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Welcome to The Rest is Politics with me, Rory Stewart.

And me, Alistair Campbell.

So we're now about to interview Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California, World Bodybuilding

Champion, Hollywood action hero star. And I think it's just worth doing a little bit of an explainer to listen to this about why we're doing it. That sounds a bit of a strange thing given that he's one of the most famous people in the world.

But I guess for The Rest is Politics, the central part of the whole theme is that he was elected as Governor of California in astonishing circumstances. California had a recall election where the governor was toppled partway through his term. And there was a very, very short few weeks' campaign and Arnold Schwarzenegger put himself forward and won, took over and then was reelected again. And he did much better than anybody anticipated and in particular was known for his environmental legislation. He also went through the 2008 financial crisis, which did a lot of damage to the California economy and left with quite low approval ratings. But he is somebody who talks a lot about being consistently underestimated in life. And this is a very, very confident man who, in his latest book, which is called *Be Useful, Seven Tools for Life*, talks about the fact that he was underestimated when he was a bodybuilder. He was told that he had the wrong shaped body in history when he turned up in the States. Then he couldn't make it in Hollywood for nearly 10 years. He tried to get parts and couldn't get them because they told him he didn't fit. He had the wrong acts and he had the wrong body. And then of course, when he was running to be governor, everybody said, this is ridiculous. This guy's got this thick Austrian accent. You know, what does he know? He doesn't know anything about politics. It's never going to work. Even if his own wife basically said, look, I think you'll be good at the campaigning, but you're not going to be any good at this policy stuff. And that was when he was 55. She knew him very, very well. So he's somebody who I think feels all his life that he's fighting against things. Let me give a very quick summary though of the life born in 1947 in Austria. Now, this is just two years after the Second World War. His father has been part of Nazi Germany's army. And like many Austrian men of his age has returned back from the war, shattered, having lost the war. What Arnold Schwarzenegger has described, a whole generation of lost men struggling with the trauma of coming through, of having lost a very evil war in which they were the aggressors. He grew up obsessed with the United States in particular with Hollywood, but also with bodybuilding that he saw as a quintessential American thing. And very quickly thought, I'm going to get out of Austria, which he saw as a sort of broken, depressing country and head to the bright lights of the US. And has retained an incredible sort of optimism about the US ever since. Turns out, gets the US, he becomes the leading bodybuilder in the world, wins all these huge competitions, defines the sport, promotes the sport, makes the sport bigger than it's ever been, becomes a Hollywood actor. And by the 1980s with *Conan the Barbarian* and then *Terminator* becomes the highest paid Hollywood star in the world. He marries one of the Kennedy family. So his wife's mother was JFK's sister, John F. Kennedy's sister, and the sister of Robert

Kennedy. So her two uncles, of course, were assassinated. So she had a very, very difficult, traumatizing relationship to the idea of going into politics. She had a big Democrat family. He was, of course, a Republican. Elected as governor of California, then had a catastrophic collapse of his marriage where it had turned out that he'd had a secret child with somebody who'd been working in the house. His Hollywood career collapsed again, and he had to rebuild himself as a kind of social media TV star. And now he's launched essentially a self-help book. And I don't know, he's a sort of rather amazing example of somebody from a very ordinary, working class, rural background in Austria, who made himself a global star. You know, maybe he found in bodybuilding something that, although he keeps saying, I'm not a self-made man, I'm made by teams of people, there's nothing more individual than bodybuilding. It is literally being in front of a mirror, and in his case, using steroids, which he admits to. Hour after hour, just toning every individual muscle. It's something that you basically are not part of, really, part of a team at all. Something where you can, as a working-class kid from rural Austria, just make yourself, make your body. And I guess it finishes, through this interview, with the reflections of an older man trying to hold up his own life as an example, being a kind of role model. But it's an odd kind of role model. And I hope you enjoy listening to the podcast and trying to get your head around all that this man is.

Governor, thank you very, very much for joining us. I wanted to start with something that fascinates me, which is the way that your life seems to have gone from a childhood, which to us seems like something out of the sound of music, then in another stage of your life to Conan the Barbarian. And I wanted to go back to that childhood a little bit and talk about Austria in the late 40s. Two things, I think. One is, you've sometimes talked about a broken generation, and you've sometimes talked about how the United States represented for you something different, optimism, athletics, Hollywood. Tell us a little bit about the Austria of the late 40s, early 50s. Well, when I was born in 1947, it was right after the Second World War. So Austria and Germany did just lost the war. So I think at that time, I'd never even thought about it because it was a kid. But later on, when I came to America, they analyzed what was happening in my childhood and having a father that was, you know, every so often drinking and under the days, you know, kind of way of thinking that he was an alcoholic. And, you know, all the men around it were angry. They felt like losers. They were drinking and they were going through post-traumatic stress syndrome. And at that time, none of that was acknowledged and was talked about. They just went about their lives. So we were kind of like victims of all of that, the kids, not just me, but the neighborhood kids and everyone. There was violence around it. We were beaten and all of that. And so that gave me, I think, the motivation that I wanted to get out of there. I wasn't happy. And it was wonderful because now when I look back, I said to myself, if I wouldn't have had that, maybe I would have stayed in Austria. Maybe I would have been happy there. And then I would have had an ordinary life like my other friends had. So now I credit actually my father and that upbringing for getting me to America and creating that fire in a belly and for me to create the visions that I had and the daydreams that I had about wanting to go to America, wanting to be something special and get out of there. And all of that was kind of a reaction to what was going on. One quick thing before I bring in Alastair, sport. So I think for Austria after the war, sport was important. The football team, skiing, people like Tony Seiler from Kitzbühel,

