

[Transcript] The Realignment / Realignment Discussion & Ask Me Anything: Saagar & Marshall on Why They Interview Politicians, Saagar's Engagement, and More...(Supercast Exclusive)

Welcome back to the Realignment.

Today's episode is a free preview of Sogur and my Supercast exclusive Ask Me Anything where we answer subscriber questions, get into a bit more of a discussion about interviews and other great things that are really entertaining and quite a bit looser than the normal sort of interviews we do.

So if you'd like to listen to the rest of the full recording after this free preview, go to realignment.supercast.com or click the link in the show notes.

Interviewing politicians.

After listening to your interview with Vivek Ramaswamy, I think you both did a great job of asking pressing questions, making you answer the question and being fair.

But I also can't help but find interviews with politicians to be completely pointless overall.

There's no analysis being done, we know all their answers ahead of time.

So what's the point?

Do you plan on interviewing more politicians in the future?

How do you feel about this?

I think the audience will be interested to hear you flush this out.

Yeah, this is a great question.

Got this from a bunch of different people.

Sogur, we could answer this question at a couple of different levels.

There's the realignment long form level.

There's the breaking point short form level.

There are overall thoughts about the interview and politicians in general.

Let's just start with your reaction.

We'll go through those different permutations.

It's a good question.

You have to balance the amount of bullshit that you're going to know that you're about to get hit with with the newsworthiness of it.

Also Vivek, and I hope he doesn't listen to this, but one of the things is I knew he was inexperienced.

I knew that he would be able to, he did not have the press controls that most of these guys have to make sure that they're never in the same position.

So I also knew that we would have a, at least more time than normal with the politician and B that he wasn't well trained enough in order to swizzle his way out of some answers, which means that you would probably get something interesting.

By and large, I hate politicians, I have almost nothing.

I want almost nothing to do with them.

Even the ones that I actually like on a personal level, because whenever you get to know some of these guys on a personal level or girls, the way that they talk off camera versus the way that they talk on camera is so maddening and difficult to square that to me, it becomes impossible to actually interview with them because they're so full of shit and playing to different constituencies whenever their camera voice is on that I just don't find

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it interesting literally at all.

I think there's a role for it and you know, you can clip this if you want.

This is the only time where I'll say I actually think the mainstream media is useful and I'll tell you why the mainstream media is transactional whenever they interview politicians, they bring on a politician for five minutes, he has an agenda and so do they.

And that's it.

That's all you get out of it.

But if you actually want to know how this person thinks, what they taught, how they talk, what their background is on a certain issue, how they arrived at this, 99% of them, A, they don't have an actual answer and B, even if they did, they're not going to tell you because there is zero upside for them.

So what do you think?

Yeah, totally.

This is we're going to spend a while on this one, but A, to understand our frustration with politician interviews, listen to our first interview with Josh Hawley back in 2019 and the second interview.

The first interview, I don't think we were aggressive or pushing off, it was a little too like, oh gosh, go A.G., Senator, you like a realignment, it's so cool that we're here. But that said, he said interesting things versus the second interview we did with him, which was in, I believe 2021 tech, it was terrible.

He was more media trained.

His answers were more clipped.

He wasn't relaxed.

Inside the system.

It's this awkward dynamic, which I have yet to see few, if any, politicians square this reality because on paper, I get why they media trained him in terms of Josh Hawley.

You need to give clip answers.

You need to not take risks.

It's not worth a clip going bad and going viral because this is just like one hit.

It's better just memorize your talking points.

But that said, by removing all risk, you really just commoditize yourself and prevent yourself from actually being particularly compelling and particularly different.

So what you want to have is a situation where a politician is able to figure out how to be authentic while also just minimizing the risk that that's kind of like the opportunity that would emerge there and someone's eventually going to figure this out.

I don't know if they will.

I'm not sure if I would agree with that.

I think that the system works perfectly and that there is no upside to what you're talking about zero upside because the risk is so high.

You're not just talking Marshall about you're not just talking Marshall about the risk of a Twitter viral comment.

These guys have institutional interests as in donors, other GOP senators.

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And so the risk is just so high that if you go uncalibrated that you're going to piss somebody off.
And the reality is, is that not any of them has much to gain from a single interview.
So yeah, I don't know.
I don't think this problem can be square.
I don't know if this circle quote unquote can be squared.
I really don't.
I don't think there's a way out.
This is funny because you're kind of speaking to audience members who are like, oh, like politicians, you need to go on Joe Rogan.
Do all these things.
I know you have a lot of thoughts because you and I have to feel a lot of like, hey, can you push this to Joe Rogan?
Oh, someone staff like give us actually, once again, these these press people are probably not listening to this episode.
Let's just do like the final generic saga response when press people in good faith.
I think they want to do it.
They think it's cool.
He has a big audience like respond why you're not forwarding those responses.
Number one, you're not going to do well on Rogan.
You know why?
Because you're buttoned up.
You're somebody who is completely incapable of fielding real questions.
Number two, like, and what I mean by that is they are inside the system.
And to their, you know, here's the thing.
You and I were of the system.
So I know how to operate between those two worlds.
Joe doesn't know how to do any of that.
He might bring up bears or something like that.
They're not prepared for that.
So a, it would be a bad episode and like B, you don't actually have anything to say.
I'd be like, I don't, I know that you don't have nuanced thoughts outside of talking points.
You know, the funny thing is, is that Crenshaw, his best Rogan episodes were very early way before he ever got famous.
The other thing is, you know what he talked about while he was on there?
It wasn't politics.
It was a lot about his Navy SEAL service.
It was about his background, his compelling personal history, because obviously that's what Joe finds interesting.
And actually, whenever he did start talking politics, he made himself look like a goddamn fool and hung himself.
And I would note he has not been on Rogan in over two and a half years, I think, for

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a reason.

