

Episode 5: Nothing lasts forever

YVONNE: Previously on Rediscovering: SB 1070

(cue music)

RON: The ruling didn't address the racial profiling concerns that many in the immigrant community feared most. And it specifically kept open the possibility that such concerns could be grounds to revisit the papers-please portion of the law.

YVONNE: But for now at least, 1070's controversial core was preserved. The state could require police to inquire about the legal status of those they suspect of being immigrants.

YVONNE: To those casually opposed to 1070, winning on three of four counts might have seemed like a victory. But in the immigrant community, the fact that the high court preserved the right to seek legal documentation on demand left a deep, lingering fear of discrimination and deportation.

Alfredo: [00:27:22] it was sort of people flew. I mean, and if they could get away, they got away. A lot people, by the way, who were document that got away. I just don't want to be here. You know, this this this place is full of hate. I just don't want to be here. [00:27:39][16.9]

YVONNE: But while thousands of people left Arizona, far more stayed. And many of them weren't going to just hide.

(outcue music)

YVONNE: Carlos Garcia came to the U.S. without papers at 5 years old from Sonora, Mexico. He grew up dreaming of being a teacher and a sports coach. As a teenager, he was adopted by his stepfather. His adoption would eventually lead to him earning his U.S. citizenship in the early 2000s, when he was a college student. Arizona's efforts at curbing illegal immigration, including sb 1070, drove him into activism.

Carlos: [00:52:43] Spent the first 15, 16 years of my life fighting back, responding, reacting, trying to defend my family from not being destroyed.

RON: As an activist, he witnessed tearful and chaotic separations of children and families by sheriff's deputies. He protested legislation at the state capitol and in Washington D.C. He even got arrested during his protests. He helped those more friendly toward undocumented immigrants get elected to office. Then he *really* got involved.

Chants: [00:55] Si se puede! Si se Puede! [0:59]

Garcia: [24:00] I Carlos Garcia, do solemnly swear that I will support the constitution of the united states and the constitution and the laws of the state of arizona. [24:14]

Announcer: [25:08] Ladies and Gentlemen Councilmember Carlos Garcia. [25:11]

YVONNE: In May 2019, Garcia the activist with Puente Human Rights Movement, was elected to the Phoenix City Council.

Carlos: How can we now shift, how can we build power and whether it's in this position or whatever position? My personal goal is to continue to dismantle all that harm that was created over the last 20 years. And so that's that's what's next. Right. Whether it's through this position, through Puente through, whatever we're doing, it is to dismantle that which was placed in Arizona over the last 20 years [00:53:27][44.6]

YVONNE: And it's not just Garcia.

(cue theme music)

YVONNE: Nothing lasts forever. Not in politics, not in policy. Change can come slowly, but it does happen.

RON: Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 didn't happen suddenly. It took years of effort building toward a moment when the Legislature, the governor and the public, pushed by a terrible slaying, agreed to do something about illegal immigration, even if the White House and Congress couldn't.

YVONNE: For a while, 1070 was popular and was a good way to win elections in Arizona. Russell Pearce, Jan Brewer and John McCain were all re-elected taking hardliner positions in 2010. But the Latino and migrant communities, those most directly impacted by those policies, have pushed back.

Today, running against 1070 and the politics of oppression is a good way to win elections in Arizona, even if the White House wants to change all that. I'm Yvonne Wingett Sanchez.

RON: And I'm Ron Hansen. This is the final part of Rediscovering: SB 1070. In this episode, we'll look at the legacy of Senate Bill 1070, Arizona's 2010 immigration-enforcement law.

(outcue theme music)

YVONNE: SB1070 reshaped Arizona politics and set an example to others about the political potency of nativism and border security.

RON: It's a law that has galvanized a new generation of activists. Combined with Arizona's rapid growth among transplants and Latinos, it helped make the state a political battleground

this election year. It's a dramatic shift for a state that was reliably red in presidential elections for most of the past 64 years.

YVONNE: The state had two Republican senators for 24 years in a row, ending in 2019. This year, voters could elect a second Democrat to Washington -- giving Arizona a pair of Democratic senators for the first time since 1953.

RON: At the state Legislature, the two-seat majority in the state House of Representatives is the GOP's smallest since Democrats last controlled the chamber in 1966.

