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## **Rheta Grimsley Johnson: When the truth doesn't matter**

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Rheta Grimsley Johnson -

The Emperor With No Clothes is lumbering at his full speed toward the highest office in the free world, pulling behind him to help guard the hens the largest collection of miscreants, misogynists and thieves since Alcatraz closed shop.

And all along the route, fools with their baseball caps on backward are cheering the swaggering parade, shouting hallelujahs and playing the occasional game of kick-the-can with liberty, justice and the messenger.

At a friend's birthday party recently, two well-meaning acquaintances who still read newspapers asked why I haven't been writing about politics. I've been thinking about the honest question since.

I am not writing about politics because there is nothing left to say. Not for me, anyhow. The voters -- or nearly half of them -- have spoken. At least they have brayed a response to a torturously long call for intolerance, injustice and insanity.

The news these days depresses me to the point that I can't follow it. For the first time in my adult life, I am not interested in current events. Not if it involves Jeff Sessions' face in high definition. Wake me when the nightmare's over.

Seven times more people in my home county voted for a crude, tweeting racist than for the other candidate, who was not perfect but at least did not base her campaign on hate. If I dwell on that, I'll go crazy. And, there's nowhere to move.

Many thinking people I know are hurting because they find it hard to believe that so many of their fellow Americans were harboring such grudges against minorities that they were carved like soft soap into a coalition of hate. A powerful coalition of hate that will rule our world.

The country is fundamentally changed.

The decent, world-saving country I was born into when Eisenhower was president and the middle class mattered is gone. The optimistic citizens who asked not what their country could do for them but what they could do for their country are beaten. The

humble leaders who left office and built houses for the homeless are woefully out of style. The prospect of another minority or woman president has vanished, at least in my lifetime.

This is a new day, and not a bright one. The officers on this sinking ship already are singing "Nearer My God To Thee."

My profession, which I've diligently pursued in some form or fashion for 40 years, is, for practical purposes, gone, too. Trump and his ilk see no need for a free press, what's left of it. They have no need for facts that cannot be made up and fed to the gullible. They are making real plans to rule without the ultimate check and balance of the truth.

I was not as surprised as some about the outcome of the election. I had a preview. The mail I get from The Other Side had turned vicious. I've always heard with regularity from those who disagree with my politics, but never before had it been written in crayon and covered with drool.

I no longer read my mail. Save your stamps and your bile. You have elected a man with effective ways to stop any opposing views. Sit back and enjoy the ride on greased rails.

As for me, I'm sticking my head in the shifting sand and trying to focus on other things.

When the truth doesn't matter, little else does.