later some of the great stars, the 70s. In a sense, your bodybuilding was a form of athletic activity. You were a sort of sportsman. Do you think that was part of you that was Austrian? That's an Austrian culture? Well, not really because my father and friends and neighbors, they said to me, says, you're so energetic about this bodybuilding and weightlifting, but this is not really an Austrian sport. Why don't you do skiing? Why don't you do play soccer or bicycle racing or something like that? Something that is more Austrian. And I somehow couldn't really relate to that. I said to myself, okay, I understand it, but I don't want to be an ordinary Austrian competing for this stuff. I want to be unique. I want to be different. I want to get to America. I want to do something American. Bodybuilding is an American sport and the British kind of sport because in England, there were great bodybuilding champions like Reg Park that became my idol. He lived in Leeds and he was training five hours a day and he became great. Mr. Great Britain and then became Mr. Europe and Mr. Universe. Three times Mr. Universe as a matter of fact. And then got into movies and then I was 15 years old. I saw his Hercules movies. So that's what I wanted to be, not a ski racer, not Tony Syla. And so I went as fast as I could to get to America and then to go and build myself up and become the best bodybuilder four times. And Arnie, did you ever reconcile what seems to be quite troubled relationship that you had with both your parents and also you had the extra tragedy of your brother being killed? He was also, I think, a big drinker being killed in a car crash. So when you said you wanted to get out of there, were you getting away from Austria? Were you getting away from your parents? And did you ever feel that you reconciled it? First of all, you're absolutely right. I was trying to get away from everything. I just wanted to leave and I wanted to create my own life. So I was extremely happy when I started meeting all these other guys with the age of 15 that went to weightlifting and bodybuilding. And I started to adopt that new life and I felt this was really great because my parents were not into that. So this was my own. I felt like I had just started my own thing that was not my parents idea. It was not something that my father said I should do or my mother said I should do in order stuff. So I felt really proud of myself and I felt great and I had kind of a new life. I felt and it motivated me. And then when I went to America and I became very successful in bodybuilding and then in show business and everything, when I look back at that now, I said to myself, I'm so glad that I had this kind of upbringing because it's the very thing that drove me. They gave me the fire and a belly that created all those visions and that will power and all those things. So I, you know, I speak very fondly of my father always because he did his best that he could. He probably was beaten when he, when he grew up, you know, so that was kind of the tradition then. And not the day anymore. Austria is a totally different place. You know, politically speaking, economically speaking, and socially speaking in every way, it has much more Americanized. And so, you know, now when I go back there, I see a totally different Austria than when I grew up. But you know, sometimes those obstacles, you know, I know that there's a lot of kids or a lot of grown-ups that run around and say, well, this is my parents fault. They did this to me and this is why I've just hang up in doors. I think it's a bunch of crap because the bottom line is, I think all of this stuff, we, when we grow up, we develop our own brain and our own mind and then we can go in any direction that we want to go. We don't have to kind of suffer through this leftovers. I mean, you know, to me, I love my mother. I love my dad and I appreciate what they did for me. And I always credit them for having helped me and not making me feel like I'm a self-made man,