YVONNE: A decade after Arizona passed 1070, the law still quietly echoes through our politics, in the people who were affected by it the most.

(cue music)

YVONNE: Sometimes the connection to 1070 is easy to draw. What activists have done is use immigration-related issues like SB 1070 to spur more Latinos to vote. This has mostly benefited Democrats. And more Latinos -- like Carlos Garcia -- started running for office as well.

YVONNE: In 2019, Tucson elected Democrat Regina Romero its mayor. She's only the second Latino to hold that office since the Gadsden Purchase in 1854. And she's the first Latina to ever hold that position. On the night she won, Romero said the city needed to demand the repeal of SB 1070.

RON: There are 90 members of the Arizona Legislature. In 2010, when SB 1070 passed, 12 of those 90 members were Latino. Ten of them voted against it. One Republican voted for it, and one didn't vote.

YVONNE: Today, 22 of the 90 state lawmakers are Latino. And that didn't happen by chance. Elected officials like Carlos Garcia and Regina Romero recognized that without a seat at the table, they couldn't help control their own future.

Carlos: [00:15:28] One of the narratives that's happening around 10, 70 is a you know, this is some how a celebration. And I think it is in the sense that we've built power. People have come out of this work and are now leading in different issues. [00:15:46][17.8]

(outcue music)

YVONNE: Because 1070 had such strong partisan overtones, those who oppose it are lining up solidly on the other side. Combined with our changing demographics, it has led to a slow-rolling tide of Democratic victories.

RON: Remember Joe Arpaio? He's the former Maricopa County sheriff, who won six terms promising hardline law enforcement, especially against undocumented immigrants in his later years.

YVONNE: In 2008, before 1070, he won by 13 percentage points. In 2012, after 1070, he won by 6 points. It was a much narrower win, but it was still a win. For activists like Tony Valdivinos, who wanted Arpaio out of office, the narrow defeat motivated them. It showed him that if Latinos voted in larger numbers, they could provide decisive margins.

(cue music)

Tony: [00:17:15] Was just like this moment of recognizing how close you got. And I remember being in a room when everybody was in tears. I mean, people were literally devastated. And I just remember looking at my my friend in the eyes. And we we knew that it was a matter of time. [00:17:34][28.6]

RON: From there, Arpaio's time came quickly.

By 2016, voters were fed up with the steep financial cost of Arpaio's legal battles with his enemies. At the same time, Arpaio was trying to fend off accusations of racial profiling.

Latinos had taken Arpaio to court, saying his enforcement operations were racist. A judge agreed, and ordered him to stop. He defied the order and was found in civil contempt of court.

Arpaio: [00:40:41] It is a misdemeanor. Contempt the court. Same time as a barking dog. So they go after me so much. [00:40:50][9.8]

Arpaio: [00:41:04] . So, hey, I can take a. You open the door. I'm telling you, doesn't bother me,. [00:41:13][9.1]

YVONNE: When he faced reelection in 2016, he lost to a Democrat by almost 13 points.

YVONNE: The same night Arpaio lost, voters elected Donald Trump as president. Including Arizona voters. It was a bittersweet moment for activists.

Tony: [00:20:13] My God, 2016 election night we're over a hance park. I mean, we just defeated Arpaio and Donald Trump just got elected. That was a very confusing moment for a lot of us because we had been in the trenches for such a significant amount of years in the summer, pushing these votes. Talking to people for, you know, raising volunteers. And when are when Donald Trump got elected and Joe Arpaio lost, you know, it was it was a very phenomenal feeling to recognize that you just defeated one of the most undefeatable people in politics and in Arizona of what Arizona people believe is. And we got Paul Penzone elected, [00:21:20][66.3]

(outcue music)

YVONNE: Such mixed results are to be expected in a state that is in political flux. As the nation's fastest-growing county, Maricopa County's electorate is more diverse than ever. Transplants, often from blue states, such as California and the Rust Belt, are importing their politics with them.

The state's Latino population is growing quickly, and many young people are coming of age to vote. And Trump's topsy-turvy presidency has turned off many of the voters in the suburbs who used to reliably vote for Republicans. In 2018, Arizona's evolving electorate had more surprises in store.

