Aug 28 - Sherrill appearance on Beyond the Campaign

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You're listening to Beyond the Campaign and this is episode number four. Welcome to Beyond the Campaign. I'm your host, Michelle Globe, podcast publicist, author, and host of this show and read the damn book. Here you're going to learn from political candidates and from politicians. We're not just going to talk about the issues. We're going to talk about the human beings who are investing themselves in us so that we can invest ourselves in them. This is beyond the campaign. Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host Michelle Glovak and hailing from the east coast, the great state of New Jersey. I have with me, Representative Mikey Cheryl, who is running for governor of New Jersey. When I started my deep dive into who is running for what office, I fell in love with her story. She's a Naval Academy grad, a helicopter pilot, a mom of four, an attorney, just an overall badass. That is what we call her in my house. I loved getting to hear her story, why she took these pivots along the way, and what issues she is most passionate about. I know these are all going to resonate with you. So, get ready for a great conversation with Representative Cheryl. Hello, Representative Cheryl. &gt;&gt; Hi. Thanks so much for having me today. &gt;&gt; Thank you so much for coming on. I am so excited to talk to you. And I do I have to preface it because it's so funny. I was telling my husband that I was interviewing you and I'm like, &quot;Yeah, Mikey Cheryl's coming on. She's running for governor.&quot; And she goes, &quot;He he's all she Aren't you interviewing a man?&quot; I'm like, &quot;No, it's Mikey.&quot; And I looked up what your real name is and I'm Michelle is your middle name. So, props to your parents. Was your call sign Mikey? &gt;&gt; Well, it was because um my name was Mikey. Then in helicopter squ in my helicopter squam they weren't as into call sign. So if you had a nickname like that you didn't really get a new call sign. So you were just um but the the reverse was kind of true. I remember interviewing for a job in the Navy and I was interviewing with some surface warfare people and I'm in the avi I was in the aviation community and I went and I said my name's Mikey Cheryl and they told me later I got the job but they told me later when I left they were making fun of me because they said I was introducing myself with my they thought I was introducing myself with my call sign like hey I'm Maverick you know that kind of like hey I'm Mikey and they were like okay Mikey and then I'm like that's my name they go well we know that now but it's so True. I I was in corporate aviation for almost 20 years and worked with a lot of former military pilots who all use their call sign. You're like, &quot;Come on, guys.&quot; &gt;&gt; Back in the day, you know, some of those things weren't that appropriate. So, it was always funny when people would just go by them. And I think you got to stop that right now. You got to start going by like Ste's. It would be better for everyone, &gt;&gt; right? I think even in my FBO days when I started, we had a supervisor who went by his call sign. I was like, &quot;Buddy, no. You're a line tech now.&quot; Yeah. Let's Let's tighten it up nowadays. Yeah. &gt;&gt; Before we dive too much deeper, can you introduce yourself to everyone, please? I'm Mikey Cheryl. I'm currently the congresswoman from the 11th district of New Jersey. That's northern New Jersey. And I am running for governor. I am the Democratic nominee for governor for the great state of New Jersey. &gt;&gt; I love that. I'm so excited. I I don't spend time in New Jersey because I'm all the way in California, but I've had Sander Booker on twice now. We got to meet in person. So, I feel like I'm pro New Jersey. &gt;&gt; Yeah, everybody has. Yeah. I feel like no matter where I go across the country, when I say, you know, I'm from New Jersey, everyone's like, Jersey. And I'm like, that's right. It's a good state to be from. &gt;&gt; I love this. And I love I love that. So, we've already talked a bit about your background, but you went to the Naval Academy. You're a helicopter pilot to in our house. That equates to you're a badass. Uh I I think that is so cool. I I always said that if I was going to get my pilot's license, it would be in helicopters because there's just something so much cooler about them and there's much more technique and anyone who's flown in a helicopter will get that. &gt;&gt; I totally agree with you. Um, and I like how in your house that equates to badass because I would like to implement that in my house. My teenagers aren't convinced yet, but I I'll work on it because I I like that attitude. &gt;&gt; I will send my nine-year-old to you. She She's not allowed to cuss, but she is allowed to use the word badass when referencing certain females. &gt;&gt; Oh, that's great. That's great. &gt;&gt; So, you you are the equivalent to a badass here, and she will say that. I will take it. &gt;&gt; Where did this love for aviation helicopters come from? And then the and you're an attorney. Um, so I feel like there's a lot of similarities here. My bachelors, my masters are in law because I thought I was going down that path, too, but I I kept veering. So, what was what was all of the inspiration for your journey in this career and then pivoting to politics, which we know is so fun? Yeah. So, I wanted to fly from an early age. Uh, my grandfather was a pilot in World War II. And I mean, that guy loved aviation, everything about it. He loved aircraft. He loved aircraft museums. Um, he just he