

The Guardian

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[The Observer](#)[Kristen Stewart](#)

Kristen Stewart's gay ghost hunt is the spookiest of Pride tie-ins

[Rebecca Nicholson](#)



Actress promises a paranormal romp in a queer space, whatever that might mean



Kristen Stewart: queer eye for the spirit world? Photograph: REX/Shutterstock

Sat 11 Jun 2022 12.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 14.54 EDT

Happy [Pride month](#) to all who observe it, particularly the massive construction corporation building several housing estates at the end of my road, which has proudly displayed the rainbow flag outside its showroom and from which I assume LGBTQ+ applications for mortgages will be fast-tracked and discounted. Thanks, guys!

This is the month of rainbow packaging on your favourite products, gay-friendly for June only, though it should let us know whether the NHS gets to keep the rainbow as a thank you for all of its hard work during Covid, or whether the rainbow will return to its rightful place on a lettuce, guacamole, bacon and tomato sandwich. The [first brick](#) was thrown at Stonewall so that guacamole could stand for “gay”.

This year, the drip-feed of Pride-adjacent news has been less crudely commercial than usual, or less “hi, gay!”, to quote comedian Meg Stalter, whose videos are in danger of becoming an annual balm (please watch Stalter’s first “[Corporations this month](#)” video and [this year’s sequel](#), both of which made me cry with laughter), than Rebel Wilson announcing that she is

dating a woman. “I thought I was searching for a Disney Prince... but maybe what I really needed all this time was a Disney Princess,” [she wrote](#) on Instagram.

Joe Lycett will host a [Big Pride Party](#) in Birmingham for Channel 4, to celebrate Pride’s 50th year. And in the only Pride merch tie-in I can enjoy, apart from that Royal Mint 50p, [Cher has collaborated](#) with Versace, releasing a £280 “Chersace” T-shirt in rainbow colours, with matching socks that cost £80.

But the ultimate has to be [Kristen Stewart’s](#) casting call for LGBTQ+ paranormal experts on Instagram last week. She has teamed up with the producers of *Queer Eye* to executive-produce a new ghost-hunting show, fulfilling a promise made in the *New Yorker* last year, when she talked of developing “a paranormal romp in a queer space”.

She posted a video/casting callout, looking for experts “who will lead the pack on this super gay ghost-hunting adventure”. Even though I don’t believe in mediums and spiritualists, I love the idea of a paranormal romp in a queer space, particularly if everyone is wearing Chersace T-shirts and socks. An A-list movie star pivoting to a format made famous by Derek Acorah and Yvette Fielding was not on my [Pride](#) checklist this year, but I will happily wave the flag for it.

Alison Bechdel: moving the goalposts was a wise decision



Alison Bechdel: a graphic rethink. Photograph: Oliver Parini/The Observer

The cartoonist Alison Bechdel, whose graphic novels are the kind of graphic novels that make people who do not read graphic novels take them seriously, found herself in the news, in an odd offshoot of an ill-considered tweet about a film streaming on Disney+.

It started with the kind of nightmare online scenario that brings me out in a cold sweat. An American writer and podcast producer tweeted that she thought *Fire Island*, a movie centred on two gay Asian men and based loosely on *Pride and Prejudice*, did not pass the Bechdel test. In fact, she awarded it an F- and criticised its “[drab lesbian stereotypes](#)”. Bechdel came up with [the test in 1985](#); it measures representation by running a film by three simple criteria: whether a movie has at least two women in it, who, two, talk to each other, about, three, something besides a man. Applied to a film about gay men, it has, perhaps, slightly less relevance in this case. The writer, clearly having not thought this through, posted a more thoughtful apology and deleted the tweet.

It grew beyond its original form, however, to become a bigger debate, as these moments often do, but in a lovely coda to this fire (island) storm, Bechdel [then amended](#) her own test. “Two men talking to each other about

the female protagonist of an Alice Munro story in a screenplay structured on a Jane Austen novel = pass,” she said.

I look forward to the extremely broad application of this note to all future films with the exact same premise.

Graham Norton: slipping into a warm bubble bath of words



Graham Norton: take comfort in books. Photograph: Carlo Paloni/REX/Shutterstock for BAFTA

I’m not a podcast aficionado – I claim to lack the time – although in the hope that I might become one some day, I have subscribed to several hundred of them.

At one stage, I thought I was definitely going to listen to a US podcast about permaculture that exceeds the two-hour mark each week and, ironically, ignoring the notifications for all of the podcasts I do not listen to probably takes as long as it would to just listen to an episode every now and then. But there is one that I listen to with true devotion and that is *The Graham Norton Book Club*, [the third series](#) of which began this last week.

It is on Audible, which means you do have to pay for it, and it's Amazon-affiliated, like almost everything else. But it is an audio bubble bath that doesn't take itself too seriously. Norton interviews authors and, as his long-running chatshow proves, he is unmatched at personable, personal chats. Big-name actors read bits from classic novels and, best of all, a panel of clubbers (book, not night) discusses that week's book club choice. All-time greats are panned as often as they are praised, usually within the same conversation. I love it.

Rebecca Nicholson is an Observer columnist

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The ObserverBrexit

The Observer view on Britain's dire economic outlook

Observer editorial

The true cost of Brexit is becoming painfully clearer by the day



The OECD has predicted that the UK economy will not grow at all next year. Photograph: Phil Noble/Reuters

Sun 12 Jun 2022 03.28 EDTFirst published on Sun 12 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

Britain's growth prospects are the gloomiest of all developed nations. The OECD predicted last week that the UK economy would not grow at all next year, the [worst outlook](#) for any OECD nation. This follows warnings in April from the IMF that the UK will experience the worst growth out of the G7 nations [in 2023](#). After a decade of stagnant wages, it seems Britons need to resign themselves to the fact that the buoyant growth of the 2000s is but a distant memory.

Every country has suffered the shock of the pandemic, followed by the spike in oil and wheat prices triggered by Russia's illegal war in Ukraine. But

other developed economies have proved more resilient, enjoying export-driven recoveries in the wake of Covid. Here in Britain, the economic malaise left exposed by the 2008 financial crisis is long term and structural.

This crisis was supposed to prompt a big economic rethink: a reckoning with Britain's addiction to growth fuelled by rising levels of consumer debt enabled by rising house prices. The then shadow chancellor George Osborne pledged to rebalance the economy away from debt-driven growth to more productive development, driven by business investment and exports, underpinned with an expansion of the UK's manufacturing base and a reduction in the huge regional inequalities between the south-east and the rest of the country.

No such thing materialised. Instead, the least affluent areas of the country were forced to bear the biggest burden of cuts to public services, undermining their potential to attract investment. Britain's sluggish recovery from the financial crisis – average GDP growth in the decade after 2008 was a full percentage point lower than it was in the run-up to the year – was propelled by consumer spending and resurgent house prices. Productivity growth dropped substantially, taking Britain from second in the G7 for productivity growth pre-financial crash, to the second slowest post crash. There remains a significant finance gap for fast-growing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a market failure the government has not adequately addressed.

The hard Brexit pursued by Boris Johnson has also undermined the fragile political settlement of the Good Friday agreement

And Brexit has pushed the British economy in precisely the opposite direction to what was needed after the financial crisis. The hard Brexit pursued by Boris Johnson – taking Britain out of the EU's economic and political institutions in an ill-thought-through attempt at a “clean break” – has undermined the fragile political settlement of the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland and deepened Britain's economic ailment.

Investment and exports are down as a result of Brexit. Now that similar countries are starting to recover from the pandemic, the scale of the damage is becoming more evident. Last week, a piece of [analysis](#) estimated that the economy is already 5% smaller than it would have been had the UK not left the single market and customs union. These impacts are not unexpected but there was simply not the slack in the lethargic British economy to absorb them. Even media publications that supported Brexit at the time are recognising that Brexit is costing British voters day in, day out, in the form of higher business costs, particularly for exporting SMEs, lower wages, and more poorly funded public services, a cost we can ill afford.

Brexit has also affected the price of [sterling](#); a decline in the value of the pound has increased the cost of imports even as British exports have fallen, contributing to the cost of living crisis. Economic forecasters predict the pound could drop further against the dollar and euro, particularly if UK-EU relations over the Northern Ireland protocol become [even more fractious](#).

This hopeless government, mired in incompetence and scandal, has no answers. There is no industrial strategy, no plan to boost growth outside London and the south-east, no alternative ideas for exporters in the wake of Brexit. Ministers have no idea what to do about the UK's dysfunctional housing market; last week, the prime minister said he would expand the right to buy for housing association tenants with an announcement so lacking in substance it would make the back of an envelope seem robust. Johnson seems determined to continue to pick fights with the EU over the Northern Ireland protocol in a way that will only prolong the economic pain and drive a further wedge between Britain and its largest export market. Rising inflation will not just force real wage cuts on many workers; it will also erode the true value of spending on public services, imposing further austerity on schools and hospitals.

The prime minister and chancellor cannot even agree on the fundamentals of what the government's approach should be, and a joint speech they were due to give this week has been [postponed](#). The OECD has [criticised](#) the chancellor for his fiscal policy, which, even with the multibillion-pound package of support he announced last month, is contractionary overall, just as the economy is in desperate need of a stimulus.

The Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood [was right to advocate](#) for Britain rejoining the EU's single market a week ago. Brexit ideologues can rail against this all they want. But as Britain looks set to rediscover its role as the sick man of Europe, a closer economic relationship with the EU is starting to feel like an inevitability, no matter how long it takes.

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[The Observer](#)[Saudi Arabia](#)

The Observer view on Saudi Arabia's 'rebel' golf tournament

[Observer editorial](#)

The brutal regime has got sportswashing down to a tee, and the west is more than willing to be its caddie



Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman at the Emirates Formula One Grand Prix in 2018. Photograph: Reuters

Sun 12 Jun 2022 01.30 EDT

Not everyone wants to watch a bunch of fading stars wearing tasteless checked trousers knock a little white object around a golf course. Strange, too, that Saudi Arabia is paying “rebel” players to do so in a [breakaway tournament](#), given its dislike of dissidents of every stripe. Yet in this arena, as in so many others, the public interest has not been considered. That’s par for the course for the anti-democratic regime of the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

First [reports](#) from last week's inaugural round of the Saudi-funded LIV golf tournament in Hertfordshire suggest there is a long way to go before it matches the thrills and huge audiences of the US Masters and the Open. But modest beginnings did not prevent the PGA Tour, organiser of the men's professional game in North America, banning 17 LIV competitors for daring to [take the Saudi shilling](#).

It would be gratifying to think such swift punishment was prompted by righteous outrage at yet another blatant sportswashing scheme by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund, chaired by Salman. Sadly, not. The PGA Tour appears motivated by a desire to protect its monopolistic position, existing deals with star players and lucrative TV and sponsorship rights. The "rebels", some nearing the end of their careers, appear motivated by money while claiming to uphold the principle of [free agency](#).

This storm in a golf cart is far from spent. The DP World Tour could also impose bans. Legal action may ensue. But that will not worry the Saudis, who offered a too-tempting \$4m (£3.2m) in prize money to the first [LIV Series](#) individual winner from a pot worth \$20m. The lure of hard cash, overriding competitive, political and ethical considerations, is what drives Salman's global soft power strategy – a strategy that is rapidly transforming, distorting, and weaponising international sport.

Treasure chests of Saudi petrodollars are now invested in Formula One motor racing, horse racing, boxing and wrestling. Earlier this year, the \$600bn wealth fund invested over \$1.5bn in the booming global [gaming and eSports industry](#). Most notoriously, its purchase of [Newcastle United](#), an English Premier League club, gave the regime a foothold in the world of football to potentially rival that of its Gulf neighbours, the UAE and Qatar.

The Saudi soft power strategy aims for enhanced international status, investment and influence against the backdrop of Salman's "Vision 2030" national modernisation plan. Sportswashing, a key element, is about glossing over and diverting attention from the regime's ongoing human rights abuses, mistreatment of women, intolerance of political dissent and brutal penal system. In March, 81 people, many from the much-persecuted Shia Muslim minority, died in a [mass execution](#).

In a week when the UK price of a tankful of unleaded petrol rose above £100, it is galling that western democracies are helping to fund sportswashing – and a gradual takeover of their sporting heritage. The kingdom's [income from oil exports](#) rose to \$1bn a day in March. Galling, too, that this vast trade facilitates other objectionable Saudi policies, such as its Yemen intervention, while fundamentally undermining efforts to cut global carbon emissions.

After the Saudi journalist and regime critic, Jamal Khashoggi, was murdered in 2018, Joe Biden declared Saudi Arabia a pariah state and refused to meet Salman. Now the US president is considering a [visit to Riyadh](#) next month, partly to lobby for cheaper oil – a humiliating prospect. The west's relationship with Saudi Arabia is deeply unhealthy and has been for years. As Riyadh's influence grows, so too will the problems.

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Observer comment cartoon

Boris Johnson

Boris Johnson moves on after the confidence vote – cartoon

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[The ObserverUK news](#)

How encouraging it would be if Nadine Dorries, the culture secretary, showed some interest in the arts

Alex Clark

Literary festivals and live performances are thriving after a tough period, but don't expect the government to notice



Nadine Dorries, the culture secretary, leaves Downing Street after attending the weekly cabinet meeting, on 7 June. Photograph: Wiktor Szymanowicz/REX/Shutterstock

Sat 11 Jun 2022 10.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 14.55 EDT

Rising to the bait is rarely advisable, but sometimes one is tired and fractious and, like a child, very eager to be centred in the discourse. Thus it was that, sitting at the ferry port waiting for the night crossing home to Ireland after a week interviewing writers and performers at literary festivals in the UK, I [tweeted](#) irritably about Nadine Dorries.