(cue music)

RON: Democrats had not won a single statewide election in Arizona from 2010 until 2018. That changed in a big way. In 2018, Democrats won a seat in the state-wide election for Corporation Commission for the first time in 10 years.

YVONNE: They won the schools superintendent race for the first time in 26 years.

Hoffman: [0:07] It is truly my privilege to be here. And I am deeply honored to be your next superintendent of public instruction. [0:16]

RON: They won the secretary of state's race for the first time in 28 years.

Hobbs: [0:32] I am and will be forever grateful for the confidence you've placed in me to do the job of Secretary of State. [0:42]

YVONNE: And the biggest news of that election, Kyrsten Sinema defeated Martha McSally, giving Democrats their first victory in a U.S. Senate race in Arizona in 30 years.

Sinema: [02:24] Arizonans had a choice between two very different ways forward. One focused on fear and party politics and one focused on Arizona and the issues that matter to everyday families. Arizona rejected what has become far too common in our country. Name calling, personal attacks and doing and saying whatever it takes to get elected. It's dangerous and it lesses who we are as a country. [02:55]

(outcue music)

RON: All four victories were tight, meaning every vote mattered. Long after it was over, the Census Bureau reported that, compared to the 2014 elections, voter turnout among Hispanics in 2018 improved more than turnout among non-Hispanic voters. It was the kind of small difference that has helped remake the state politically.

YVONNE: In that way, Arizona could be following a path set by California a generation earlier. The Golden State was politically competitive into the 1990s. That changed after voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 187 in 1994.

RON: That initiative sought to exclude undocumented immigrants from receiving public benefits, including a public education. A federal judge later gutted the law, but in the meantime Prop. 187 ignited political engagement within California's Latino population, as exhaustively documented in a podcast by Gustavo Arellano, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times.

YVONNE: For most of the past 25 years, Republicans have seemed an endangered species in California politics.

YVONNE: Here in Arizona, a new generation of activists is looking to replicate that outcome by canvassing neighborhoods that used to be treated as afterthoughts in Arizona politics. It has helped bring a more-purple hue to Arizona's political map.

RON: Tom Perez was a lawyer for the Justice Department when that agency sued Arpaio for racial profiling. Today he heads the Democratic National Committee.

Tom Perez: 12:00: I when I was first here doing work involving Joe Arpaio and then SB 10 70, it sometimes felt like you could hold a meeting of the House Democratic Caucus in your state house, you know, in a phone booth. It felt like we needed more troops. And now you look today, you know, the through line that twenty nine out of 60 members of the House are Democrats ...

And why is that happening? ... And so I have seen people wake up to the reality that Arizona can do better. I spoke to people I remember vividly in the Chamber Commerce when we were talking about SB 10 70. How do you recruit clean energy companies to come to Arizona when the only thing they see is Joe Arpaio and SB 10 70? That was a black eye on Arizona.

[00:13:32][33.1]

(cue music)

YVONNE: But the legacy of 1070 is more than just more Hispanics voting for Democrats.

RON: The business community that didn't want 1070... learned they could not sit silently as controversial legislation about social issues percolated throughout the statehouse.

Arizona lost \$141 million in the fallout from SB 1070. And it gained a racist reputation that hampered corporate recruiting to the state. A new level of political engagement sprang from business leaders.

RON: People like Todd Sanders who is the CEO of the Greater Phoenix Chamber realized they couldn't stay silent.

Todd: [00:11:43] I think what we learned post 1070 is that social issues do matter. And we are the business community is part of the community. And so it was important for us to have the conversations to talk about the bills, whether or not there was a direct business impact or not, and then decide what to do. And then next year, the week we called the sons of 10, 70 were were front and center for us. [00:12:13][29.8][00:12:13] We looked at those bills as exactly the kind of thing that we need to stop. We put a bull's eye on all of the bills and we killed them. [00:12:21][8.1] We killed those bills. [00:12:24][0.5]

(outcue music)

RON: In 2014, Republican lawmakers sent Gov. Brewer Senate Bill 1062. It would allow businesses to ignore state laws that conflicted with their religious beliefs. Critics called it a backdoor effort to ratify bigotry against same-sex couples.

YVONNE: This time, business leaders weighed in. Businesses large and small urged Brewer to veto SB 1062. Among those who lent their voice to the opposition were the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, AT&T, Apple and PetSmart.

