'The Interview': Gretchen Whitmer Wants a Gen X President — in 2028

0:00

[Music] from The New York Times this is the

0:06

interview I'm Lulu Garcia Navaro there is one thing that's certain

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about this year's election whatever the result it will be the end of an era

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opening the door to a new generation of political leaders and for Democrats

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there are few politicians buzzer than Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer after

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serving in the Michigan State Legislature Whitmer was elected to the governorship in 2018 and when Co hit she

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became a national lightning rod for some of the restrictions she put in place taking hits from Trump whose rhetoric

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she blames for inspiring an assassination attempt against her but it was what Whitmer achieved in 2022 that

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really cemented her as a political force that year she was reelected on the back of a Reproductive Rights ballot

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referendum she also achieved something that hadn't happened in nearly 40 years in Michigan with the help of

1:00

redistricting she gave Democrats a trifecta with both the state house and

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the Senate flipping to Blue in the past few years Whitmer has leveraged that majority to enact a progressive wish

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list of policies including basic but meaningful gun control legislation a new

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clean energy plan and she's also been pushing for educational reforms like Universal prek and free Community

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College Whitmer is term limited though her governorship will end in 2026 and

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there's a lot of speculation about what's next for her like many politicians with national Ambitions

1:36

she's written a new book about her life and vision for the country it's called true grud she's also raising her profile

1:43

as co-chair of President Biden's reelection campaign we talk about Biden's challenges in the second half of

1:49

our conversation and about whether she can deliver the must-win state of Michigan here's my conversation with

1:55

Governor Gretchen Whitmer [Music]

2:05

I want to get the elephant out of the room which is you're releasing this Memoir in the middle of the 2024

2:11

election cycle so why now so it's it's less of a memoir and more of like a

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handbook the question I get whenever I'm traveling even within Michigan but certainly outside of Michigan as well is

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how do I stay positive and all the ugliness and craziness that I've had to

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lead the state of Michigan through how do I stay positive why do I want to keep doing this work and I thought you know

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this is going to be another heavy year 2024 sure is it's going to feel very dark at times with the political

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rhetoric and this important election coming up and I thought if I can put some light out into the world right now

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maybe you can laugh at my expense or maybe there's a little inspiration here that'll help you get through whatever

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you were navigating were you worried about how it was going to be perceived though putting it there at this this

3:00

moment because you can put light into the dark at any time but this is as you mentioned just a very important election

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and you are a very prominent Democrat you know what I I can't worry about how everything's going to be perceived

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that's one lesson I certainly have learned in the last six years no matter what I do or say people are going to

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have their own take on it so you got to do what you know the right thing to do is this book did help me understand you

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as a person it is a book that talks a lot about your own personal story how

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you view the world you write in the book about how you partied in high school and

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college and that you didn't really become ambitious until uh you got into law school you talk about how you

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actually threw up on your principal who found you passed out in the parking lot um from drinking and first of all like

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mortifying but you didn't include this in your book for no reason so I'm curious what were you hoping to show

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well every one of us has our flaws right that was a period of time when you know

4:02

I was not particularly disciplined and was focused more on having fun and and

4:08

that's that's okay too I learned a lot during that period of time but it was that real big screw up that taught me um

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each phase in life you learn things you've got opportunities and um my mom

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and I we had a very tough relationship during that period of time as I would have had with my daughters if they'd

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been as wild as I was at that age but I also was the moment where I really

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learned who I was and when I went to law school is when it all started to click for me so I was a little bit more of a l

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Bloomer than my sister was but by the same token I think these are lessons that help keep me humble and fortunately

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when I was a teenager we didn't all have phones where we could film one another making you know um not the greatest

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judgments yeah for sure and in fact you make a point that humor and being able

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to not take yourself so seriously is part of what you think makes you a

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powerful politician in a way you actually put a picture of yourself in the book missing a front tooth because

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you had an accident growing up um so first of all it's funny that you married a dentist right as a woman though we're

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always so attuned to the way we look um how we're perceived I mean women we know

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and specifically politics get judged a lot more harshly do you worry about that

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I do you know especially in the beginning of my career as a young woman in going into politics women of course

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you know we can't just switch out ties every day we've got to be mindful of

