

Hillary Clinton Tried to Throw the DNC Under the Bus

Who hasn't former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton blamed for her presidential election loss last November?

Her latest scapegoat, the Democratic National Committee—at least its staffers and former campaign employees—aren't taking her throwing them under the bus lightly. Speaking at Recode's Codecon event on Wednesday, she suggested the party was overly inept, fiscally bankrupt and behind the curve in its data operations.

"I set up my campaign, and we have our own data operation," she said. "I get the nomination. So I'm now the nominee of the Democratic Party. I inherit nothing from the Democratic Party."

Asked to elaborate, she added:

"I mean it was bankrupt, it was on the verge of insolvency, its data was mediocre to poor, nonexistent, wrong. I had to inject money into it."

The DNC's former data director was not happy one bit about that last comment. Andrew Therriault, responding to his colleagues on Twitter, used a double expletive that described his reaction before adding:

"I hope you understand the good you did despite that nonsense. We will respond in due time, but for now, just realize your work was worth way more than you're being given credit for ... this is too important. I'm not willing to let my people be thrown under the bus without a fight."

This isn't the first time Therriault has lashed out at his party's former candidate. In February, he wrote for the Medium

blog—in a post titled “We Shouldn’t Blame Data for Bad Campaign Messaging”:

In early 2014, the Democratic National Committee began building a new data science team at party headquarters, and I had the privilege of leading that team. Its creation was part of Project Ivy, the DNC’s plan to leverage data and infrastructure built by the Obama campaign to support down-ballot candidates and prepare for the 2016 presidential race. Our team had many accomplishments during the years that followed, but we were never given the chance to fulfill our most ambitious goal: making data a key part of the Democratic Party’s strategic planning.

I say this not to air old grievances or poke at wounds that have barely begun to heal. My team and I kept a low public profile and labored behind the scenes, and these days I prefer to look forward rather than back. But it is hard to stay quiet when a string of news articles and opinion pieces in recent months have blamed the use of data for our losses in 2016. So for the sake of preserving the very real progress we have achieved, I want to offer a response to these accusations.

The common premise of these arguments is that Democrats lost because we chose to rely on data instead of developing a messaging strategy that would appeal to voters. But this claim fundamentally misinterprets the role of data: data is a tool for campaigns, not a strategy. Absolutely nothing about a data-driven campaign precludes the development of a winning message, and it would be absurd to try to run a campaign without one!

As long as Clinton continues to blame everyone except for herself for her campaign’s failures, and as long as everyone else in the Democratic Party continues pointing the fingers of blame everywhere else, it’s likely the internal warfare will continue for some time. {eo}