RON: At the time, the National Football League was scheduled to hold a Super Bowl in Arizona in less than a year. The NFL ominously said it was monitoring the situation in Arizona ahead of Brewer's decision on 1062. Everyone understood what the NFL could do.

YVONNE: After all, the league had taken action against Arizona's policies before. In 1990, the league took the 1993 Super Bowl from the state over it's resistance to observing Martin Luther King Day.

KGUN9:[0:54] Instead the superbowl played out in Pasadena, California and Phoenix lost out on an estimated 200 million dollar boost the game would have had on the economy. [1:03]

YVONNE: Brewer once again kept quiet about the bill as it sat on her desk. This time, amid a tidal wave of opposition, she vetoed it.

RON: 2014 also marked a move away from illegal immigration as *the* dominant issue for Republicans in Arizona.

Jobs, the economy ... and funding for K-12 education emerged as the campaign's **biggest** issues. Republicans had a competitive primary for the race to pick Brewer's successor.

YVONNE: Several of the more conservative Republican candidates unsuccessfully tried to make illegal immigration the dominant issue, including Andrew Thomas. He's the former Maricopa County attorney who worked alongside Sheriff Joe Arpaio to crack down on illegal immigration.

Thomas was disbarred over ethical violations tied to his feuds with county officials and judges. Undeterred, he ran for governor and finished fifth in the six-way Republican primary election.

RON: Then there was Doug Ducey, the state treasurer at the time. A former ice cream company executive, he understood how a tarnished reputation could harm business growth. He focused his campaign on fiscal responsibility and restoring the state's image, saying it would help attract corporate headquarters, and with them, good-paying jobs that would improve the state's economy.

Ducey: [03:28] I have a very clear agenda as your next governor. I want to kick start the economy so there are more jobs for hardworking Arizonans that turn into fulfilling careers. [03:38]

(cue music)

YVONNE: Although Republicans in Arizona seemed to move past their focus on more-restrictionist immigration policies, those who bore the brunt of the hardline actions are still haunted by them today.

RON: Arizona's Latino community never had the luxury of forgetting about 1070. Those who are here illegally worry that police will have grounds to see papers they don't have.

Those who are here legally, or were born in the U.S. with roots going back generations, worry they will be racially profiled, forced to produce documents they must carry around in a way that others don't.

YVONNE: And those concerns -- which were raised by protesters *from the* beginning -- came to fruition. Our colleague Uriel Garcia detailed the impact of SB 1070 in terms of racial profiling. He found that between July 2017 and December 2019, Phoenix Police called Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, more than 6,100 times.

RON: In 62% of those cases, the individuals were found to be in the country legally. In fact, less than 3% of those calls ended with ICE arresting someone suspected of being in the country illegally.

(outcue music)

For many activists, such numbers show that SB 1070 inarguably resulted in racial profiling by the police.

YVONNE: Katherine Figueroa is still affected by the crackdown. Remember, she was 9 years old when she was playing at her aunt's house one afternoon in 2009. The evening news was on and she saw images she would never forget: her father on television, his hands cuffed behind his back with zip ties.

RON: Arpaio's deputies detained her mom and dad and other workers at a car wash during an immigration raid. Her parents are from Mexico City. They crossed the border on tourist visas in the mid-1990s but overstayed them. Katherine was born in the U.S.

YVONNE: For three agonizing months, Katherine lost her parents to Arpaio's jail. In losing them, she found her voice.

Katherine: [00:10:31] I was attending marches, protests outside of the jails. You know, just speaking out for my parents, knowing that they weren't able to speak up for themselves. So I had to do it or someone else had to do it for them, too [00:10:47][16.6]

YVONNE: In 2010, she went to Congress to ask for help and advocated for her community.

Katherine: [01:53] Please tell President Obama to stop Sb1070 and (Intelligible) which are racist laws that give the police everyone that is brown and for arpaio to ask like an immigration agent. [2:10] Please tell President Obama to stop putting parents in jail all they want is a better life for their kids. [2:17]

YVONNE: She marched in favor of pro-immigrant policies. She protested SB 1070.

RON: She became a small, but powerful symbol of the emotional toll of families with mixed status. And her family represented the consequences of the federal government's failure to overhaul the immigration system and the impact of a *state* zealously trying to do what Washington would not.

