

A little over two months ago, Former Governor Zairn resigned their position of Chair of the Democratic Party. 30 days later, they resigned their position as Governor of Sierra and faded from the public spotlight, only popping back in to deliver statements on the Democratic Party DNC elections via surrogates. Beyond that, they have retreated to private life, turning from one of the most successful Democratic Governors of Sierra to, well, no one. Gone. Vanished.

Through extensive effort, I managed to track them down in a secluded cabin in Colorado, the exact location of which will be unavailable. When they answered the door, I could tell that they seemed much happier than when they had been Governor and Chair, through my interactions with them at the Democratic Headquarters. Walking into the cabin, it seemed that it was a tech developer's paradise in the middle of nowhere. Servers, computers, monitors, digital art stations, and paper books galore.

Walking through the tech jungle, I asked them what this was all for. The response? "I've gone back to creating games. Before I started in the Dems, I created content online for people to enjoy. I stopped while I was heavily involved, but with my free time, I've gone back to my passion projects. I mainly create systems, lore, and stories; I've recently learned how to create models as well, which should help make my content feel livelier. The next step is proper coding, which I'm dreading. I've also been helping my friends with their own projects whenever I can, moderating communities, creating rules of procedure, editing their written work, teaching them how to make systems and use basic online tools, like spreadsheets for simulating procedures for their games in lieu of coding. I've also been writing more. Essays on whatever's on my mind, usually philosophical concepts and applications to politics. Nothing good—I don't have much of a command of philosophical theory—but I find it fun to puzzle out what I think is right and wrong." They pulled up some games that they had made for me, and from the looks of it, they were all in the early stages of development. But, they look to be good.

We sat down in their living room for the formal interview, which was surprisingly clean (the question is, where does all the trash go?). I asked about the first thing on everyone's mind - their opinion on the current DNC. "I recall a conversation the DNC had one time about the RNC approval polls that their Whip runs. The consensus was that approval polls created and ran by party leadership are just propaganda to prop up the administration. Leaven was a part of that conversation, so I find it funny that he's implemented polls. Did I think the party would have fallen apart? No, the Dems are too big to fail. My opinion prior to Leaven's election, which is still my opinion, is that he's just unfit for the chairpersonship. I think Ninjja was the better choice for chair." So, it seemed that they hadn't changed their opinion. They continued: "He's given me no reason to change my opinion. From what I've heard from people in the Dems still, Leaven hasn't done much personally. He didn't do much as Deputy Chair, either. I also heard he had initially rejected Jarl when he applied to join the Dems. That disappointed me, after the BMP merger I negotiated. That kind of selectiveness has screwed the Dems over before—I had argued for admitting PGF before he joined the Socialists, when Zero was chair. That was rejected by the DNC because they considered him annoying. And the Socialists got an active Atlantic politician, where the Dems had been lacking since the party's cleavage. I believe Chris was eventually admitted, but even being on that course again is just foolish."

During their time as Chair, it is generally agreed that they made a lot of controversial decisions and put into place a lot of controversial programs. But, it seems, they regret nothing: "I

regret nothing, no. You can disagree with some of the actions I took, but the only one that I've second guessed was withholding the primary results. At the end of the day, I don't regret what I did there, because everybody involved knew the actual results. Everybody relevant knew what was going on and why. Everything else—everything in Leaven's and Hurricane's letters, for instance—all showed one very specific and curated side of the respective stories. I really don't think anything that appeared anywhere in there was represented fully and honestly, and knowing every facet of what I did, no, I don't really regret those actions."

They sat for a minute, thought and then continued: "To expand a bit on the misrepresentation, Hurricane had said I didn't tell the DNC what I was going for in the Socialist negotiations. That wasn't true, I had given a document to the DNC chat that had everything I wanted to get, and I expanded on every reason for those positions in that same chat. Leaven presented chair canvassing as some sin, but conveniently forgot to say he did the same thing, which several people close to Leaven during both chair elections had told me. SHOCK also did the same, but on a bigger scale, I believe, keeping a more detailed list. Mika as well. I had heard that during the election between Brain, Leaven, and Ninja, Hurricane had grabbed people from other places to vote for Leaven.

And all of that is okay. It's politics. Canvassing is a part of politics. Selling yourself and your qualities, that's a part of politics. If you don't encourage people to commit to an action and actually do stuff, then you're not gonna be a good leader. Otherwise you just get inactivity. I believe Leaven also mentioned the bit where I had planned to postpone DNC elections to pass the constitution. Completely true. He presented it as a bid to hold power forever. Not true, I specifically shortened the term of the chair in the constitution to four months. The constitution was completed pretty soon after the election, and presented to the DNC after the next general elections. Leaven essentially blocked it at that point, because it had combined two teams that were inactive, and had been for ages.