but they made me and not myself. Now, you've just published a book which Roy and I both read yesterday. I read it on a long train ride through France and I enjoyed it. But interestingly, the title Be Useful was what your dad used to say to you. Do you think he felt that being bodybuilder and even being a Hollywood star was not the most useful thing you could do? Do you think you ended up in politics partly because that is a way that actually we can be useful? And remember, this is a political podcast. Yeah, yeah. That's why I don't know why I'm here. But no, but you hit the nail on the head. My father, when he saw me doing bodybuilding, he immediately criticized it. And he said, you know, why are you doing that? You're just, you know, trying to kind of work on yourself. You only think about your own muscles and your own body and you should look better in order. Why don't you go in order to get stronger? Why don't you go and chop some wood for the neighbor lady that is 80 years old and she cannot chop wood anymore herself? So why don't you do it? Why don't you help her? That's being useful. You know, shovel some coal for the neighbor, you know, then you get muscle stew and you get strong too. So it was this kind of stupid talk that he had to make me feel guilty. But the bottom line was he meant well, because he just said, look, everyone should go out and not just think about themselves, but do something for the people. Now remember, he was a police officer. He was a chendarm, which is a French word for country police officer, chendammerie. And so he was a police officer. So he felt that he was, he chose a profession that will help people to provide safety for the people than to be protected in order. And he wanted his children also to do the same thing. And, you know, but it was the very thing that drove me always hearing this voice behind me saying, be useful, be useful, be useful. And what do you think looking at your whole life was the moment where your father would have really thought, okay, at this moment, my son was really being useful, which would he have been most proud of in your life? Well, you know, my parents never came to any competition that I competed in. So it was not like the day in America where the parents go to see them playing soccer and going to singing recitals and plays and all this kind of stuff for the kids. In those days, they didn't do that. I think the only competition that my father and my mother went to was a competition in Essen, Germany, which was the Mr. Olympia competition. So for some miracle reason, that year, Germany got the rights to run the Mr. Olympia competition, which is the top bodybuilding competition, where only Mr. Universe is allowed to compete in. And I won that competition. And they watched that. And I remember them coming up to me afterwards, where we had a party, a dinner with all the champions there. And my parents came up to me and says, we are so proud of you. Wow. I never thought that this is going to develop into this, that you're standing up there and stage in front of 5000 people, and you're winning, and you're the most muscular man. But you'd already been doing it for some time by then. So they came quite late in your career. This was like after I started in 1962. So this was 10 years after I started with bodybuilding. I won now the third Mr. Olympia competition. The first one was the first one they saw. That's right. That was the first competition that they saw. And so they freaked out when they saw that, how people were screaming and honored, honored, and all that stuff. And you know, how I won the competition, got my trophy, won the cash prize. And then right after that,

literally like two months after that, my father passed away. And so it was really terrific to see that. And that's when I saw that he got it finally. And my mother, of course, is like all of the mothers of famous people that they full credit. I tell you, I remember when we were at the Gordon Globes in Beverly Hills at the Beverly Hilton. And there was the mother of Sophia Lorenz sitting there with my mother. And the mother of Sylvester Stallone was sitting there. All the mothers were sitting together at the Gordon Globe Awards. And they all were talking about how they were responsible to make you famous. Sophia Lorenz mother said, Oh, I pushed her to take photographs with this photographer. And that's what made the photograph that was made a very famous. And Stallone says, Oh, my son will be such an idiot. He would have been in the school. He would have done nothing. But I pushed him to become an actor because I knew his talent right away. When he was a kid, and my mother said, Oh, man, I kept pushing my son. I said, train harder, train hard. She didn't believe in training at all. You know, it was very funny to see this three, four women. Exactly. It was very cute. And it was very, very funny.

When you were a bodybuilder and also when you were a Hollywood star, was there always a part of you that was thinking about politics? No, I tell you that what got me really thinking about it was because I started dating Maria. And she was the daughter of Sarge and Shriver, who started the Peace Corps and the Job Corps, legal aid to the poor and all of those programs in America under the Kennedy and Johnson administration. Why are you not a Democrat? You married into the most famous Democrat political clan in the world, and you're not a Democrat.

Okay. Well, when you marry a Democrat, that doesn't mean that you have to always set and start throwing out your philosophy and then become a Democrat. I mean, this was not my style. I mean, I was a committed Republican, and I was very, very happy to marry a Democrat and to marry

into a Democratic family because I got a really, a lot of knowledge about the other side. And so that was very important to me. And I think that when you talk about politics, it was really never something that I thought about until I started listening to Sarge and Shriver, to Maria's mother that always talked about service, always how do we help people? How do we go and make lives better

for the kids? How do we make it better for minorities and for people that, you know, make no money and

that have, that are poor? And, you know, how do we create legal aid for them and all of these kinds of, so you always talked about policy and about helping people. And I just thought that was fascinating. I thought that was so good. It was really interesting to have a life where you just occupy yourself with that subject. I think that rubbed off on me. And so I started hearing more and more about politics and about running and this and that. And then I started working in 1990 for George Bush when he was president. He was president from 1989 to 1993. And so he asked me to

be the chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. So I spent a lot of time with him at Camp David. He invited me a lot of times to Camp David on the weekends and then also to the White House. He included me a lot of times in meetings that he had with various different groups of people and lawyers. And I just thought that was so inspirational to see him at work and to make a difference in America. And so that kind of all of that, being with the Shriviers and being now with Bush, I think inspired me and started making me think, wouldn't it be cool to have it somewhere down the line? I don't know when. I was in the middle

