

IMANI: Hello fellow law nerds! Welcome to Season 8 of Boom! Lawyered!, a Rewire News Group podcast hosted by the legal journalism team that's back baby!

I'm Rewire News Group's Editor-at-Large, Imani Gandy

JESS: And I'm Jess Pieklo, Rewire News Group's Executive Editor. Rewire News Group is the one and only home for expert repro journalism that inspires you to call a clown a clown and the Boom! Lawyered podcast is part of that mission. A big thanks to our subscribers and welcome to our new listeners!

IMANI: Jess? Boom! Lawyered is back, bitches!

JESS: Season 8 baby! I mean Imani, eight seasons. Season eight?! Can you believe it?!

IMANI: In a way I can't, but in another more important way I can because nobody does legal journalism the way we do legal journalism. Also Jess, did you know that everything old is new again?

JESS: What do you mean?

IMANI: Last season we spent a lot of time talking about the stink of corruption emanating from this Supreme Court.

JESS: We sure did. And while we took a break over the summer, the corruption coming out of the Court sure didn't. And that's what we're going to talk about today: Ginni Thomas, her decades long crusade for right-wing causes, and the corruption that she is up to her elbows in.

JESS: Now really, this is just a continuation of the conversation we started last season about how corrupt this court is.

IMANI: We talked about Neil Gorsuch's corruption. Remember how he was unable to sell a piece of land in Colorado until the one guy who had business before the court overpaid for it—not cool Neil. We also talked about Brett Kavanaugh's corruption (who paid that credit card debt, buddy? I'm still wondering), and we also talked about Sammy the Leak Alito.

You know, we should recap that nonsense because it was shady—as the kids say—as fuck. And I feel like we need to reiterate just how shady it was. Look I'm down with the Gen Z Zoomers...You can't see me because this is audio now.

The TL;DR on that situation is that in the Hobby Lobby case—you remember the one where the Court ruled that for-profit corporations don't have an obligation to comply with the contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act contraception mandate if they believed in Jesus enough, you don't have to supply birth control to your employees as mandated by law.

JESS: Regulations are for folks who are non-Jesus believers, Imani.

IMANI: That's true! That is absolutely true. And so Alito was leaking information to this former evangelical leader by the name of Robert Schenk in order to give the Christian right an opportunity to prepare a PR blitz once the Hobby Lobby decision came down.

JESS: I'm sorry, I just have this image of Sam Alito literally leaking information like sweating...

IMANI: Like Rudy Giuliani with the hair dye. He's just sweating Hobby Lobby out of his pores.

JESS: It's like Jesus on the brow. Yes. Exactly. Just sweating religious imposition but that case—Hobby Lobby—created an opening for businesses to refuse to comply with civil rights laws, a point I made during our episode about how Alito should be impeached. That episode was appropriately called "[It's Time to Impeach Alito.](#)"

IMANI: Look, SCOTUS knew the decision would be unpopular, so Alito decided to just go ahead and give his pals a heads up. Just like he went ahead and gave his pals a heads up when he leaked the Dobbs decision.

JESS: But Imani, I'm no Alito fan, but we don't KNOW that he leaked the Dobbs decision.

IMANI: DON'T WE THOUGH, JESS. DON'T WE.

JESS: I feel like this is an appropriate time for a *circus sounds* ...

OK settle down. And as much as I love a good Alito dragging, what does any of this have to do with Ginni Thomas. I was talking about Ginni Thomas at the upfront.

IMANI: Because Ginni Thomas, as it turns out, is not only the tenth justice on the Supreme Court—that's right, I called her the tenth justice on the Supreme Court—she's the justice most enthusiastic about cracking democracy wide open to, get this Jess, protect America from the deep state, the fascist left, and transsexual fascists.

JESS: I'm sorry from WHOM?

IMANI: You heard me. Transsexual fascists.

IMANI: Look, Ginni—or Virginia Lamp as she was known when she was a wee lass—isn't playing with a full deck. And since she's from Omaha Nebraska and you're from Omaha Nebraska; she's a white lady and you're something of a white lady yourself—I need you to explain to me what this woman's deal is.

JESS. Is this some kind of "All Nebraskans Are the Same" thing Imani??! Do I have to do some white lady whispering here?

IMANI: Yeah you do. That's your job. You're the white lady whisperer. I certainly can't do it. I don't know what goes on in y'all's heads.

JESS: Imani's not wrong here. For real though Ginni has always been Ginni Thomas. There's something about the conservative movement in the Great Plains that trends conspiratorial with a heaping dash of religious zealotry--that's Ginni Thomas in a nutshell.

Like the American flag and a bald eagle on the cross with Jesus kind of shit. I COULD GO ON AND ON! Ginni? I do know where you come from sadly.

But back to the topic at hand: The reality is we have to go all the way back to Citizens United, the landmark case that unleashed a torrent of anonymous dark money into politics. Before Citizens United the Court was compromised by partisanship sure, but the difference was it didn't have literally billions of dollars from undisclosed individuals and organizations lobbying its justices for outcomes they want.