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what we wear on top of how we look Etc and so I um it can get expensive most of

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the things that I wear and buy are actually secondhand and I rented a dress

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from Rent the Runway to give my first state of the state speech in and a

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predominantly Republican legislature to whom I was addressing at the time I knew that there were a lot of things that

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they weren't going to share as terms of values and vision for the state and when I laid out the vision but I wanted to

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feel confident going in I wore this I thought attractive blue dress oh my God the the fashion police showed up the

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next day it was the critique was not about what I said or the important

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message that shared it was about what I was wearing and they actually interviewed people about how they thought I looked in that dress and you

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know as a mother of of two young women it was just crushing not because it it hurt my feelings but because here I am

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laying out a vision for a state after just getting elected the Chief Executive Officer of of a state of 10 million

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people where we have serious issues to tackle and that's what I was talking about and the focus was what I was on

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what I was wearing and I think that we deal with a lot more of that than than men ever do and I am mindful of it

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because I want people to focus on what I'm saying not not anything else when you say you're mindful of it do you

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Forefront your gender or do you pretend that it's not there I'm not going to talk about it I'm a person in a suit and

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and my gender doesn't matter or do you feel that there is a different thing that as a female politician you bring to

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the table I go back and forth to be honest Lulu I think that there are moments where um uh you might take a

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situation as a learning opportunity to educate someone uh there are moments where when you're talking about

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something that is inherently gender based Reproductive Rights for instance

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talk about my experience as a woman as a sexual assault Survivor there are moments where I ignore the noise and

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just muster through it's I think a calculation uh calculation maybe sounds

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too um you know planning it's a assessment that women have to make at

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all times colleague when I was in the Senate came up to me and said something totally out of bounds and very over the

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line and I remember sitting there thinking I've got to figure out how to respond to this can I educate him why

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what he just said is totally inappropriate do I ignore it do I laugh and brush it off and tell him you know

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that he's foolish do I take it on in a very serious way and it's sometimes

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exhausting to figure out how do I have to respond to someone else's bad behavior but I am mindful because I

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think about the women who come after me are my my own daughters and what did you decide well in that one I I responded

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with um some very colorful language and put him in his place and he never bothered me

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again I want to talk a little bit about you as a political leader because one of

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the reasons you are viewed as this rising star for Democrats is that you are a popular governor in a Battleground

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state in 2022 you got a trifecta for the Democrats you won the house you won the Senate and you won the

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governorship I guess my question is there's two ways that you can move when

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something like that happens especially in a state that is so closely divided you can decide to do what some governors

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in red States and purple states have done which is to say I'm going to be a interest I'm going to move more

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incrementally or you can enact what is a

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very partisan agenda right you took that second route what was the calculation there why did you decide I'm going to

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really try and run with the ball well we ran on an agenda and people elected us on that agenda and so My Philosophy is

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if people have have elected you to do something do it don't waste time don't

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make excuses deliver and I'm I'm grateful that I've got this second term

10:01

a lot of folks are writing the my political obituary going into the reelect in 2022 I ended up winning by

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almost 11 points and that for me made me feel very confident that people expected

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me to lead on the issues on which I was running I also though want to make sure to recognize I think you can't win an

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election in Michigan by double digits if you're not also drawing over people who

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are not traditional Democrats and I'm proud of that one of the stories in the book I tell is about uh my friend Randy

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richardville the Republican leader and we had a lot of knockdown drag outs when I was the Democratic leader in the

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Senate he was the Republican leader he was in the majority we did battle we'd

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Al often though also end the day going and grabbing a beer together because I think that it's important to not take

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things personally but to stay focused on on doing the job and also trying to

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continue to build relationships with diverse sets of interests and people that's what our system is supposed to be

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about it's supposed to be about that but you know one of the things that I know other Democrats have pointed to is that

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the Republican Party under Donald Trump has gone in a particular direction that

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makes that they feel very very difficult so that sounds great to sit and have a

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beer with your political adversary but at the same time there are huge

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ideological chasms at the moment there's no question I mean it's chenging I'm I don't ever want to imply that it's easy

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it takes work it takes thick skin and a short memory and that's a good thing in

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politics that's for sure um during the pandemic when things were really at at

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their hottest when the former president singled me out and called me that woman from Michigan and I was getting a lot of