of my acting career and it was the top star at that point. I said, wouldn't it be cool one day to get into politics myself? One of the things I resonated with, so I came into politics without being a professional politician. And when I was reading your book and seeing some of these documentaries, I felt when I took over for the first time as a cabinet minister and I suddenly had this \$20 billion a year budget and I felt like a bit of an imposter. I felt this is an impossible job. I'm dealing with so many unbelievably complicated things. The policy decisions are unbelievable. And I think you were quite reflexive about this. Your first day in the job, just suddenly getting a sense of just how crazy what you expect a governor to be responsible for and think about. Well, it was an eye-opener. You know, it's always one thing when you jump into a race and then to go and always, and I felt like, oh, this is like a competition, like going for the Mr. Olympia competition or Mr. Universe competition. It's like, how do you wipe out your competitors?

So it was fun to go on a campaign trail and to talk to the people and to take the pictures and go to fundraisers and to do all the kind of things that get you up there and do to finally win. But then when you sit in there in an office, my wife always said, I think you're a fantastic campaigner. I think you're great politically, but I think that you will really hate policy. And the funny thing was that quite the opposite happened because I started really learning about all these very different subjects. And this is why I always say that the capital in Sacramento, that the capital became kind of a university for me because I learned so much about the various different issues. You know, there you are at nine in the morning, you're sitting there with the teachers union and you talk about, you know, better pay and the benefits for the teachers. Then an hour later, the prison guard union comes in and they're talking about their issues. Then the nurses union comes in and they talk about their issues, issues that I never even heard about. I mean, it's like, they said to me, we have to have instead of a six to one, a four to one ratio. And I learned that with the mayor's assistant. I said, what the hell are they talking about racial here? You know, and then I found out and they were explaining it to me, you know, that there is now six patients to one nurse and they only have only four patients to one nurse and all this stuff. And it all made sense all of a sudden to me. So it was like one meeting after the other was a great, great education. And what was your style? Are you quite a quick decision maker or are you somebody who likes to take the papers away, think for two weeks before you make it? So do you make decisions on the spot? Are these people leaving the office with you saying, okay, I'm going to do four to one for you? Well, I was a decision maker that kind of took in information

from the left and from the right. And I think because you talk about not having been in politics before, I think one of my advantages was I didn't come in as a political hack, so to speak, you know, where I felt like total loyalty to my party. So I made decisions a lot of times that made sense to me, even though I was a conservative thinking person. Do you make them quickly or you take time? I listened to my team and we talked about it. Then we had meetings, follow-up meetings. Then we figured out how to be compromised and maybe do something a little bit different, but still kind of move the thing forward, you know, so that someone will come in and say, we want to have a minimum wage, \$15 an hour, and we will say, well, let's do a gradual increase over a period of five years. And so we came up with ways to negotiate and stuff like that. But what was my advantage was that they had not just Republicans giving me advice, but they also had Democrats giving me advice. There's a very interesting section in your book,

where you talk about that, where your chief of staff was somebody, recognises a Democrat, you were very clear about when you were appointing judges that there had to be a kind of political balance. And that feels right to me, but it feels completely dissonant with the sort of politics that we have in the United States right now, which feels really polarized. Now, first of all, how worried are you about the state of US politics and what do we do to try and reverse some of this polarization? Well, I think that I was always a big believer that the entire United States represented by Democrats and Republicans and declined to state and independence. We don't have six parties or anything like that, but, you know, we have different views. And I feel like that if we all work together, that we are the most powerful nation in the world. I'm concerned if we continuously go, when the Democrats take over, that they only hire Democrats and have only Democrats make decisions. And when the Republicans take over the White House or Congress, then only Republicans make the decision. So to me, this is only half of the brainpower each time. And so I feel that it is very important that we teach our politicians to kind of work together and to not look at each other as the enemy, because just someone thinks differently and has a different political philosophy does not make them an enemy because they're still American. And so I feel like kind of like, since I get to learn my lessons from sports, in sports, when you have a team, you know, my weightlifting team, when we competed, no one asked what your political affiliation was. We competed as a team and there were liberals and conservatives and this is a weightlifting team and they came from different backgrounds. Some of them were farmers, some of them were, you know, factory workers, sons, and some of them were, you know, sons of teachers. So they were different kind of thing. So it's so stupid that we argue and we look at each other as the enemy rather than working together. And I just think that I had the advantage of doing that. And I saw firsthand how it is possible. Yesterday Republicans were up in arms when I said that I have Susan Kennedy, as my chief of staff, they said, well, she's gay. I said, so what? I said, I don't go around asking people what the sexual orientation is or what they prefer to do in bed. I said, it's none of my business. I said, and then I said, they said, well, she's a Democrat. I said, so what? I said, but when I look at her memos and when I talk to her, she talks exactly the language that I talk and she wants to improve the state and she wants to do something great for people. So I'm going to go with her. I said, you're not going to tell me who I choose. I said, it's the governor's job to choose his chief of staff. So it was something for them to get used to, but we worked it out and it was fine. Right then, Governor Anastas, let's take a quick break and we'll be back. So you were born in 1947 and you're getting older and you're looking at two presidential candidates, presumably President Biden and presumed Donald Trump going to the next election who are older than you. What do you think about people of that age running? What have you learned from getting older? What would you be worried about about people going into their 80s doing a job of that kind of stress? Well, first of all, I would not put everyone in the same pot, you know, because there are people that I know that are 96 years old and they're still actively involved in business and making decisions and they're very sharp. And then there's people that are age 70 and they're really slowing down and they're very forgetful. They're very fragile. So you cannot put everyone in the same pot. But what I see right now is that we have people that are too old and because of that, slowing down with the energy and with their creativity. And that's what's going on in America. I think that we should have a new generation. I felt that

