

Trump's lessons for team Hillary

By [Luke Rix-Standing](#)

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Image: Gage Skidmore

I'm going to put myself out there: Hillary Clinton will win the American presidential election. With the ballot just days away, statistics supremo Nate Silver is forecasting a 330 to 205 Democrat win, while Arizona is now projected to go Blue for only the second time since 1948. As his hopes recede, The Donald spits and splutters about rigged elections and scurrilous media campaigns, while defending 'locker room banter' that would have him fired by law from any of his own companies. If Clinton does lose then Paddy Ashdown might have to eat an entire three-piece suit, while Gary Lineker should present Match of the Day with nothing but an empty packet of Walkers covering his tackle.

But when the victory bells stop ringing and the hangovers start to fade, Democrat strategists will have to bed down and pore over the million dollar question: how do they ensure that the Donald Trump phenomenon never, *ever* happens again?

There's something uncomfortably fundamental about Trump's appeal. The instant gratification that laces his every sentence; the wife and career that fulfil the fleeting fantasies of every insecure teenager; and most of all the extreme simplicity of his language and ideas. Like the Freudian id, Trump speaks to the part of all of us that never grew up - that revels in the arbitrary morality of childish squabbling. A study by [yourdictionary.com](#) of Trump's speeches revealed the 20 words that he uses most - *win, stupid, huge, smart, loser, tough, moron*. No adult speaks like that: it's playground language for playground politics, that we all subliminally understand simply by virtue of having been children. However much we try to deny it, there's a Trumpite somewhere within us all.

But from the burning wreckage of this election cycle, there still emerges an ember of political takeaway. In a BBC special report Gabriel Gatehouse talks to Trump voters in Youngstown, Ohio – a rust-belt state in which the average annual income has dropped by \$10 000 since the turn of the millennium. “We need to stop the bleeding here” says Chad Witherstein, “we’ve lost enough and we can’t stand to lose anymore. The Democrats don’t represent us, the Republicans don’t faithfully represent us, and now we have a man who’s standing on the outside of that”. When Kerry Pascal lost her job as a medical technician she and her husband started a real estate firm, which went bankrupt in the 2008 crash. “All we’ve had is same old same old,” she says, “and I don’t see how it could get any worse”. A local hairdresser agrees: “it would be great to have a different view, even if it’s just for four years...just to see what he could do differently”. All across Youngstown the message is the same: when you can’t find a job but must work two to prosper, you’re willing to take substantial risks. Trump voters have never sounded so reasonable. Internationalist narratives of progressive politics talk constantly of ‘humanising the other’ – usually referring to ethnic or sexual minorities – apparently without realising that, in many ways, Trump voters are the ‘other’ on their own front door step.

So unless Clinton tackles with genuine conviction the urban decay and alienation that has led perfectly normal, rational people to vote for Trump, Pepe the Frog and his band of alt-right internet trolls will continue to make dangerous inroads into the traditionally Democrat blue collar vote.

Sadly for American politics, I’m not sure that she will.



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