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threats at the time my Republican Le legislature who' worked with me pretty well up until that moment really turned

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on me that was the moment when everything kind of Chang changed I share a picture in the book from the window

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that I took on my phone when they had a demonstration people showed up in their cars and shut down the capital city and

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they were holding up signs calling me you know a Nazi um we saw Confederate

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flags saw a Barbie that was dressed like me and hanging from a noose and it was

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shocking I also had a Republican leader who took to um calling me names and

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shared a stage with a lot of the some of the folks that ultimately were tried for the plot to kidnap and kill me and yet I

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had to keep negotiating with that guy cuz I had to get a budget done and so I think that that short memory and thick

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skin is really important if we're going to try to bridge these gaps because I

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got a job to do at the end of the day let's talk about that era because it was

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the period when you became a national figure very early on you and then president Trump were at odds to put it

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mildly and you became a symbol of what Republicans saw as Draconian pandemic

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restrictions you face protests death threats you write that you were shocked

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at how virulent the reaction was looking back why do you think people

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reacted the way they did so quickly one of the things that I did during the

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pandemic was was talk to my colleagues a lot especially my Midwestern group of

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Governors bipartisan group Ohio Indiana Illinois Wisconsin Minnesota and even

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Kentucky and it was really helpful for perspective everyone of us was dealing

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with some level of that animosity in swing States it was even more heightened

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because of the political Dynamic and I think some intentional efforts to really

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Jin it up but every one of us was dealing with it when I chatted with Mike dwine who was in a republican controlled

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state of Ohio and he's dealing with threats or dealing with anger from his

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legislature trying to scale back his executive powers that was really good for perspective for me I will say though

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that it was uniquely worse in Michigan one of my colleagues on our group call

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said you know Gretchen you're doing a lot of the same things the rest of us are but why do you take so much more

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crap for it and he said soon as that last word landed he said wait don't answer that question I know you're the

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one woman that's doing it of this group of Governors and you think it was sexism well that was his theory and I'm not

14:41

going to combat that I do think that that was maybe what made our situation in Michigan stand

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out things went off the rails in Michigan in October 2020 14 men ended up

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being arrested for plotting to kidnap you and overthrow the Michigan Government you write in the book that

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this was referred to in the press as a kidnapping plot but you say that's not accurate can you tell

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me why not what do you see it as I'll tell you in context of another situation

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that was covered as a assassination attempt not long ago there was a single

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person that showed up on uh justice Kavanaugh's lawn and it's been covered

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as an assassination attempt it was one person he was apprehended well before

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any threat really became real to Justice Kavanaugh and I'm grateful for that I

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recognize a threat against anyone no matter who they are what their political views is undermines our system of of

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democracy and I think it's really important that we all call it out when it happens the way that was covered

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versus how 12 to 14 people who were plotting over the series

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of months who were doing exercises they had what they called kill house running

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through scenarios about how to kidnap me and kill me and let's be clear they

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weren't going to keep me for ransom their intention was to you know like a terrorist organization have a sham trial

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and then execute me it was very clear in a lot of their Communications that was the plan and it was over the series of

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months they staked out a a vacation property that my husband and I have on

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more than one occasion they had plots to blow up Bridges and kill police officers as well to even burn down the capital

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locking the legislature inside all of that has been labeled a kidnapping plot

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and it does feel like it is to Discount the seriousness it was over such a

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longer period of time so many more people involved so many weapons involved and yet the discrepancy of how that was

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covered versus how this one person on Justice Kavanaugh's lawn uh was covered

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it was really shocking when you think about it h you write in the book that you want to

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meet with one of the plotters who pleaded guilty who is in prison now what do you want to

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know I'd like to understand what drove this group of people to take this

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extreme position and to try to um to to

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undergo this exercise to try to kidnap me and kill me I want to understand it what is happening you think there's

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something to understand maybe maybe there's not but I'd like to see I'd like

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to know is is it because there wasn't for that person Economic Opportunity was

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it because they got laid off during the pandemic and they were really worried about how they were going to pay make

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their house payment what was it that set them off it can't just be the fact that we wanted people to wear a mask because

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they showed up in masks to be not identified so it wasn't the act of wearing a mask but what was it what was