Do I give a stuff whether she believes people were booing at Boris or, in her version, expressing their utter delight and gratitude at his presence? I do not. But, it struck me, I'd really like it if the culture secretary tweeted about culture, not its invented wars, and acknowledged that the arts were in evidence up and down the land. That my message seemed to find favour in my little echo chamber was nice but, perhaps, a somewhat pyrrhic victory.

I had just driven from Hay-on-Wye, where thousands of people had come to hear hundreds of writers during the festival. More to the point, another army of people, many of them volunteers, were making it all happen: locals putting performers up in their spare bedrooms, donning hi-vis jackets to staff makeshift car parks, fetching coffee and sandwiches.

Marquees were packed. Book-signing queues stretched for miles. But this is not just fan mail for Hay so they'll invite me back, because this happens all the time, everywhere – even now, when organisers are recovering from two years without live audiences and all the expensive and ingenious efforts they've had to make to offer digital alternatives. How encouraging it would be if there was even a touch of public recognition from the government. Isn't it the least that one should expect?

The joy of Jay



Jay Blades of BBC1's *The Repair Shop*. Photograph: Ken McKay/ITV/Rex/Shutterstock

One of my interviewees was *The Repair Shop*'s [Jay Blades](#), whose memoir *Making It* might also be useful reading for those who have, this week, been pontificating about how we quantify and characterise success for those from working-class backgrounds. My main takeaway from Blades's story: it can take years to work out how to live your life, even longer to make it happen, and attempting to impose a linear narrative on it is futile and self-defeating. All we should ask is that society, its structures and its agencies, do not confound each citizen's right to find a way forward. Once again, isn't that the least one should expect?

But Blades gave me something rather more personal. I mentioned to him that my 87-year-old mother-in-law was a huge fan and that – sorry, writers – her ears had really pricked up when I said I was going to meet him. Immediately, he commandeered my phone and made an utterly delightful video message for her, which, naturally, I forwarded straight on.

Finally! My family thinks I have an actual job.

Costa bows out



Poet Hannah Lowe, winner of the 2021 Costa book awards. Photograph: David M Benett/Dave Benett/Getty Images

In less of a Pollyanna vein, there are to be [no more Costa book awards](#). The prizes, in which five category winners ultimately go head to head, have been running for 50 years, sponsored first by Whitbread and then by Costa.

A strong selling point was their ability to blend widespread appeal with bringing less well-known writers to the attention of the public – previous winners include Hilary Mantel, Philip Pullman and Kate Atkinson, but last year's winner was poet [Hannah Lowe](#), a boon not only for her, but for a genre not always associated with the spotlight. Running book awards is expensive, and one can assume the returns, in terms of corporate marketing, are tricky to measure; Costa are not the first to bow out, and they probably won't be the last. But it's to be hoped that someone else with deep pockets and an appreciation of the value books bring to our cultural life will emerge on a metaphorical horseback.

Alex Clark writes for the Observer and the Guardian

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The ObserverMonarchy

The royal kids are now part of the show. But is it healthy to make such a spectacle of them?

[Catherine Bennett](#)



The Cambridges' heir and the two spares certainly put in the hours for the jubilee



‘Prince Louis excelled at adorableness at the platinum jubilee.’ Photograph: Tim Rooke/REX/Shutterstock

Sun 12 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT

With the Queen absent and her immediate heirs scarcely a novelty, Britain’s child royals emerged as a precious asset over the jubilee – and were still generating loyal clicks and content days after being temporarily discharged from duty.

An earlier [warning](#) from William that his son would enjoy a “normal” upbringing has proved to be, if not exactly baseless, capable of delightfully media-friendly expression. Not only George, but all three apprentice royals, aged four, seven and eight, contributed extended service through the jubilee weekend, displayed in eye-catching outfits ranging from smart casual to – perfectly normally – a historic sailor suit.

The smallest Cambridge, Louis, modelled a garment understood to have been William’s and which prettily signalled this lightly updated family’s unequivocal commitment to dynastic continuity. Victoria and Albert once enjoyed dressing up her four-year-old heir, Bertie, in a [sailor suit](#), in which the future degenerate would be [painted by Franz Winterhalter](#). “Bertie put on

his sailor's dress," Victoria wrote, "when he appeared, the officers and sailors who were all assembled on deck to see him cheered, and seemed delighted."

His successors' jubilee appearances in carriages, on walkabouts, at home, on balconies and in the front row at mass events have supplied quantities of cherishable material, already the subject of expert analysis, in which they are seen yawning, waving flags, squabbling over sweets, baking with Mummy and even learning, on the walkabout, to quip. Charlotte, considered the best trained of the three, is said by a number of lipreading authorities to have corrected her older brother's posture, as well as comically admonishing the younger one. Bless, bless and bless.

Louis is agreed to have excelled at adorableness, confirming his parents' wisdom in showing off the constitutionally irrelevant ones

In most reviews, Louis is agreed to have excelled at adorableness, confirming his parents' wisdom in showing off, along with their doomed child, the two constitutionally irrelevant ones. "We all had an incredible time," the [Cambridges wrote](#), "especially Louis..." The dots refer to various episodes of face-pulling and restlessness that helpfully advanced the family's ritual claim to some sort of universal domestic appeal, along the lines established by Victoria. At the same time, the public could appreciate how beautifully this obstreperous new character – provided he does not change or quit – will complement, in future Windsor chronicles, those of "sensitive" George and "bossy" Charlotte. There was even some useful little prince-related controversy, with a Louis-is-a-brat contingent generating still more extravagant claims for the child's charm and potential. For the celebrity nanny, Jo Frost: "[What we saw](#) was an insight into Louis' personality and quirky temperament which was a delight to see."

If such illustrated conjecture does not breach Ipso press standards on children's privacy or, indeed, article 16 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it can only be because, when it suits, the Cambridges choose to rise above it.

The Ipso [guidance](#) - “Journalists can print photos of children which don’t show anything that might affect a child’s welfare” – might rule out media analysis of a civilian eight-year-old’s facial expressions or character but as something of a [specialist in early childhood](#), the Duchess of Cambridge is presumably confident that her minors will survive this exposure, and without the resentment that surfaced early in the Prince of Wales. On the eve of his investiture, aged 20, [he told the BBC](#) about coming to feel “stuck”: “It’s something that dawns on you with the most ghastly, inexorable sense. I didn’t suddenly wake up in my pram one day and say ‘Yippee’, you know.”

Maybe it’s a further guarantee of the Cambridge children’s retrospective endorsement of parental ambition that they have witnessed, thanks to Uncle Harry’s jubilee visit, what lies in store for apostate spares, even in exemplary families: outcast seating and fraternal non-speaks. “It’s a mix between *The Truman Show* and living in a zoo,” he [said last year](#), when asked about his upbringing. “The biggest issue for me was that being born into it you inherit the risk, you inherit every element of it without choice.” The meagre supply of images of his and Meghan’s children is, while entirely consistent, still widely resented.

As with next-generation Beckhams and Kardashians, the children could enjoy lifelong rewards for doing little more than get dressed and look at the camera

To be fair to the Cambridges, the family’s contrasting showcasing of its young talent probably strikes many fellow professionals in entertainment or influencing as incredibly restrained. True, the young Cambridges probably haven’t been consulted on the ethics of exhibiting small children to symbolise an endangered monarchy’s stake in the future. But, as with next-generation Beckhams and Kardashians, the children could also enjoy lifelong rewards for doing little more than get dressed and look at the camera.

In fact, with the Commons’ Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee now [proposing](#) that child social media influencers be registered and protected as “working children”, the Cambridges’ venture into semi-

professional (given only that the working adults are paid directly) partnership with their children could hardly be better timed.

Child influencers, the [committee reported](#), may, although “the primary income streams for their families”, be unprotected by existing UK child performance regulations. “At present, there are very few ways to regulate how children are participating in the influencer community, and the impact this may have on them, including on their consent and privacy.”

Meanwhile, the reformist influencer Sarah Adams (“Mom Uncharted”) is among those now discouraging parents from posting images of their children. “All the choices I got to make for myself, everything I put out there – I chose that. I made those decisions,” [she told BuzzFeed](#). “And I would like my kids to have that same sense of autonomy and not see a whole footprint following them around that they didn’t really have any say in.”

Which is all very persuasive. Of course children should be protected from exploitation by their own parents, whether it’s via tasteful proofs of domestic bliss or videos memorialising infant embarrassment or hilarious cuteness. But have any of these campaigners even considered what this sort of regulation could do to the British monarchy?

Catherine Bennett is an Observer columnist

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[The Observer](#)[Help-to-buy scheme](#)

The ugly truth behind our rigged housing system – politicians live in fear of owners

[Sonia Sodha](#)



The latest help-to-buy scheme will do little but fuel the rising prices that ministers bank on



Houses in Dover. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

Sun 12 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT

So far this year, three of my friends have celebrated buying their first flats in their early 40s, after a decade of saving for a deposit out of the leftovers from extortionate rent, while watching house prices continue to rise.

Buying your first home was once something you did in your 20s but, compared with those 10 or 20 years younger than us, we're the lucky ones: buying a flat in London zone 3 is just about affordable for people who, while they may not have had parental help, have earned professional salaries in their 30s.

The British infatuation with home ownership has become a national cliche. But to disparage it as an obsession implies that it is a quaint cultural anachronism. In fact, worrying about getting on the housing ladder is one of the most economically rational things you can do. In a country where we don't build enough homes, and wealth tied up in housing is taxed at absurdly low levels, the home ownership club offers a number of exclusive benefits.

The monthly cost of the average mortgage is [cheaper than rent](#) for the equivalent home; private renters spend 36% of their income on housing, compared with 12% for [mortgage owners](#). Rising house prices mean that, by the time you've paid off your mortgage, not only will you have somewhere to live cost free, you will have an asset that has inflated significantly in value to pass on to children or grandchildren. And then there is the all-important security of not having to move home at short notice because your landlord decides to up the rent or kick you out.

Boris Johnson's [latest proposal to expand home ownership](#) by asking housing associations to sell off homes to their tenants at a discount, and allowing people to put benefit payments towards a mortgage, is just the latest in a long line of bad ideas that purport to expand these benefits to more people. Invariably, the help-to-buy schemes of the past 20 years have been about trying to help over the line a few people who are close to being able to buy, while making things worse for everyone else by further inflating prices or reducing the stock of social homes. In fact, one minister's estimate that the scheme could help [just a few thousand](#) is probably on the optimistic side: housing associations are independent bodies, which the government would have to bribe rather than force to sell off their stock, and people with modest levels of savings are disqualified from benefits, which begs the question of how many could afford a deposit.

The ugly truth at the heart of the housing crisis is that politicians have zero incentive to pursue policies that would truly make housing more affordable. Rising house prices straightforwardly redistribute from those who rent to those who own. Politically, homeowners have much more power than renters: even as the number of renters grows. Both parties fear the upset that falling house prices would generate among some far more than the delight they would prompt among others. Economically, Britain's model of growth is predicated on consumer spending fuelled by rising house prices: we simply do not have the healthier form of investment – and export-led growth that politicians have promised but failed to deliver.

The result is that prices have been left to rise out of control in recent decades, celebrated by a generation who have enjoyed the windfall and politicians who have welcomed the growth the increase has stoked, even as they claim to sympathise that far fewer millennials than baby boomers will

own homes by the time [they are 40](#). The private rented sector has expanded to take up the slack: one in five households live in privately rented homes, compared with just [one in 10](#) households 20 years ago. Renters in Britain get appalling value, paying some of the highest amounts [in Europe](#) for insecure tenancies, with a quarter of privately rented homes of substandard quality.

Young people without parental help to fall back on have been screwed royally by the dysfunctional housing market. More than a quarter of 21- to 34-year-olds live with their parents. Rents are, of course, highest in areas where the best jobs are to be found. If not being able to afford a rental deposit is bad for those in their 20s who can find a good job while continuing to live at home, it is an appalling block on social mobility for those it keeps in areas where there simply aren't the jobs to which they aspire.

But as the generation that can never hope to own a home grows older, other dysfunctions will become more prominent. We will see rising numbers of middle-income parents with children facing the same private-rental trap long faced by those on low incomes: imagine having to move your child to a different school because your tenancy has ended and you can't find somewhere else affordable to rent, then that happening again in a couple of years. What will happen to those who have rented all their working lives when they hit retirement and don't have the security of a generous pension or a paid-off mortgage?

The solutions are largely obvious but politically difficult. The government must invest in a huge programme of building homes for not-for-profit rent: the only period in living memory when we built enough in this country was 1950-1980, when the government invested in building around 100,000 homes a year; leaving it to the private sector has [never worked](#).

We need radical reforms to renting, to regulate rents, guarantee long-term tenancies and ensure landlords extract no more than a modest profit, and owning residential property for investment purposes should be taxed more punitively. These reforms would stabilise prices and reduce the windfall benefits of home ownership that are derived at the expense of private renters.

If that all sounds like a pipe dream, it might not be too long before demographic change starts to tip the balance of power more towards renters, as the group shut out of the club continues to grow. However, this leaves the big unanswered question: if not from the asset bubble that is our dysfunctional housing market, where will Britain's growth come from?

