

Hello listeners. This is a potent episode and I am so grateful to my guests.

We are #LIVEintheHIVE with Betsy Gaines Quammen, historian and award-winning author of *American Zion* + *True West* – and Tasha Adams, the ex-wife of Oath Keeper's founder, Stewart Rhodes.

Betsy has previously been a guest on #TheEdgeofEverydayPodcast in June of 2022 and in that episode, we talked about both of her powerful and increasingly relevant books and the significant need to have difficult conversations across polarizing political views and differing cultural perspectives. You can find that episode at TalkRadio.NYC and on my YouTube channel, Sandra Bargman on The Edge of Everyday.

Betsy brings wisdom + engaging storytelling to her important work, and in these increasingly turbulent times under a clearly authoritarian administration, I knew I needed to have her on the show again. When I reached out, Betsy suggested that I also ask her good friend, Tasha Adams, to join us. Tasha's ex-husband, Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the right-wing militia, The Oath Keepers, had just been released from jail, having had his sentence of 18 years in prison for **sedition conspiracy** for his role in the Jan 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection commuted.

Tasha's story is deeply moving, a life lived under the thumb of an abusive, manipulative man, and finding the courage to plan an escape for herself and her 6 children. I could only imagine how she must be feeling upon hearing the news of his release.

This episode is NOT about the Oath Keepers, or Tasha's role in it. There are podcasts and interviews and two documentaries in which to explore that information.

**This episode explores the relationship between open spaces and toxic masculinity.**

***“What I knew then and feel more deeply now is that open lands inspire open minds. This is the open space of democracy”. - Terry Tempest Williams in NYT***

- Betsy and Tasha shared how they met while Betsy was researching the BUNDY family and publicly owned federal lands for her first book. It's all documented in her book, *American Zion: Cliven Bundy, God, and Public Lands in the West*.
- Then researching Western mythologies that create TOXIC MASCULINITY. Researched in *True West: Myth and Mending on the Far Side of America*.
- The power of WOMEN friendships.
- The takeover of OPEN spaces of land out west and the open spaces of a closet – and of the mind – the complete MACRO + MICRO of toxic masculinity.
- Both women weigh on the abuse, vitriol and the TACTIC of DISORIENTATION for control by Toxic men.

- The very IMPORTANT exploration – that question that Tasha has received – that **every** trapped and abused woman has received – “WHY didn’t you leave?” Both Tasha and Betsy weigh in with extraordinary insight and information.
- “The tyranny over the weak” that toxic masculinity employs today.
- How is Tasha rebuilding and reclaiming today? She’s writing a MEMOIR!
- Betsy is working on a non-fiction book, DEAD RECKONING, that explores ancestral relations to haunted landscape, haunted houses and epigenetic trauma.
- All this - and much more.

Full bios and resources:

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