YVONNE: In 2013, a judge closed her parents' immigration cases. Under the Obama administration's guidance, ICE administratively closed cases against undocumented immigrants in removal proceedings.

Katherine: Thank you for everybody's support for the people who signed the petition.

(cue music)

YVONNE: But closing the case does not give them any sort of permission to remain in the U.S. It only means that ICE is no longer actively trying to deport them.

Katherine: Thank you for everybody's support for the people who signed the petition.

RON: Under the Trump administration, many of the closed cases have been reopened. Many have been deported.

YVONNE: Today, Katherine is going to school. She works. And as a U.S. citizen, *she votes*. She's no longer marching in the streets, but she is still pushing her family and friends to make **their** voices heard in 2020.

Katherine: [00:30:28] Like even when my coworkers I'm just like, don't forget vote. Well, you know, it's really important, especially if we want to see a change. If we really do want to see a change, we need to go out and vote. If we just stay home, we like like, you know, that are like, why is he in office? Like, well, we had the opportunity to not keep him in office, but, you know, people decided not to go out to vote. So when I do hear people complaining and stuff, I'm just like but did you vote? No, I didn't vote. OK, well, then your vote could have made a big change, a big difference. [00:31:04][36.0]

RON: And Tony Valdovinos has found his purpose.

He once rode buses from Phoenix to Mesa to knock doors in the effort to recall Russell Pearce. Now, he's CEO of his own political firm, called La Machine Consulting Group.

YVONNE: He helped elect Phoenix Councilman Carlos Garcia, Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego and Phoenix City Councilwoman Laura Pastor. As well as Democratic Congressmen Ruben Gallego and Greg Stanton. He also helped elect various Democratic state lawmakers, including Isela Blanc, who is formerly undocumented herself. His life story is also the inspiration for *Americano!*, a hit musical.

Tony: [00:22:18] I employ 44 employees at the current moment. And that's one of the greatest feelings, is that we're hiring young kids that, you know, I've seen afford their own cars overworking for us over a certain amount of years. And that's encouraging when you see your community. You know, when you're part of helping your community build and you know. So I just think, you know, it's a very confusing time, but it's a it's a challenging time for so many immigrants and Americans to to step up. [00:22:50][32.7]

(outcue music)

RON: Before Donald Trump took office, Valdovinos went to Mexico for the first time. It was a trip his parents never wanted him to take given his status as a DACA recipient. He applied to the government for permission to travel.

Tony: [00:21:32] I knew I was never going to ever meet my grandparents. And I decided to go, you know, knowing that it says it at the bottom of your DACA, that it's not a guarantee back in. I got to meet all four of my grandparents before three of them passed the following two years. [00:21:47][14.9]

RON: For Tony Valdovinos, and Katherine Figueroa, and Carlos Garcia, and others, the legacy of SB 1070 was the awakening of their community and their power. And for older activists, like Salvador Reza and Alfredo Gutierrez? Well, SB 1070 helped them pass the torch to a new generation of activists who could wield influence inside the halls of power.

(cue music)

YVONNE: For Jan Brewer, Russell Pearce, and Joe Arpaio, SB 1070 showed the political potency of the issue of illegal immigration. All three are still active in politics in their own ways. Brewer is a surrogate for Trump's re-election effort. Pearce remains active in grassroots Republican work.

YVONNE: President Donald Trump issued his very **first** pardon to Joe Arpaio in August 2017. The fallout of Arpaio's crackdowns don't seem to bother him at all.

Trump: [00:42] He's done a great job for the people of Arizona. He's very strong on border very strong on illegal immigration. He is loved in Arizona. [00:51]

RON: And, at 87 years old, Arpaio is seeking redemption: he is running for his old seat as Maricopa County Sheriff. The federal government's failure to act on immigration reform fueled a simmering rage of its own. 1070 showed that local leaders would test their powers if Congress refused to act.

Russell: [01:15:31] I recognize that not everybody coming across that border is a bad person in terms of a bad person. But there's a cost to that. A huge cost that can't be ignored. And the rule of law, can't be ignored. [01:15:47][25.3]

RON: Pearce stands by Arizona's decision to act. And he says so despite the fact that Robert Krentz's high-profile slaying, which served as the impetus for many around SB 1070 remains unsolved.