On this podcast, we talk a lot about how conservatives have weaponized the First Amendment for their own causes on this podcast and truly it starts with Citizens United—and I would be remiss not to make the abortion connection because that's kind of what I do.

IMANI: Six Degrees of Abortion

JESS: Six degrees from abortion is... James Bopp Jr! He helped bring Citizens United to the Court and that man is also a high-ranking attorney in the anti-choice movement soooo....when we talk about the anti-democracy forces and the anti-choice forces.... it's all the same fucking picture Imani.

IMANI: What's interesting in the CU case is that Ginni Thomas's husband would argue against forcibly disclosed donor information," which could "preempt citizens' exercise of their First Amendment rights." So not only did he want tons and tons of dark money, he was all hey man, maybe we don't have to disclose who's contributing it at all.

JESS: So I've explained what Citizens United is and the significance of it. Again I ask, what does this have to do with Virginia Lamp?

IMANI: I love lamp. Do you think Clarence Thomas goes to bed thinking "I love lamp" Well it turns out that Ginni worked in concert with Leonard Leo of Federalist Society fame and Harlan Crow of Nazi memorabilia enthusiast fame to reshape the judiciary and overturn the very precedents we've been discussing on this podcast for going on eight years now.

JESS: Abortion?

IMANI: Yup.

JESS: Affirmative action?

IMANI: Yup.

JESS: Voting rights?

IMANI: You got it. We've long talked about Leonard Leo's hand in shivving our civil rights in the kidney but earlier this month, thanks to some investigative reporting by Heidi Pryzbyla at Politico, information regarding the tenth Justice, Ginni Thomas's involvement in these schemes. Really shocking information.

JESS: The report is alarming. Imani and I have been doing this for a while so it takes a lot to alarm us, but let me tell you—this is alarming. Heidi reports that in the months leading up to the Court issuing the ruling in Citizens United, a group of conservative activists got together to stymie Barack Obama's policy initiatives. They couldn't just let Black excellence thrive.

IMANI: Among those activists? Leonard Leo and Ginni Lamp Thomas.

JESS: I'm so tired of these two. Of course it's Leonard Leo. Pick another hobby, my dude, other than undermining democracy. Seriously. Leonard Leo is the head of the Federalist Society and basically the Dark Money Overlord of the federal courts. He's the main reason we have the federal judiciary stacked with anti-democratic ideologues and jamokes.

So it's Ginni Thomas and Lenny Leo elbows deep in the conservative effort to undermine basically all the rights we care about.

IMANI: And guess who is providing the seed money for this conservative effort? Half a million dollars worth of seed money initially? Harlan Crow.

JESS: Nazi memorabilia enthusiast Harlan Crow? You do not say! That's never going to get old. This is the guy who has donated money to every member of the Senate Judiciary Committee except for Josh Hawley, either directly or through various political action committees.

IMANI: The one and the same. The same guy who paid for Clarence Thomas's mama's house. And who paid for Clarence Thomas's great nephew and legal guardian's school tuition to the tune of thousands of dollars a year. The guy who was taking Clarence on luxury yacht vacations.

JESS: I want a billionaire benefactor like that—so I could be like, here pay for some more Beyonce trips.

IMANI: I honestly might flip to be conservative if someone sent me on a tour with Beyonce.

JESS: I'm now imagining you and Candace Owens at every Beyonce show.

IMANI: Oh my god. No! I take it back. I take it all back. I regret everything.

JESS: So we've got Ginni and Lenny, the worst duo ever, also I immediately go to Laverne and Shirley. So we've got Lenny and Squiggy creating this conservative activist group called Liberty Central Inc. with Daddy Warcrow's millions—I love Daddy Warcrow, that is perfect—two months after oral arguments in Citizens United and two months before the decision in CU was handed down. That's some shady ass shit!

Liberty Central is a morass of dark money with millions flowing from anonymous donors to conservative luminaries and pals of Leonard Leo, and until this new report came out in Politico, Ginni Thomas's role in creating Liberty Central has flown under the radar.

IMANI: This is just a sidebar, but Ginni ultimately had to step down from the group she and Lenny created, Liberty Central Inc, because of that absurd voicemail she left for Anita Hill where in typical Karen fashion, she demanded that Hill apologize to her husband for shit that had gone down thirty years prior during Clarence Thomas' "high-tech lynching."

JESS: She was for sure a full box of Franzia in the evening when she did that.

IMANI: She 100 percent was. According to Politico, that email piqued the media's interest in whatever she was doing and once it came out that she was heading up this organization, Liberty Central, and once it came out that the entire purpose was stopping Obama's agenda, people thought hey man maybe not a good idea for the wife of a supreme court justice to be leading this type of org. So instead she created Liberty Consulting and basically does the same exact shit but it's cool because she's just "consulting."

But it gets even weirder. Guess who filed the paperwork to launch this organization within months of the Citizens United being argued. Cleta Mitchell.

JESS: Who the hell is Cleta Mitchell?

IMANI: She's a conservative lawyer who is a big deal in right wing circles. She's the chairperson of a right wing organization called Public Interest Legal Foundation or PILF.

