**A025C381\_220826FC\_CANON\_proxy.mp3**

[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** So we'll be here ready here in a second.

[00:00:02] **Speaker 2** Now, there's a great story. I did one of these just before the 2020 or 2020 election for T.K. and the Japanese news channel. And that they called me and reached out. At first I thought it was a joke, but it was legitimate. Came to Japan and we set up in my garage and there was a political yard signs behind me and the guy spoke English and Japanese. He does this interview, so he sends me the link when it airs over in Japan. So I see. I can't understand a word that's being said. And then when I talked to the translator talking over me, it's like, well, now I can check out the Japanese TV.

[00:00:35] **Speaker 1** Oh, that's me. Did you do the closed caption to see what it came up as?

[00:00:39] **Speaker 2** You know, I didn't think of that. I really should have done that. Everybody still on YouTube.

[00:00:43] **Speaker 1** Be curious to see like how I'm sure they did. Hopefully they didn't skew it, but just like the translations of when they translate your language to Japanese and that it get that Japanese gets translated back to English print yeah sometimes can you know like the old samurai movie kind of thing like it can gargle the syntax or just make things a little odd. Yeah. Especially if you're using like political jargon. Sometimes that can be interesting.

[00:01:08] **Speaker 2** Yeah. Because our terms are different and yeah.

[00:01:10] **Speaker 1** I would be interested to know about that. Well, I guess. But give me an idea of where we are talking about 2020. How much does that still loom over everything right now.

[00:01:23] **Speaker 2** On the Republican side, way too much. Even last night I attended a joint Republican Party meeting between Dodge and finally eight counties. And it was a great event, but they had the person get up for 5 minutes and talk about election integrity. And she even made the comment the last election was stolen from us. I have been saying rather publicly for a year and a half now that it's a midterm election with a fairly unpopular Democratic incumbent president. And there's economic issues. Republicans should be looking at a tidal wave election. The one way to screw it up is to keep focusing on 2020. And we keep doing that. We just can't turn the page and focus on 2022. It should still be a really good year for Republicans, the whole midterm, the history that. But instead of a tidal wave it might just be like a nice little wave of Republicans will pick up seats across the country. But it won't be the kind of block that I think we were seeing a few months ago. And a lot of that is simply we just can't get out of our own way in 2020. Part of the problem for Republican leadership is that is where our base is here in Wisconsin. When Speaker Vos, who I consider myself a pretty big fan of, he did the Gabelman investigation. The plan on all along was able men were supposed to look into that thing for six weeks, two months to show everything that happened, show that there wasn't fraud. But the other side bent the rules and used everything they could using COVID to get as many ballots to many Democratic voters, and it probably juiced the turnout on their side. Were there fraudulent votes cast? No. Where there's some shenanigans. Yes, that was supposed to be the report. And then force comes out. We're going to clean this up if we win in 22. While he could never get to that point, Lieberman wouldn't stop. He fell in love with the attention. Then Trump was saying nice things about him, and he goes from working at the Home Depot to being on Fox News, talking about how the election was stolen here, blindsiding half the Republican legislature. So that turns into Trump endorsing Steele. The guy that ran against was.

[00:03:25] **Speaker 1** Adam.

[00:03:25] **Speaker 2** Steele. Adam Stein? Yeah. Who runs against Robyn in the primary and that thing's way closer than it should have been. But there's bipartisan problems on that, too. As much as the Democrats like to talk about how they're interested in saving democracy, they're voting in our primaries for some of these kooky people to make life on our side harder. Maybe if I was in their shoes, I'd do the same thing. But don't lecture me that you're sticking up for democracy when you're voting in our primaries for the Looney Tune candidates. Because some of us who both believe in Republican principles and America and want to stick up for democracy and understand how elections work, we would like to win these primaries with Republicans that want to face the future and tackle problems and not keep relitigating in 2020.

[00:04:09] **Speaker 1** So where do you consider yourself now within the party? Because obviously you gained a fair amount of attention when you were county chairman, some would say, for speaking reality, truth to some of the people. And then you ran for mayor. Was that a way to kind of get away from the partizan nature? I mean, I think there were some people, especially in Madison, who said, well, you got chased out of party politics and found a place in a non partizan area.

[00:04:35] **Speaker 2** I don't know. I got chased out of it. I did get elected to a third term as the county party chairman and then I stepped down from that position to run for this one. There's some truth to it in the fact I was getting burned out and tired of it because the crazy stuff, I guess is the term I'll use just won't stop. And it drives me kind of crazy because there's a lot of to do and there's opportunity where where the where it didn't chase me out is I. Love open and always have. I always knew someday I wanted to be the mayor of Japan and the time was coming. And the election calendar. The mayor we had wasn't going to run again. My kids were getting older. I had done four years as the county party chair. Six years was I was the Treasurer. I spent a whole decade involved in that, went to two national conventions and for the most part loved all of that. But I always wanted to be the mayor of Japan because this is a nonpartisan position. I'm working really hard to keep it that way. And the best part of this job is I get to be the biggest cheerleader for a party, and I love doing that.

[00:05:35] **Speaker 1** So what what is that? We we've seen that in in past years. And we would like to offer to Nino and other places where I don't know if moderate Republicans a bad phrase to use these days, but the Republicans may have fell out of step with where the rest of their party was going, said, let's go down a non partizan and try and bring some the joy I felt in public service back to that area.