Sonia Sodha is an Observer columnist

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/12/ugly-truth-behind-rigged-housing-system-politicians-live-in-fear-of-owners>

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[The ObserverIslam](#)

Film bans are less about offence, more ‘community leaders’ showing who’s boss

[Kenan Malik](#)



Pulling The Lady of Heaven from cinemas is a win for self-appointed gatekeepers of Islam



The Lady of Heaven tells the story of Fatimah, the daughter of the prophet Muhammad, who is a revered yet disputed figure within Islam. Photograph: IMDB

Sun 12 Jun 2022 02.30 EDT

‘Birmingham will not tolerate the disrespect of our Prophet... You will have repercussions for your actions.’ So claimed a leader of a Muslim protest against the film *The Lady of Heaven*. There were similar protests in cities from Bradford to London. Fear of “repercussions” led the cinema chain Cineworld to withdraw the film from all its outlets; another chain, Showcase, soon followed.

But who determines that a film is “disrespectful”, and to whom? Who speaks for Muslims? The Muslims who made the film? Or those who feel offended by it?

Whenever there is a protest about a film or a book or a play deemed racist or disrespectful to a particular community, many, particularly on the left, take those claims at face value, especially if that community happens to be Muslim. They take at face value, too, that the protesters are in some sense speaking for “the community” or the faith. Yet what is often called “offence

to a community” is often a debate within those communities. And nowhere is this clearer than in the row over *The Lady of Heaven*.

Written by Shia cleric Sheikh Yasser al-Habib, *The Lady of Heaven* tells the story of Fatimah, the daughter of the prophet Muhammad. Fatimah is a revered yet disputed figure within [Islam](#). Both Sunnis and Shias regard her as an ideal of womanhood, but her death is a source of controversy. Sunnis believe that Fatimah died from heartbreak after the death of Muhammad. Shias hold her death attributable to the injuries she suffered during a raid on her house ordered by the first caliph, Abu Bakr. For Shias, Fatimah’s husband, Ali, was the rightful successor to Muhammad and they refused to recognise the authority of Abu Bakr.

Gatekeepers shield some beliefs from challenge. They protect not the marginalised but the powerful

The Lady of Heaven uses Fatimah’s death to make provocative claims about both early and contemporary Sunnis. Intertwined with the tale of a young child in contemporary Iraq, the film describes Fatimah as “the first victim of terrorism”, comparing Abu Bakr’s followers to Islamic State supporters today.

The question is not whether the film is historically accurate or whether it is offensive. It is a polemical take on a live debate within Islam that many Muslims (and not just Sunnis) find distasteful. The question rather is why the protesters’ view of Islamic history, and their sense of being offended, should be taken more seriously than the right of the film-makers to present their historical and theological views?

Debates about the giving of offence are rarely about offence. They are mostly about gatekeeping: that is, debates over who has the right to police communities and determine what can be said about a community and by a community. That is why so many disputes over “offence” involve minority writers or artists, from Salman Rushdie to [Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti](#), from [Hanif Kureishi](#) to [MF Husain](#).

Every society has its gatekeepers, whose role is to guard certain institutions, maintain the privileges of particular groups and shield some beliefs from challenge. They protect not the marginalised but the powerful. In minority communities, gatekeepers are usually self-appointed guardians who appropriate for themselves the authority to determine the boundaries of acceptable speech and conduct. They are not shy of claiming “blasphemy” or “hate speech” to censor ideas they find intolerable.

The Lady of Heaven has already had a five-week run in the US without protest. In Britain, however, the film was seen as an opportunity for certain leaders and organisations to flex their muscles. Much of the campaign for its banning has been organised by the Muslim news website 5Pillars, its editor Roshan Muhammed Salih describing the film as “shocking and disgusting” and as “[pure, unadulterated, sectarian filth](#)”.

Salih has long been a propagandist for both the Iranian regime (he was head of news for Press TV, Tehran’s English language broadcast service) and the Taliban. As the Taliban took control of Afghanistan last year after the American withdrawal, Salih tweeted, “Sooner Taliban win the better” because they “[will ensure more peace](#)”. He supports traditional hudud punishments which include the amputation of hands for theft, the public stoning to death of adulterers and the [execution of apostates](#). He describes Muslims who are “embarrassed about some of the harsh punishments” of sharia law as “[sell-outs](#)”. “How can you be embarrassed by Allah’s law?” he demands.

Salih supports hudud punishments which include the amputation of hands for theft and the execution of apostates

Salih should not be censored, odious though his views are, and offensive to many. They throw shade, though, on his claim that he opposes *The Lady of Heaven* because it is sectarian and he fears [disharmony within Muslim communities](#). Those protesting about the film outside cinemas have the right to make their views heard. What they do not have the right to do, however, is to prevent anyone else from expressing their views, or from challenging

their version of history and theology, or to ban a film they find offensive. There is no right not to be offended.

Figures such as Salih do not represent “the” Muslim community – there are many different Muslim perspectives, even on the most contentious issues. Nor should we unquestioningly indulge protesters who shout “racist” or “Islamophobic” or “hate speech” in an attempt to censor views they dislike; such critics are part of a debate and should be treated as such. To close down a film on the say-so of such protesters is to concede to the most conservative voices in that debate and to betray more progressive Muslims. The more that society gives licence for people to feel offended, the more people will seize the opportunity to be offended. And often in the [deadliest of ways](#).

The tenets of one religion are often offensive to believers of another, and to non-believers. There can be no freedom of religion without the freedom to give offence. It is the freedom that allows Salih to declare support for hudud punishments and sharia law and to laud the murderous theocrats of Tehran and the Taliban. It is also the freedom that allows *The Lady of Heaven* to be shown, for *The Satanic Verses* to be published, for teachers to discuss [Charlie Hebdo cartoons](#), for cartoonists to mock any religion.

Those of us without a stake in the debate over Fatimah’s death or the Sunni-Shia divide nevertheless have a stake in keeping debates as open as possible. Freedom is not just for gatekeepers.

Kenan Malik is an Observer columnist

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/12/self-appointed-gatekeepers-of-islam-no-right-not-to-be-offended>

[The ObserverPolice](#)

Letters: what happened to policing by consent?

Whether it's at football matches or protest marches, violence from those charged with keeping the peace is deliberate, not a blunder



Riot police watch Liverpool fans at the Champions League final in Paris.
Photograph: Manu Fernández/AP

Sun 12 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

There is much to learn about the practice of policing from the example of the French authorities' "management" of the Champions League final ("Uefa, the police, French ministers... all peddled gross lies. Only fans prevented disaster", Comment.) There is more to learn from watching *The Monopoly of Violence (Un pays qui se tient sage)*, an award-winning film by David Dufresne that makes extensive use of amateur footage taken during anti-government yellow vest protests highlighting the role of citizen journalists in documenting events while inviting us to reflect on policing in modern democracies.

The rise of the yellow vest movement and the regular protests was a turning point, says Dufresne, when “suddenly we realised that police violence was systemic”, not just “a series of unfortunate blunders”. Add to this the image of a young woman forced to the ground by Metropolitan police officers, on her stomach, hands pinned behind her back, a policeman’s boot inches from her face – arrested for participating in a peaceful vigil for a young woman murdered by a Met officer. So we know we are not being policed by consent, not in France or the UK.

Judy Seymour

London NE2

Ronan Evain [rightly says](#) that “the events that unfolded in the hours before the game and late into Saturday night in the surroundings of the Stade de France originate in the twisted relationship that France as a country has with football fans”, (Sport). However, the chaos came less than a year after the more terrifying outbreak of anarchy at last season’s Wembley Euro 2020 final. I’m a huge football fan but would think twice before going to a major final; I certainly would be wary of bringing children. How much longer can Uefa hope to convince the public that these expensive finals are even well-organised and safe enough for ordinary adult fans to attend, never mind bring their families?

Joe McCarthy

Dublin

Stop appeasing Putin

Simon Tisdall’s analysis of the west’s response to Russia hits the nail on the head (“[Timid Biden condemns Ukrainians to an agonising war without end](#)”, Foreign affairs commentary). If Putin is not driven out of Ukraine entirely then it will give the signal to aspiring tyrants around the world that they can act with impunity. We know the consequences of appeasement in the 1930s. Have we learned nothing?

Chris Waller

Bristol

I’m rich. But am I deserving?

I've just read the article on wealth and guilt ('[Would you give away your fortune](#)', Magazine). I empathised with the "Stephen" who is quoted. I too am a millennial who grew up with considerable inherited wealth, and spent years wracked with guilt and self-loathing over the fact that I hadn't done anything to "deserve" it. It took me far too long to accept that having unearned money didn't make me evil. Even so, I didn't feel a sense of self-esteem until after university, when I got my first job and earned my first pay cheque. I've never needed to work, but long felt my life lacked worth or meaning without it.

The real problem is not just economic inequality but with a system that tells people their moral worth is linked to the work they do and the money they earn; when in reality the distribution of most of the world's money is entirely random and arbitrary. Nobody, whether rich or poor, "deserves" their position in life; we all just got lucky or unlucky. Once we've accepted that about the world, we can start trying to change it.

Name and address supplied

Substance before style

Defining a problem, and Will Hutton and Hillary Clinton between them do that well, is only the first step towards finding a solution ("[Hillary Clinton is right: the age of the showman leader has damaged politics](#)", Comment). "Performative politics" has always been with us. That we want to be entertained while also being well governed is nothing new. What has changed, as Clinton points out, is the degree of our vulnerability to manipulation.

We have to come to terms with the fact that entertainment and effective government do not make good bedfellows. We need to remind ourselves that our past indulgences with "entertaining" politicians have usually ended badly. Of course we want our leaders to display charisma, but we should ask ourselves whether there is substance behind the facade. We could do no better than to start the process by giving Sir Keir Starmer a chance.

Roderick Reynolds

Livernon, France

Diacritical difficulties

Turkey's name change to Türkiye ([Editorial](#)) is surely destined to go the same way as the Czech Republic's to Czechia. One does not need to be a professional translator like myself to know that every language has its own names for geographical entities: Londres, anyone? In the case of Türkiye, the diacritic on the "u" is likely to prove a particular obstacle to getting it right in a language such as English in which such marks are virtually unknown.

Will Erdogan break off diplomatic relations with countries that continue to call his nation Turquie, Türkei, Turquía or Turchia? And, as Brexit Britain seeks to return to imperial measurements, will we summon to the Foreign Office the ambassadors of countries that persist in calling us le Royaume-Uni or das Vereinigte Königreich?

Philip Slotkin

London NW3

Every cloud...

Cardiff's problem with dog poo ("[Another fine mess](#)", Magazine) reduced dramatically some years ago when the council issued every household with a food waste caddy. The council was not pleased that the small biodegradable liners were being "misused" by dog owners, but it's left most of the streets and parks much cleaner.

Liz Haigh

Cardiff

Give Charles a break

I am by no means a fanatical monarchist but I found Nick Cohen's article on Prince Charles distasteful ("[Unlike the Queen, King Charles will have no sense of caution, only of entitlement](#)", Comment).

In view of the fact that we are stuck with Charles as the next monarch, perhaps Cohen should take heart from the example of Edward VII. He too had a long wait to succeed his mother and had got into serious trouble with a

number of scandals and attracted adverse press, parental and popular criticism. His private life could best be described as colourful.

When he came to the throne, expectations were low and the start of his reign was interrupted by life threatening illness. Nevertheless, he rapidly became popular and successful, quickly escaping from the very long shadow of his mother and putting his own mark on the first decade of the 20th century.

John Hurdley

Birmingham

To be, or not to be?

There are three Antony Gormley rooftop sculptures in Peterborough collectively entitled *Places To Be*. Given Gormley's decision to apply for a German passport ("[“Tragedy” of Brexit drives Gormley to apply for a German passport](#)", News), perhaps Places Not To Be would now be more appropriate.

Toby Wood

Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

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[For the record](#)UK news

For the record

This week's corrections

Sun 12 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

An opinion piece said the Bank of England would be infuriated by a potential stamp duty rise, when a cut was meant ([It's a top Tory ploy. Why hasn't Sunak cut stamp duty?](#), 5 June, p55).

An article said that a portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, “registers her reign as queen of Scotland from 1542 to 1587”; Mary lived until 1587 but was forced to abdicate in 1567 ([Power, prestige and pearls on show in a rare gathering of our islands' queens](#), 5 June, p4).

In a column about the Parthenon marbles, references to Byron’s The Curse of Minerva had the eponymous goddess mistakenly turned into “Medusa” on second mention ([Why shouldn’t the Greeks have their marbles back? We proved we lost ours long ago](#), 29 May, p43).

A travel feature mistakenly located the Beach at Bude hotel on the north Devon coast; it is in north Cornwall ([Rooms with a sea view](#), 5 June, Magazine, p33).