the people that empower now have created the problem that we're in. And as Einstein said, that the same mind that created the problem is not able to solve it. And so therefore, I believe that we need a new generation to come in and to solve those problems.

Who would you vote for between Biden and Trump? Oh, I have no idea about that because I don't see Trump as an alternative at this point because he still has too many legal problems. We don't even know that is he really in fact running or can he go and run all the way to the end. So I right now only think that he maybe will win the Republican nomination because he's definitely has the highest poll numbers. So I think he will get there. But I think that he can really run. I still question that. But what is the danger to America if Donald Trump were to return to the White House? How would you define that as a real and present danger? Well, I don't see it as a danger

because I just don't see it possible. So therefore, I don't even have to debate that issue. I don't see it possible. First of all, I don't see it possible because of his legal problems. And second of all, I don't see it possible because he right now has 33% of the people voting or being on his side and you need over 50% to win the election. So for being ahead of the Republican category, I is totally understandable. I see that that's a fact that he's the head of the main guy there and he's the master there. But I mean, that does not really translate into a victory at all. And Governor, one of the things that's very striking when you talk is you often seem to be very, very positive about people. A lot of your personal narrative is about praising bodybuilders who were mentors to you or wrestlers that you got to know or other actors. But presumably, there are also people that you dislike. And I'd be interested in what kind of character traits anger you, what kind of people you disapprove of, what kind of politicians you don't have to name names, but what character types do you not like? Well, first of all, I don't really give a shit, right? But I don't get mad or angry at anyone. I don't get hateful about anyone. People can be different and all that stuff. But let me just say in general, I'm very disappointed at politicians, period, because as a whole, they want to get elected. They want to get reelected. They want to protect their position and their job. And for that, they sometimes act like cowards. They don't want to take on any kind of challenging kind of things. They don't want to go and tackle the high hanging fruits, only the low hanging fruits, things that are easy to do. And it's because of a lack of courage. And they talk a lot of times when they go to, you know, military events or something like that. Oh, look how brave those soldiers are, they're risking their lives and then go to the funeral of a firefighter and they say, they are so brave, they're risking their own lives to save others. And then those politicians are not even willing to risk their position to make the right decision. And to me, that is very disappointing. And so this is why I would say overall, politicians should really think about more being a public servant than a party servant. Because that's the important thing. And by the way, I know that you worked for Blair. And I just want you to know that he was an extraordinary man, because I didn't know him well. But he came over

to California, and he gave a speech about the environment. And I loved his speech and his talk so much that I went to him and I said, could you please help me? And he says, we what? And I said, we're about to really create great environmental policy in California. But I said, the Democrats still have a problem with our cap and trade, an idea that you guys, that you actually developed in Europe. And he said to me, he says, who do you want me to talk to? And I said, well, he's right here. I said, a good friend of mine, Fabian Nunez, he's the speaker of the assembly. I said,

but he still has a problem getting it across to his constituents. So he sat down with him and he promised him that he will send his best guy to Sacramento and will teach us how to write the bill so that they we don't make the same mistakes that they made in England or in Europe in general. Because he says this was a new idea. And he said, we made some mistakes. He said, and I think they can be straightened out by making some alteration to the bill. He says, so let me send someone over. And he did. And because of Tony Blair, we passed a most effective cap and trade bill that actually reduced our pollution, our greenhouse gases by 25% and created 50% of renewable energy and the million solar roof initiative and all that stuff. And it was because of Tony Blair's help. And he didn't look at me like, oh, he's a Republican. I don't want to help him. No, he was interested in helping the state of California and therefore helping the world because California is the fifth largest economy in the world. So I would never forget that. So, you know, we maybe don't agree on all the different policies, but he was a very kind and generous man that was

willing to work with someone like me and, you know, and help me.