[00:05:57] **Speaker 2** I think there's truth to that. I think what you have like in a Dinka, Knutson or Crawford, is you have these are people they love. Their community I think is part of it. And there's just stuff they want to do. They care. They want to accomplish, things they believe in. And the partizan nature of things right now, the tribalism of the two parties, you can sometimes put your hands up because you can't get anything done. And I think that aggravates and burned some people out too that are in the partizan politics. It's that it's so hard to accomplish anything because like you can't even compromise. Like you can get 60% of what you want and you'll be called a rhino because the Dem is getting part of what he wants. Well, that's kind of how it used to have to work, and it just doesn't anymore. Which brings me up to a sort of non-related topic, but when I was the party chairman, I was asked by What's the name of it? It's Columbia University in New York City. There's a smaller school involved in that. The professor's name was Mike Miller. And as soon as you're done recording, that will pop in my head. But he had me speak to his students about Partizan politics, and what he wanted was a Republican to come in and talk because the class is overwhelmingly liberal Democrat students. And I did that. And the last question I was asked, if there was one thing you could change about American politics, what would it be? And my answer was to force people to interact with people that don't agree with them. I think one of the problems we have right now is if you're a Republican, you can watch Fox News and listen to talk radio and Facebook and Twitter. People who all agree with you. If you're a Democrat, you can watch MSNBC, tune in. They're like National Public Radio, which is more left. And then the same thing with Twitter and Facebook. And we just we meet someone who votes differently and we like look at them like they're an alien because we just don't interact with people we disagree with. I think that's unhealthy. And I also think it plays into the whole with redistricting, that gerrymandering argument. When you look at the state of Wisconsin, the Republicans don't even have to gerrymander it. Red areas are getting redder. Blue areas are getting bluer. People don't want their next door neighbor to be someone that doesn't vote the same way they do. And the values are clashing and I don't think that's healthy.

[00:08:01] **Speaker 1** When did you see that shift? You mentioned being in county politics for a decade. I mean, there are going to be some, especially Democrats can say, well, it's all Scott Walker. He started it with act. When he divided the state. There's other people will point to a different period in time. But when when did you start to notice it on the ground.

[00:08:17] **Speaker 2** Mean see it's funny you're right democrats would point to Scott Walker and in PA we have three state prisons. There's a lot of state workers. And I know there were hard feelings when ag time happened and there's truth to that. But on the Republican side, a lot of us would point back to George W Bush. We felt that we were attacked on 911. He had some really difficult decisions to make. And when the going got tough overseas, Democrats cut him off at the knees and for political reasons. Right. So I think both politically it some Democrats maybe go back to the way we acted with Clinton in impeachment. I don't know when it started, but it's just it's been getting worse over time. And I do think cable news has played a role in it. And and I was a cable news junkie for a long time because I like to know what's going on. And I enjoyed watching the shows where I agreed with the host's state. And that's fine. But the problem with that is, is you just you never interact with someone who disagrees. And it's unhealthy to like to win an election. You need to add people. And because of the hyper partizan nature of it and the negativity, we're busy trying to always kick people out. That's a term that they use in our party of the rhino Republican in name only. I've been called that by people because I didn't think the election was stolen. Well, if you kick me out and I don't vote for you, you're in you're in a lot of trouble. Coming into 2022, Tim Michaels has to figure out how to get those 50,000 Republicans who voted Republican, but not for Donald Trump. And that's how you win the election. The election's not stolen. When Glenn Grossman's getting more votes than Donald Trump in the sixth Congressional District, there was just a falloff. There were people who wanted to vote for Republican conservative principles, but not Trump. What we need to do as a party is figure out why that was. And yelling at people and telling. They're stupid for not liking Trump isn't how you win them over. You know, I loved a lot of Trump's policies and I enjoyed some of the tweets and stuff that he did. But I could also see how he was turning off areas of voters. And that's what we have to improve on, is winning over those voters.

[00:10:13] **Speaker 1** I mean, that goes back even 2016. Ron Johnson ran ahead of Trump.

[00:10:17] **Speaker 2** Yeah, he did.

[00:10:18] **Speaker 1** I mean, even when Trump won Wisconsin, he still wasn't the top vote getter.

[00:10:21] **Speaker 2** And that happened in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Florida. What is it? Pat Toomey, Marco Rubio and Ron Johnson all polled better than Trump in their states. It was like a reverse coattails effect. You know, and I truly believe that's how Trump won Wisconsin, because we were campaigning in those closing weeks door to door, begging people to vote for Ron Johnson. And Glenn Grothman is a check on a President Hillary Clinton. And I personally know people who did this. They went to the polls to vote for Ron Johnson. As that check looked at the presidential ballot, they had no intention of voting for Trump. They took a deep breath and voted for him anyway because he wasn't her and he won. And I'm glad he did because I think she would have been terrible for the country. But we weren't that group by turning out those voters. And then what you saw on there was also a depressed Democratic turnout over Hillary Clinton. And when they got their numbers to go back up in 2020, they were able to overcome that. But like I said, if we just get those 50,000 Republican voters to vote for Trump, he wins the state of Wisconsin by about 22,000 votes. That's the key to winning these statewide races.

[00:11:24] **Speaker 1** He's still not president. But would that have changed what Wisconsin is dealing with now? Yeah.

[00:11:31] **Speaker 2** Yes, I think so, because we wouldn't be focused on the last election. We'd be focusing on issues. You know, Trump probably should have won that election as close as it was in the states where it was close. If there's if you don't have the whole COVID thing and they're sending ballots to lots of people. So the only people who really wanted to vote, vote, he probably ekes out a win in Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin. And I don't know about Pennsylvania and Michigan. I just think it was too lopsided. But so he wins those states, he gets reelected, and then we don't blow the two Senate seats in Georgia. So you're looking at a President Trump, 52 Republican senators, and we're short in the House only by six seats like it would have been a shocker, just like 2016. I think the Democrats would be in fighting. They wouldn't be knowing what to do. The economy. I think you would still have some of the inflation coming out of the COVID because you're going to have that. But you wouldn't have I don't think you would have had the skyrocketing energy prices because the Keystone pipeline would have been pumping along. So I am the I don't think Trump would have botched the Afghanistan pull out the way it was. That said, we'd probably be looking at a rough midterm because it would be the sixth year. And President Trump's popularity never got over 47%, so we'd be climbing up that hill again. I understand entirely how we elect presidents, and I'm a fan of the system. And I I'm such a dork. I think we should repeal the 17th Amendment. I don't even like direct election of U.S. senators, but at the same time, we can't keep winning the presidential election while losing the popular vote. At some point, it's not sustainable. You don't get the mandate you need. The country's too divided. We've we've got to figure out a way to get we've only won the popular vote one time since 1988. We've got to do better than that.

