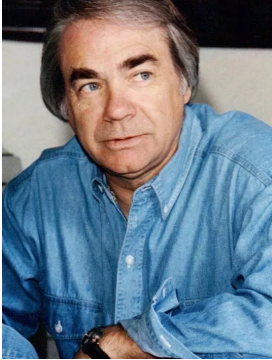


Even Democrats are tired of hearing from Clinton

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For a public official or a candidate, nothing is quite so dispiriting as an election loss. It represents a popular rejection of one's philosophy, opinion and values.

While the sting of defeat fades with the passage of time, a loss is an experience not soon forgotten.

But, defeat has a close companion — irrelevancy. Coming to the realization that more people are tuning out than tuning in is nearly as emotionally wounding as a rebuke from voters.

By turning her book tour into a scapegoating tour, Hillary Clinton is flirting with such a fate.

Her non-stop carping about her loss to Donald Trump (to whom she fully expected to administer an historic beat-down) and her obsession with blaming her loss on the underhandedness and incompetence of others is wearing thin.

Her interviews and talk show appearances are friendly forums for her to re-run the 2016 campaign and blame the usual culprits — Russians, fired FBI Director James Comey, the media, and the national Democratic Party.

The nervousness among Democrats that her tour would detract from the need to move past the election and concentrate on gaining Congressional seats in 2018 was well-placed.

Her comments — written and verbal — further divided the party, rather than helping pick up the pieces after a demoralizing loss.

She's taken to Twitter to opine critically on the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria, the Congressional response to the massacre in Las Vegas, and the National Rifle Association which, she claimed, has captured the entire Republican Party.

Many Americans listening to Clinton appear to be doing so out of courtesy rather than any interest in what she has to say.

To them, it's like watching your cousin's slide show of the family's trip to Disney World. The "oohs and ahhs" disguise the voice in their head whispering "when will this finally be over."

Undeterred, Clinton seems intent on slogging on, determined to be the dominant public voice on policy and politics.

When Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, a California Democrat and vice chairwoman of the House Democratic Caucus, startled her party recently by suggesting it was time for the current Congressional leadership to step aside and "pass the torch" to a younger generation, her comments were construed by some as including Clinton.

Sanchez directed her remarks toward Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, a fellow Californian, who, at age 77, is the party leader along with Rep. Steny Hoyer, the minority whip, and Rep. James Clyburn, the assistant minority leader. All are in their mid to late 70s — a time, according to Sanchez, when they should make way for a younger generation of leaders.

Clinton, though not mentioned by Sanchez, is at 70 of the Pelosi-Hoyer-Clyburn generation.

Sanchez' criticisms are indicative of a restiveness in the party rank and file, a frustration with Pelosi who they see as the cork in the bottle preventing anyone else from rising to leadership level.

By implicitly including Clinton, Sanchez reflected the views of her generation that the future lies with them and Clinton's time is past.

Clinton has had distinguished career in public life — First Lady, United States Senator from New York, Secretary of State, and the first female nominated by a major party as its presidential candidate — but it is her loss at Trump's hands that will forever mark her legacy.

Her book and relentless attempts to assign responsibility elsewhere are a part of remaining relevant, a desire to be not merely a single voice, but the dominant voice.

It would be unwise and gratuitous for the party to attempt to shut her down or insist that she curtail her public pronouncements, even though some secretly and fervently wish that it was so.

She is certainly free to speak her mind and continue to portray herself as someone who would have been the nation's first female president were it not for sinister outside influences.

Convincing her to adopt a lower profile and move on from her loss to Trump will be a delicate task for party leaders, but a failure to do so will highlight party divisions and lead to more grumbling like that of Congresswoman Sanchez.

In my career, I have been involved at a high staff level in four gubernatorial campaigns as well as legislative and local campaigns too numerous to recall.

I've won some and lost some. Winning is better, losing is inevitable.

Clinton's relevancy will disappear entirely should she refuse to grasp that simple, immutable truth.

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