, posters, and "Flaming Pinto" magnets and mugs for all the tort fans in your life. That's at store.tortmuseum.org. To order your copy of *The Capitol Hill Citizen*, "Democracy Dies in Broad Daylight," go to capitolhillcitizen.com.

The producers of the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran. Our executive producer is Alan Minsky. Our theme music, *Stand Up, Rise Up*, was written and performed by Kemp Harris. Our proofreader is Elisabeth Solomon. Our associate producer is Hannah Feldman. Our social media manager is Steven Wendt. Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, everybody. Stay active, get engaged. That's what it's all about.