[00:13:14] **Speaker 1** So with where things are today, I mean, Democrats are talking about, well, democracy is under attack. And we've seen things happen in Wisconsin where the state Senate wouldn't approve a lot of Tony Evers appointments. We've seen Fred Green sit on the board and the Natural Resources Board and refuse to vacate a seat and he won't be forced to. And there's been a lot of things like that that, well, they may be working the system and legal. They still don't look appropriate within what what the history of the democratic principles are supposed to be. So when Tony Evers says, you know, democracy is on the ballot, what is the response to that in terms of that holistic picture for someone who does it for people that don't focus on all the details of government?

[00:13:59] **Speaker 2** Well, the first thing I'd say, if they really believe democracy is on the ballot, they shouldn't be voting for the kooks in Republican primaries. They should let those of us who really want to clean that up clean that up, because I think it's better if we have two healthy political parties with two different ideas competing for voters interest. That would be helpful. What's the second part.

[00:14:18] **Speaker 1** In terms of the idea of democracy to go with the way institutional ism is working in the legislature, the infighting back and forth, the boards?

[00:14:27] **Speaker 2** And we don't there's something unique in our system if you push it too far, it doesn't it doesn't work anywhere like you're right. It used to be the governor would appoint his secretaries and they would get approved, even though you didn't agree with him because that guy won the governor's race. And that's and we've seen it at the national level, too. Like, didn't President Trump go almost two years with acting secretaries because he couldn't get them approved to the US Senate?

[00:14:54] **Speaker 1** IT but those were all that could have been approved by republic.

[00:14:57] **Speaker 2** They could have been went through filibusters on. Some of that, like.

[00:15:01] **Speaker 1** None at the job.

[00:15:01] **Speaker 2** A lot of that goes back to George W Bush. He wanted to put while there was Miguel Estrada and there was that one Laney from the south, I can't remember her name. And he wanted to appoint them to federal judicial officers and they'd get filibustered and held up. And that's not how this is supposed to work. I don't know. Like. Do you foresee a time where a Republican president can appoint a Supreme Court justice and the Democrats control the Senate, like what Reagan and Bush did or Nixon? I don't like Antonin Scalia was approved 96 to nothing because he was qualified. You know, it shouldn't be this this hard. It's not supposed to work this way. There's got to be some institutional respect for the guy who wins the election.

[00:15:46] **Speaker 1** So when that's not happening, what is the solution? He's right now like under whether it's gerrymandering or just the nature of Wisconsin, the geographic distribution. If Evers wins, we're going to continue to see that that loggerhead.

[00:16:00] **Speaker 2** Right. Because there's no downside for the Republicans to to give them the appointment because their districts are overwhelmingly Republican. And our voters like it when our person stands up and opposes it. It's why we haven't passed a federal budget in 20 years. You have the Freedom Caucus, for example. I probably agree with them on everything, but you can't get everything you want. You got to get to 218 votes and they would hold Paul Ryan or John Boehner hostage because it was all or nothing. And far too often they got nothing. But they could go on Hannity's TV show and fundraise because it was Jim Jordan or Mark Meadows. And look, I'm the real Republican fighting for everyone, and then they become celebrities doing that, too. But it hurts the system and it falls. It's falling apart some. And another problem with it. Every Republican, every congressperson now goes home on the weekends. They want to be in their district because that became a thing kind of in the Tea Party citizen legislators, which is great, but they don't build any of those relationships over the weekends. They're not shaking hands in a bar, coming to making a deal or an agreement. It's just all of this playing to the base and whichever side can turn out enough of their base voters wins the elections.

[00:17:11] **Speaker 1** So when you look at where things are now, are you do you see you have any reason for hope for where the parties are? The two party system is either in Wisconsin or at the national level.

[00:17:22] **Speaker 2** I am, yes, because I'm always optimistic. And I guess we've had things like 1861 until we've had in 1968. The country has been in these these perilous situations before and things calm down and we get out of it. And I think that will happen. I just don't know how long it will take, because you're right, it's very hyperpartisan. It's very divided right now. There's no more conservative Democrats and there's no more liberal Republicans. And that that means there's less having to make agreements to get stuff through. And and they've been changing rules in the Senate, the US Senate over time, where it's going to be a 51 margin thing. And it's it's the same with the 17th Amendment. We've just made the US Senate a giant House of Representatives. And I think that I don't want to get to I wrote a column on that once that a lot of the breakdown in American democracy goes back to getting to the 17th Amendment and having US senators elected by the popular vote because they used to represent the states and look out for the states interests. And now they're just politicians looking to get elected and it's just changed the balance of things and that I kind of draw back to that as the beginning of all of this falling apart. But that's 100 year old story and no one is interested in that as I am.

[00:18:40] **Speaker 1** When you look at the the the lasting impact of Trump, whether he is able to run in 24 or not, whether whenever that happens with the in the Mar-A-Lago details has got dropped, you know, that's almost going to be irrelevant by November with the attention span of the nation. But he seems to have had, at least to this point, a lasting impact on the kind of Republican that is succeeding and the temperament of Republicans that are empowered or given the money and the attention within the party. Does that last? I mean, is that going to be the new standard bearer or could we go back to a George W Bush or H.W. Bush statesman type person?