would take every opportunity. My um uncle was in the Air Force and he would take him up some tent. I mean, just loved loved loved flying and and I sort of caught the bug early and I just remember he was in Cincinnati, Ohio, and we'd go to the Wright Pad Air Force Museum where they have a B24 and we'd go see it and we'd be seeing and he'd be talking about his days flying in World War II and what that was like and how that, you know, how that was and and all this stuff. I mean it the stories were always just amazing to me because here was a guy who you know had never really left Cincinnati as far as I know until he was a young man and then suddenly he's fing a B24 aircraft over to London meaning uh flying down the coast until I think Venezuela and then just kind of going east until he hit Africa and then going back up and I mean and then living in in London and getting shot down and being rescued rescued by the French. And it was just kind of an amazing amazing story to me and something I was always so fascinated by. And what came through again was how much he loved that kind of camaraderie he had in his squadron, how much he loved serving his country. And it was it was funny because he would take I have two younger sisters and he would take all of us to the right air force museum or to the Air and Space Museum in Washington. And my sisters would be like dragging along. Like, stop asking grandpa questions. We just want to go get lunch. Like, can we leave now? And I'd be like, stop. I just want to see one more. Blah blah blah. So, it was it it is I can see it in in my own family. I can see it um in my cousins and stuff. Sometimes you get bitten by the bug and sometimes you don't. But, uh I always wanted to fly. I always wanted to serve. &gt;&gt; And what made you choose the Naval Academy? Um, so my grandfather flew in the Army Air Corps, which was became the Air Force. And, um, so, uh, when I first told my dad I wanted to fly. And he said, you know, that's too expensive. You have to go in the military. I was like, yeah, I'm going to go to the Air Force. And he goes, &quot;Well, um, I I said, you know, but I want to go to college.&quot; He goes, &quot;Well, you should go to one of the surfacemies.&quot; I said, &quot;I'll go to the Air Force Academy.&quot; And he goes, &quot;Oh, you don't want to go.&quot; And and by the way, can I just preface this by saying I was like in the fifth grade. I don't think my father was real. This was not a deeply well thought out like we weren't sitting at a table with maps and and admissions pockets and and deciding my future. This was my dad largely doing something else as I was just hanging out with him saying, &quot;Yeah, okay. Well, you know, I want to go to the Air Force code.&quot; He's like, &quot;Ah, you don't want to go there.&quot; He goes, &quot;You want to go to one of the cool ones?&quot; Um he said uh the Air Force Academy is too new. He said the ones with real history are at West Point and the Naval Academy. And I said, 'Well, I want to fly. And and he wasn't in the military. He goes, &quot;Well, I think they fly in the Navy.&quot; Which I mean, by the way, they do. Like they have tons of air. Um that kind of shows you how well thought out this was. So he goes, &quot;I think they fly in the Navy.&quot; And I go, &quot;Okay, I'm going to go to the Naval Academy.&quot; And he said, &quot;Yeah, that's a really cool place. I went there as a boy scout when I was little and it was awesome. And I said, &quot;Okay, I'm going there.&quot; And um then uh I said, &quot;I'm gonna fly.&quot; And he said, &quot;Well, I don't know if the Naval Academy takes women and I don't know if the Navy has women pilots.&quot; And I just it to this day I remember that that was not at all an issue for me because everything I'd been told remember you know this was these were the days of you know Helen Ready and and you know I'm woman and I can you know do anything and and Gloria Steinum I mean there was just this real sense especially I think for young girls that you could do anything you know you can go achieve your goals and you can break down these barri barriers and don't pay attention if it's not available. And I I think that is everything that I remember feeling as a little girl feels now like it's under attack that those those same conversations going on now are so much more of, you know, parents thinking, &quot;Yeah, honey, I hope so.&quot; But and maybe not expressing that but thinking, you know, I know I think to myself, gosh, I got to fight for this because I have to make sure our kids I have to make sure all these kids in New Jersey have these opportunities and have that sense that this country can deliver. They've got to stay engaged. They've got to stay involved and I've got to provide that pathway. &gt;&gt; I completely agree as a mom of two. I'm a stepmom of two also. And you know, it it brings back those conversations where with the opposition saying, &quot;Well, I've always I've always respected where you lie in your political beliefs.&quot; And I go, &quot;Well, yeah, cuz I respect everybody, and I'm fighting for literally everybody, including your children and mine, and you are not.