Other recently amended articles include:

[Civil service cuts will leave Whitehall unable to cope with Brexit workload](#)

[EasyJet diverted my flight and then refused to pay my taxi bill](#)

[‘We want a queen who is like a parent’: Observer writers down the decades on the monarch’s reign](#)

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The ObserverClimate crisis

Why bankers close their ears to the ‘climate nut jobs’ talking about the end of the world

[Nick Cohen](#)



An investor’s rant gives an insight into the City’s short-termist view of the environment crisis



People fill their buckets from a municipal water tanker in May 2022 in Uttar Pradesh, India, amid a severe heatwave that caused drought-like conditions in vast swathes of India's agricultural heartlands. Photograph: Ritesh Shukla/Getty Images

Sat 11 Jun 2022 14.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 14.54 EDT

If the future remembers any corporate villain from 2022, it will be Stuart Kirk. The satirically titled head of “responsible investment” at HSBC looks the part: shaven headed, tightly trimmed beard, hard, sharp eyes. Like all the best villains, the banker’s arguments are insidiously appealing. He says out loud what his audience thinks, cutting through polite society’s pious crap to reveal its selfish desires.

“There’s always some nut job telling me about the end of the world,” [he told the *Financial Times’s Moral Money*](#) conference – and I haven’t made that title up either. “Who cares if Miami is six metres underwater in 100 years? Amsterdam has been six metres underwater for ages and that’s a really nice place.”

Notice the neat two-step he performs. On the one hand, only “nut jobs” talk of a catastrophe, even if the ranks of the nutty include the UN and every serious climate scientist. But when the nut jobs turn out to be anything but

nuts, Kirk shifts his position and assures you that we will enjoy climate change, as Amsterdammers enjoy their canalside cafes. And if we can't? We'll all be dead in a 100 years anyway so who the hell cares.

I welcome Kirk's rant as he was articulating what most governments must subconsciously think. Not one country has honoured the [promises made at last year's Cop26](#) summit in Glasgow. Alok Sharma, a cabinet office minister and Cop26 president, tried his best to stir them the other day by [talking of "a monstrous act of self-harm"](#) and "chronic danger". To no avail. Like Covid lockdowns and 2021's fashions, climate change is yesterday's news.

Last week, the government launched a quarter-baked housing initiative, which almost certainly won't happen, and will only force up the exorbitant price of property if it does. Not once did he mention insulating Britain's homes. The omission was part of a pattern. In no recent statement has the government committed to improving our energy resilience. Our reliance on oil and gas funds despotic regimes from Russia to Saudi Arabia. Their emissions contribute to catastrophic climate change. Rising fuel costs are pummelling the incomes of millions. And yet nothing happens.

So many of the schemes to reach net zero strike my cynical mind as either utopian – the technology isn't there – or too expensive for electorates to bear. Home insulation, by contrast, is authentically popular. It would halve heating bills and deliver tangible benefits to citizens. The Treasury's fear of the short-term cost explains the policy paralysis in part. But there is a deeper intellectual confusion, not just here but across the world, which is closer to Kirk's arrant complacency than fear.

Most studies of ignorance concentrate on the voters intellectuals oppose: Brexiters, Trump supporters and the like. But climate change is asking hard questions about the inadequate thinking of highly educated technocrats in rich societies.

Green economists are trying to explain why the US Federal Reserve, European Central Bank (ECB) and Bank of England are refusing to treat climate change as a systemic risk to the financial system. They wanted central banks to introduce [one-to-one capital requirements](#) for loans to fossil

fuel companies. The more risk capital a bank is obliged to hold the less profit it makes on a loan. Faced with a punishing regulatory burden, banks would deprive polluting companies of resources by choosing to lend elsewhere.

It's not that the project was dismissed as too radical. The Bank of England and Federal Reserve took the [danger of a climate “Lehman moment”](#) seriously. Isabel Schnabel, a member of the executive board of the ECB, wrote of climate change causing inflation, adding to monetary risk and amplifying volatility as extreme weather and massive suffering brought their inevitable economic consequences. Yet all rejected action. The Bank of England offered the democratic objection that “how to address the causes of climate change is a decision for governments and parliaments, not financial regulators”. But it succeeded only in raising the obvious follow-up question: why then aren't democratically accountable governments directing banks to address climate change?

There are no climatic equivalents of interest rate rises or furlough payments to return us to a tolerable equilibrium

James Vaccaro of the Climate Safe Lending Network says that even the most intellectually gifted central bankers do not understand the [difference between a crisis and a collapse](#). Or if they do in theory, they are too constrained by established ways of thinking to act on their knowledge.

An economic crisis caused by inflation, Russian militarism or Covid may be devastating. The world will suffer loss and damage. But from an economic point of view there is an “other side” to reach once the crisis has passed and we have returned to a type of normality.

There is no other side to a collapse. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is talking about the rapid acceleration towards breakdown. You can see it coming in the monstrous heatwave in India and the wildfires in Siberia. Once average global temperatures increase beyond 1.5C, “tree die-offs, drying peatlands, thawing permafrost and other self-reinforcing feedback loops [will] release additional carbon emissions, [amplifying the](#)

warming further”. Climate change will spiral “beyond the ability of humanity to influence it”.

There are no climatic equivalents of interest rate rises or furlough payments to return us to a tolerable equilibrium.

Economists, like so many of us, can be slaves to the past. We think we can look backwards to the future. What happened the last time there was a land war in eastern Europe? How did previous Conservative PMs fare after a bloody confidence vote? In the best of times, the past is an unreliable guide, but it offers us no clues to our environmental future. Risk managers point out, that when, for instance, the European Banking Authority says that evidence of climate change causing economic chaos is scarce, it failed to ask what evidence it expected to find in backward-looking data.

If ever there was a case for vigorous bank regulation, Stuart Kirk made it. In his address to the *FT*’s moral money-makers he said that the average length of a loan was six years. “What happens to the planet in year seven is actually irrelevant to our loan book.”

HSBC suspended him for telling tales out of school. But the governments, central bankers and business leaders who believe it is “irrelevant” what happens when they have retired in six or more years are still, I am afraid, very much with us.

Nick Cohen is an Observer columnist

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Headlines saturday 11 june 2022

- ['Worse than half-baked' Johnson's leaked food strategy 'fails to tackle cost, climate or hunger'](#)
- [Analysis Defra plan shows no stomach for bold action on food poverty and obesity](#)
- [Rwanda deportations Prince Charles criticises 'appalling' scheme – reports](#)
- [Live Russia-Ukraine war: 'intense street fighting' in Sievierodonetsk; Zelenskiy 'didn't want to hear' Russia warning, says Biden](#)
- [What happened in the war this week? Must-read news and analysis](#)

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‘Worse than half-baked’: Johnson’s food strategy fails to tackle cost or climate

Labour says leaked white paper suggesting more fish farming and venison ‘borders on preposterous’

- [Analysis: Strategy shows no stomach for bold action](#)



The white paper proposes an increase in the use of ‘responsibly sourced wild venison’. Photograph: Alex Fieldhouse/Alamy

[Helena Horton](#), [Rowena Mason](#) and [Patrick Butler](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 14.35 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 06.19 EDT

Boris Johnson’s new [food strategy](#) for England contains virtually no new measures to tackle the soaring cost of food, childhood hunger, obesity or the climate emergency, a leaked version of the white paper shows.

The strategy, seen by the Guardian and due to be published on Monday, was supposed to be a groundbreaking response to [recommendations](#) from the restaurateur Henry Dimbleby, who wrote two government-commissioned reports on obesity and the environment.

Dimbleby made a number of high-profile suggestions, including the expansion of free school meals, increasing environment and welfare standards in farming, and a 30% reduction in meat and dairy consumption.

But the slim 27-page document makes few recommendations, and declines to address the contribution of food prices to the cost of living crisis or address calls for consuming less meat and dairy.

Among its few policy proposals are the suggestion there could be more fish farming, which is environmentally controversial, and an increase in the use of “responsibly sourced wild venison”.

The strategy was described as “bordering on preposterous” by Labour over its lack of concrete proposals on food prices and “worse than half-baked” by the environmental campaign group Greenpeace.

Johnson recently delayed measures to tackle obesity and has come under fire for failing to do enough help families with the cost of living, with inflation running at 9%.

Although the white paper accepts food prices are a major part of the squeeze facing many families, and that many people on low incomes struggle to afford to eat, it suggests this is not the business of a government food strategy.

The white paper instead focuses on “longer-term measures” to support the food system rather than “duplicating work on the cost of living” – citing the Treasury’s £15bn support package focused on lowering energy bills. It sidesteps growing calls from teachers and others for an extension of [eligibility for free school meals](#) to an extra 1 million children in poverty, although it says the idea will be “kept under review”.

It boasts it “has made it easier” for young low-income families to apply for and use the Healthy Start fruit and vegetable voucher scheme – though it ignores Dimbleby’s critique of the scheme’s inadequacies, his call for it to be expanded, as well as overlooking recent problems with the digital part of the scheme.

“The government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes, helping them to enter and progress in work and lead fulfilled lives,” it says.

The white paper also ignores Dimbleby’s proposals for a tax on sugar and salt used in processed foods as a way of escaping what he called the “junk food cycle”. Dimbleby insisted bold regulatory measures, rather than relying on educating consumers and voluntary agreements with the food industry, were needed to tackle the huge and growing market for unhealthy foods.

But while the white paper accepts that obesity is prevalent, with 64% of adults and 40% of children overweight, it makes clear there is no great desire for state intervention, and insists on the importance of individual responsibility and choice in influencing demand for healthy foods.

Experts had also urged the government to cut meat and dairy consumption in order to improve land use and tackle the climate emergency. Dimbleby called for a 30% reduction, and Greenpeace a more ambitious 70%. In his executive summary, Dimbleby stated: “Careful livestock farming can be a boon to the environment, but our current appetite for meat is unsustainable: 85% of farmland is used to feed livestock. We need some of that land back.”

However, the government makes no such commitment, instead opening a consultation about new technologies to help cattle produce less methane. There is also a focus on regenerative livestock farming, which uses more land than intensive farming to produce less protein.

It says: “Sustainable sources of protein do not have to be new or novel or displace traditional sectors. Regenerative farming will also provide a more sustainable production of traditional protein sources. Using livestock to benefit the environment in balance with food production is already being championed by many small-scale farmers.”

One new announcement made in the white paper is regarding animal welfare. Ministers plan to make it easier for countries to trade with the UK if they have strong animal welfare legislation.

The report also mentions an expansion of aquaculture – fish farming – to potentially replace some meat in the diet. This is despite fish farming being found to be often very damaging to the environment.

Deer stalkers will also enjoy a boon from the report, as one of the few new announcements it makes is that the government will “look to increase the use of responsibly sourced wild venison, which would have otherwise been disposed of, in the food chain”.

Environment experts who fed into the strategy said it was “worse than they expected” – and they did not have high expectations.

There are also fears that the report signals a watering down of the environment land management scheme (ELMS) as there are no targets for land use change mentioned.

Jim McMahon, the shadow environment secretary, was heavily critical of the leaked strategy. “The UK is in a cost of living crisis with food prices spiralling, real wages falling, growth plummeting and taxes up. It is clear now that the government has absolutely no ambition to fix the mess they have created,” he said.

“A food strategy is of vital importance, but the government has dithered, delayed and now failed to deliver. This is nothing more than a statement of vague intentions, not the concrete proposals to tackle the major issues facing our country. To call it a food strategy is bordering on the preposterous.”

Tim Farron, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson on environment, food and rural affairs, added: “The Conservatives’ food strategy has no solution to solve the cost of living crisis and nothing for the millions of people struggling to put food on the table.

“By failing to do anything to help farmers across the country the government are all but guaranteeing a generation of higher food prices.”

Louisa Casson, the head of food and forests at Greenpeace UK, said: “The government’s food strategy isn’t just half-baked, it’s flatter than a pancake and missing most of the crucial ingredients needed to truly ensure our long-term food security. Instead of listening to the warnings from climate scientists on the urgent need to reduce meat production, ministers seem to be goading UK farmers into producing even more of it.”

Ben Reynolds, the deputy chief executive of the food and farming charity Sustain, added: “Our understanding is that the government’s food strategy white paper will acknowledge the many issues facing our food system but fall short on strong policies, underpinned by legislation, needed to make wholesale change.

“The Dimbleby review generated considerable understanding and appetite for change. Health campaigners, businesses, food enterprises and investors have all called for government intervention to help avert the health, climate and nature crises caused by our food system. We would welcome any mandatory responsibilities on industry and the public sector that help make healthy and sustainable diets the norm, but if the government publishes a white paper with little more than reheated commitments, consultations and reviews, this will just kick the can further down the road.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/10/worse-than-half-baked-johnsons-food-strategy-fails-to-tackle-cost-or-climate>

Health policy

Defra plan shows no stomach for bold action on food poverty and obesity

Analysis: Two years ago the PM promised a ‘war on fat’ – but there’s little of substance in this can-kicking document

- [Johnson’s food strategy fails to tackle cost or climate](#)



An expansion of free school meals, a key Dimbleby recommendation, will be kept ‘under review’. Photograph: Keith Mayhew/SOPA Images/Rex/Shutterstock

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[@peterwalker99](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 14.46 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 00.14 EDT

The [2020 report on a food strategy for England](#) by the Leon restaurant chain co-founder Henry Dimbleby and the [resultant government plan](#) have things

in common, including a recognition that Covid highlighted significant issues over food and that obesity is a national crisis. But when it comes to solutions, the two documents could hardly be further apart.

[Dimbleby's report](#) recommended a significant expansion of the free school meals programme to tackle food poverty and unhealthy eating, using expanded sugar and salt taxes to fund fresh fruit and vegetables for low-income families, and it also called for a 30% cut in meat consumption inside a decade.