[00:19:21] **Speaker 2** I think we will get back to that. It's still his Republican Party. You can see that in these primary victories. What will tell the tale is in a midterm that's supposed to be a huge year for Republicans, if a lot of his candidates, that when these primaries get smoked in elections, that we should be winning. That would be the beginning of the end of that. When Trump went and screwed up the Georgia runoff, I thought it was going to start to change that. And instead the next day we had the January six riot and I went on local radio because I thought everything that happened that day, except for the actions of Mike Pence was absolutely awful. And. It befuddles me and disgusts me that the Republican Party has gotten to a point where it just kind of defends that day, or if it doesn't defend it, just shrug their shoulders and tries to compare it with Kenosha. And I guess I consider myself a Liz Cheney fan. Like, that's the kind of I like Liz Cheney. I like Paul Ryan. I love Tommy Thompson and Scott Walker, like Republicans with ideas. Ron Johnson in 2010 was, I thought, an awesome candidate because he's running for U.S. Senate talking about charts and budgets and how we can't do this forever. And that's the conversation I wanted to have. And it's hard because you're voting probably to cut some people's things, but there's only so much money and we don't want to go broke. Those are the debates that I would like to have, the big issue stuff and I don't know. Instead, we it's become a party of personalities, battle of personalities. And the US Supreme Court has way too much power. Like when one Supreme Court justice dies, the whole country is up in arms and one justice on the court was never supposed to be that important. So there's all these different areas where the whole system, it's been pushed to the brink and it's just it's falling apart.

[00:21:10] **Speaker 1** So one of the things that came out of the the the the conspiracy theories about 2020 being stolen was that it seemed like Republicans, at least Kleefisch, was putting out a call for, hey, be a poll worker, sign up to be an observer. Get more involved. Have you seen that? Are you aware of that happening either here or countywide or.

[00:21:29] **Speaker 2** Yeah. One thing that is happening is we have there's going to be more poll watchers, more poll workers. I think, I mean, from our side, more people willing to take a day or two off of work to do it. And and I think that's a good thing. And I can tell you that the election wasn't stolen and they may have doubts, but at least they're doing something positive about it by getting involved. My biggest fear about telling people the election was stolen is they're not going to care. They're not going to vote, and that's a good way of losing elections in the future. As far as Rebecca Kleefisch goes. I had high hopes on that race because I thought she was the kind of Republican who can win back those suburban, college educated white women soccer moms that like to vote for Republicans but didn't like Donald Trump. And a lot of that was the male chauvinist, chauvinistic personality stuff. They just those two groups never clicked. But I think she made the same mistake that was made in the primaries. She started to play along with them. You can't hack off the majority of your base and win a primary. I think she may have done better if 16 months ago she just said this election wasn't stolen. There was stuff we can clean up. We have to focus on the future. Instead, she'd go up on the regular Joe Show in Green Bay and eat as mac and cheese. And he's ripping on me every day. And it's like, Well, where do you want the party to be? Like, you got to. How can you lead the state if you're afraid to tell the base of our party the truth? In St Michael's did the same thing and that that rally that Trump came in, I think it actually it hurt Michael's. I don't know if the majority of Republicans like the former president coming in and crapping all over the most successful conservative speaker of the state assembly we've ever had. And and then to hang around with Gabelman, who I think is just be clowned himself and lost all of his credibility. And that's we why should people vote for us for serious jobs if we're not acting seriously.

[00:23:23] **Speaker 1** Since the primary? I mean, it's not unusual to see politicians pivot after a primary. Right. Is there enough room for Michael's to pivot to actually, like, create that separation, to say, hey, no, I'm I'm a I'm in the Walker Thompson vein.

[00:23:38] **Speaker 2** There is it helps that the premiere was in August and that September anymore. And notice he scrubbed this Trump stuff pretty quick the day after the election and they turned their focus on Kenosha and the Republican Party of Wisconsin. And the ticket itself did not miss the chance to get all over that issue and defund the police. Almost reelected Trump. And then in Michael's and Eric Tony, those campaigns are smart to focus on that, to focus on law and order, to focus on safety and communities because it's an issue that affects everyone and people. In Japan, we are the seventh safest city in the state. Like my keys are in the truck right now, otherwise I'll lose them. But we watch the news and we see the crime in Milwaukee and we're like, we don't want to live that way. And that's, you know, that's a Democrat city. We're more Republican area. So that's a good issue for them to be campaigning on. Michael's is I think the other thing he's got going for him is it's a construction company. They're blue collar workers. And he can also be that Tommy Thompson type Republican in the sense that Michael is Pipelines, a union company. And the union and the Michaels have had a wonderful working relationship for a very long time. And I think his TV advertisements have been good. He's driving the truck. He's not speaking pop perfectly. He's more of your regular guy. I mean, as regular of a guy as you can when you're as rich as him kind of thing. But yeah, he's got time to. Do that. And Tony Evers is he's beatable. But I think our side thinks this is a slam dunk. And it's not because Tony Evers, the best thing he's ever had going for him is the legislature's so overwhelmingly Republican. He signed two of the best budgets ever because he could make some vetoes. But the Republicans were smart how they wrote it. So he can get up there and say, I've cut your taxes more than any Republican governor has and he's not wrong. He didn't want to, but he can say that. And, you know, he's not super controversial because he doesn't do a whole lot. So look for our side to run a lot of commercials where he's wearing his mask upside down and stuff like that and the hammer on Kenosha and some of the other liberal policies he's got. But, you know, the way he affects will pan in a negative light, is they close one of the cell halls that were Pine Correctional. And so that's hurting our sewer revenues. If that if they were paying utilities. And he's just I think the liberal on crime issue is a winner for our side. And then you're going to see Michaels and Tony play that up.