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happening that is there a lesson to learn from this that's what I always want to

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know do you forgive the plotters I do and um eight of them are doing hard time

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now so I think that's important to point out some were acquitted and you write in the book that you think that that was

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unfair I'm I do think that it was you know very sad to see such a desperate

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treatment of people that were a part of the same undertaking and I think it does us all a disfavor if there's not a

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accountability but for the ones who took accountability and who shared their remorse and participated with the

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prosecution I did ask the judge to take that into account and to recognize that

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that is a positive outcome and hopefully that that was reflected in the

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sentencing separate from what happened to you during this period of the pandemic I do want to ask you about some

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of the lessons that you may have learned Michigan's stay-at-home order did last

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longer than other states you closed all the schools in March 2020 and you didn't urge them to be

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reopened until a year later do you think now that we sort of have the fullness of

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hindsight schools should have reopened earlier because we know now how

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profoundly it impacted kids to be out of the classroom I have said many times

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that if I could go back in time with the knowledge we've accumulated now there C certainly are things that I would have

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done differently I also want to remind everyone that during that period of time

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Michigan was so hot compared to the rest of the country it was New York Detroit

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it was Chicago and it was uh New Orleans that were having massive impact from

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covid our hospitals were at at real brink of course you were dealing with the situation and no one really knew how

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to deal with with this it's less about what you were facing but more specifically about the impacts of

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schools you're seeing it in Michigan chronic absenteeism students performing below pre-pandemic levels in reading and

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math so just applying that as the current governor what do you see maybe the lessons are of that period

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particularly when it comes to kids in schools I think we we have to remember that we were looking at lessons from the

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the Spanish flu and recognizing that we hadn't dealt with a global pandemic in

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UND years that that particular virus absolutely was devastating to younger

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people and as a person taking in as much information as I could from our epidemiologists and our Public Health

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experts the thought that we might have a lot of school AG kids that were going to die from this virus I think was really

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what motivated our actions and the actions of lots of Governors when we

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stopped kids going to school it was I it has had carried a long hard price tag

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with it we've made massive investments in early childhood and in free breakfast

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and lunch for all 1.4 million Michigan kids and literacy coaches and so we're

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working to help get our kids back on track but absolutely if I could go back in time with the knowledge we have now

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and knowing this virus didn't disproportionately kill children would I

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done some things differently yes staying in Michigan one of the more

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recent issues it's fair to say that you struggled with is a conflict in Gaza Michigan has the second largest

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population of Arab Americans in the country there was a huge movement to

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vote uncommitted to protest the Biden administration's handling of the conflict and in some arab-american

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communities up to 3/4 of Democrats cast their votes as uncommitted do you worry that the

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protest vote will translate into meaningful erosion of Biden's support I think one of the um really important

22:02

lessons right now is everyone's hurting the only uni veral truth here in the

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states is that everyone's hurting we're watching what's happening the loss of life it's it's profound the hostages

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that are are still you know in captivity the remains of hostages who've not

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survived so I do think that it was important for people who disagree with

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the policy to be able to make an outward statement of that through that boat I

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also think it's important to recognize we've got a high stakes election coming up we know that this is a very Stark

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choice in front of us and um there are going to be generational impacts from

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the outcome of this election and so I'm doing everything I can to make sure that

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michiganders and all of these communities feel seen heard respected and reflected in the policies of of

23:01

President Biden I mean what does that look like because recent polling has shown that among Muslim and Arab

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American voters Trump is leading Biden by 32 points that's a huge defection from 2020 so how are you addressing that

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what we have seen at least in so many of the conversations that I've had on the ground in Michigan is this is a a

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community that takes umage with the to put it lightly with the president

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policies that being said I hear routinely that they also recognize that

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a vote for Donald Trump is a vote for someone who pushed a Muslim ban who

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talks about countries with people of color and Incredibly harsh and cruel

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terms I think that making sure that people come out and vote is going to be the important focus of of our work going

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into the fall election and I don't take any vote for granted and I don't think

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that the Biden Administration does either last question about Gaza which is

24:04

a bit of a personal one we've seen a lot of college activism you have two College age daughters one just graduated from

24:11

Michigan and one is still a student there what have they been telling you

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about what's going on in campus well I'm I'm glad that I've got a 22 yearold and a 20-year-old who are