Noting a pre-Covid toll of 90,000 annual deaths due to poor diet, Dimbleby said it was clear the state “has the moral authority to intervene in people’s lives to help them eat better”.

In stark contrast, the 27-page government food strategy produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) eschews bold action on food poverty and diet for a combination of can-kicking and minor policy tweaks.

Public health experts will wearily note a paragraph that talks about “an important role for individual responsibility and choice”, something successive UK governments have appealed to over the decades, with no apparent success.

Public health interventionism, inevitably labelled “nanny state” measures when rolled out in the UK, had a brief moment of prominence in 2020 after Boris Johnson blamed his brush with serious Covid on excess weight [and promised a “war on fat”](#).

Such wars, however, take time and create enemies, and [much of Johnson's strategy was shelved last month](#), prompting [a backlash](#) among campaigners such as Jamie Oliver.

So what does survive in the food strategy, which repeats Dimbleby's dire warnings about the health consequences of a society where 64% of adults and 40% of children in [England](#) are overweight or obese, and notes how excess weight is closely linked to poverty?

Not much, in truth. Much of what could happen is booted into the policy long grass, mainly the health department's promised white paper on health disparities, or more research into ultra-processed foods. The idea of reducing meat consumption is not mentioned.

Eligibility for free school meals, perhaps Dimbleby's key recommendation, will be kept "under review", while an existing programme to help children learn cooking skills has a budget of "up to £5m", or about £250 per English state school.

Measures for food poverty are similarly vague, with the only mentions of the cost of living crisis referring to existing government schemes, and justification that it would be pointless to be "duplicating work" on the issue.

As did Dimbleby's report, the strategy covers other areas, notably food security, sustainability and the impacts of Brexit. On the first two, the government strategy stresses how Covid and the war in Ukraine have highlighted the need for resilience on food, but offers little in the way of policies beyond "taking advantage of new research and technologies and making the most of post-Brexit opportunities".

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It is on Brexit where the report is perhaps most eloquent, including a pledge to extend the seasonal worker visa scheme for food workers, and to liaise with industry on ways to plug other labour gaps.

More widely on Brexit it hints at food standards that, while not necessarily lower, could be termed more flexible, ensuring rules are "proportionate and based on the best available science", while scrapping "bureaucracy that stems from old EU rules".

Critics might say that is the easy bit, politically. Tackling obesity and food inequality was always going to be enormously hard and require radical solutions. The government's food strategy has seemingly noted that, and so opted instead to simply not try.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/10/defra-report-shows-no-stomach-for-bold-action-on-food-poverty-and-obesity>.

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[**Prince Charles**](#)

Prince Charles criticises ‘appalling’ Rwanda migrant scheme – reports

Source says Prince of Wales was ‘more than disappointed’ with deportation plans



A spokesperson for Clarence House said Prince Charles remains politically neutral. Photograph: Reuters

[Harry Taylor](#)

[@harrytaylr](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 17.40 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 00.14 EDT

Prince Charles has privately criticised the government’s policy of deporting migrants to Rwanda, calling the practice “appalling”.

The heir to the throne has been heard opposing the policy behind closed doors, a source has told the [Times](#) and the [Daily Mail](#).

The claim comes on the same day that a [legal challenge against](#) deporting asylum seekers was rejected by the high court. The first flight to send migrants to the central African country could leave on Tuesday. An appeal against the ruling has been launched.

The government's deportation policy was introduced in April as a way to discourage people trying to cross the channel in small boats from northern France. More than 10,000 people have arrived so far this year.

Under the deal, any arriving outside legal processes will be flown 4,000 miles away. The policy has been criticised on human rights grounds, and on Friday the UN's refugee agency backed calls to stop Tuesday's flight because it breached Britain's legal obligations.

The source said: "[Charles] said he was more than disappointed at the policy.

"He said he thinks the government's whole approach is appalling. It was clear he was not impressed with the government's direction of travel."

Commonwealth heads of government are due to meet in the country's capital, Kigali, later in June. Charles is due to represent the Queen at the gathering.

A spokesperson for Clarence House said: "We would not comment on supposed anonymous private conversations with the Prince of Wales, except to restate that he remains politically neutral. Matters of policy are decisions for government."

However they did not deny to the Times that Charles was opposed to the policy.

A government spokesperson said: "Our world-leading partnership with Rwanda will see those making dangerous, unnecessary and illegal journeys to the UK relocated there to have their claims considered and rebuild their lives.

“We are confident the agreement is fully compliant with all national and international law.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/10/prince-charles-criticises-appalling-rwanda-scheme-reports>

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Scholz, Macron and Draghi to visit Kyiv – as it happened

This blog is closed. Live coverage will resume later

- UK says Russia [attempting to ‘overwhelm’ Sievierodonetsk with artillery](#)
- [Family of UK man sentenced to death call for cooperation](#)
- [Zelenskiy ‘didn’t want to hear’ Russia warnings, says Joe Biden](#)
- [What we know on day 108 of the invasion](#)
- [Ukraine’s high casualty rate could bring war to tipping point](#)

Updated 8h ago

[Maya Yang](#) (now); [Nadeem Badshah](#), [Tom Ambrose](#), [Geneva Abdul](#), [Clea Skopeliti](#), [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) (earlier)

Sat 11 Jun 2022 19.36 EDTFirst published on Sat 11 Jun 2022 02.26 EDT



Ukrainian servicemen run for cover in Lysychansk. Photograph: Aris Messinis/AFP/Getty Images

[Maya Yang](#) (now); [Nadeem Badshah](#), [Tom Ambrose](#), [Geneva Abdul](#), [Clea Skopeliti](#), [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) (earlier)

Sat 11 Jun 2022 19.36 EDTFirst published on Sat 11 Jun 2022 02.26 EDT

Key events

- [8h agoSummary](#)
- [10h agoUN commission arrives in Ukraine to investigate war crimes](#)
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- [19h agoCaptured South Korean fighter to be tried in self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic](#)

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German chancellor Olaf Scholz to visit Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is planning a visit to Kyiv alongside the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and the Italian prime minister, Mario Draghi, the German newspaper Bild am Sonntag reported on Saturday.

SCOOP: Chancellor Scholz is planning a visit to Kyiv together with Macron and Draghi. They want to meet Zelenskyy in Ukraine in June before the G7 summit. Our exclusive [@bild](#) report THREAD (1/3) <https://t.co/V6SD3x7EsR>

— Paul Ronzheimer (@ronzheimer) [June 11, 2022](#)

According to the outlet, the leaders want to meet **the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy**, prior to the G7 summit.

Speaking previously about a potential trip to Kyiv, Scholz said: “I won’t join a group of people who go in and out for a quick photo opportunity. Instead, when I do, it’s always for a very specific thing.”

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Updated at 14.36 EDT

8h ago **19.03**

Summary

This blog is closed. Live coverage of the war in Ukraine will resume later. A summary follows.

- **Rolls-Royce Germany has [provided](#) two super power generators to Ukraine, the country's ministry of health announced on Saturday.** In a statement, the ministry of health said: “One such generator is capable of providing the work of not only one building, but all the buildings, if it is a large regional hospital.”
- **The US has [announced](#) that it will be boycotting the St. Petersburg International Forum that is set to take place in [Russia](#) later this month.** “We urge governments and companies to join our boycott and send a clear message that there is no “business as usual” while Russian forces brutalize Ukraine,” US State department spokesperson Ned Price said.
- **Russia's military has [set up](#) another field hospital due to heavy casualties. Kyiv Independent reports.** The Russian military is setting up an additional field hospital in the village of Shebekino in Russia's Belgorod Oblast, according to the general staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
- **Ukraine [remains](#) in control of the Azot chemical plant in Sievierodonetsk where hundreds of civilians are sheltering, the region's governor said on Saturday, after a Russia-backed separatist claimed 300 to 400 Ukrainian fighters were also trapped there.** Ukraine has said some 800 people were hiding in several bomb shelters underneath the Azot plant, including about 200 employees and 600 residents of Sievierodonetsk.
- **A United Nations commission has [arrived](#) in Ukraine on Saturday to investigate war crimes.** Deputy Speaker of Ukraine's parliament Olena Kondratyuk said that the commission's goal is to record war crimes and human rights violations.
- **Approximately 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia's invasion of the country in February, [according](#) to a military adviser to Ukrainian president [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#).** He added that the daily numbers of Ukrainian casualties were around “200 to 300 die, no less.”
- **The European Border and Coast Guard Agency [says](#) that 2.5 million Ukrainians have returned to their home country since the**

war started in February. The agency also said that 5.5 million Ukrainians have fled to the EU since the war began.

- **Russia is attempting to repeat the Holodomor, a man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 that killed millions of people under the Soviet regime, the head of the office of the Ukrainian president has [said](#).** On Saturday, Andriy Yermak, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's office head, said: "Russians shell Ukrainian fields with firebombs. Those creating global food crisis attempt to reconstruct Holodomor."
 - **The armed forces of Ukraine have [received](#) new Starlink satellite communication systems from SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk.** The Ukrainian defense ministry said that the Starlinks will be used for its intelligence forces' "special missions."
 - **The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is [planning](#) a visit to Kyiv alongside the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and the Italian prime minister, Mario Draghi.** The leaders want to meet the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, prior to the G7 summit.
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Updated at 19.36 EDT

[8h ago](#)[18.51](#)

The German division of Rolls-Royce has provided two super power generators to Ukraine, the country's ministry of health announced on Saturday.

In a [statement](#), the ministry of health said, "One such generator is capable of providing the work of not only one building, but all the buildings, if it is a large regional hospital."

"Generators have already been distributed and sent to healthcare facilities. One of them has already been delivered to the Kyiv Regional Hospital, and the other one will provide for the operation of the emergency facility in Mykolaiv," it added.

Rolls-Royce handed over two powerful generators to Ukraine. One of these can ensure the operation of several hospital buildings.

The generators have already been distributed & sent to health facilities.
<https://t.co/m3KIUenzOm> pic.twitter.com/aS1TlZx9ve

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [June 11, 2022](#)

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Updated at 19.34 EDT

[9h ago](#) [18.26](#)

The US has announced that it will be boycotting the St. Petersburg International Forum that is set to take place in [Russia](#) later this month.

In an announcement released on Saturday by **US Department of State spokesperson Ned Price**, he said, “The U.S. Government will not attend the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in any capacity. We urge governments and companies to join our boycott and send a clear message that there is no “business as usual” while Russian forces brutalize Ukraine.

The U.S. Government will not attend the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in any capacity. We urge governments and companies to join our boycott and send a clear message that there is no “business as usual” while Russian forces brutalize Ukraine.

— Ned Price (@StateDeptSpox) [June 11, 2022](#)

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[9h ago](#) [18.06](#)

Russia's military has set up another field hospital due to heavy casualties, the Kyiv Independent reports.

⚡Ukraine's military: Russian military sets up another field hospital due to heavy casualties.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said the Russian military is setting up an additional field hospital in the village of Shebekino in Russia's Belgorod Oblast.

— The Kyiv Independent (@KyivIndependent) [June 11, 2022](#)

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[10h ago](#) [17.42](#)

Ukraine remains in control of the Azot chemical plant in Sievierodonetsk where hundreds of civilians are sheltering, the region's governor said on Saturday, after a Russia-backed separatist claimed 300 to 400 Ukrainian fighters were also trapped there.

Reuters reports:

“The information about the blockade of the Azot plant is a lie,” Serhiy Gaidai, governor of the Luhansk region partially controlled by pro-Russian separatists, said on the Telegram messaging app.

“Our forces are holding an industrial zone of Sievierodonetsk and are destroying the Russian army in the town,” he wrote.

Ukraine has said some 800 people were hiding in several bomb shelters underneath the Azot plant, including about 200 employees and 600 residents of Sievierodonetsk.

Rodion Miroshnik, a Russian-backed representative of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People’s Republic, said late on Saturday that some civilians had

started to leave.

“There are occasional exchanges of fire. ... They (the Ukrainian defenders) may still be holding several hundred civilians hostage,” he said in an online post. Reuters was not immediately able to verify his account.

Miroshnik had earlier said 300 to 400 Ukrainian fighters were blockaded on the grounds of the plant along with civilians and had tried to negotiate their passage to Lysychansk, Sievierodonetsk’s twin city.



Smoke rises after a military strike on a compound of Sievierodonetsk's Azot Chemical Plant, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in the town of Lysychansk, Luhansk region, Ukraine June 10, 2022. Photograph: Reuters

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[10h ago](#) [17.22](#)

UN commission arrives in Ukraine to investigate war crimes

A United Nations commission has arrived in Ukraine on Saturday to investigate war crimes.

Deputy Speaker of Ukraine's parliament Olena Kondratyuk said that the commission's goal is to record war crimes and human rights violations.

"I have assured the UN Independent International Commission that the Verkhovna Rada [Ukrainian parliament] will contribute to the successful work of the mission! We discussed the work of the commission in Ukraine, which was established to record violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and other crimes related to Russian aggression. The major task is identify suspects, gather evidence and prepare materials so that no one escapes punishment," Kondratyuk [said](#).

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Updated at 17.37 EDT

[10h ago](#) [16.47](#)

Approximately 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia's invasion of the country in February, according to a military adviser to Ukrainian president [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#).

On Saturday, **journalist Mark Fygyn** asked **military adviser Oleksiy Arestovych** if 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed, the Washington Post [reported](#).