And because I know how I handled negotiations was a point of contention, half the DNC—Hurricane and Leaven, with Card fluctuating—believed that only Ninja cared about getting Chesapeake Governor. They had wanted to ratify a deal that gave the Socialists both Governor and Speaker in Chesapeake. We had just absorbed the BMP. Every BMP member was lobbying hard against giving up that ground. Some original Dems as well. And BNG and I thought it was stupid. We didn't think anything short of CH Governor for the Dems—not a monopoly on the position, but at least a run—would pass. And it didn't, so I guess I was right. What really took long there was that half the DNC didn't see that. So no, I don't regret canvassing. I don't regret my initial plan to pass the constitution, would've been a godsend if that had actually happened. I don't regret not giving the Socialists Speaker and Governor and taking their initial proposal because look how a better deal turned out."

Goodness, that's a lot of accusations. It seems, from their perspective, that he believes that they believe that a lot of people had wronged them. But, he doesn't expect an apology from any of them: "Well, I love BNG and he was amazing throughout my entire administration, and I really don't blame Hurricane for the mistakes I feel (because I'm sure he disagrees that he made any mistakes) he made, he was busy and likely didn't see the doc and the explanation. Leaven isn't very self aware, so I don't expect an apology from him. I mean, he was mocking the Republicans for whipping a VONC and has shown no remorse for trying to coerce the Dems to

get rid of Dobs himself. But if he ever wanted to talk, to find some sort of channel and have a dialogue or something, he can find a way to reach me. It doesn't have to be an apology."

Let's move away from the DNC for a minute. Their proudest moment was "Winning the Sierra Governorship. Coming back from that margin because of strategy, rather than just pre-election spam, really represented what I believe politics is, and what this community should be. More thought put into movements, rather than going through the motions."

The next question I asked brought a sort of sadness to Zairn. I asked, "A lot of people are wondering if you will ever try to make a return to the Democratic Party and politics. Will you?" They responded, "No. Way too toxic. I haven't opened up about this in public, but I left because of a mental health scare. That's why I was gone for the first few days of the election. I gave forty plus people seven months of my life, and I got Hell the last two from people. From Leaven's conduct in DNC meetings before he resigned, to the general toxicity of every party. The Dems, GOP, and Socialists. A not-insignificant portion of the Republican Party was trying to repeal the Civil Rights Act. The Socialists, despite agreeing with a more socialist economy, are too young and naive for me. The Dems have a superiority complex. No party is for me, and they're all pretty bad in their own ways, though they do have some shining spots. Like, Ibney is a great guy. Chloe, though I disliked her conduct as Governor and party leader, was amiable. Mika's lovely. SHOCK, as much as I disagree with him on the last take he had that I saw of him, is a fun guy to be around. BNG is, of course, amazing. PresentSale could be surprisingly wholesome, despite his earlier toxicity. APG is insanely intelligent. But the bad everywhere far outweighs the good for me."

As anyone who listens to the The Democratic Model podcast knows, I always like to ask my interviewees for a piece of advice. This time although, I asked for advice specific for the DNC. Here's what Zairn said: "For God's sake, the DNC is not a parliamentary republic. The chair does not wield power through the confidence of the DNC, they have power from the people. The Deputy Chairs get their power from the people, not from the Chair. If something happens that you feel is wrong or that you disagree with, speak out. To the others, know that disagreement is a natural part of life. Working through disagreement breeds better cohesion than showing fake unity. Add another Deputy Chair. Somebody needs to break ties, or you'll have another 2v2 situation. Oh, and don't vomit on the Quad because you're upset you're losing."

After that, it was around 12:30, and I needed to get to lunch. Zairn did invite me to stay for lunch, but I had to go consult with The New Deal and Fox News about a poll. Zairn understood, and sent me on my way. It seems that Zairn was happy to have some company, after being alone for so long, but was also happy to have me out. I suppose, if you have had to deal with a DNC which constantly fought, made backdoor deals, and went against each other in almost everything, you would want to be along for a while as well.

On an editorial note, The Democratic Model won't be taking a position on that situation. It's generally agreed that it was a nasty situation, and that there were a lot of nasty things said by both sides, but as to who was right...that remains in dispute because the DNC won't release meetings transcripts (M: chat logs). Until that happens, the only people who know what happened are those who were inside the room at the time.