IS IT OVER YET?

HANDLING ELECTION DAY, PLUS REFLECTIONS ON AN AMERICAN NIGHTMARE
How can we get past this brutal election cycle?

BY STACY J. WILLS

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ell, now what? Assuming we’ll have a winner soon and not a court case, and that there will remain plenty of time under a new administration for four years, what will we do with our time, ouranger, our racism, our trans-

sphobia, our ignorance? At some point we will use the dedans, our silly memes, our self-righteous posturizing disguised as “Socratic,” and our trolling disguised as “conversation”: How will we recover from the tearing apart that thinking it’s okay to say “It’s a F*cking-hating” over the fine china (ouch)? Or “She’s a stupid b*ch” in front of children? How will we clean back to some semblance of civility, to a time where we wouldn’t have dreamed that our presidential discourse is on to new highs. (internet, backhead name-calling) (see what I did there?) It’s like I can’t stop. The negativity has dawned on me.

Let me tell you, there were times—dark times—during this election cycle when I whispered awful things to myself like “F*ck, WC” and “My name is Hillary and I Am the Worst.” Of course, Romney had a nice head of hair. There were moments when I woke myself up at night repeating: “September, deja vu, September.” —There was no way that I was going to be a sissy American, that feeling that although we differ in opinion, we are civil and united and believe in our system of Democracy—and exchanged cold glares with the retired couple whose Mercedes sported an opposition bumper sticker. My fellow Americans looked at my gray hairdo, which had a tiny Harley emblem on the chest, as “HC” and the woman mumbled, “You can wear that Hillary look in here.” I didn’t want to explain. I wanted to brawl. I was sure I could lay them both out with a spinning roundhouse kick—a skill I absolutely do not have—but I wanted to take more. So I stayed focused. There was nothing amusing about it, no warm fuzzy America the Beautiful buzz, no apple pie, no baseball. Who have we become? I don’t want to be this person, nor be among these people. I want the love back. Or at least the decency. I’ll be okay if I never again see a Basket of Deplorables.

Yes, I had issues. But I stood in line to vote—something that has always given me a sense of pride as an American, that feeling that we have—but I wanted to vote more. So I stayed focused. There was nothing amusing about it, no warm fuzzy America the Beautiful buzz, no apple pie, no baseball. Who have we become? I don’t want to be this person, nor be among these people. I want the love back. Or at least the decency. I’ll be okay if I never again see a Basket of Deplorables.

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In the morning of the presidential debate at CNVC, Ruben Kihuen climbed onto the back of a truck parked in front of the Trump International Hotel and told the crowd he was living the "American Dream." Addressing the "Wall of Taco Trucks" rally—organized by the Culinary Union Local 226, one of his longtime supporters—Kihuen told his story of coming to the United States with his family from Mexico when he was 8 years old and making the most of the opportunity. The crowd chanted with applause.

Kihuen has risen from Nevada State Assemblyman to State Senator, and is now running for the U.S. House of Representatives in Nevada's fourth district. When Kihuen was attending Rancho High School, he was a deferred student, but also a life in office was not his first choice. When Kihuen was attending Rancho, he said, he did not want to be a professional athlete, he wanted to be a professional politician, to make the world a better place.

During his senior year at Rancho, Kihuen played in the Las Vegas High School soccer league, an event at which he scored a tryout with Chivas, the well-regarded professional league, Major League Soccer and the U.S. National Team. "Trust me, he had the toolset to make it … You just never know what life is going to throw at you," says Hernando Gomez, a Las Vegas High School alum who went on to play for the Mexican professional league, Major League Soccer and the U.S. National Team. "I was depressed. " Kihuen recalls. "I was depressed." During his senior year at Rancho, Kihuen had volunteered for Sen. Harry Reid's 2004 reelection team, sensing deals that send jobs overseas and invest in transportation projects like the interstate 11 corridor.

I have good news and bad news. The good news is, you'll be able to play soccer again; the bad news is, you'll never be able to play professionally," Kihuen recalls. "I was depressed." When the doctor came back and said, "The doctor came back and said, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, you'll be able to play soccer again; the bad news is, you'll never be able to play professionally," Kihuen recalls. "I was depressed." During his senior year at Rancho, Kihuen had volunteered for Sen. Harry Reid's 2004 reelection team, sensing deals that send jobs overseas and invest in transportation projects like the interstate 11 corridor.

Kihuen grew up in Guadalajara. His father, Armando, traveled to Southern California for seasonal labor, and in 1986 he applied for Ronald Reagan's immigration amnesty program, eventually establishing permanent residency. When Kihuen was attending Rancho High School, he had dreamed of scoring goals in the soccer pitch, not the campaign trail.