"Yes, something like that," Arestovych replied, adding that daily numbers of Ukrainian casualties were around "200 to 300 die, no less." The Post has not been able to immediately verify the numbers.



Ukrainian servicemen carry the coffin with the body of Ihor Slavhorodskyi, on June 11, 2022 in Bucha, Ukraine. Ukrainian soldier Ihor Slavhorodskyi, 58, died in Luhansk Region on June 2, 2022. Photograph: Alexey Furman/Getty Images

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[11h ago](#)[15.59](#)

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency says that 2.5 million Ukrainians have returned to their home country since the war started in February.

The agency also said that 5.5 million Ukrainians have fled to the EU since the war began.

Over 2.5 million Ukrainians have returned to their home country since the war started - Frontex

European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)
says 5.5 million Ukrainian citizens have fled to the EU since the

beginning of the war in February.<https://t.co/KXWgGyRvuQ>
<pic.twitter.com/iLwwwNWQ0d>

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [June 11, 2022](#)

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Updated at 16.05 EDT

[12h ago](#)[15.32](#)

Russia is attempting to repeat the Holodomor, a man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 that killed millions of people under the Soviet regime, the head of the office of the Ukrainian president has said.

On Saturday, Andriy Yermak, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's office head, said [on Telegram](#): "Russians shell Ukrainian fields with firebombs. Those creating global food crisis attempt to reconstruct Holodomor."

Russians intend to repeat Holodomor- President's Office Head

"Russians shell Ukrainian fields with firebombs. Those creating global food crisis attempt to reconstruct Holodomor" Yermak said, invoking memories of Stalin's famine that killed ~4mn in 1932-33
<https://t.co/gbL80cLiRM> <pic.twitter.com/xedvcXQ8SM>

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [June 11, 2022](#)

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Updated at 15.39 EDT

[12h ago](#)[15.05](#)

The armed forces of Ukraine have received new Starlink satellite communication systems from SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk.

In [a tweet](#) on Saturday, Ukraine's ministry of defense said:

Multitasker @elonmusk manages not only to work on preparations for the Mars mission but also to pass the Starlinks to our intelligence so needed for their special missions. #UAarmy defend freedom on Earth so that it can be established on Mars as well.

⚡ The Armed Forces of Ukraine received new Starlink satellite communications systems from Elon Musk. <https://t.co/yVhvr1aQT4>

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [June 11, 2022](#)

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Updated at 15.23 EDT

[13h ago](#) [14.29](#)

German chancellor Olaf Scholz to visit Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is planning a visit to Kyiv alongside the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and the Italian prime minister, Mario Draghi, the German newspaper Bild am Sonntag reported on Saturday.

SCOOP: Chancellor Scholz is planning a visit to Kyiv together with Macron and Draghi. They want to meet Zelenskyy in Ukraine in June before the G7 summit. Our exclusive [@bild](#) report THREAD (1/3) <https://t.co/V6SD3x7EsR>

— Paul Ronzheimer (@ronzheimer) [June 11, 2022](#)

According to the outlet, the leaders want to meet **the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy**, prior to the G7 summit.

Speaking previously about a potential trip to Kyiv, Scholz said: “I won’t join a group of people who go in and out for a quick photo opportunity. Instead, when I do, it’s always for a very specific thing.”

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Updated at 14.36 EDT

14h ago **13.24**

Russian strikes knocked out power supplies in Donetsk’s two largest Ukrainian-controlled cities, Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko wrote on the Telegram app.

Speaking later on national television, he said the move was part of a deliberate strategy to cut off electricity in towns in Donetsk that remain in Ukrainian hands, Reuters reports.

“The enemy understands where he is hitting, and for what purpose,” he said.

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What happened in the Russia-Ukraine war this week? Catch up with the must-read news and analysis



A resident looks out from her burnt-out apartment in Irpin, outside Kyiv, following her return with her 17-year-old daughter after they left as refugees in February. Photograph: Marko Đurica/Reuters

Ukraine ‘almost out of ammunition’; death sentences at a show trial; the battle for Sievierodonetsk

- [Russia-Ukraine war: latest updates](#)

Guardian staff

Fri 10 Jun 2022 15.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 02.54 EDT

Every week we wrap up the must-reads from our coverage of the [Ukraine](#) war, from news and features to analysis, visual guides and opinion.

Kyiv hit by missile attack

The week started with the sound of explosions heard around the Ukrainian capital in the small hours of Sunday morning.

Dan Sabbagh reported on [Russian cruise missiles striking a railway depot](#) in the eastern Dniprovsky suburb of Kyiv. Ukraine said the strike hit a rail car repair works; Moscow said it had destroyed tanks sent by eastern European countries to Ukraine.

It was the first time anywhere in the capital has been hit for more than five weeks. One person was hospitalised, and a plume of smoke rose and was visible from high points in the city. Five cruise missiles were launched from Tu-95 bombers, one of which was intercepted, Ukraine’s air force said, in an attack that represented a change of approach from Russian forces.



Smoke seen from high points in Kyiv on 5 June after explosions hit the Ukrainian capital early that morning. Photograph: Sergei Supinsky/AFP/Getty Images

Putin ‘rational, cold, cruel, black evil’

Luke Harding and Dan Sabbagh [spoke to Ukraine’s former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko](#), who described Russian president Vladimir Putin as “absolutely rational, cold, cruel, black evil” and claimed he is determined to go down in Russian history alongside Stalin and Peter the Great.

In an exclusive interview in Kyiv, Tymoshenko dismissed the suggestion that Putin was “crazy”. “He acts according to his own dark logic,” she said. “He’s driven by this idea of historic mission and wants to create an empire. That’s his hyper-goal. It comes from a deep inner desire and belief.”

Tymoshenko, a leader of the 2004 Orange revolution and twice prime minister, had several [one-on-one meetings with the Russian president](#). They held negotiations in 2009 after Putin, then prime minister, turned off the gas supply to Ukraine. Tymoshenko stood for president in 2010, 2014 and 2019, finishing second twice and then third.

Close up, Putin was “always cautious” in what he said and always suspicious that he might be being taped, she said. “He is from a KGB school,” she said. Before Russia’s full-scale invasion in February, he made no secret of his belief that there was “no such nation as [Ukraine](#), and no such people as Ukrainians”, she said.



Former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Ukraine ‘almost out of ammunition’

Ukraine’s deputy head of military intelligence has told **Isobel Koshiw** that Ukraine is [losing against Russia on the frontlines](#) and is now almost solely reliant on weapons from the west to keep Russia at bay.

“This is an artillery war now,” said Vadym Skibitsky, deputy head of Ukraine’s military intelligence. The frontlines were now where the future would be decided, he told the Guardian, “and we are losing in terms of artillery”.

“Everything now depends on what [the west] gives us,” Skibitsky said. “Ukraine has one artillery piece to 10 to 15 Russian artillery pieces. Our western partners have given us about 10% of what they have.”

Ukraine is using 5,000 to 6,000 artillery rounds a day, according to Skibitsky. “We have almost used up all of our [artillery] ammunition and are now using 155-calibre Nato standard shells,” he said of the ammunition that is fired from artillery pieces.



Incendiary ammunition airbursts are seen during a shelling, as Russia’s attack on Ukraine continues, in the town of Marinka in the Donetsk region.
Photograph: Reuters

Life in Donbas as the frontline creeps closer

Luke Harding and Isobel Koshiw reported on the [deteriorating conditions for those living in Donbas](#) as Moscow continued to concentrate its firepower on Ukraine’s east.

In the city of Slavyanask, a one-time spa resort near Sievierodonetsk, a terrible battle draws near.

Sitting on a bench outside city hall, the deputy mayor, Yuriy Pidlisnyi, said he told residents to flee. About 25,000 people out of its population of about 100,000 had stubbornly ignored his advice, he said, as conditions inside the city get steadily worse.

There is no gas or water, and only intermittent electricity. With petrol expensive, many residents get around on bikes. Some who left have come back after running out of money. The local economy is trashed. Soldiers queue outside a market cafe to buy cost-price 60 Hryvnia (£1.80/\$2.25) kebabs.

Slava Vladimirovich, a member of Ukraine's Donbas battalion who has been evacuating civilians from the beleaguered city of Lysychansk, asked: "Why did God punish me by making me be born here? I liberated Popasna and Lysychansk eight years ago and took part in the biggest battles. And then the Russians came back to us again."

Isobel and Luke also spoke to troops in Bakhmut who described their [perilous fight to hold Ukraine's east](#).

Soldiers said they had become used to remorseless shelling from the Russian side. "The first time you see a tank you are afraid," said Sasha, a young medic. "After a time you don't feel it. It's like going into a trance. Your objective is to kill the enemy. You can't do this if you have a normal psyche. You become other. My parents tell me I'm disconnected from reality."

Dan Sabbagh's analysis of the Donbas battle noted [there are signs that the invaders are reaching exhaustion](#) and questioned whether Ukraine can cope with the losses it is sustaining.



A Ukrainian serviceman takes a break after digging trenches near the frontline in the Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, on Wednesday. Photograph: Bernat Armangué/AP

Battle for control of Sievierodonetsk

Heavy fighting has seen Russian forces concentrate their efforts on [trying to surround and capture the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk](#), advancing at a rate of 500m to 1km a day, **Dan Sabbagh reports**.

“Sievierodonetsk remains the epicentre of the confrontation in Donbas,” Zelenskiy said in a late-night address to the nation on Wednesday evening, claiming that Ukraine had inflicted “significant losses on the enemy”.

The Ukrainian leader corroborated reports of heavy fighting, saying the battle for Sievierodonetsk was “probably one of the most difficult during this war”.

“In particular, the fate of Donbas is being decided there,” he added.

Capturing Sievierodonetsk would give Russian president Vladimir Putin control of all of Luhansk – the region that, with Donetsk, makes up Ukraine’s Donbas industrial heartland – consolidating a shift in battlefield

momentum after his forces were pushed back from Kyiv and northern Ukraine.

Russian forces are concentrating their efforts on capturing the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk

Russian forces are concentrating their efforts on capturing the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk

Highlighting the importance of the fight for Sievierodonetsk, Zelenskiy on Sunday visited the beleaguered city of Lysychansk, just a few kilometres south.

On the frontline close to the fiercest fighting, he spoke to his troops. “What you all deserve is victory – that is the most important thing. But not at any cost,” he said in a video later broadcast from his visit.

Death sentences at a show trial

Andrew Roth and **Emine Sinmaz** reported on the “disgusting Soviet-era show trial” that resulted in death sentences for two British men and a Moroccan national captured while fighting in the Ukrainian army in Mariupol.

On Thursday a court in Russian-controlled east Ukraine convicted 28-year-old Aiden Aslin, from Newark, 48-year-old Shaun Pinner, from Watford, and Saaudun Brahim on charges of “terrorism”. Observers said the process was intended to imitate the war crimes trials of Russian soldiers taking place in Kyiv.

Both Britons have said they were serving in the Ukrainian marines, making them active-duty soldiers who should be protected by the Geneva conventions on prisoners of war. However, Russian state media has portrayed them as mercenaries, and the court convicted them on the charge of “being a mercenary”.

The ruling was swiftly condemned by top British officials.

“I utterly condemn the sentencing of Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine,” said the UK foreign secretary, Liz Truss. “They are prisoners of war. This is a sham judgment with absolutely no legitimacy ... my thoughts are with the families. We continue to do everything we can to support them.”

- *Our visual guide to the invasion is updated regularly and can be [found here](#).*
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2022.06.11 - Spotlight

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- [Fashion 50 best summer dresses to buy, rent or thrift](#)
- [Does anyone ever really feel ‘grown up’? I asked some older people to find out](#)
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Interview

Pete Doherty on swapping crack for camembert in France: ‘It’s easier to be clean here – even for a scoundrel’

[Hadley Freeman](#)



Pete Doherty, photographed in France last month. Photograph: Laura Stevens/The Guardian

Twenty years after the Libertines' narcotics-fuelled heyday, has the singer really put the chaos behind him?

[Exclusive extract: Pete Doherty on his messy relationship with Kate Moss](#)



[@HadleyFreeman](#)

Sat 11 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 09.12 EDT

High up on a Normandy clifftop, in a house overlooking the sea, the man I once considered to be the most beautiful musician in the world, [Pete Doherty](#), is asleep on a sofa in a pair of black underpants. Back in the 2000s, I frequently used to see him around east London, trailed by acolytes and hangers-on, but I never once saw him asleep or even at rest. To his fans, it looked as if he was lost in his own poetic world (his critics sneered that he was lost in crack and heroin). But here he is now, having a mid-morning snooze in the home he shares with his wife, Katia de Vidas; his Siberian husky, Zeus, at his feet. No one expects an interview with Doherty to start on time, but my train back to Paris leaves in three hours, so I give his shoulder a gentle tap. He snuffles awake. "Oh, hey! OK, just give me a minute, I'll get some clothes on," he says in his fey and gravelly voice, and

disappears. Laura, the Guardian's photographer, and I wait nervously. Will he give us the slip? Or fall back to sleep?

Instead, he confounds our expectations and reappears within 30 seconds, dressed in a black T-shirt, shorts and slides, cap on his head, looking if not fresh then at least awake. I tell him the plan: I'll interview him here, then Laura will take his photo in the garden, and then I'll catch my train.

"No, that's not gonna work," he says, already on the move. "I wanna drive you somewhere, let's go."