That's why I mean, look, it's no secret to Rory or any of our listeners that I'm still a great friend of Tony Blair's and think he was a great prime minister. And I was, I'm glad you said that, not because it just because it was Tony, because your answer before that, I think worried me a little because you're somebody who's known the inside of politics and how hard it is. And yet you were essentially saying almost like that all politicians are bad. Not all. I didn't say, I didn't say all. No, I know, but that was the impression.

In general, I said politicians have this behavior of not being bad, but just being cowards a lot of times and not really being able to make the tough decisions. So it's not not all. There's a lot of them that are different. Maybe give us another couple of politicians that you've worked with or that you know or that we know that you admire and tell us why. Well, for instance, Ronald Reagan, I didn't work with him, but I was a big admirer of him. And President Nixon was the one that actually when I moved to America in 1968, was running for president against Hubert Humphrey. And when I listened to Hubert Humphrey, it sounded to me like I'm listening to some politician in Austria, you know, kind of socialism. And he government is the solution.

You know, I said myself, well, I love what Ronald Reagan said. And what Nixon said is that the government is the problem and that this is really get the government off your back.

Can I ask you, Governor, you can't be president in the United States because the constitution doesn't allow you to. I know you would like to be, but you can't be. But why not become chance through Austria? Austria would love to have you back. You're a big star in Austria. It's your country as well as America being your country. You have two countries. Why not go back and be a great Austrian politician? I think they have a good chance there. And I don't want to go back to Austria and be a politician in Austria. No, not at all. Why not? Tell me. I just feel like I want to live in America. I want to live in California. You know, that's where my home is. And I love always going back to Austria. Some effect after this trip, I go back to Austria and to visit.

There's a museum now there, the Schwarzenegger Museum, where it was actually the home where I grew up. And, you know, this is all the various different movie memorabilia there and the motorcycle from Terminate and the desk, the governor's desk and all of the stuff is there. It's a wonderful place and it has like hundreds of visitors coming every day. It's really very, very popular. But to do politics there, no. I have no desire to do that. And so I want to stay in America. I want to go

and be helpful there. And I always tell people, even though I cannot run for president, but whoever is our next president, I tell everyone always is that I'm always available. If anyone needs any help, doesn't matter if they're Democrats or Republicans, I'm there to help.

And is the thing that you've done in your life that you're most proud of being governor? Is that the thing that is it? I'm most proud of that. But I tell you, the thing that I'm really proud of myself is that I was able to recognize that life is not just about me, that life is about helping other people. And that's what I talk about in a book or so.

And you got there later in life?

Yeah, it was like, well, I always had a trace. I always was very happy, happy to help other bodybuilders and stuff like that. But I remember it started with Special Olympics when I was asked to do a study for Special Olympics for people that they intellectually challenged. And to go and to go to this university and to study what effect weight training would have on those Special Olympians. And I had the most wonderful time teaching them for three days. And I was so happy afterwards. And they said, I'm as if, why am I so happy? I mean, it's not a career move that I made here. I didn't make any money. Why am I happy? And I found out it was because I was giving something

back. I was doing something to make other people feel good, to hug them and to get to give them medals and to start creating the powerlifting championships for Special Olympics. Then I started traveling all over the world to promote Special Olympics. And then eventually I became the chairman of the president's council on physical fitness on the president Bush. And then I started after school programs. And one thing led to the next. And it always became addictive to give something back and to do something for people that eventually are in for governor. And so to me, I think to have that side of you that wants to reach out and help and to recognize that I was not a self-made man, but there was a creation of millions of people. I mean, there was 5.8 million people that voted for me for governor. So I didn't make myself governor. They made me governor. There's millions of people. You know, I did not make myself a movie star. It's the movie fans from all over the world that made me the big movie star. And so on and on and on, like yesterday, I was in the Royal Albert Hall, right? We played. We loved it. Exactly. But it was packed. It was packed. And there was, you know, an interviewer there. So imagine if I would just think that I'm a self-made man, that I'm sitting there by myself with an empty hall. It would be ludicrous, right? So this is why I always say it's the people that make you, that give you the power. My last question is this. You've been very, very famous for a long, long time, and you've in a way known three different sorts of fame. I didn't realize until I watched your recent documentary just how big a thing the whole, you made the bodybuilding sport. I just didn't realize that. It was huge. So that was a, that was an extraordinary fame. You then reached this kind of fame that we all know, which is, we don't know, but we know of, which is Hollywood fame.

And again, I didn't know until I saw that documentary that you were making the sorts of money that no other film stars were making at the time. And then you've known political fame. What's been the difference in those three, the very different sorts of fame?