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very um confident and invested and vocal and I learn as much from my kids as I do

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anybody uh and I'm I'm grateful you know my daughter my oldest called me early on

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um probably late last fall and she was really upset about the deaths in Gaza

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and the escalating loss of innocent lives um Jarred by what happened October

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7th without question and then the ongoing loss I've asked her questions you know she's got a a wonderful diverse

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group of friends this generation sees I think the humanitarian need and is very

25:06

motivated to to call on our leaders to address the the crisis that is playing

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out every single day and so I I I am very appreciative of of their advocacy

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and activity and I think it's emblematic of what we're seeing across our younger generation so you think the protests on

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campuses were a legitimate expression of that some of them were some of them crossed the

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line you know it's funny as we've been talking it strikes me that um we've been talking about issues in Michigan but

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they're all so resonant to the National stage right your state is such a microcosm of what is happening in

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different parts of this country and you know you are one of the co-chairs of the

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Biden re-election campaign as we're speaking today you just came from the White House

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and obviously the president's age has been an issue for voters and there's been a lot of questions about his mental

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Fitness he's 81 years old pretending that this isn't an issue hasn't really been working for Democrats I mean it is

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an issue for voters do you see it as a legitimate concern and how should

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Democrats be talking about it well one of the things I know is you can't tell people how to feel and you can't tell

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people to ignore something they are questioning or they're interested in I think it's important to recognize yes

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the two leading standard bearers for the two big political parties in this country are are both you know 80ish

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right um that's an inescapable Fact one has got a record of delivering

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incredibly for the people of our our country the chips act the IRA the

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investment that's happening on Shoring Supply chains and the investment on Bridges and roads all across this

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country president bid Biden has a record of delivering and that's the kind of

27:01

leadership I think that we will see for the next four years if he's reelected on the contrary the other

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80ish year old is someone who has not articulated any sort of vision for our

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country someone who has um been more about dividing us someone who when they don't like someone will attack them and

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mobilize their supporters to threaten them um someone who has only talked

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about grievance and Vance and I think people want a leader who is going to

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make their lives better who is going to work at it every single day President Biden has shown that he is that person

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and he's the only person that falls into that category in this race for president

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so I'm hearing I'm hearing the message there it does make me think though something you do write a lot about in

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the book is the power of messaging the power of how you articulate a vision

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it's something that you were very proud of in 2017 and 2018 your slogan was fix the damn roads um I learned a lot about

28:01

Michigan roads reading your book I want to say that I didn't know uh you know but my editor had to Google to find out

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what Biden's slogan this year was um and it is finish the job which I have to say is not much of a Humdinger I'm curious

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if you have sharper ideas because you seem to be good at this and right now Democrats nationally are really

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struggling with messaging about where the party stands when I talk to voters they really have trouble

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articulating what Democrats are going to do for them I I think that I talked to a lot of

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my colleagues Governors I think know what's going on in their states better than anybody and we all get asked what

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about the national messaging and I think a national message is a is is always a challenge Washington DC is so far away

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from the average person's life that to conceptualize what A3 trillion

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investment in onshore and Supply chains means to your everyday life is darn near impossible to discern and that's why

29:02

I've always learned when you show up and ask people they're going to tell you what they want they're going to tell you what they need and they're going to use

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the language that they use fix the damn roads was not something that we PLL

29:13

tested or Focus grouped it was just conversation after conversation what do you need me to do if I'm elected fix the

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damn roads but Governor Whitmer it's ironic because President Biden passed an infrastructure Bill he is fixing the

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damn roads that's right and bridges and internet right but he's not getting credit for it I mean why do you think

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that is but for that same reason right I think the pandemic's taken a toll people

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are stressed out they're just trying to pay the grocery bill get the kids off to school show up at their job and maybe

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get a little bit of sleep at night they're not consuming everything they can't discern what the chips act has

29:49

meant and so we got to tell that story better there's no question that that's maybe one of the most important biggest

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challenges for us going into this election but in many ways this is a kind of Vibes election I mean when you PLL

30:03

people and you ask them what is the economy doing they think it's in recession how is the stock

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market doing they think it's down there isn't a real understanding of even where the country is at so then how do you