Russell: [01:15:58] we're a generous nation and this isn't about you're a good guy or a bad guy. I mean we know bad guys are coming. But it's about the rule of law and secure borders [01:16:14][15.1]

YVONNE: And former Governor Jan Brewer feels much the same way.

Brewer: [00:07:59] We believe in the rule of laws and that nations have borders. And if you don't have border, it's like a house without walls, it collapses. And you need to protect the integrity of your country. And if you don't lose it, you lose your values in your community. You know, being a why it was established and like people go and fight for our country. I mean, you don't have a country. I mean, nothing.

YVONNE: We asked Brewer what she thought the legacy of SB 1070 *should* be.

Brewer: "And I think people want to say their legacy is 10. 70 is saying that we believe in the rule of law. We want our borders protected. And if you want to immigrate, you're all welcome to come back. Come in the right way. [00:08:40][40.6]

(outcue music)

RON: Since the passage of SB 1070, Arizona has taken significant steps to the left. In the same time, *America* has pursued a more hardline approach to illegal immigration. The political appeal of nativism that worked in Arizona resonated with a broader swath of Americans than many could have ever expected.

Larry King: “Arizona’s new law, what do you make of it?”

Donald Trump: “Well, it all starts with the federal government not coming out with a law. They’ve been talking about it for years and they still haven’t done anything, and Arizona is really getting crime-ridden. I mean these people are coming over. There’s killings all over the place, there’s shootings all over the place.”

YVONNE: That’s Donald Trump on CNN’s Larry King Live five days after Jan Brewer signed 1070 into law, and five years before he announced he was running for president. The themes that defined his 2016 run -- a lawless border, a state overrun with criminals, an impotent federal response -- were on his mind even then.

RON: Trump’s Arizona supporters are careful not to claim credit. They see Trump as more of a kindred spirit than a student of Arizona policies.

Ron: [01:14:20] How much do you connect his rise to 1070? [01:14:23][3.0]

Russell: [01:14:23] Haha, I don't know if that's a fair statement. [01:14:26][2.8]

[5.8]

Russell: [01:14:58] But I don't know that that this in itself was part of it. Certainly the philosophy that goes with it and where he got that from, I don't know. But it is in line with what I've been pushing for years [01:15:13][14.4]

Arpaio: [00:25:36] . And he started talking about illegal immigration almost from the beginning because I was there [00:25:47][10.9]

Brewer: [00:09:04] Well, I think that he obviously understood and appreciated the fact that the people of America supported what we would do, what we had done in Arizona. Y
[00:09:15][10.9]

RON: Still, it’s clear that Trump closely followed 1070 and saw it as an appropriate antidote to what he viewed as a border in crisis.

LK: “What do you make of a boycott plan?”

Trump” “I think it’s ridiculous. I think, look, Arizona is one of our states. They’re a productive state, a wonderful state. I’ve been there many times, and people are just streaming into their state, and crime rate goes way up.

Trump: “And they say along the border it’s just brutal what’s happening. If you live along the border, and I just heard this today, I was listening to somebody describing life, and it’s murder. It’s really dangerous stuff, and a lot of the border states are having this problem.

YVONNE: If Trump was sounding the alarms about what he viewed as a major problem, others dismissed him as a reality TV star peddling the birther conspiracy theory against President Barack Obama. But he was laying out the ideas that would later launch his longshot presidential bid.

Trump: If people come into the country illegally, I am favoring saying you have to get them out. You need laws. We have no law. Nobody even knows what the law is.

RON: And Trump made it clear how he felt in his famous campaign announcement.

Trump:[3:30] “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.” [3:56]

RON: Trump moved through the Republican primary like 1070 moved through the Arizona statehouse: quickly and with a presumption that failure was inevitable. He said things that everyone expected to derail his campaign. And he made Arizona Sen. John McCain a top target.

Trump: [1:50] He’s not a war hero. He’s a war hero because he was captured. I don’t like people who were captured. I hate to tell you. [1:58]

YVONNE: Arizona’s Sen. John McCain brushed aside Trump’s brash comments.

McCain: [2:57] Totally inappropriate for Mr. Trump to say he doesn't like to be with people who were captured. [3:05]

YVONNE: But Trump’s conservative hair-a-sees never hurt him. ... He had struck a nerve with voters who felt like undocumented immigrants were reaping America’s benefits... while their own lives suffered.