&quot; And that is exactly where we are in all of this, that the opposition is not fighting for the rights of our children. They're not fighting for us as women. and we have to do something. So, I love that you're coming forward for your state as a Californian. We're seeing that with Governor Nuomo and and he's standing up and I think that's why we are so lucky to live in California because we have someone who says don't poke the bear. &gt;&gt; We won't be poked. &gt;&gt; Right. Right. And and I just love, you know, I think um there's so little that can cut through what's going on now. And I think humor does it. I I think that's why you see the attack on like Stephen Cobear and stuff. I think humor does it really well. And I think um his current tirade on uh Twitter is just really enjoyable. &gt;&gt; It is. &gt;&gt; Really enjoyable. Yes. &gt;&gt; It breaks up the CNN breaking news alerts that are every morning. &gt;&gt; Exactly. Exactly. &gt;&gt; Yes. Or Aaron Parnass. I'm like please no more breaking news from you, buddy. Um, yes, we need those Twitter updates. &gt;&gt; Right. Right. Exactly. &gt;&gt; So, what made you decide to go into politics from being an attorney? I know you were focusing on criminal justice reform. Where did that change come to you and decide that no, I I want to run for an elected office? You know, it's funny because when you're doing something in your 20s, I don't think you realize until much later how much that just informs your outlook of the, you know, of the world and stuff and how that's kind of, you know, any experience that you have may be different from what other people are doing or thinking because you just sort of are like living your life. And I don't remember being incredibly focused on other people's lives. I remember kind of self-directed there, you know, in my 20s and I didn't have kids. I wasn't married. It was just kind of my life was about me. And um you suddenly get to a point in your life where you realize, huh, I'm kind of looking at this a little bit differently. And and the reason is because I'm so informed by some of those things that shaped me as a person. And and by that I mean the Naval Academy and the Navy. And I say that because I now live in Northern New Jersey, which isn't like living in Norfol, Virginia. There aren't, you know, it's I there aren't many veterans in my town. There aren't a lot of people in, you know, the high school that go off to serve in the military. And so I when when I got out of the Navy, I went to work. I went to law school. I went into a law firm. Again, not a lot of veterans. and just continued living my life. So, it almost came as a surprise to me to find how I still was so so many of those lessons were still so deeply ingrained in me. And um I say that because as I look back on why I did certain things, it just seems like some of that drive was came from some of the training in the military. So, in other words, I remember being in um a P training camp. We were trained if if you're in special forces or in naval aviation, you get trained in the event you find yourself behind enemy lines. So we did this training and there were commitments made meaning like the U US Navy the US military would not use any of these tactics um because we always want the moral high ground because you know but it would help us fight for your release because we would have the world community to fight with us because this is unacceptable. And so to see torture and rendition and Guantanamo and all of the things I was promised that the United States would never do, to see all of that being eroded, that is largely why I decided to go back to law school because I really felt like it was the Supreme Court at that time that was standing up and in a space where most people weren't. I really felt as if there was a need to fight for those values and to come at that in in a strong way to protect what those core values are of this country. I went on to serve. Um, and then, uh, I think it was some of what I was trained about in the Constitution and who we fought for and how we fought that led me to run the first time in 2018 for Congress because Donald Trump was attacking so much of what I'd spent my life fighting for, whether it was tor or whether it was, you know, against gold star families or against John McCain's service or any number of things. the Muslim ban. I mean, these things that I felt were deeply embedded in the Constitution of the United States that he was attacking and undermining and now um being at this moment where again there is a crisis at hand and what is the best way I can run to the fight? And I do remember in 2018 someone saying to me as I was running in 2018 and I was told like, &quot;Oh, you'll never win this race. You know, this the person you're running against is very entrenched. It's a Republican district. It's a Trump district. you can't do, you know, this can't this won't work out. And you know, so I'm running and I'm like, &quot;No, we can do this.&quot; And we're gathering the forces. And I remember somebody going, &quot;You've had friends. You're just everybody else is running away and you guys run right to the fight.&quot; And I was like, &quot;Yeah, I guess that's right. I mean, you're you're trained to do that.&quot; And and that's always been sort of what I focused on is where can I do the most good? Where can I address these things I'm really concerned about and make and affect the most change? And so that's what's compelled me in sort of all these career transitions is to find that space where I I'm really attracted to public service. I really like to feel that what I'm doing is making a difference. And um so that's always sort of driven me. And it came as a big surprise for me to one day sort of wake up and think, oh, I guess a lot of this is because that's kind of how I was trained in my very early formative years. &gt;&gt; I love that. And not to let's also mention you're a mom of four. So, you've been very busy career-wise, &gt;&gt; but you have four, they're not so tiny, but tiny humans, as I I call them, that you have been raising this entire time while creating huge change and