[00:25:59] **Speaker 1** When it's funny that Eric Tony and I hear Tony and think of Tony Evers.

[00:26:03] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I got to be careful on that. But I would never call the governor by his first name.

[00:26:06] **Speaker 1** Okay, I've got a nice yes to that.

[00:26:08] **Speaker 2** Yeah. I mean, I it's so it's very nice that he sent that, you know, so I put it on my wall, you know, I didn't vote for Tony Evers, but he's still the governor. And one of the things we've got to get better at is just respecting people for the office they hold. Like he went to my wife's school and it was a really big deal and I thought it was cool. My wife got to sit in the front row and meet the governor and it's not the guy we prefer, but he's still the governor and he deserves to be treated like the governor and respected like the governor and the same four presidents. And I don't like the the f JB stuff. There's a flag over here on Middle Street that says that Biden I don't think that's respectful. I don't like that we treat highly elected officials that way. And I don't like the fact that my kids can read that flag when they walk by. They have the right to fly the flag. I'm not taking it down. I don't like it. I don't like the Let's Go Brandon stuff. It was funny at first and I'll chuckle at it, but I had to explain to the kids what that meant. And I didn't like it when they were doing it to George W Bush or even Donald Trump. And you could make the argument that Trump brought a lot of it on himself because he didn't always act presidential. And I'm not going to say that that's not true. But we need to do a better job of respecting the offices these people hold because it's these are nice offices and they're important offices.

[00:27:22] **Speaker 1** You you made a point about how Republicans could lose a very winnable midterm because of their focus on elections in 2020. And that would seem likely to only fuel the conspiracy mindset that if they do lose this fall, it's like, well, it has to be more fraud. And there seems to be this heads I win, tails you lose mentality that the only way to disprove election fraud is for Republicans to win the election.

[00:27:52] **Speaker 2** Makes it convenient, doesn't it? My argument to that you would be look at all these elected Republican county clerks in the state that are no longer attending their local Republican events. They can tell you what happened. They may not even like all of the changes that were made for the COVID stuff, but they can prove to you there wasn't fraud, there was a stupid stuff. Someone in Brandon, Wisconsin, right after the election sent me a nasty letter that his dead uncle voted. We'll call the attorney or call the district attorney, but no one ever followed up because these things didn't happen. And we have to. You're right. If if we I still think we're going to win the midterm. I just think the win could be a lot. It should be a huge blow. And I don't think it's going to be because we're focusing too much on 2020.

[00:28:37] **Speaker 1** So you if you had to guess right now, you would still say Michael's as governor, Ron Johnson wins reelection, basically a Republican sweep in Wisconsin.

[00:28:46] **Speaker 2** I don't know. I think so. 20 years, his approval ratings around 47, 48, that's doable for him. It's also doable for Tim Michaels if they run on the right issues, Ron Johnson's behind, but he always closes strong. So I'm not that concerned. And Mandela Barnes is so far to the left that if we if his campaign can get that message out, I yeah, I think all things considered, the way Wisconsin votes in midterm elections, if we can focus on the right issues, Republicans should sweep the state of Wisconsin. It's going to be close, though, like Tim Michaels isn't going to get any better than 52% and I might be a 51 to 49 thing all over again. I fully expect that in all of the races. But it's a it's a good ticket that the Republicans are running. I'm Tim Michaels is a successful business person. Roger Roth is a very serious state senator. Eric Tony is a very highly qualified district attorney. And I think that that that our candidates are very good is very helpful. Ron Johnson is very polarizing. And I think some of his statements hurt him. But again. Once the once the electorate learns about his opponent, I think he's in an awkward position. And I go back to how they had him written for Dead in 2016 and he closed strong. And then my guess is that's what he'll do again this time.

[00:30:07] **Speaker 1** When you when you think of what the future might hold with Republicans in complete control, again, there are some people that are afraid for what might happen in 24, that they wouldn't certify a Democratic win in the presidential election or that destroying the WBC and then rewriting it into who knows what. Again, what are those valid concerns or do you think that they would moderate their positions once they have power and no longer need to feed the beast of their own electorate?

[00:30:39] **Speaker 2** So that's a very good question. I think it's a legit concern at the same time. So a lot of Republican congressmen and I'm going to pick on Scott Fitzgerald and Tom Tiffany. Right. They voted to not certify the election while it was a free vote. They knew that that's what their constituents in overwhelmingly Republican districts wanted them to do. That's what Trump wanted them to do. And their vote wasn't going to matter because they were going to lose the vote if if the House was Republican by 12 seats and their vote may have actually not certified the election. I'm not so sure they vote that way because that's opening up a whole can of worms that we've never done before. But because we came that close, it's a legit concern. But that's also a bipartisan issue. Republicans, rightfully so, are looking bad for the way Republicans acted on January six. But let's not forget, in 2004, the Democrats objected to Ohio's electoral votes. 2000, that was just that was a mess. And then in 2016, went through objections to a couple of the states Trump won, too, that they had to break apart and vote. And I remember Joe Biden shutting it down on the House floor. So it's not like when the Democrats are over here and they're like, you can't trust Republicans. They won't certify the election. A lot of us Republicans have had that same fear about Democrats because of how they acted when George Bush won in 2004. One thing Ron Johnson says that's very accurate and anyone can take it how they want. But it is bad when one side wins and the other side doesn't have much faith in the election that we have to fix. Republicans, a lot of them, too many of them legitimately think Trump won Democrats, a lot of them, too many of them think that George W Bush didn't win or that Russia concluded and changed the election results in 16. We have to get away. We have to get back to where we vote and people can understand it. We don't need hand counting. There's some Republicans that want to go back to that. It's not 1850. We can fill out the ballot. They can go through the machine. There's a paper trail. We can do this with with confidence. And there's simple fixes. One of them is these people who vote early. Those ballots need to go in on Monday, the day before the election, because I know what happens because I get it. The ballots sit at the central county office in Milwaukee. Our guy is always ahead at 1230 at night and then there's 400,000 Democrat ballots that get counted and we lose. And I was like, well, that's not right. That looks like Chicago in the Kennedy years. If we cleaned that up, that would help. So where the stuff happens in real time. It would look less suspicious.