He opens his car door and Zeus jumps in. As it happens, the last thing my editor said to me before I left for Normandy was: "Whatever you do, don't let him drive you anywhere!" I get in the car.

"Um, what time will you be back?" Laura calls, still standing in front of the house. But Doherty doesn't answer. And off we go.



'It's been three years now since the end, of – or at least a long pause in – this mission of mine to constantly get obliterated on crack, heroin and ketamine.'

Photograph: Laura Stevens/The Guardian

So many men and women of my generation were in love with Doherty. Never before had a musician seemed so charismatic, so romantic, and yet so accessible. We stalked the pubs he hung out at, joined message boards to know when the next gig would be, copied his style. He and his on-again, off-again best friend [Carl Barât](#) founded their band, [the Libertines](#), on their vision of Arcadia, which was all about communalism, a world built on art and creativity. That dream fell apart when Doherty decided it should mean hanging out with packs of fellow drug addicts, much to the chagrin of the more business-minded Barât, which led to Doherty being chucked out of the band several times. But initially, at least, it meant treating the fans as part of the band, pulling us on stage and inviting us to after-parties. And the music! No other band better captured what it felt like to feel young and stupid and glorious in Britain at the beginning of this century. A zillion copycat bands mushroomed in their wake, but none came close to the Libertines. They only released two albums at their peak, 2002's [Up the Bracket](#) and 2004's [The Libertines \(Anthems for Doomed Youth\)](#) (followed in 2015), but they were the iconic band of the era.

Now, recalling the intensity of my feelings for Doherty makes me cringe, like remembering a misguided early relationship. Recent years have been especially discombobulating for Doherty fans. He was always a magnet for the tabloids, which used to follow him around hoping to catch him shooting up or overdosing. Now, aged 43, he gets papped trundling about Normandy with grey stubble and a paunch. "Pete's swapped the heroin for cheese!" sneer the headlines. Before I arrived in Normandy, I felt as nervous as if I were going to a high-school reunion. Would he be a reminder of my youthful foolishness, or a reflection of my middle-aged dullness, and which would be worse?

"Shall we go get a coffee? Oh – no, that road's closed," Doherty says as we drive through a local village. The car is making a worrying beeping sound. Does he want to see what that is?

"Yeah, it's weird, that," he says. After about 15 minutes, we realise it's Zeus standing on one of the backdoor latches, half-opening the door. Hanging out with Doherty in 2022 is, in some ways, not massively different from hanging out with Doherty in 2002. I show him a photo a friend took of the two of us

in 2005, back when he was living in a horrible little hotel on Brick Lane in east London, and I was living in the flat next door.

“So that’s when we were hanging out? I thought I remembered you,” he says with a smile, which is a sweet thing to say, but extremely unlikely given the amount of narcotics he was on at the time. Does he remember much from that period?

“I try not to. That’s why it was a bit weird with the book. I just couldn’t be doing with it.”

Right, the book. I’ve come to Normandy to talk to Doherty about his memoir, *A Likely Lad*, which he co-wrote with Simon Spence. It’s full of anecdotes that evoke the scuzzy chaos of London’s indie music scene in the early 2000s. (Typical example from the book: when the Libertines broke into a pub in Clerkenwell to put on an early gig, “The only person to turn up was [Razorlight singer] Johnny Borrell. He turned up in a gas mask and did a folk set with these two black gospel singers. He was quite good, actually.”) As the most infamous member of the Libertines, and then his second band [Babyshambles](#), Doherty wasn’t just at the heart of that era, he defined it, in ways both good (his poetry, his idealism, his stylishness) and bad (the drugs, the convictions, the wasted talent). Who better to capture the excitement but also the bleakness of that period than him? But nothing is simple with Doherty. Not only did he not write his memoir – he talked to Spence, who then had the unenviable job of putting all the tales in chronological order and fact-checking them – but he hasn’t even read it.

“It’s too weird reading it because it’s in the first person,” he says.

Was that not what he expected?

“No! The initial agreement was I would talk to him on the phone and it would be in the third person. But when the book arrived it was all ‘I’, ‘I’, ‘I’. It’s completely shocking.”



With Carl Barât during a Libertines tour, 2004. Photograph: Andy Willsher/Redferns

So he's a bit upset about it?

"Well, yeah, you can imagine. My agent's words to me were: 'Just think of the money.' But we'd already spent the money."

Worse, he says, "they've taken all the good bits out, because everybody's lawyer had to read it. Carl had a good look at it, Kate [Moss]'s lawyers wanted to see it. I kept saying, 'You gotta keep that in, it's funny!' But they kept saying, 'No, no, no.' Plus, my wife was a little bit concerned, but I said to her: 'If you don't read it and I don't read it, we can just pretend it doesn't exist.' But that's not how she does things."

(Later, I ask Doherty's literary agent about how the book was written and he says: "A Likely Lad is a ghosted autobiography based on many hours of conversation between Peter and the ghost writer. Peter may have had reservations about this approach initially, but every word in the book is his.")

De Vidas plays the keyboard in his current band, [Pete Doherty and the Puta Madres](#), and they got married last October. What did she take out of the book?

“Loads of stuff about other girls, obviously,” he says, and it’s true that several of Doherty’s girlfriends and the odd fiancee are notably absent. Similarly, singer [Lisa Moorish](#), the mother of his 18-year-old son, Astile, and model Lindi Hingston, mother of his 10-year-old daughter Aisling, barely make an appearance. But he and Astile, an aspiring film-maker, have a good relationship, he says. He hasn’t seen Aisling since his relationship with Hingston broke down.

One ex who very much does appear in the book is Moss. The pair were together for more than two years, and the combination of Britain’s most notorious musician and the world’s most rock’n’roll model made them the ultimate celebrity couple. Things briefly imploded for them in 2005 when photos of Moss appearing to take cocaine in a studio where Doherty was recording with [Babyshambles](#) ran on the front of the Mirror. There were rumours that Doherty himself had sold those photos, which he has always firmly denied, and Lord knows he had plenty of hangers-on who would have sold photos of their dead grandmother for a tenner. But surely he knew that Moss – a famously private person – would hate him writing about their relationship?



With Kate Moss at Glastonbury, 2005. Photograph: Matt Cardy/Getty Images

Kate Moss didn't go to crack dens! She never had an interest in all that, and, if I'm honest, that's why we broke up

"I don't think there's anything about Kate in this that hasn't been written before," he says.

So you left out all the stories about [Kate Moss](#) going to crack dens, I say, as a joke, but he gets all jumpy: "Kate Moss didn't go to crack dens! She never had an interest in all that, and, if I'm honest, that's why we broke up."

Does he regret choosing crack over Kate Moss?

"Do I regret breaking up?"

Yes.

"No, course not. What kind of question is that?" he scoffs.

Despite the lawyers, the book still packs in plenty of good-value celebrity anecdotes, from a member of the Strokes nicking Doherty's cocaine, to the time he and Moss went on holiday with – of all people – Sarah Ferguson, which ended with him being deported: "And the next thing, I woke up at Heathrow in a pair of Thai policeman's shorts," he writes. It is also very good at capturing the absolute chaos of Doherty's life: on one page alone, his house gets flooded; he goes to court for driving offences; 13 wraps of heroin fall out of his pocket while in the courtroom; and a friend seriously injures a man while driving Doherty's car, which neither of them were insured to drive. No one ever made being a drop-out sound more exhausting than Doherty.

Spence writes in the book's introduction that he had been asking Doherty's manager for years about the possibility of collaborating on a book, but was told not to hold his breath. Unexpectedly, in late 2020, Doherty agreed to do it. Money was undoubtedly a factor – Doherty tells me he only agreed to do the Libertines' 2019 tour to pay a tax bill – but there was something else: in late 2019, he finally kicked his longstanding heroin and crack habit, and so felt sufficiently stable to embark on the project.

“Where are we today? 2021? July?” he asks.

May 2022.

“OK, so it’s been three years now since the end of – or at least a long pause in – this mission of mine to constantly get obliterated on crack, heroin and ketamine, which is a mission I took pretty seriously for 20 years, and every aspect of my life was affected by that mission. Even this, being able to jump in the car to get to a place where Zeus can run around – that feels new, and it’s good you’re here to see it,” he says.

The story of Doherty’s return to sobriety will probably not be adopted as a model by Narcotics Anonymous, given that it began with him being arrested in Paris twice in 48 hours – first for buying crack; then for beating up a motorcyclist who – Doherty writes – was driving “his scooter towards one of my dogs”. Then at the Paris police station, “I pulled my pants down and pissed all over the counter, was shouting stuff about the war … When they came to interview me, I was just in my QPR shirt and my pants and a piss-soaked blanket,” he says in the book. He was put on probation on the condition he go on Buvidal, which is an injection to block the effect of heroin. Also as part of his probation, he needed a permanent address. He’d hoped to go back to the Albion Rooms, the Libertines’ somewhat improbable hotel in Margate, Kent, where he’d been staying before the tour. But he had been banned. “I kept bringing various characters there, and it was no good for the vision Carl has for it as a business,” he says. So instead he went to De Vidas’s family home in Normandy, which is where they are still living. Then the pandemic hit.

“It’s not a big drugs area here. Then, of course, everything stopped. So all the circumstances combined to make it easier to be clean, even for a conniving scoundrel like myself. It just wasn’t worth the aggravation,” he says.



With Gladys, one of his dogs. Photograph: Laura Stevens/The Guardian

His life in France is quiet. ‘I try to keep my feet up and walk the dogs. Find a good gaff. Go to church sometimes’

But 10 years ago, not even probation, a blocker and a pandemic would have come between him and drugs. Has he lost his appetite for self-annihilation?

“Maybe. I don’t know. Before the tour [in 2019], when I was living in the hotel in Margate, there was a fair bit of annihilation and chaos like what you saw on Brick Lane. I wasn’t dead, somehow, and that was more or less enough for me. But it’s true: 10 years ago, I absolutely wouldn’t have moved here.” His life in France is pretty quiet. “I try to just keep my feet up and walk the dogs. Read. Find a good gaff. Talk to people. Go to church sometimes.”

Really?

“Yeah. Katia doesn’t come. But it’s nice.”

In his book, he writes that the first time the Libertines played together “my heart was completely in it. In the same way I was a true believer in Jesus and

how the love of God could save your soul when I was 14, now I was sold on rock'n'roll.”

Does he ever have moments when he thinks how different his life is now from how it once was?

“Yes, definitely moments when I think: how strange. But I suppose this is what I’ve always been searching for.”

What, contentment?

“I think so. I don’t think I could have this kind of life in England. I get too easily distracted. Here, I get left alone,” he says. Once he romanticised England: “More gin in teacups / Leaves on the lawn / Violence in dole queues / And a pale thin girl behind the checkout”, he sang in Albion by Babyshambles. Now, he says, with a proud tug on his hat: “I’m a good Frenchman.” (He’s not getting French citizenship, however; instead he hopes to get an Irish passport, thereby ticking the EU box.) His French, he says, is “pas mal, mais pas parfait”, and he’s become a big fan of pétanque. He and De Vidas are looking to buy a house in the area.

We park the car on a rocky beach. I ask if I should bring Zeus’s lead. “Nah, he’ll be all right,” says Doherty, and Zeus immediately takes off for the shoreline.

As we walk, we talk about his 2012 payout from the News of the World, after the tabloid admitted hacking his phone. In his book, he says his mum, Jacqueline, and older sister, AmyJo, were also targeted. “Sometimes I think it wasn’t so bad. I used to get away with quite a lot as well,” he writes about the hacking. Is that really how he felt about being hacked? He looks at me as if I’m deranged.

“No, of course not. Where did you read that?”

In his memoir.

“God. No, what a ridiculous thing to say. It was incredibly distressing,” he says.

How did he feel about being such a mainstay of the tabloids for so long?

“Well, if they’d been celebrating the music and I looked half-decent, it would have been the dream!” he smiles a little sadly.

But they just wanted to write about drugs and Moss?

“Yeah, it was confusing.”

I tell him some people said he sold stories about himself to make money to buy drugs.

“There were times when the tabloids would want to talk, and I’d sometimes take their money on the condition that they’d write about the music.”

But they’d just write about Moss?

“Yeah, that’s all they wanted to write about.”

How does he feel now when the tabloids make fun of how much he’s changed physically and publish photos of him, say, eating a gigantic fry-up?

“I hear whispers about it, but I don’t see it. I was always quite good at tuning things out. And it becomes like a badge of honour, doesn’t it? Like, you think, ‘All right, some thick bastard in a Canary Wharf office wants to write about me, and I can take it.’”

Yet in his mother’s heartfelt and very sad 2006 memoir, *Pete Doherty: My Prodigal Son*, she writes that he is very “fragile”.

“Yeah that’s true, too. I do still feel fragile.”

Is that why he sought annihilation in drugs?

Amy was always moving so fast and I think she didn’t know what to do with herself when left to her own devices

“If it was, that didn’t make any sense because heroin puts you in pretty vulnerable situations,” he says, and, after reading his memoir, no one could doubt it. It is, frankly, astonishing that he is still alive, especially as so many in his circle are not, including [Amy Winehouse](#) and [Peaches Geldof](#), who both make appearances in the book.

“Amy was always moving so fast and I think she didn’t know what to do with herself when left to her own devices,” he says.