Well, you know, I feel like there's a different stages in my life. It's almost kind of like, you know, a little kid playing with a little choo-choo train. And then you grow up and you're like now 15 years old and all of a sudden there's choo-choo train. You look at it and you laugh at it. Can you imagine? I was at this age where I still played with this choo-choo train. And so

you grow up and the same I feel with this. There was a time where I looked at bodybuilding and I said to myself, can you believe I'm standing up there on stage with these little posing trunks oiled up and they're saying to the world, look, I'm the most perfectly developed man in the world. It sounded like ridiculous to me all of a sudden. And so I started getting into acting and still supporting bodybuilding. I still, you know, hold the bodybuilding competitions, the world championships

every year. The Arnold's Classic in various different continents all over the world to promote sport and fitness and weight training and all that stuff. But I grew out of it. You know, at the age of 28 I was, and I was out of it and I was interested and kind of like fascinated with the idea of learning how to act and become a leading man in movies. And then always then you grow out of that and you say to yourself, is this all there is in life where I just say those lines that someone writes and then perform and say, I'll be back and ask the baby and put the cookie down and get to the

chopper, you know, in all of those kind of lines. Ask the baby. That was Boris Johnson's last word as prime minister before he left parliament. That was the last thing he said. But anyway, I always say I'll be back, right? But in any case, says, I mean, is this all there is? And then always then you get hungry for the next thing in life, which is to be a public servant. And so this is, you know, it reminds me kind of like, you know, on an Hillary who climbed Mount Everest. And I always loved his line when they said, after he came back down, they said, what was it like being upended on the highest mountain in the world? And he looked around and he says, well, when I looked around,

I saw another peak. And then I said to myself, okay, I have to figure out how to climb that peak. So he right away went for the next thing. And so I think this is what to me makes life.

That's why I love doing that movie back in the seven is called Stay Hungry,

because I always was hungry for more and for different things. And I never was satisfied with just being too long with the same thing or doing for the rest of my life the same life, the same thing. And I think this is the great thing about you guys. I mean, you guys have been involved in politics. And now you switched over to go and communicate to people and to bring them very interesting and fascinating stories and interesting and different personalities and stuff like that. And that's very difficult to do. People have to understand that it's really tough when you get to a certain age that's always in switch profession. But it is spicy. It makes you start thinking in a different way again. It makes you preparing for it in a different way.

Obviously, you have to learn something new. I think that more people should do that. But people are so afraid of, you know, when they get too old, they feel like, oh, I cannot change now and all this stuff. It's bogus. I think you should always search for your passion. What do you love to do and then go after and chase that? I must tell you, I did a session in a college recently, which was a communications masterclass. And the video that I showed them and that we talked through was the one that you did about Ukraine. Pick that as my most recent communications master

class. I thought that was an extraordinary piece of communication. Well, thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Governor. That was very kind of you. Lovely to see you. Great privilege. Thank you very much. Keep up the good work, guys. Okay. Thank you. I'm proud of you. Thank you. Thank

you. Bye bye. So listen, I guess you were pretty pleased with the fact that he said Tony Blair,

although he let it down a bit by then immediately comparing saying that he wanted Richard Nixon also as one of his favourite politicians. That was absolutely my fault. I should not have asked the follow-up. Tell us two more politicians that you really like after telling us that wonderful story about what an incredible leader Tony Blair was. No, it was interesting because I'm in France and I was watching you and he get settled in. And I don't think you could hear me. And he was refusing to put headphones on and wanted a little earpiece and all that stuff. I thought, God, this guy is just going to be like a grumpy old man. But the minute the thing started, he was in a different mode. Yeah. And I think some empathy, I think with public figures, one doesn't ever fully understand what he's put himself through. I mean, he's not the youngest person were born in 1947. He's just got off a plane from the States. He's actually done exactly the venues we've done in London, Palladian Royal Albert Hall. He's done all these endless interviews. He's just done another interview before he came to us. He's stuck in traffic and he's having to come in thinking, remind me, he was there saying, okay, Alistair's the guy that worked with Tony Blair. And then he's in there and he's thinking, oh, goodness, here we go again. But you're absolutely right. Once he's on, there's a real twinkle and a charm and you can imagine him. I mean, I can see him as a leader. When I grew up, there was a Black Watch Colonel who was my neighbor called David Rose, who'd commanded the Black Watch in Korea. And he had a lot of the same style into his 70s and 80s, a sense of a kind of happy warrior, somebody that you really would want to follow. No, he's definitely, he's got whatever charisma is, he's definitely got it. Very a great storyteller. That was absolutely true. The thing I said at the end about the, I'd only said it because he was going on about reinventing because I think that's something else he's turned into now.

This kind of presenter of complicated arguments at a time when people only want the kind of one 22nd, 32nd thing. He did one on the Middle East recently as well, a sort of 15, 20 minute kind of piece to camera that really tells a story. He's a great storyteller, really is.

He's also sort of rather wonderfully leaning into being straightforward.

You know, there's quite a lot of times where he's like, I don't give a fuck about that.