"Ruben was the man," says Herculez Gomez, a Las Vegas High School alum who went on to play for the Mexican professional league, Major League Soccer and the U.S. National Team. "He was building the team, the infrastructure, that would go on to change his legacy in Washington, D.C."

In 2000, at the age of 20, Kihuen scored a tryout with Chivas, the well-regarded Mexican league team from his hometown. During final prepara-
tions, Kihuen was playing in a Las Vegas high school league, with his foot on the ball, he turned back to school and focused on politics. Eventually, Kihuen received his degree in education from UNLV and became a recruiter and advisor at UNLV. Meanwhile, he kept working on campaigns. He helped organize the first Latino outreach program in Virginia in 2004, supporting the successful gubernatorial run of Mark Warner. He joined Harry Reid's 2004 reelection team, and when the Senate won, he brought Kihuen in as a regional representative.

It was the start of an ongoing mentorship. "For someone at that level to start mentoring someone on their own who is barely starting out in politics, think it speaks volumes about him," Kihuen says. "He was building the team, the infrastructure, that would go on to change his legacy in Washington, D.C."

In 2006, Kihuen still had a relative unknown, decided to run for assembly, and defied the prognosticators by winning. It was the first time ever that he was not building the team, the infrastructure, that would go on to change his legacy in Washington, D.C.

Now, when you're in elected office, you look back and say: 'Yeah, I've made it, I've achieved the American Dream,'" Kihuen says. "But there are still many families who haven't."...
Confirmation bias has wreaked havoc on our social media accounts. Will we undo it?

By Geoff Carter

It’s called “myside bias,” or more commonly, “confirmation bias.” Shahram Heshmat, a professor at the University of Illinois at Springfield, defined it succinctly in Psychology Today: “When people would like a certain idea/concept to be true, they end up believing it to be true … Once we have formed a view, we embrace information that confirms that view while ignoring, or rejecting, information that casts doubt on it.”

Truthfully, I can’t get through a presidential election cycle without confirmation bias. The more polarized and angry our country becomes, the more I need to be around those who hold my deeply felt principles—and to ignore those who don’t. If I didn’t, especially in this fiasco of an election year, my brain might have self-immolated somewhere around the primaries.

Confirmation bias is harmful. It deprives you of important and relevant facts, and can easily ossify into ugly prejudices. I want this election to be the last time I practice it. And what that probably means is this: In roughly three years’ time, I’ll delete my social media accounts and keep them deleted until the next election cycle is done. It takes too much out of me. It gets in the way of the things I should be saying and doing.

I don’t know how many people I’ve filtered or outright blocked on Facebook and Twitter since the campaigns began. I was tired of fighting, so I just … disappeared them. There are no restrictions, legal or moral, to prevent me from doing that; all social media is strictly opt-in. (And it doesn’t prevent others from blocking me, either.) Nevertheless, as election sickness wears off, guilt is setting in—and I’m wondering how many of these disagreeables I’ll restore to my feed.

I should probably listen to Heshmat and unblock everyone. “Look for instances to prove that you are wrong,” he wrote, citing Abraham Lincoln’s proclivity for employing political rivals. “This is perhaps a true definition of self-confidence: the ability to look at the world without the need to look for instances that please your ego.”

It’s sound advice, and I want to live by it. But how much sh’t Lincoln would have gotten done in a day if he’d had a Twitter account? Probably not much.

Baldwin as Trump

Alec Baldwin’s spot-on SNL impersonation gave us great lines like “Wrong.” … “Wrong” … “Wrong.” Kate McKinnon’s Clinton was stellar as well, crying, “If you don’t elect me, I will continue to run for president until the day I die.” youtube.com/watc

The New Yorker’s Andy Borowitz

He’s been a lifesaver, with a steady stream of satirical writing. Headlines include “Trump Blasts Media for Reporting Things He Says,” “Many in Nation Tired of Explaining Things to Idiots,” “Trump Warns Hillary May Rig Election by Getting More Votes” and “Hillary Releases 20,000 Spam E-Mails From Old Navy,” with even sharper stories underneath. newyorker.com/humor/borowitz-report

Between the Ferns

Zach Galifianakis interviewed Hillary Clinton for the Funny or Die talk show. ZG to HC:
  - “Are you excited to be the first girl president?”
  - “As Secretary, how many words-per-minute could you type?”
  - “What happens if you become pregnant? Are we going to be stuck with Tim Kaine for nine months? How does this work?” (Clinton’s deadpan reply: “I could send you some pamphlets that might help you understand how this works.”)
  - “When you see how well it works for Donald Trump, do you ever think to yourself, ‘Oh, maybe I should be more racist?’” youtube.com/watch?v=xrkPe-9rM1Q

Thanks for the laughs

Favorite pop-culture moments inspired by the presidential election by Stacy J. Willis

Delete my account