

PRESS RELEASE:

Contact – Renee Rallos
Email – rrallos@wfae.org
Phone – 704.926.9314



WFAE Launches *Candidate ME*, a New Podcast Series Hosted by Tom Bullock

Charlotte, N.C. (August 2, 2017) – WFAE has a long tradition of covering elections and all that comes with it – candidates, issues, events and results. But more goes into a campaign than what the average voter sees. It’s those behind-the-scenes stories that WFAE’s **Tom Bullock** will explore in a new podcast called [Candidate ME](#).

“The concept is simple. I launch a hypothetical campaign for an office I am in no way qualified for,” explains **Bullock**. “I picked Mayor of Charlotte because, since I don’t live in Charlotte, I can’t run for any office in the city. So my pretend candidacy can have no impact on the race.”

But there is a lot you can learn about real campaigns through this hypothetical lens.

Candidate ME will also feature long form stories and interviews with real candidates, republican and democratic strategists, and others. The series will also examine races across Mecklenburg County. Listeners to the podcast can submit questions via WFAE’s website. Some of these questions will be explored in future episodes.

“I hope *Candidate ME* will give listeners context,” said **Bullock**, “I think the podcast, along with our regular coverage of the races can provide a deeper understanding of the election. And be interesting and entertaining to boot.”

Candidate ME is currently available at WFAE.org and iTunes, and will soon be available on Google Play and other podcast platforms.

“*Candidate ME* is a unique approach to both demystifying the electoral process and engaging more members of the community in our coverage,” said **Ju-Don Marshall**, chief content officer of WFAE. “Our intention is for the podcast to be a combination of what we believe our listeners and readers will find interesting about the political process and what they tell us they want to know. We already have gotten several suggestions from people who are excited about the podcast and would like to see Tom explore certain topics.”

Episode Descriptions:

So You Want To Be a Candidate?

Filing to be a candidate is the official start of a campaign. If you’re a Republican or Democrat, the process is fairly simple. But the path is more difficult if you want to run as an Independent or unaffiliated candidate. If the unaffiliated voter is the fastest growing political group in North Carolina, why aren’t there more unaffiliated candidates? Local political consultants will also give their predictions for the Charlotte Mayor’s race and Charlotte City Council.

(more)

Flip or Flop?

Candidate ME talks with two groups who want to flip party control of a political body and break a supermajority held by their political opponents. One is Democratic State Senator Jeff Jackson who has started a grassroots effort to flip the General Assembly. The other is leaders of Mecklenburg County's Republican Party who want to break the Democratic hold on Charlotte City Council.

Other episodes will examine the role of dark money in Charlotte politics, which is a first for the city; incumbents versus challengers and why the latter jumped into the race; and the art and science of the political attack ad.

For interview opportunities, please contact Renee Rallos.

About Tom Bullock

Bullock's political reporting at WFAE has included the controversy surrounding House Bill Two; the North Carolina governor's race; and the heated debate in the South Carolina legislature over the Confederate flag. Before joining WFAE in 2014, Bullock worked at NPR for 15 years. He was senior producer of NPR's Election Unit and for NPR's Foreign Desk where he produced and reported from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Haiti, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, among others. In 2017, Bullock won a regional Edward R. Murrow for his reporting of the protests after the Keith Scott shooting in September 2016. He and his family reside in Huntersville.

About WFAE

WFAE 90.7 FM is a non-profit public radio station, licensed to the University Radio Foundation Inc. With 90.3 in Hickory, 106.1 in Laurinburg and 93.7 in Southern Pines, WFAE serves over 230,000 weekly listeners in the greater Charlotte region with an award-winning mix of local, national and international news, and entertainment programs from NPR® and other content partners.

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