

Blue Jean Nation 'America's one finger salute'

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Media pundits are over analyzing election results. Republicans showed there is nothing they will not do to get power. Democrats insisted on nominating exactly the wrong person and have written off large swaths of rural Wisconsin. We live in dangerous times.

ALTOONA, WI - What's perhaps most shocking about the turn our country has taken is that so many were shocked. Media pundits and the professional operatives and party insiders they count on as sources have a habit of over analyzing elections and over complicating politics. What just happened is not that complicated.

Anti-establishment feelings are running sky high, making 2016 a change year and November 8 a change day. Donald Trump was seen as the change candidate. Hillary Clinton was seen as the stay the course, more of the same candidate. Clinton emphasized her experience and qualifications and readiness for the job. Trump talked of draining the swamp. If voters had been in a stay the course state of mind, Clinton is elected. A huge number were in no such mood. Tens of millions felt the urge to extend a middle finger to the powers that be. Trump was the biggest middle finger they could find.

Some things became apparent in this election. Republicans showed there is nothing they will not do to get and hold on to power — from [voting suppression](#) and voter internment (also known as [“packing” and “cracking”](#) in the parlance of those practiced in the dark art of partisan gerrymandering) to nakedly visible appeals to bigotry and scapegoating of some of the most vulnerable among us. Democrats showed they possess the greatest weakness of all: An inability or unwillingness to recognize their most glaring weaknesses much less do anything about them.

Democrats insisted on nominating exactly the wrong person at exactly the wrong time. They chose a consummate insider at a moment when anti-establishment fervor was reaching a boiling point. Curiously, in talking to both party insiders and mainstream Democratic voters, they all seemed to think they were playing it safe. They couldn't see they were making about the riskiest choice imaginable.

Democrats either don't understand or don't care how hated they are by voters who live in small towns or out in the country. Judging from what I've encountered over the last year and a half since Blue Jean Nation formed, the party's name has become a dirty word in most rural areas. By all appearances, party leaders have written off large swaths of rural Wisconsin and rural America. What they don't seem to realize is this strategy makes it [all but impossible for them to construct governing majorities](#) any time in the foreseeable future.

The disastrous results of the 2016 elections have many Democratic foot soldiers and worker bees calling for heads to roll. A favorite target of their wrath is the party chair. Being party chair has to be one of the worst of all possible jobs because everyone presumes the position has great power when it has nearly none. The real power rests with the political industrial complex made up of professional consultants and vendors of campaign services who make huge sums of money win or lose. They have party leaders under their spell, and with the smoke clearing from this year's elections there are no signs as of yet that attempts will be made to break that spell.

We live in interesting but dangerous times. Putting power ahead of principle, ruling Republicans have made the classic deal with the devil, swapping essential pieces of the party's soul for temporary supremacy. And exiled Democrats not only do not appear to have a plan to stage a comeback, they seem reluctant to even acknowledge they have a problem.

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