So anyway, the real issue that I personally see with a lot of these people is the system is designed to protect its own and to keep itself going.

So CNN, when they have Republican politicians on, everybody knows the game.

Republican is coming on to defend Trump.

The CNN politician gets to Kabuki Theater, where she's like, well, what about January 6th, Senator?

And he's like, well, we need to move on from that and go to or what about Joe Biden?

And he can't even speak a sentence and everyone gets, everyone's getting exactly what they want.

And you get one follow up if that.

That's the role.

Yeah.

And then you cut you off and they move on to some, they move on to another segment.

So that's it.

It's great that, you know, for all of the talk of the politicians on mainstream media, they would die if they had to do a real independent media interview.

So yeah, that's my, that's my real talk.

Yeah.

And I think the last thing that I'll just close with here is here is why we still do interview politicians.

So A, in the case of Vivek, I was actually just genuinely curious how he'd do.

Yeah.

Because like when we just be like incredibly frank here, and I think he needs to hear this because no one's telling him this, like, I think Vivek has launched the most arrogant presidential campaign in like modern history.

Like I genuinely mean that the level of just like, it's kind of like people are kind of asking what questions would you ask if you had more time?

I really wanted to ask him and he couldn't take this question.

So that's why it didn't happen.

Dude, why are you so confident?

Mm hmm.

Like, is it the money?

Is the fact that you've paid all these people, he has a staff of 20 to sit in his like mansion and tell him how smart he is.

Like, I just look, you know, a saga like behind me, like we both have all of these books.

And like the number one takeaway, if you read even like a 15th of the number of books that publishers send us is just, wow, anytime you come from the outside and come to the inside, you are shocked by how little you know, by how little of your specific skill set like necessarily applied.

And you're just like, well, I'm just going to be humble here.

So how do you just sort of like just come off from the start saying like, oh yeah, like

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I'm just totally this much better than Donald Trump.

And the stupid but me all these generals who tell me not to invade Mexico or just a bunch of like policies, like I just like, I just cannot comprehend that.

And I generally would like to know like his honest answer to that question.

And guess what?

He wouldn't have given me an honest answer.

He kind of would have searched circuitry.

He would have been definitely in a very pissed at me afterwards.

That's why I didn't ask that.

But that speaks to like your point, saga of like, there's no actual reason to do it.

That said, though, the reason why every once in a while being selected with these interviews are important.

And you guys do this too.

You guys have, you know, Ro Khanna on you guys have Marianne Williamson on what we had Vivek on breaking points.

It's because at the end of the day, independent media, when they're in our position needs to retain like a degree of credibility.

So like the realignment, like what am I trying to do here?

I'm trying to build a podcast so that like Hill staffers who are thinking about like domestic resiliency, if there's a supply chain crisis, I need them to come into the podcast and listen there.

I'm less focused on one of the views I'm overall getting.

I need to interview Ro I need to interview Ro Khanna.

I need to interview Vivek, I need to interview the FTC chair Lena Khan, we've got that request going in.

I need to interview the consumer financial protection bureau person, because that is how independent media, if done sparingly, levels itself up.

That said, if we just were like, Hey, look, what's the interview of politician every single week?

This would be a disaster.

Well, let me tell you also about Ro, right?

You know, one of the reasons I'll interview him because it's not full of shit.

I can be like, Hey, man, what do you think about this?

And he'd be like, look, I disagree with you for this X, Y and Z reason.

And I'll be like, have you talked to the White House and he'll be, he'll be like, yeah, I did.

And then, you know, he's like, I made an answer.

And that's what they think.

He was willing to speak out against his own caucus on the whole like Ukraine.

Look, I'm not saying he isn't a typical politician in many ways, because obviously he is.

That said, he is remarkably open and honest.

Anytime that actually will talk to him, I find that very rare.

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And the reason why is I've talked to him offline and both online, there's not a hell of a lot of difference.

That's a rare skill.

Now, look, I don't think it's to his political benefit.

And that actually highlights exactly what I'm talking about, which is he probably be better off.

He just shut his mouth.

He, I guess, believes that, I mean, he's told me this, that he gets recognized more from doing our show than literally any other show.

And it's part of the reason that he does it.

So it is relatively self-interested, but it's not like the system is reward.

It's not like he's getting a chairmanship or any better legislation because of that.

And most of the time, it's what these people care about donations, poll numbers for the California Senate raise in 2024 are not looking particularly right.

So that's it.

So yeah, here's the actual closing piece of advice then.

Ro Khanna, right?

Was a undersecretary in the Obama administration and actually is like deeply smart or not manufacturing issues.

Like he wrote a book about manufacturing in 2012, bought that book, but it's actually really interesting.

So the real secret here is there are certain politicians that at the end of the day have something interesting going on.

They in certain contexts can do well in this format, but the harsh realities most politicians are just not selected for or rewarded for being interesting.

If you enjoyed this free preview of today's Supercast exclusive, ask me anything with me and Sager.

Definitely go to realignment.supercast.com or click the link in the show notes to get access to the full episode and all of our other exclusive content.

See you all next time.