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[00:00:00] **Nate Hagens:** Good morning. So, somebody won. I did a Frankly four years ago called something like Seven Realities No Matter Who Wins, and I did one two years ago, Somebody's Gonna Win. Longtime viewers here know that I hold a transpartisan view, both on this channel and in my own life. If I sort people, I usually do it by whether they're generally aware of what's really happening to our world under the headlines, whether they care about that, whether they use a wide boundary lens, and whether they express via nuance or certainty or fanaticism.

[00:00:45] And none of those four filters line up with any particular political party. Okay, so this is Wednesday morning, November fourth. Yesterday, the Democrats won, and they won big. I expected them to win, but not like this, and my wide boundary relief that I'm feeling isn't about who won; it's about the margin.

[00:01:11] And the count was clear, and the outcome wasn't close. And if it had come down to a few thousand votes or a hanging chad in two states or such, we would probably be in for months of nastiness and more distrust in the system and each other, on top of what already exists. That risk is much smaller this morning, and in that case, it probably would've been nearly the same if the other party had won by this margin.

[00:01:41] So my relief there is about the count and the clarity, whoever it favored. So, a few random morning-after comments. First, what didn't change? The carbon pulse is where it was last week. The planetary boundaries are where they were. The Superorganism's metabolism didn't read or care about the election returns.

[00:02:10] You all know this. When I did the Frankly in twenty twenty-two, I opened with the national debt having just crossed thirty-one trillion dollars, and it's approaching forty-one trillion now. And that was both parties taking turns in the chair, two midterms, and almost ten trillion of new monetary claims on biophysical reality: claims on future energy, materials, and ultimately ecosystem impact.

[00:02:40] Gridlock is the Superorganism's cruise control setting, and biophysically, the cruise control is set at a pretty fast pace. I said two years ago that both parties are in thrall to the global economic Superorganism, and I would still say that, with the same caveat I added then, too: that one of them still can't discuss climate change and planetary boundaries at all.

[00:03:08] So on the things this channel is about, the ecology, the energy, the monetary disconnect, Tuesday's results change very little, other than, I think, a window has widened and opened up for deeper, maybe harder-hitting conversations on what we do as a culture and a species on these topics.

[00:03:38] Second, the backdrop to all of this is that there are multiple wars that the United States is involved in, and six in ten voters told the exit pollsters that starting the war was the wrong decision. So you could call this an anti-war vote, which I'm quite happy about. What I can't see is the actual mechanism for retreat, either in the Middle East or in Ukraine.

[00:04:07] If the US pulls back from Hormuz and the Gulf, that would be good, but the security umbrella that oil and liquefied natural gas flows have sat under for decades will get shakier, with all that implies for our currency's energy and material future, whichever political party is in charge. And I fear if the attention and the arms shift back towards Europe and Russia... Remember that Europe is heading into winter paying roughly ten times what we pay for natural gas.

[00:04:45] And I worry that the Ukraine alliance versus Russia is going to potentially escalate. Neither of those is a political party question. Third, the vote itself in many ways was a biophysical signal, and a bipartisan one at that. Again, the early exit polls had the economy as the top issue, and voters were more than twice as likely to say that their personal finances are now worse.

[00:05:23] A few weeks ago, I had the seven rungs of the ladder episode, and in there I said, "Any politician who presides over rising energy prices loses, full stop." Two years ago, it took out one party. Yesterday, it took out the other one. And if you look at what the affordability complaint was comprised of this time, household electricity prices are up significantly since twenty twenty-four, faster than inflation.

[00:05:53] Fastest in Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. And the thing, rightly or wrongly, probably more rightly than wrongly, that voters blamed that on was data centers. Nine states elected their utility regulators on Tuesday. And for an energy-blind culture, I don't think a kilowatt-hour has ever been on a national ballot before.

[00:06:18] So, bad news, but good news in the energy awareness category. The energy story is coming to light. When incumbents of both parties lose on affordability in back-to-back elections, I have to think the problem is upstream of either party. And looking back using the lens of the carbon pulse, it also tells us something about 2008.

[00:06:48] The party that won then on affordability now presides over the same shrinking cultural surplus. And if I'm right about the carbon pulse, they're gonna get the same treatment in the good news, bad news category. 'Cause the societal surplus that allowed US, and arguably global, politicians to deliver cheap things to their voters, cheap food and cheap gas and cheap credit, is shrinking, and people are feeling that viscerally in their pocketbooks and probably in their guts.

[00:07:27] So I think the voters, maybe subconsciously, are viewing and feeling a signal that the political system can't read yet. And that signal is what next week's Frankly is about: the changing rules for our culture on the downslope of the carbon pulse. Lastly, and I mentioned this briefly, and I think it's the reason that I feel a bit lighter and more optimistic this morning: this election wasn't close.

[00:08:04] Over fifty million people voted early. The votes got counted. Nobody has a plausible reason to say they weren't. And in January, the power in our nation moves as it should. And sure, there are probably gonna be a few instances of recounts and lawsuits over a few thousand ballots, but the vitriol that has seeped into our national consciousness after every election the last few years feels diminished this time.

[00:08:38] And I didn't know how much that fear of that anxiety in our national discourse in coming months was weighing on me, and how much relief my body felt this morning. Our trust in government on both sides is already pretty low, and a close count across the board would have given another haircut to whatever trust we have.

[00:09:00] I'm sure it's more complicated than that, but in the weeks ahead of yesterday, I know a lot of people on both sides that were preparing for trench warfare in the courts and such, and the blue tsunami removed that risk, I think and hope. So, just some brief, random musings the morning after this, to me, surprising election.

[00:09:26] The real work I talked about a few weeks ago, bending instead of breaking, avoiding a nuclear war, protecting what's left of the biosphere, and some new cultural sense of the sacred, that is all the same work this morning as it was a week ago. But I have to say that a government and an electorate and a civil society that can still respond to a signal is a much steadier place to do all that work from than one that can't.

[00:09:58] And that is true whichever party is doing the responding, so I'll take it. I will close with a gentle reminder that whoever you disagreed with at the voting booth yesterday will still be your neighbor during the Great Simplification, and I would bet you already agree with them on some deep truths about our world and the future, even during and through this week's festivities or grief.

[00:10:30] I guess what I'm mostly feeling is a reprieve from near-term chaos and kind of a shot in the arm to earnestly continue this difficult work and build this community in my country and around the world. Next week, I think I will do the one about upslope rules and downslope rules of the carbon pulse, which is really about why both parties keep losing on the same issues.

[00:10:59] Talk to you next week. Have a good weekend.