

# Flyover country

From her hometown of St. Louis, political journalist Sarah Kendzior talks about what middle America can teach the rest of the country

**BY JOANNE ZUHL**  
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“Flyover country” was never meant to be a flattering term.

Middle America, lacking the wealth and sparkle of coastal cities, is viewed from the fringes as a collection of places where people – and money – depart, but never arrive. They are not destinations, but rather hometowns left behind for better climes, upward mobility and at least the perception of higher class.

Flyover country is journalist Sarah Kendzior’s home. It’s her source of insight to the social, economic and political condition the country finds itself in today. It’s the intersection of economic stagnation, exploited workers, decay and racism. It’s a land that voted for Donald Trump.

“Underneath the explosive residue of the Trump administration lies the rot of systemic problems that have lingered for decades,” writes Kendzior in her book, “The View From Flyover Country: Dispatches from the Forgotten America.”

For years leading up to the 2016 presidential election, Kendzior, who lives in St. Louis, Mo., reported on those systemic problems endemic in the Midwest. Her



book is a collection of those writings, originally published between 2012 and 2014 by Al Jazeera, with a post-election prologue and coda.

She brings to her analysis her academic research in authoritarian states, particularly those of the former Soviet Union, and the role of the internet in shaping political movements. In addition to Al Jazeera, she’s written for The Globe and Mail, Politico, Slate, The Atlantic, the Chicago Tribune and

The New York Times. Kendzior’s perspectives have been amplified on national news programs and notably through social media, which has offset her refusal – despite offers – to relocate to Washington D.C., New York City and other media hubs for her career. In 2013, the periodical Foreign Policy named her one of the “100 people you should be following on Twitter to make sense of global events.”

Kendzior will be joined by Amy Siskind, author of “The List: A Week-By-Week Reckoning of Trump’s First Year” on June 13 at the Alberta Rose Theater for a discussion on their new books. The sold-out event benefits the Southern Poverty Law Center.

When Street Roots spoke with Kendzior about her book, Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens had just resigned under public pressure. For months he had been at the center of a scandal involving an adulterous affair, felony assault charges and even the threat of impeachment. Just before the announcement, Kendzior tweeted, “What happens in Missouri often anticipates the

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