[00:33:19] **Speaker 1** But Republicans didn't pass that bill that was proposed. Cathy Bernier wanted to.

[00:33:24] **Speaker 2** Cathy, Bernie.

[00:33:25] **Speaker 1** Sanders would have signed it.

[00:33:26] **Speaker 2** I think he would have. But that opens up the other argument to like the whole early voting thing. That's not fair how we do that. So Madison, Milwaukee, even the City of Lupine, we have a city clerk and I have an assistant clerk. You can come here between 730 and for Monday through Friday, two weeks before the election, cast your ballot. Right. Cool. You live in the township of alto. You can't. These townships are overwhelmingly Republican. The alto township of final. That county is the second most Republican township in the entire state of Wisconsin. Behind Eastport, if you live in that town and you want to vote at 2 p.m. on a Tuesday, you can't because you have a town clerk who's part time working at Saputo cheese. So if you want to vote early, you got to call ahead, schedule, appointment, go to her house and vote in the garage and the cities that are more democratic. They're open all the time. And these little rural areas that want to vote for Trump aren't. And that is that is a legit problem. And that is why so many people on my side don't care for all of this early voting. I argued for it in 2020 and I argued for mail and balloting strongly in 2020 because of a pandemic. I wanted to make sure those rural voters and also if they were afraid of COVID, weren't afraid to go and vote on Election Day because they knew it's going to be really close. But in a normal election cycle, I think we might be better off if we would get back to Election Day being Election Day. I don't want to stand in a long line either, but there's something patriotic about doing that.

[00:34:47] **Speaker 1** And we've seen absentee ballot go down considerably since 2020 in the primary and.

[00:34:53] **Speaker 2** Our side.

[00:34:54] **Speaker 1** Well, it's going down in Milwaukee as well.

[00:34:56] **Speaker 2** Well, that makes me feel better. I just get nervous that our. The argument I always made is baseball fan. I don't like instant replay in baseball, but because baseball has it, the manager of the Cubs needs to use it to his advantage. So in 2020, I said I never cared for all this early voting and mail in balloting. But the those are the rules we have to play by. So we have to take every advantage we can to to catch up to the Democrats on that. So this is where people get confused when I talk. I don't like the current rules, but we got to play by them the best we can. And then maybe once we win, we can clean some of that stuff up.

[00:35:31] **Speaker 1** But I mean, in some way, turnout is turnout.

[00:35:34] **Speaker 2** Turnout is turnout. And any Republican I can get a ballot in their hands. I want to. And that's very important. And we're Republicans were kind of foolish two years ago. They were they were ripping the heck out of me for pushing for the mail and balloting. And then the thing comes in the mail. How to get your ballot with Trump on. You're going like this because his campaign people understood we need to get a ballot. Every Republican voter, you can't leave one on the table because it could be that close.

[00:36:02] **Speaker 1** So you, I guess, describe for me the level of fame or infamy you've reached over the last few years, especially in that Trump era where you were getting international TV requests. And is it because you were one of the few lone voices willing to speak out in that regard? Or what do you attribute to the fact that you you received that kind of notoriety?

[00:36:26] **Speaker 2** Yeah, a lot of it is I was the lone voice on it. And some of it is, I think the more liberal media thought, hey, here's some role Republican going off, which was never the thing, though. Like, I wasn't I wasn't doing the NeverTrump thing. I wasn't encouraging people to vote for the other side. I came at it as a Republican, trying to get every Republican vote out there. And I was taking this unique path that I think the majority of elected Republicans agreed with me because they were all running for reelection and were doing the same thing. I was I was just one guy willing to say it because I just felt so strongly in it. It's interesting you use the term infamy because there is that radio show in Green Bay that just read me for two years now. All the time I got some rather nasty voicemails and letters. And then after the election, when I made a lot of statewide news, I really objected to doing the recounts only in Dane in Milwaukee County, especially Milwaukee County, because we were going after predominantly African-American voters. And that hacked me off because the Republican Party was founded in this county in Ripon, because we wanted civil rights in the end slavery. And we go in there and we're going to try to throw their ballots out because we have an idea how they voted. I didn't like any of that, and I thought the imagery was terrible because to win elections, you need to grow the pie and not shrink it. And we are the party of civil rights and have a good story to tell on that and we suck at telling it and stuff like that hurts us on it. But someone had to say it, I thought because we were doing these things and no one was pushing back on it. And then the what was the infamy and fame? I guess the famous part is they actually wrote a book about it. Mark Bowden And what's the other guy? The name of the book is called The Steal the Attempt to Overturn the 2020 Election and the People Who Stopped It, it came out in January. You can check it out in the library in town. I don't know how well the sales were, but I'm in a book and I never would have guessed that there's that.

[00:38:23] **Speaker 1** Were you more surprised at the attention or more surprised that you were one of the only voices? Both.