(cue music)

YVONNE: And that message still resonates with Trump voters today. We caught up with one such voter -- Lawraleen (adeenome - pronunciation guide) from Phoenix -- at a Trump rally in February.

Lawraleen: [00:01:41] I think right now the biggest thing that I that I'm for Trump more is because immigrants is coming into the country illegally. [00:01:51][9.6]

RON: Trump's antidote was a "big beautiful wall." He came to Arizona early and often to the delight of conservatives... who still backed 1070's aggressive approach to illegal immigration. He made appearances in Phoenix, Mesa, Fountain Hills and Prescott Valley.

YVONNE: Trump staked his campaign on the same sort of hardline, restrictionist policy proposals that Arizona had long grown accustomed to. He vowed to construct an "impenetrable" barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border that he said Mexico would pay for.

TRUMP:[21: 46] On day one we will begin working on an impenetrable physical tall powerful beautiful southern border wall. [21:56]

Trump Supporters: [53:47] "Build the wall! Build the wall!"

(outcue music)

RON: He promised to end Obama's executive actions programs that protected hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants from deportation and let them work legally in the U.S. And he pledged to end sanctuary cities.

YVONNE: For those who had lived through the debate and consequences of SB 1070, it was as though Trump was following the same populist playbook that made Russell Pearce, Jan Brewer and Joe Arpaio household names within the Tea Party and the conservative movement. The seeds of that approach were planted and nourished in Arizona.

Trump: "And as far as president, I get asked this question, 'Boy why don't you run for president?' because I do have sort of a take on what it takes.

(cue music)

Trump: And they continue to ask me the same question because they really are looking for answers in this country.-

RON: Trump, of course, won the presidency in 2016, and Arizona helped make it happen. He carried the state by 3 and a half percentage points. That's a win, even if it's a slight one, and in the most immediate sense, that's all that mattered. At least in 2016.

YVONNE: But Trump's margin in Arizona was the smallest for a Republican since Bob Dole lost the state in 1996 to President Bill Clinton. Before that, Democrats lost in Arizona by an average of 19 percentage points over 11 straight elections.

Aside from Bill Clinton, you have to go back to Harry Truman in 1948 to find a Democrat who won the Grand Canyon State.

RON: Entering 2020, Arizona sits as the possible fulcrum of American presidential politics. Trump's well-financed campaign has been working in Arizona for more than a year. And he

brought his campaign to the state in a February visit as a reminder of how connected he feels here.

Trump: [00:03:04] It's great being here in the great state of Arizona with thousands of hardworking patriots who believe in God, family and country. Thank you. Thank you.
[00:03:15][11.1]

Trump: [00:03:18] And with your help this November, we are going to defeat the radical socialist Democrats and we are going to win Arizona in a landslide [00:03:27][9.3]

[20.4]

YVONNE: At the same time, Arizona's new activists continue to wage their own campaign, connecting Trump to the forces that gave the state 1070.

NPR: [00:12] Long a safe bet for republican presidential candidates, Arizona has joined the ranks of hotly contested battle ground states. [00:20]

YVONNE: Which side will prevail in November?

RON: That's still hard to say. But in politics, nothing lasts forever.

(outcue music)

(cue theme music)

RON: This podcast was edited and produced by Katie O'Connell, Maritza Dominguez and Taylor Seely. Reporting by Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, Daniel Gonzalez and myself, Ron Hansen. Script supervision came from Katie O'Connell, Daniel Gonzalez, Kathy Tulumello and Dan Nowicki.

YVONNE: Greg Burton is our executive editor. John Adams is our director for storytelling and innovation. Social media for this podcast came from Danielle Woodward, Grace Palmieri, Garrett Mitchell, Angel Mendoza and Claire Rafford. Web production by John Paul McDonnall.

RON: Audio in this episode comes from the city of Phoenix, KPNX 12 News, K-GUN9 Tucson, Arizona PBS, Rafael Prieto, National Day Laborer Organizing Network videos, CNN, NBC, CBS News, C-SPAN and NPR.

YVONNE: Thanks so much for listening to Rediscovering: SB 1070, a podcast from The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com.