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reach those people well and an interesting thing too is in some of the most recent research individuals feel

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like their situation is pretty good but the rest of the economy is not good and

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that's the absolute inverse of what generally you see people feel like okay I'm not doing good but everyone else

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seems to be getting ahead it's the inverse it's a a strange phenomenon I don't know how to explain it but I do

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know we've got to make sure that people appreciate all the different things that are happening in their communities

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because of the work that President Biden has done so last question Biden is behind in

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many polls um and certainly it is close in swing States like yours he is losing

31:02

ground to young people black and brown voters as we record this the polls are pretty tight in Michigan it's a must-win

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state do you feel pressure to deliver the state can you well in 2022 we

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absolutely ran up our numbers W by 11 points and flipped the legislature in the process we showed up everywhere that

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is going to be even more important now than ever I do always know that there's

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a path to Victory through Michigan it's going to be a little more challenging this cycle but we've rolled up our

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sleeves we're not going to get distracted we don't celebrate small um leads in polls we don't you know fall

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apart when there's a small lead on the other side in a pole it's Michigan it's going to be tight all the way through

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the election we're going to do the work and I feel confident we're going to be able to win this race

31:59

gr Whitmer thank you so much I look forward to our next conversation me too thank

32:04

[Music] you after the break I call the governor back to get her take on a few specific

32:11

issues including Reproductive Rights every American woman and her family and

32:17

health care providers deserve to know that this fundamental question around

32:22

healthc care is vested solely in the individual and that's going to have to happen at the federal level so I do

32:28

believe we've got to continue and I do believe that's why this upcoming election has such high

32:36

[Music]

32:45

[Music]

32:52

stakes hi Governor Whitmer it's Lulu hi where are you right now where am I am I

32:58

catching you right now I am in Detroit the great city of Detroit um Governor we

33:03

only have a little bit of time uh so I want to jump right in great so I'm

33:10

guessing that you're not going to tell me if you're running for president in 2028 right I don't know what the heck

33:16

I'm going to do in 2028 so you can ask but that's the honest answer that's fair

33:22

but you're clearly preparing for a bigger role on the national stage you are term limited you're term ends in

33:29

2026 so I do want to sort of understand how you think about some key issues and

33:36

after our last conversation I was thinking about how we really didn't get to dig into Reproductive Rights and I

33:44

wanted to ask you on a national level row isn't coming back you know Congress

33:50

has been unable to pass legislation protecting contraception much less

33:55

abortion do you see any way to protect abortion at the national level well I do and I think ultimately

34:02

that's got to be the goal right now you know we've seen it all across the country when people get an opportunity

34:10

to weigh in they overwhelmingly you know vote to ins Shrine abortion rights we

34:15

saw it in in Ohio we saw it in Wisconsin with their Supreme Court election we saw

34:21

it in Michigan um a 10-year quest to un

34:27

do uh legislation that made it more difficult for women to access uh abortion and and health care I got to

34:35

sign the repeal of that into law in the wake of us amending our constitution to protect abortion rights and talk about

34:41

that in the book how personally gutted I was when I shared my story of being a

34:46

sexual assault Survivor didn't make a damn difference on the debate but 10

34:52

years later as Governor we flipped the legislature we stayed at it and ultimately I got to sign the repeal now

35:00

these are overarching issues we don't solve them overnight but the fight is worth having what I'm hearing you say is

35:07

that the only way to really resolve this now is going state by state and as you

35:13

know that's going to lead to basically a patchwork um situation where some women

35:19

will be able to have the right to reproductive freedom and some women won't because of where they live which

35:26

is why L you at this point this is where we can make progress In This Moment by

35:32

enshrining it where we have those tools but at the end of the day every American woman and her family and health care

35:39

providers deserve to know that this fundamental question around Health Care

35:45

is vested solely in the individual and that's going to have to happen at the federal level so I do believe that's why

35:51

this upcoming election has such high stakes not just for abortion rights but

35:56

certainly abortion rights are are at the heart of a lot of what we're talking about individual

36:02

freedoms speaking of that you know the Supreme Court has been Meed in controversy especially around justices

36:08

Alo and Thomas do you think they need to recuse themselves from rulings on anything to do with the 2020 election in

