

Gabriel Franklin

Good morning everyone and welcome, it is my pleasure to sit down with famed Roman author Marcus Tullus Cicero! Thank you for joining us today, Cicero.

Now, just to get started, could you please give some of the American listeners a bit of context and explain what your name means?

Well, as you know I have three names, Marcus Tullus Cicero, like a lot of my other Roman friends. The first name, or praenomen is given to me like a regular first name in America, Marcus, and many of my friends growing up had the same name as me, as a lot of us shared the small amount of praenomens. But my second name is passed down directly from my father, Tullius. My brother has the same second name, also known as nomen, because of my father as well, and we will pass these names down to our children. I am most commonly known as Cicero, with is my Cognomen, personal surname, and also has connection to my family. My name translates closely to “chickpea”. When I first started getting into politics people told me to change my name to something more noble, but I stayed true to myself and I was determined to make Cicero as noble a name as any.

We all know about the Catiline orations, could you give us some of your thought processes on writing those speeches, and what are some things that you started to sniff out when you started building this case?

I was always wary since I was a consul elect. Catiline was plotting against me, trying to kill me. I defended myself in silence but never forgot about this, however a lot more made me realize that he was not after just me, but the entire republic! A lot of my suspicions started on the 28th of October, with the massacre of the nobles, which I attribute in large part to Catiline. However, it is my understanding that he has been meeting with other questionable characters and conspiring in the dark provided to him by remote locations against our republic. I saw the violence and danger that he was capable and keen to commit against our beloved state, and felt it my responsibility to

illuminate this to the rest of the senate. Everyone is scared of him, when he walks in to the senate, people leave their seats! I knew I had to do all that I could to get him out of there, with what I do best, which is using my brains and my voice.

I understand you are not the biggest Julius Caesar fan, has there been any bad blood in the past or was your response to him mainly because of his actions in a position of power?

Well Julius Caesar and I definitely had a very complex relationship. I think a lot of this is due to how hungry for power he was and both of our positions all the way at the top of the Roman government. We developed a very cordial relationship over our time, and I saw his rise to the top, but I always prioritized the integrity of the republic, which is one reason I was hesitant to join his triumvirate. When he became the head of Rome, he installed me in his court, but I could never get fully behind him because I viewed the government as a dictatorship at that point, which it was. I'm not going to say I was happy he got killed, but I definitely wasn't as sad as some others were, but I was still inclined to help his nephew Augustus, because as I said earlier, my main focus is just preserving the state and bringing the country to the best place it can be.

We all know you are an incredibly accomplished politician, but also an author. How would you describe your duties as a Roman, and ability to make a change in your country with your brainpower?

I think my purpose for Rome is to make the nation a better place, and be as helpful as I can to as many people as I can. If I could fight for Rome I would, but my talent was never physical, instead I was always adept with my studies and books, so my purpose is to impact people that way, with my brain. It took me a long time to come to this realization but I am confident in the idea that it is my responsibility to help the commonwealth educate themselves and show them the ways of the arts.

What was it like getting exiled from Rome and then being reinstated in the Senate? Are you grateful for your second opportunity?

Honestly my career in the Senate was a rollercoaster of emotions. I don't think I deserved to be exiled in the first place, but I took that experience and learned from it. I organized my thoughts and figured out how to be a better member of the senate. I'm extremely grateful for my fellow senate members who were willing to give me a second chance and reinstate me. As I wrote in my Post Senatu orations, the character of the other senators is truly extraordinary and inspires me to be better at my job.

Talk to me about your relationship with Milo...

Milo and I go way back. As I said earlier, I'm extremely thankful to him, he was one of the only people campaigning for me to be reinstated in the senate, which is very honorable of him. I still feel really bad about not being able to help him when he was on trial for murder, I had a whole speech trying to clear his name, but in the moment, I just sort of broke down and was not able to deliver it. Maybe it all worked out for the best though...I still sent him the speech at least so he knows I'm on his side.

Resources:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-companion-to-cicero/68825E4EC155E08F08F57DF94AEC3524>

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195389661/obo-9780195389661-0012.xml>

<https://sites.la.utexas.edu/cicero/texts/>

Texts Referenced:

Catiline Orations

Post Senatu

To Milo

Archia Poeta