running towards the fight, which is incredible, &gt;&gt; right? I mean, &gt;&gt; I think I think there are a lot of ways in which many of us feel as if We've had opportunities. I was able to serve in the Navy. I was I graduated in the first class of women eligible for combat on ships and aircraft. So, I was able to have this career in the Navy doing the thing I really wanted to do. Um I've been able to run for Congress and and I guess I I'll keep fighting because that's what I do, but it's really not me that I'm worried about. You know, I feel I can pay my bills right now. Um, I, you know, feel very much like I've achieved a lot of stuff I wanted to do. I, it's not my future that I'm concerned about. I'm concerned about my kids. I'm concerned about the kids in New Jersey. I'm concerned about any possible grandkids. I I don't think this country is in a place that is going to ensure that all of our kids have the greatest access to opportunity. Um, in fact, I think just by running for office, I maybe have put my family in more danger and that scares the heck out of me. So, I've got to create a world where that's not true, where I know that people can have a secure future. Where I know that at a minimum you can speak up against our government and you're not going to be put in jail. And that would have been really bizarre to say even five years ago that I was worried about that. But now I don't think anyone would question my concerns there. &gt;&gt; Not at all. I I tell my kids the same thing. I I say, &quot;Yes, you know that I'm interviewing politicians. If mommy gets arrested, we hope not.&quot; But you never know at this point. You never know. &gt;&gt; I I think that's exactly right. I think that's why having really strong states to protect people um because otherwise it doesn't feel like there are a lot of protections. should that come about to fight. I mean, when they have a member of the Senate handcuffed for speaking up at a press conference, something is really really wrong right now &gt;&gt; and dragged away. Yeah. We I mean, we watched it on TV, Sandra Padilla. And and you mentioned something that strikes me because as a mom and as a woman, you know, so often we ask that stupid question of, you know, how do you do this as a mom and you've got children? I make sure that if I ask that question of a female, I also ask it of a male. How are you doing it? What is your wife doing at home to help you? But you bring up such a different level. It's not simply how are you doing this and raising a family, but now you have to protect them on another level. What is that like? I I read Gretchen Whitmer's um memoir about how she had to keep her family safe and and this was years ago and it's only getting worse. Do you mind sharing a bit about what your concerns are or how you're protecting your family or how that's come up? I I don't want to get too personal, but that is a concern. &gt;&gt; Yeah, I I I'm you know, I maybe you could have sused this out from my background. I have a very high risk tolerance for myself. Like I am not risk averse in any way. I like traveling around the world. Um I've served all over the world and in you know sometimes countries without democracies and stuff like that. I um I've you know I've flown in naval aviation. We've had to do these all kinds of training that was um it felt fairly safe to me but it you know people died doing it on occasion and stuff. So, so I'm always fine with that stuff. I am the complete opposite when it comes to my kids. I mean, if I could just put them in bubble wrap and just say, you know, just sit right here next to me and I will always make sure you're safe and you know, that would be perfect. I hate the thought of them in any way being in danger. And I hate the thought more, 10 million times more, that it could be because of me, that because of something I'm doing that I'm I'm putting a bigger target on their head. That that just sickens me. And yet at the same time, it's balanced with this idea that if I don't do this, then they're going to be living half a life by not being able to say anything they want to say, not being able to be creative, not being able to write maybe the the stories they want to write or talk about the things they want to talk about or start a a podcast with things they want to talk about or people they want to talk to because none of that's going to be available if I don't fight back against what this administration is trying to create. And so it's a horrible, horrible decision to have to make in this time. Like, are you going to take the long view and fight hard for their future? Are you going to duck your head right now and just try to keep people safe today? And and I'm, you know, I've obviously picked my battle here, but it doesn't feel good. It doesn't feel like I know that for sure I've I've made the right choice. Um, and I I struggle with that. I mean, we see what happened in Minnesota. We have a judge here um where a person in her court came to her door and killed her only son. We just have a level of political violence going on right now that is um that is unacceptable and unusual and that is driving a lot of people out of this space. and and if we if we don't combat that, if we don't find ways to keep people safe and and find ways to support them in this, we're going to lose the things, I think, that are most important to our future. And and so, but it's horrible. It's a horrible, horrible thing that we even have to think of right now in these times. &gt;&gt; It's such a sacrifice that I think a lot of people don't recognize or realize. And because it's becoming so much more prevalent, we have to consider