36:15

president Trump well you know as a lawyer my understanding is that you know

36:21

that would be appropriate um the supreme court operates under their own rules I

36:28

think it's really um something that that gives me great anxiety is this distrust

36:34

in institutions that have sustained this democracy for so long and we sadly have

36:41

seen so many Americans get persuaded by um I think false information and

36:48

undermined our institutions and then when you see justices that appear to have real conflict um not recuse

36:56

themselves that further erodes our our confidence in these institutions that sustain us democracy and it's very

37:02

concerning yes do you think the court needs to be expanded then I mean because it's a 63 majority and if things like

37:09

abortion rights for example are ever going to be reconsidered the current makeup of the Court isn't one that is

37:16

favorable to Democrats you know l i that we're we're stepping way outside of you

37:21

know um my expertise as as a legal um as a legal mind but I would just say this

37:27

um whether or not the court gets expanded or whether or not you know we just ensure that President Biden is the

37:34

one in that office who makes the next handful of appointments um all of these

37:39

things work toward the same end of restoring some Integrity into our government which is desperately

37:46

needed moving to another subject it does seem that 2028 is going to necessarily

37:52

see a Changing of the Guard what do you hope your generation of politicians can do for the

37:58

country so I'm 52 almost 53 and you know as I talked to my fellow gen xers um

38:07

best generation yeah we recognize that you know our our parents generation as

38:13

we had a lot of excess and and certainly I worry about so many of the decisions that were made prior to my kids

38:20

generation and what they are worried about and so I'm hopeful that we can really move the needle whether it's

38:27

around um bringing down our our nation's debt or ensuring that we are active when it

38:33

comes to climate and solidifying and protecting individual rights these are

38:38

are really the existential issues that my kids generation is worried about gun violence Etc and so um I'm hopeful that

38:46

in 2028 we see a gen xter running for the White House and let someone from my

38:53

generation is ready to take the mantle uh my last question is about

38:59

Trump you know he is a convicted felon now and even if he doesn't win the

39:05

election trumpism as a political movement seems like it's here to stay do

39:10

you agree with that do you think his ideas and his vision will Outlast him I don't know I'm not sure to be

39:17

honest Lulu I think that um there are still a lot of Republicans out there who

39:23

would not identify as Trump supporters but are not willing to relinquish their party they're fighting to bring back

39:30

some common sense and and more traditional viewpoints and values to the

39:36

party and I'm hopeful that they're successful because I I do think it's important for our system of governance

39:42

to have robust debates with people with different perspectives I miss having pro-choice Republicans in Michigan um in

39:50

government I I miss being able to have you know thoughtful debates and then ultimately find Common Ground I'm always

39:57

striving for it but it's it's a lot more challenging and you know I think the average person in this country expects

40:04

that of us and so um I'm hopeful that this is a chapter but not a

40:12

trajectory Governor Whitmer thank you so much for your time I really appreciate it thanks

40:18

[Music] Lulu that's Governor gret and Whitmer

40:23

true Gretch what I've learned about life Leadership and everything in between will be out on July 9th this

40:29

conversation was produced by Seth Kelly it was edited by Annabelle bacon mixing

40:35

by aim Shapiro original music by Dan Powell and Marian Lozano photography by

40:42

Philip Montgomery our senior Booker is priia Matthew and our producer is Wyatt orm our executive producer is Allison

40:49

Benedict special thanks to John Lindstrom Rory Walsh renan belli Jeffrey

40:55

Miranda Maddie masello Jake Silverstein Paula Schuman and Sam doick if you like

41:01

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41:06

our conversations you can always go to NY times.com thee and you can email us

41:12

anytime at the interview at NY times.com next week David maresi speaks

41:19

to the one and only Eddie Murphy I remember uh I was 19 I went to the blues

41:26

bar it was me Belushi and Robin Williams to Coke Out start doing coke and I was

41:32

like oh no I'm cool and uh every now and then I would over the years I would trip

41:37

about that moment cuz I was really young and it was been so easy to try some coke I wasn't taking some moral stance but I

41:44

just wasn't interested in it and to not have the desire or the Curiosity of it

41:50

that say that's Providence I'm Lulu Garcia Navaro and this is the interview from The New York

41:56

Times [Music]

English (auto-generated)