[00:38:30] **Speaker 2** I never expected the attention like it started by an accident. I got mad at something Trump said about ballot mail in ballots being all fraudulent, and I wrote a tweet and I don't even know how it happened, but the Bill Kristol came across it and retweeted it, and that's what took off. And then I was on the local final radio station, and then the next thing I know, I'm doing upfront on Channel 12, and then someone at CNN sees that and they're calling and I'm like, Holy cow, I don't know how this is happening, but I just I kept repeating myself over and over about the importance of getting a ballot in every Republican's hand. And like I was trying to help Trump win the election. And my fear, too, that I wanted people to know it wasn't just the presidential race, whether Trump won or not. If those voters in Little Alto can't vote early because they have a part time clerk, don't trust voting by mail because Trump's telling them they're fraudulent and don't want to go out to vote in person because they're 80 years old and COVID was coming back. If they don't vote, they're not only not voting for Trump, they're not voting for Glenn Grothman. They're not voting for Dan Fine or John balling that part scare me because that's how you lose down ballot races you shouldn't lose. Now, none of that came to be and everything went okay. But I mean, the COVID surge came back, though, in late October. And that was my fear all along. And then all. Publican, voters in the rural areas wouldn't turn out to vote. And I'm not insulting older voters in rural areas. I want them to vote. I just. I was trying to help in any way that I could.

[00:40:02] **Speaker 1** So are you are you comfortable with where your life is at now if things kind of simmer down? I mean, you're you're mayor of a pond, you can kind of focus on your community. Or is there still like, you know, I'm sitting in your office coming in, talking about that? I mean, is that still like at any point you could become Internet famous again for.

[00:40:21] **Speaker 2** I suppose anything's possible. I have really enjoyed becoming the mayor of open. It's I have a lot of passion for people. And I love Open. I've always loved Open. I don't know why I'm just a nerd that way. In high school, I was voted most likely to live in open forever. And dang it, I'm going to win that award and make it all the way through. I have no idea what the future holds. People have asked me because I have the political past and partizan politics. Is that a stepping stone for something bigger? No idea. I'm not planning on that, but I have no idea. So I just try to do this job the best I can every day. The the the partizan stuff was funny, so I didn't want to be the treasurer of the Republican Party, and no one else did either. And I media and got elected and and that's a true story. But I worked really hard at being treasurer and doing a very good job at it and I took a lot of pride in it and I got to meet a lot of people and loved it. And then our chairman was Dan Fine, and in 2016 he got elected to the state Senate so he couldn't stay on as the chairman. And I was like, Well, I don't really want to do it. And he's like, Ryan, you're good. You have a lot of passion for the party. You do the work, you'd be good at it, and we need someone to step up. So I stepped up to do it for two and a half terms, but I was in the right place at the right time. The being the mayor of a pond was a job that I knew I wanted, and I worked a year and a half for it and campaigned. And the the yard signs and the t shirts and the campaign kickoff. I even had round for open flags because they weren't bright and had a lot of fun running for mayor got elected and I just really want to focus on this job and give it all that I have. But like when someone like you calls or Steve Scaffidi calls or something, I'm more than happy to talk about what's going on in the party because I think I still have something to bring to the table. And what the party needs to do is not take people like me out of it, because when you're shrinking the party, you're hurting yourself. You got to grow it. You got to bring in the most voters possible. And that that means bringing in those that love Trump and that means bringing in those who didn't. Because we have a statewide race coming up. We agree on most of the stuff Michaels is campaigning on and Eric told me he's campaigning. I know we need everyone to turn out and vote. Otherwise you're not going to win.

[00:42:31] **Speaker 1** When when you look at the role you ended up playing through misfortune or coincidence or whatever. Do you ever feel like you were kind of left out to dry by some of the other Republicans who felt the same way? I mentioned Dan Fine and John Barwick and they've got very solid reputations in the party, but they were very quiet through a lot of this. Do you ever feel like there could have been a time where other Republicans could have stepped up and taken some of the heat off you by saying, Hey, he's right, don't attack him, he's part of us?

[00:43:01] **Speaker 2** There was an I would say I hit rock bottom around Thanksgiving of 2020, coming right off the end of that recount stuff. I was speaking a lot of crap and no one was rallying to my defense because there was no reason to rally to my defense because that's not what their voters wanted to hear. I do think and I used the Kleefisch example earlier, and this sounds arrogant, so I hate to say it, but I think it's some of the more of them taken my lead and ran with it and said, this isn't what happened. You need to know the truth. We need to focus on the future. We'd be in a stronger position right now and we'd gotten past this. I think that is the mistake in leadership that no one in the Republican Party stood up in a leadership role and said that Liz Cheney did okay, but she was always focused on what happened on January 6th. And I mean, I'm glad she is, because I think what happened on January six was awful. But we needed someone in Wisconsin who had the Republican Party base who had credibility with them. I think that was the intention of the Gabelman investigation. It didn't work out that way. But WMC did that. No, no, no, not them. Who's that conservative law firm, Will? Will, they did that election study and basically said, yeah, there's stuff that needs to be cleaned up, but this thing wasn't fraudulent, the election wasn't stolen. I think they sent that out. There is a they have street cred with the right. I think they were hoping to help the conservative movement get beyond 2020. And we are just struggling at that. And I don't know, maybe come October everyone will focus on 2022 and the Republicans will do just fine. But if they keep looking backwards, they're going to blow it.

[00:44:43] **Speaker 1** I mean, is there any safe way to play footsie with those kind of conspiracies? Because it felt like a lot of the candidates you've been interviewing, Rebecca Kleefisch, she obviously knows how elections work. Wisconsin. Yep. Even she was doing, like you said, the little footsie of like, I don't want to. I don't want to. Spicer, by the way.

[00:45:00] **Speaker 2** Yeah. Yeah. And it was all kissing up. And then Trump comes in and endorsed the other guy. And I think most of his voters voted for Michael's. So she shouldn't have played footsie with it. She should have just told the truth from the start and see where the where the cards, what's the term or the bear poops in the woods.

[00:45:18] **Speaker 1** Where the chips may fall or.

[00:45:19] **Speaker 2** The chips may fall. But that's what she should have done, you know.

[00:45:23] **Speaker 1** And and obviously, that didn't work for her. And that could be the larger warning for the more candidates in general.