JESS: There's only one PILF I can think of and that's Pedro Pascal.

IMANI: That's like a double P Pilf. Puh-Pilf.

JESS: The first P is silent.

IMANI: She's also been a key player in the ongoing movement among Republicans to suppress votes through voter identification laws, booting people off voter rolls (remember all the

shenanigans that went down in Ohio), and the like since 2000. She's been whinging about voter fraud and election fraud since the Bush/Gore debacle.

But it gets even better: she was on the infamous "Find me 11,000 votes" call between Trump and his people, Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

JESS: This is the Carrie Matheson red string board come to life in terms of conservative fuckery.

So the woman who set up Ginni Thomas's conservative organization is knee deep in the Stop the Steal nonsense too. Wow that's a dedication to the cause.

And recall that we found out about Ginni Thomas's involvement when the Washington Post published her batshit text messages. Truly this woman needs a chaperone for her phone. She was urging officials in the Trump administration not to accept the election results. She wasn't even using a burner! I don't understand it.

We did an episode on it called Ginni the Insurrectionist if you want the details, but the TL: DR is Ginni Thomas was in attendance at the January 6 insurrection but claims she left before things got rough.

IMANI: Then we learn that she was texting Mark Meadows, Trump's chief of staff urging him and others in the Trump administration to dispute the election results.

JESS: Over 20 texts!

"The majority knows Biden and the Left is attempting the greatest Heist of our History,"

IMANI: And then she appears before the J6 Committee and says she never talked to her husband about any of this shit

JESS: Does anyone believe that? Insurrection is their pillow talk.

IMANI: It's their foreplay. Stop the steal baby.

JESS: Yeah, stuff my ballot box.

IMANI: Nobody believes that. Nobody does. Last year there was a lot of talk about whether as a nation we can hold Clarence Thomas responsible in some way for the activities of his wife. Given what we know now, I think it's absurd to pretend as if some "Chinese Wall" exists between Clarence and Ginni. That's why we're calling her the tenth justice.

JESS: And for folks who don't have a legal background, a Chinese wall is a thing this law firms would erect in their practices where if they had lawyers working on cases which were potentially in conflict with each other or if they shared clients that were sometimes adversarial, law firms

would erect what they called a Chinese wall and it would block off folks who were in those adversarial situations within a firm from getting access to information or sharing stuff.

She has more access to the Supreme Court and his more involved in right wing causes than the spouses of any other justice. She had access to his listserv of former clerks. In no universe is this appropriate.

His former clerks include people like Laura Ingraham, D.C. Court of Appeals judge and former White House lawyer Greg Katsas, John Yoo (the torture enthusiast and he's on the 9th Circuit now), John Eastman, Carrie Severino president of conservative dark money group Judicial Crisis Network and wife of Roger Severino who is the big anti civil rights dude in the Trump administration. which we've talked about these folks on the show. These are heavy hitters among conservatives. And Ginni was just emailing them cobbler recipes and what not and here's some treason on the side.

IMANI: And then we have to think of the cases her husband has ruled upon that directly advance either Ginni's personal agenda or the agenda of her compatriots including Head Bitch in Charge Leonard Leo.

JESS: He is the HBIC.

IMANI: Liberty Consulting was founded to oppose Obama's major policy platforms. Back in 2010 what were his major policy platforms back then? The Affordable Care Act.

JESS: That's all anybody talked about for two fucking years about from 2008 to 2010.

IMANI: Right and Clarence Thomas was saying that the ACA is unconstitutional and that other justices were twisting the Constitution to make room for Congress to have the power to institute something like the ACA.

Or if Clarence's lone dissent from the Supreme Court's ruling that Donald Trump couldn't withhold presidential records from the J6 committee already was sus, but now? This wasn't some flight of fancy on Ginni's part. This wasn't the wife of some Supreme Court justice just getting involved in some activities, like maybe she's going to do a little charity work here and hold some luncheons there.

JESS: Like she was joining the Junior league or something.

IMANI: Right. Like I'm going to join the Daughters of the American Revolution and have a coffee klatsch. This was a decadeslong plan in the making that started with her, Leonard Leo, and Harlan Crow a Nazi memorabilia enthusiast. This was a concerted effort. And to think that this concerted decadeslong plan was never discussed in the Thomas household? It's absurd. It beggars belief.

JESS: It beggars belief. Look at your range. Pulling out a 'beggars belief' and a 'sus' in the same comment.

But really, Ginni is the Tenth Justice. I love it. I mean I HATE it. But in terms of a frame, I love it. Also! What an episode to come back to! To think we're just getting started!

IMANI: We really are! Big stuff is happening—the pod is back, we've got our Special Issue They the People dropping on Monday over at rewirenewsgroup.com/theythepeople. It's our special on trans rights and also the graphics going along with it? You're going to die. You might actually collapse and pass away when you see what our graphics team has done. It's absolutely amazing. And! We have our first livestream of the season coming up on Thursday, October 5 with some special guests—so be on the lookout—listen out? for more details there!