I don't think your impersonation of him is quite as good as some of the others you do in your words. You haven't, you haven't mastered Audi the way you've mastered Pretty Vitale yet.

Don, you give us your, you're gonna be standing up to your onion.

I'm lucky, I'm lucky.

Listen, I also wondered what, I mean, I could see you getting a little bit riled at him slagging off politicians and saying that most of them are cowards and you didn't really like that, did you? What was it that irritated you a bit about that?

Because I think he's a very good example of somebody who did go into politics for the right reasons and did a pretty good job. We didn't sort of point out that when he left, he actually had pretty low ratings or that he was a winner. There's no doubt he was a winner, but I think then to come out of it and he did, he's right. He wasn't saying all politicians, but the general sense he was giving was effectively most of the people that we see in politics. And so I just think it's important to speak up for the ones that are good. So that's why I'm glad that he did go on to say the thing that he said about Tony and then a couple of others. But I think it's important that people like him do encourage young people to go into politics. I mean, his book, in a sense, he's encouraging young people to just kind of be strong and face life and make change and so forth, which is fine. But I think at a time, as he said, when American politics is in such a mess,

it's important that people like him don't just say they're all terrible.

It's such a difficult thing, isn't it? Because of course, I'm in a bit of trouble on this, but of course, I resonate with him and agree with him a bit. I do think that as an elected politician, the more time you spend with elected politicians, the more troubled you can be by the types of personalities they develop and by the sense that in the end, campaigning dominates everything, winning dominates everything. And it's very difficult to get people to go after what he calls the high-hanging fruit. I mean, that's the real test. And I guess this will be the test with Keir Starmer when he comes in. Is he going to be able to do that miraculous thing that some politicians do, which is campaign very safe? And then when they come in, make the really tough, radical, exciting decisions or not? Because that's the real judgment, isn't it? Well, there's no harm in Keir checking out Arnie and maybe learning a few lessons from the way he does things. He has a pretty extraordinary life.

And how does he stay so cheerful? I mean, let's just find it on the psychology. I mean, it is amazing how upbeat and optimistic he remains. I mean, it's pretty horrifying. So his father, well, his father joined the Nazi party, then joined the SA, which is the sort of police version of the SS, and then serves as a military policeman, which is a horrible position on the Eastern Front, Poland, Soviet Union, where often the military police were connected to these execution and extermination squads, these flying squads. And for people interested in what that would have been like, there's these brilliant novels by Philip Kerr following a German policeman working for the SA on exactly those fronts, giving you a vision of what that was like.

He was then buried for three days under rubble when a bomb hit him and returned and beat the hell out of his sons. And of course, Governor Schwarzenegger did not go back to his father's funeral. He's provided three different explanations during his life for why he didn't go back to his father's funeral. There was clearly a profound problem there. And yet he's chosen later in life to take this incredibly generous positive view of how much he loved his father, how much he owes him. I mean, how does that work for you? Because actually, to be honest, I didn't push enough into this, but you've also had, you've drunk a lot, you've had family members who've drunk a lot, you've had brothers who've died young. What did you think thinking about the way that he deals with it, the way that you deal with it, the different ways in which people deal with those sort of difficulties in life? Well, he's only 10 years older than I am, but I think there was a generational thing going on there. I mean, not only did he not go to his father's funeral, he didn't go to his brother's funeral, and his brother died while driving in a car crash. And his brother was just a year older than him, and they'd apparently been very close growing up. And his brother was the favorite for the dad and so forth. I think there's a generational thing there. I think I've just been much, much more open. But the other thing we didn't push him on where I'm sure some people will think that we should have done, but I kind of felt as the interview went on, it was pointless, was the thing about his own private life, which he does address in the book as saying it was the worst thing that he ever did, was kind of destroying his own family. But that's the other thing that he's come through that as well, seems to have good relations with his kids, obviously talks very, very fondly about his former life.

He also went through a scandal. So five days before he was elected as governor in California, the LA Times, managed to get stories from at least six women prepared to go on the record talking about extreme sexual harassment, assaulting people and lifts, stripping off their bras. I mean,

really. And then many, many more women came forward. And actually, I think we should have done more in asking about the Me Too stuff. I mean, look, I get it. He turned up late. We lost a lot of time. And as you said, we wanted to focus on the politics, but that is a bit of regret. And I think we'll put a little bit of a link into the newsletter if people want to follow up on that issue. And if he'd not been running then, you know, since he's running 20 years ago, I think today it probably would have destroyed him. Although you never know. I mean, I guess Donald Trump has a lot of allegations against him. Yeah, I think Donald Trump is the antidote to that. Yeah. Anyway, Rory, I'm being shouted at because I'm late. Okay, well, let's listen. Well, that's a good reason to end. Thank you, Alistair, for doing that. And thank you for being able to join. And we'll let you go. And we'll see you soon. See you soon. Bye-bye.