Opinion

Kristi Noem out, Markwayne Mullin in

It's not going to be much better

By LILLIAN CURTIN
Opinion Editor

By some grace of God, President Donald Trump has fired Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem after barely over a year on the job. This will go into effect on March 31.

To be fair, it's a great improvement from his first administration. His "A team" had 92% of total turnover in his first term, 35% of that was in the first year of his first term.

I think we all knew this day was coming, and it was certainly the right call, but it doesn't make the news any less exciting to hear. But it may be too soon to jump for joy. Her replacement may be even worse.

Since her appointment at the Department of Homeland Security, Noem has continuously made the administration look more like a joke than it already is. A hard task, but it seems to be the only task she does well.

Before her appointment, you may recall the numerous stories about how crazy she is. I mean, she shot her puppy for being "untrainable." A truly unhinged woman.

Under her leadership, ICE has run rampant in the streets. Though it said it would only deport the "worst of the worst," people like U.S. Army Veteran and Purple Heart recipient Sae Joon Park don't fall into that category. He had a green card, but his legal status was jeopardized due to past criminal charges: drug possession and failure to appear. Both were 15 years ago. He was also charged with misdemeanor assault in 1999.

I get it, he broke the law. But is he the violent criminal that DHS says he is? No. He's a veteran.

They're also deporting and killing American citizens. 170 U.S. citizens were held by ICE as of October, and in January, multiple citizens were murdered by ICE, including Alex Pretti and Renee Good.

Noem denied, under oath, that any of these were true, despite it being public information. Even after Park was presented in front of her, she still denied it.

"Either you are utterly incompetent or violating our rights with impunity, you should step down, or be removed by this president and if not, Congress should impeach you." U.S. Senator Cory Booker said to her.

Well, after today, it's clear someone listened to him.

Don't get too excited, there's always a catch. The catch being that she's not out of the Trump administration. Because, God forbid, Trump actually admitted he was wrong. Spoiler alert: he didn't.

Noem was instead placed as Special Envoy for The Shield of the Americas.

First off, I think I speak for everyone when I say, "What the hell is the 'Shield' of the Americas?"

Unless it's S.H.I.E.L.D. and Director Nick Fury is about to come and give me his spiel, I have little faith in this "new Security Initiative in the Western Hemisphere," that is meant to help countries on the Western Hemisphere collaborate to combat transnational criminal organizations, such as drug cartels.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LILLIAN CURTIN

Oklahoma junior Senator Markwayne Mullin will replace Secretary Kristi Noem as United States Secretary of Homeland Security on March 30.

So who's going to replace her? Apparently, it's U.S. Senator Markwayne Mullin from Oklahoma.

Given the fact that there have been countless mistakes, including deaths under Noem, it feels that this is purely for public perception. She's been causing havoc for over a year, and yet, no punishment for her travesties has happened until she was placed behind a mic and called out by lawmakers and representatives across the aisle.

If there was actually any accountability, Noem would've been fired altogether, not moved to another operation. Not to mention, she would've been fired a lot sooner. I wouldn't be surprised if they were just switching her out with someone who can lie through the rapid-fire question smoother than she could.

Mullin is practically the exact same as Noem when it comes to his stances. He's yet another brown-nosed pick.

He's close friends with the president and promotes the false claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen.

Mullin's name didn't really resonate with me at first, but it quickly started to sound familiar. Well, turns out that Mullin, a former MMA fighter, was the senator who challenged Teamster President Sean O'Brien to a brawl on the Senate floor.

That's right. He tried to physically fight someone on the floor due to hate comments made on social media.

DHS has obviously gotten out of control. Removing Noem would be the right decision if it meant Trump was going to replace someone whose first instinct isn't chaos. Yet, he's replacing her with someone whose first response to hate was to physically fight. At his place of work, in front of cameras, mind you. Imagine how he is behind the scenes.

One main problem with ICE agents is that a lot of them aren't trained as law enforcement, so when they can't regulate their emotions in the field, they could shoot and kill someone. Should these people seriously be led by someone who clearly jumps the same metaphorical gun and goes straight to violence?

That doesn't make good law enforcement agents; that makes an uncountable loyalist militia. If Trump's goal was to actually calm down the chaos in this country, he picked the wrong guy. And given the fact that he's "friends" with him, I'd say he knows him well enough to know that this appointment isn't going to settle anything. In fact, it may make it worse.

Professionalism clearly isn't his strong suit because he defended then-Defense Secretary nominee Pete Hegseth's drunkenness at work, calling those who didn't support him because of this behaviour, hypocrites.

Sorry if I don't want someone in charge of the military drunk on the job.

It's fascinating to me how the same people who defend that are the same ones who would claim a woman can't do the job because she'd start a war on her period, yet believe a drunk man is more capable.

Yes, Trump was "unhappy" with Noem; it wasn't about the job, but the way she was hated by the public and by other republicans. Her replacement has nothing to do with the atrocities committed, but with how she was making Trump look.

Mullin is basically the male version of her: a Trump loyalist with the same beliefs.

Time will only tell if he's even worse. Hopefully, no one else will have to be killed or kidnapped to find out.

It's OK to be rude to 'fans'

By LILLIAN CURTIN
Opinion Editor

I'm sure it's hard being a well-known celebrity who doesn't get any privacy. I can't imagine what it's like, with paparazzi following your every move, ridiculous headlines about you or crazy, obsessive fans piling on rumor after rumor.

Why is it such a crime for them to complain about that? I would. Yet, people see a woman who isn't a people pleaser and will automatically call them a bitch.

Singer-songwriter Chappell Roan is a prime example of this.

Roan was walking to dinner the other night when paparazzi wouldn't stop following her. She was wearing a scarf over her head and a simple black outfit. If you've seen her perform, you know that if she wanted the attention, she'd be in her usual drag, because that's when she's most recognizable.

But she wasn't, she was simply just trying to get to dinner. Social media blew up, criticizing her for being rude to a fan.

The problem is that, if you watch the video, you'd see that she asked the person to kindly leave her alone. That wasn't a fan that had politely stopped her one afternoon; that person went into a situation where it was clear Roan was overwhelmed, and still pressed for an autograph. They also didn't stop when Roan declined.

I get it, you want a famous person's autograph, or you may want a picture. But you aren't entitled to it.

Her attitude isn't the most optimistic when it comes to being famous. But who cares? Are you going to sit here and tell me you don't complain about your job? I know that the fans are the ones who gave her this job and life, but these "fans" can also be crazy and psychotic.

You can't just tell celebrities not to complain because they should be grateful for what their fans gave them; meanwhile, they're facing mental abuse from the fans that you want them to thank. That honestly sounds like an abusive relationship.

She loves her craft, and the fame just happened to come along with it. The only reason she's so controversial is that she's not just letting people walk all over her. Whoopty doo.

I have had my fair share of hate comments from my job as Opinion Editor, so I know a thing or two about just brushing them off and getting back to work. The thing is, I've conditioned myself that way from a very young age. Chances are, you have too.

We aren't just born with thick skin. If you have it, you know from experience that you've probably earned it.

I'm not saying Roan's skin isn't thick, or that she's sensitive. I am saying that maybe she rejects the notion to just suck it up and take it, and that's why she bites back. And honestly, that's probably the way it should be.

People, like toxic fans, look at her lashing out like it's something bad, but that's what most of us have been taught: that the right thing to do is to just sit there and shut up. So, is she really a rude celebrity, or is she just assertively setting boundaries for herself?