[00:45:28] **Speaker 2** Yeah, but I do think there's a lane and maybe we're two years too early, but there's a lane for people to tell the truth, to lead, to say we have to move on from that. The election was in stolen. Republicans got more votes than the president. Why was that? That's why we lost.

[00:45:46] **Speaker 1** I mean, even even Robin Vos. I mean, obviously he played with fire with the gambling thing and it.

[00:45:52] **Speaker 2** Almost got him. Yeah, well and.

[00:45:53] **Speaker 1** Even he's got Steve as an opponent. As a writing opponent now for the general. Not the fact is that's.

[00:46:00] **Speaker 2** Not going to go anywhere. But it's also annoying because Vos is a lot of people who don't like Robin Vos because they don't understand what the position entails. One of the things he's really good at is protecting his members and taking the heat so they don't have to. If he's got a Republican who's wishy washy on some issue, need some time, can't do it because of their district. Vos gives them cover and that's why his majority. So B he should be out fundraising, campaigning around the state, trying to get another seat or two to get to that two thirds majority. And instead they're going to our own side's going to pin him down in his district and it's going to maybe cost us a seat somewhere where it shouldn't.

[00:46:36] **Speaker 1** Well, even if he's not pinned down, he's not really welcomed in a lot of districts because.

[00:46:40] **Speaker 2** Most of these counties passed resolutions wanting them to go away. And I don't get that. I just I challenge him to find me a more successful Republican speaker in the history of the state.

[00:46:50] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I mean, there's a reason why his pictures on the wall for as long.

[00:46:53] **Speaker 2** As long as it is. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:46:55] **Speaker 1** All right. Anything else that you want to add along these lines?

[00:46:58] **Speaker 2** Well, Pond's a great community to visit. We have the best drinking water in the state of Wisconsin.

[00:47:03] **Speaker 1** How is that rated?

[00:47:04] **Speaker 2** We're the only city that has a reverse osmosis water treatment plant. And the reason is, is our rock content is so high that your water we got awful. So we have a reverse osmosis water treatment plant. So if you live in will pond, you do not need to own a water softener and your appliances last longer because the water quality so good. Really.

[00:47:24] **Speaker 1** What's the price difference on that?

[00:47:25] **Speaker 2** We're slightly higher than everyone else. That is true. But like I said, you don't need the water softener and your appliances last longer, so you save money that way. And then we're the little hidden gem of Wisconsin. Everyone knows about the prisons, but we have the seven outdoor bronze sculptures, the most famous being the end of the trail. And it tells two stories simultaneously that of the Native Americans as he's reached the end of the trail, but also that of Claire and Shaler, who purchased the sculptures and then sculpted the other ones and gifted them to Wilpon. So they tell the story of just of each sculpture, tells a different story of what it represents. But together they tell the story of Wilpon and the history of our cool little city that goes back to 1839. Cool. And I'll tell you all about it at lunch. All right.

[00:48:05] **Speaker 1** What's the worst butchering of your name you've heard.

[00:48:08] **Speaker 2** On purpose or accident?

[00:48:11] **Speaker 1** Either way.

[00:48:11] **Speaker 2** The worst one on purpose is the regular Joe rating. The show calls me Rhino Rajan, and I even tweet.

[00:48:18] **Speaker 1** It like a cough in the middle. Yeah.

[00:48:20] **Speaker 2** And like when he tweets that, he puts an A in there and like, why do you do that? Is that because your name spelt wrong? I'm like, Well, that's mature.

[00:48:28] **Speaker 1** And then is your name spelt wrong?

[00:48:30] **Speaker 2** It's spelled wrong. Yeah, it's Ron. But Ron from a panel is a good Ryan. When I ran for City Council Mayor, I get wrong a lot. I've gotten rehired once and when people send me, they'll see a nametag and they'll glance at it quick and they think, I'm Robin.

[00:48:46] **Speaker 1** Okay, but now did you get the full facts from your parents? Is that like a spelling from the old country?

[00:48:52] **Speaker 2** You know, it's kind of an interesting little story. So I'm not a junior, but my dad and I have the same first and last name we had. He passed away with COVID, but we had different middle names. So I'm not Ron Junior, but when he was born, my grandma wanted the name of Ron, but not Ronald. Okay? And she thought, well, you can spell Jon without the age. Why can't you spell Ron with the H? So it's R0 H m because it's not short for Ronald and that's the story. And so when I was born, I was supposed to be named Warren Ron and my dad left to go to work and my mom filled out the birth certificate, so I became Ron Warren. But and that's the story behind the H.

[00:49:30] **Speaker 1** Interesting. Okay. Well, that that makes sense. But I wasn't sure if there was an ethnic thing from the old country. Kind of.

[00:49:37] **Speaker 2** No, I'm Irish.

[00:49:38] **Speaker 1** Oh well then.

[00:49:39] **Speaker 2** Irish, Scottish, Norwegian, German and Dutch. So I sunburn quickly and I like to drink. That's our people. Yeah.

[00:49:46] **Speaker 1** All right, we would like to get a little video of you maybe doing some work here, chatting with some of the other. People around the office. Well, they're.

[00:49:53] **Speaker 2** Not going to want to be on.

[00:49:54] **Speaker 1** TV. Okay, that's fine. We'll leave them out of it. I don't know if there's a few emails you need to do or you want to show us some of.

[00:50:01] **Speaker 2** The.

[00:50:01] **Speaker 1** Pictures.

[00:50:01] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I can do that.

[00:50:03] **Speaker 1** But we just need some opportunity for brand to get. Some will be.

[00:50:06] **Speaker 2** Want me to knock this out? Yeah. I think you want to.

[00:50:09] **Speaker 1** Leave that on. Zachary Will. No, I just.

[00:50:11] **Speaker 2** Can hear it.

[00:50:12] **Speaker 1** Yeah. I don't think we need that on. We'll be fine.