this and and to remember that this is what you are doing for all of us and to this is why I think it's so important to invest in you and hearing your story because of what you are doing and sacrificing for each and every one of us. Well, back at you. I mean, it horrible that you have to feel that level of anxiety and fear too for your kids. I mean that all the people engaging in trying to fight for this future have to think about that is just that's awful. But thank you. Thank you for doing what you're doing. It's I think all of I think all of us together these are all really incredibly important ways we push back and ways we get information out and ways we fight this. But yeah, it's unacceptable that that's where we are, which is what we're all fighting. If if there is one issue that you could say you are most passionate about fighting for, what would it be? And I know that there's so many issues to choose from, but is there just one that you are like this this is what I want to change? It's it's opportunity because I you know I had to do a deep dive after the last election because I have run you know talking about democracy and the constitution and the things I'm supportive of and that is very well defined in my mind. I grew up in the cold war. It was always very easy to define what a democratic state looks like because you always had the Soviet Union to show what a notdemocratic state looks like. So the lines were drawn. Um, but after this last election, I felt like it was a little too illdefined in the in the maybe in in the younger generation of of what exactly I meant by that. So, I started to take a deep dive like what does it mean? And and at its heart, I just totally think democracy and a well-run democracy is that opportunity piece, that idea that political philosophers have said about it. You know, you're trying to create a society where no matter who, you know, if you had no idea, if you were a little, you know, glint in your mom's eye or something, and you had no idea what race you were going to be born, what gender you were going to be born, you know, where, how much money your family was going to have, none of that. You had no idea. And you were just going to be dropped in to this body, if you will. Um, how what society would you create to give yourself the best chance? meaning, how do we give the best chance at opportunity to the most amount of people here? So again, it doesn't matter if you can give a million dollars to the president's campaign. It doesn't matter if you can buy a gazillion dollars of his cryptocurrency or his sneakers. It doesn't matter um who your parents know or how rich they are. Because right now, what I think at at its heart, what we're all what we're fighting for in the Democratic Party is largely that idea that I'm trying to create a world where your kids are going to have opportunity, that they're going to be able to do a little bit better than you're doing, where it doesn't matter who they know. And I'm so adamantly focused and passionate about this because I can trace a million different ways in which this has operated in my own family. And I tell people, you know, when I grew up, I didn't we didn't hang out with our congressmen or our senators. I didn't know our governor. You know, my family was just kind of a normal middle class family. Um, we didn't know anybody special. So, the idea that my, you know, my father and mother, they didn't serve. So, the idea that I was going to like do the things I've done, it wasn't because um I I certainly had advantages other people didn't have. and and you know starting from a really good place as a really secure middle-ass family. But it it wasn't as if it was predestined or you know I had some person that sort of omni omni you're going to get to do what you want and that was even more true of my dad who grew up poor in West Virginia or my mom who grew up in a union family you know her mom didn't work and and just kind of very modest means that I mean so again and again I've seen in my own family how this works and to think now that I just feel like we're creating this society where if you're rich, God bless, you're going to be fine and your kids are going to be fine and your grandkids and your great their kids and duh, and if you're not, you're going to be working three jobs and fighting for crumbs at the table and never get ahead. And I just I am so adamantly opposed to that. I just I think this country of all countries can do so much better than that by people. And that's what I'm fighting for. &gt;&gt; I completely agree. I love it. I I can't wait to celebrate you winning. &gt;&gt; I'm knocking on wood. I'm also a naval engineer, so I'm very superstitious. So, knocking on wood here. Yes, &gt;&gt; I do it all the time. &gt;&gt; Can you share with everyone where they can find you, donate to your campaign, learn more about you because, as I like to remind everyone, we don't have to be able to vote for you. We can still donate and help you out even from afar. &gt;&gt; Well, thank you so much. Thanks for asking. Um, it's at mikeysherald.com and you can find all the information there and every little bit helps. Um, my campaigns have already always been built on a lot of grassroots support, a lot of just, you know, $5 here from from a lot of people that just helps lift this campaign up. So, I really sincerely appreciate it and like I said, every every little bit helps. So, thank you. &gt;&gt; Thank you so much for sharing yourself and your story. I I thoroughly enjoyed getting to talk to you today. Well, likewise. I really do appreciate it and thanks again. Take care, stay safe, and hope to talk to you again soon.