Other less well-known people around him died, including [Mark Blanco](#), an actor who fell from a balcony after trying to talk to Doherty at a party, and [Robin Whitehead](#), a member of the Goldsmith family, who died of a heroin overdose after spending the night with [Peter Wolfe](#), a member of Doherty’s close circle. Doherty was absolved of any connection to either death, and he writes vehemently about his innocence in the book. But he doesn’t seem to draw the obvious conclusion here, which is that if you surround yourself with sketchy characters, people will get hurt. He and Wolfe, he says, will “always be friends”.

Doherty wants a coffee, so he sets off on a harum-scarum chase of Zeus, which takes about 10 minutes, and we head into a beachside cafe. He orders a black coffee and a glass of calvados, which he drinks with pleasure.

So he’s given up the heroin and crack, but still drinks alcohol?

“Yeah, but I think this has to be the next to go. I can’t perform without a drink, and that seems like something to work on,” he says. He recently DJed in Milan and had, he says, “some rum and coke beforehand”.

It’s good that drinking doesn’t then lead you into taking more drugs, I say.

“No, I mean, rum and *coke*,” he says, and I can’t help but laugh.

“But I then went to bed after my set finished. I didn’t feel the need to pursue it, so I think I handled it quite well,” he says.

Until he went so completely off the rails in his late teens, Doherty was happy, stable and studious. He grew up in a military family, the middle child

between two sisters, and the family moved around Britain and Europe frequently. He got excellent GCSEs and A-levels, but dropped out of university after a year, met Barât, formed the Libertines, and that was that. In her book, Jacqueline Doherty strenuously denies suggestions that her son had an unhappy childhood, although his father, also called Peter, was strict, and later disowned his son in despair at his drug taking.

“I had a very happy childhood,” Doherty agrees. Drug taking was partly about self-annihilation, he says, “but more so about adventure and romance. I’d love to set out to sea in a time before the world was mapped. I grew up in a very mapped world. So it was about going out into uncharted territory.”

Drugs always reduce those taking them to cliches, and for a long time Doherty seemed destined to become another classic rock star casualty. Yet for all the messiness around him, he always came across as a gentle soul, which is partly why he accrued such adoration from fans. Whereas others around him seemed just angry and scary.

“Yeah, I think that’s true. I think Carl had a lot of anger. But now he has an enormous amount of happiness with his kids, and he just loves the time he has with them,” he says. (Barât lives with his longtime girlfriend and their two sons in London.)

Barât and Doherty had one of the most fractious relationships in music, which included Doherty burgling Barât’s flat and then going to jail. One of the Libertines’ biggest hits, [Can’t Stand Me Now](#), was about their falling out – but the two of them sang it while sharing a mic, so close they were almost kissing. The intensity of their bond was palpable, I say.

“Absolutely. You’re making me quite emotional,” he says, his eyes suddenly filling with tears.

Carl and I feel there are more songs to write. The plan is to go to Jamaica and try to make another Libertines record

Both men went on to have other bands – Barât formed [Dirty Pretty Things](#) – but they didn’t match the success of the Libertines. How are things between

them now?

“Good! We still feel there’s unfinished business and there are more songs to write. But he doesn’t want to do it in England, or in France, which he sees as my turf. So the plan is to go to Jamaica and try to make another Libertines record.”

Doherty has another calvados, and a beer, and we talk about how he’s changed physically, although it’s not nearly as dramatic as the papers suggest. And, hey, who hasn’t put on weight over the past 20 years?

“It’s a bit embarrassing, isn’t it?” he says, patting his tummy. “But, yeah, the cheese, man. The cheese in this area – the brie, the camembert. There’s something special in the grass, you can taste it in the milk, it’s different here, it’s so creamy. I drink it by the pint. And the butter, and the bread, and the saucisson … ” He looks almost high on the thought of it all.

I tell him we’ll have to hurry if I’m going to make my train. He makes an exaggerated show of looking for his wallet and I reassure him the drinks are on me.

“Oh good, because I seem to have forgotten my pocketbook,” he grins.

We head out of the cafe, at which point Zeus tears off again. Doherty runs after him, and I mentally say goodbye to making my train. Fifteen minutes later, he drags Zeus back and we look for his car; it turns out Doherty had left the engine running for the past hour. On the drive back, we talk about US politics, about which he turns out to be very well informed.

“I got quite into CNN during lockdown. When you have something like 6 January [2021, when Trump supporters attacked the Capitol] you don’t want to be messing around – CNN is where you wanna be,” he says solemnly. He largely stays away from the internet; he doesn’t have a laptop and gave up his phone at the same time he quit drugs so he couldn’t contact any dealers.

I ask about his relationship with De Vidas, whom he’s been with for five years, and how she coped when he was still using.

“It was hard because she doesn’t do any drugs and hardly drinks, but I found I used much less when I was with her, because of that. And now it’s great. I’m a married man. And I take that very seriously,” he smiles.

Things with his parents are good, too. “They really love Katia, and at my wedding the Libertines performed and my dad did the singing. That was a really beautiful moment. Everything just came together.”

We make it back to his house just as Laura is about to give us both up for lost, and I give Doherty a hasty hug goodbye. “No, no, have another calvados!” he says cheerfully. Ah, why rush for a train? Hanging out with Doherty today has been like revisiting the silliness of youth without the sadness; when there were no rules, but also no plunges into the abyss. We hold up our glasses and he grins: “Cheers!”

A Likely Lad by Pete Doherty and Simon Spence is published by Little, Brown (£20) on 16 June. To support the Guardian and Observer, order your copy at guardianbookshop.com. Delivery charges may apply. Peter Doherty will be in conversation at Earth, London on [14 June, 7:00 pm](#).

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50 best summer dresses to buy, rent or thrift



Photograph: David Newby/The Guardian

From a vintage 1970s maxi to a shirt dress from M&S, we select 50 gorgeous summer dresses to buy, rent or thrift

Photography [David Newby](#), stylist [Melanie Wilkinson](#)

Sat 11 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT



THRIFT Diane von Furstenberg wrap dress, £100, [lampoo.com](#)



RENT Red floral print mini by Rhode Resort, £44 a week, [byrotation.com](#)



BUY Green shirt dress in botanical print, £75, monsoon.co.uk



THRIFT 1960s seahorse print with ruffle hem, £65, tobewornagain.co.uk



Cowboy boots, £160, [artiat.com](#); beaded necklace, £129, [missoma.com](#).
Photograph: David Newby/The Guardian

THRIFT Cornflower blue maxi dress, £60, [rokit.co.uk](#)



BUY Oversized midi V-neck in retro floral print, £35, [monki.com](#)



BUY Blue and white print with tie waist, £42, next.co.uk



THRIFT Viscose maxi in animal print by Nanushka, £199,
hardlyeverwornit.com



RENT Tiered tencel citrus maxi with ruffles, two weeks for £31,
baukjen.com



BUY Lilac printed shirt dress with belt, £89, arket.com



Necklaces and earrings: Missoma; pink heels: Russell & Bromley; sandals: Scholl from Schuh. Photograph: David Newby/The Guardian

RENT Knitted slip dress by House of Sunny (left), four days for £19, rotaro.co.uk

BUY Green gingham dress in organic cotton (centre) £49, nobodyschild.com

THRIFT Embroidered orange cotton dress (right), £55, goldsmithvintage.com



RENT Cream floral dress by Self Portrait, four days from £46,
selfridgesrental.com



THRIFT Multicolour dress by Stella Jean, from a selection at cudoni.com



BUY Geometric print corduroy pinafore, £45, lucyandyak.com



THRIFT Red sleeveless shift dress, from £20, beyondretro.com



RENT Silk tea dress with tie detail, £79 a month, lkborrowed.com



THRIFT Hayley Menzies tiger-print silk mini, £95, onescoopstore.com



BUY Broderie anglaise midi shirt dress, £55, [marksandspencer.com](https://www.marksandspencer.com)



THRIFT Mid-length silk dress by Zimmerman, £246,
[vestiairecollective.com](https://www.vestiairecollective.com)



BUY Open-knit cotton orange shift dress, £89, [cos.com](https://www.cos.com)



THRIFT Vintage 1920s blue print tea dress, £265, modesandmore.com



Black hoops: Mejuri; linen dress: Casa raki. Photograph: David Newby/The Guardian

BUY Halterneck bodycon dress in floral print (left), £110, tedbaker.com

BUY Tiered mini in organic linen (right), £265, casaraki.com



RENT Green paisley print cotton mini , 4 days for £7, mywardrobehq.com



THRIFT Burgundy strappy mid-length dress, from £18, beyondretro.com



BUY Pink midi with contrast velvet ribbon, £220, thisisradish.com



BUY Pink long-sleeve floral maxi, £140, wearethought.com



RENT High-neck midi by Stine Goya, 4 days for £29, rotaro.co.uk



THRIFT Pink print midi by Simone Rocha, £160, reluxefashion.com



THRIFT 1960s shift dress in aqua print, £45, myvintage.uk



RENT Floral maxi by Paul & Joe, 4 days from £68, hurrcollective.com



THRIFT Multi-colour asymmetric dress, £110, cosresell.com



BUY Sleeveless button-front blue summer dress, £75, [stories.com](https://www.stories.com)



Necklace: Missoma; pearl necklace: Mejuri. Photograph: David Newby/The Guardian

RENT Red pleated midi in stretch fabric (left), from £46 a month, [selfridgesrental.com](https://www.selfridgesrental.com)

THRIFT 1970s green floral sleeveless beach dress (centre), £65, rokit.co.uk

BUY Linen-blend midi-length dress (right), £169, whistles.com



BUY Printed cotton kaftan with red trim, £120, boden.co.uk



RENT Halter-neck maxi in red florals, 3 days for £18,
wearmywardrobeout.com



THRIFT Yellow and black check mini, £22, wearecow.com



RENT Lilac slip dress with self tie, 4 days for £25, endlesswardrobe.com



BUY Green towelling dress, £95, meandem.com



BUY Green off-shoulder dress with ruffled hem, £129, roandzo.com



RENT Bronze maxi with tie waist by Cult Gaia, 3 days for £119,
frontrow.uk.com



BUY Floral print mini in yellow and ochre, £160, essentiel-antwerp.com



THRIFT Button-up floral print dress, £95, onescoopstore.com



50 Photograph: -

RENT Pink floral mini by Peter Pilotto, £16 a day, mywardrobehq.com



Corduroy cap: Carhartt; pink sandals: Teva from Schuh; mules: Birkenstock.
Photograph: David Newby/The Guardian

BUY Seersucker mini in lilac check (left), £135, [kitristudio.com](https://www.kitristudio.com)

BUY Green floral cami dress (right), £38, [riverisland.com](https://www.riverisland.com)

Fashion assistant Peter Bevan. **Hair** Ron Sartipi using Oribe. **Makeup** Delilah Blakeney using Nars. **Models** Kelly at Mrs Robinson; Faith at Body London; Lucy K at Milk

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Life and style

Does anyone ever really feel ‘grown up’? I asked some older people to find out

I’m an adult, with the white goods and paperwork to prove it. So why don’t I feel it? I went on a quest to understand

Plus [the retirees still cheerleading](#) – in pictures



‘More of us grow older now, spending more of our old age in good health.’
Photograph: Wolkenstein/Gallery Stock

[Moya Sarner](#)

Sat 11 Jun 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 05.46 EDT

For as long as I can remember, I’ve wanted to be a grownup. As children, my friends and I would play at being shopkeepers and customers, thrilled to inhabit an adult role. As a teenager, I lived alone abroad. By my 30s I had all

the things I thought signalled adulthood: a career (as a journalist), a home, a husband, a washing machine, a dishwasher and a fridge. All the paperwork and white goods to prove I was finally the competent, confident adult I had always hoped to be.

But at random moments my non-adulthood would pop out, like when I opened my kitchen bin to find the lid thick and throbbing with squiggly maggots, and immediately called my mother for advice. Or when my bag was stolen and people suggested my contents insurance might cover it. What contents insurance? While I was training to be a psychodynamic psychotherapist, and as a patient in therapy myself, I had more and more of these moments where I felt so unknowing and lost. Officially, I was a grown-up thirtysomething, but at times like this my adult skin felt paper-thin. In these moments, not only did I not feel like an adult; I realised I didn't even know what one is.

To find out, first I interviewed older adolescents, and world experts in the neuroscience, evolutionary biology and psychoanalysis of this life stage. Then I investigated young adulthood, parenthood (or not) and middle age. At every step, most people told me they felt they had a lot of growing up still to do.

Finally, I came to old age. I confess, I thought all older people must be fully cooked adults by default. I fell into the trap of assuming that, if you've grown old, you've grown up. It's comforting to believe questions of being an adult, of what even is an adult, have been answered by someone who draws a pension. That, says Pat Thane, author of *The Long History of Old Age*, is "the stupidity of assuming that, past a certain age, everyone is much the same and has the same sort of experiences. But they don't."

People are much more interesting than that.

Whether we're talking sociology, medicine or neuroscience, old age is said to begin around 60. I'm surprised to learn from Thane that our idea of "old" hasn't changed much in hundreds of years: in medieval England, people were liable for compulsory work until 60; in the crusader kingdom of 13th-

century Jerusalem, knights over 60 were exempt from military service; today, people get their state pension between 60 and 70.

What has changed is that last century, it became normal to grow old. This was thanks in part to a new specialisation, geriatrics, a term coined by Austrian-American doctor Ignatz Leo Nascher in 1909. Nascher, Thane says, “believed doctors paid insufficient attention to the ill-health of older people: as they had not long to live, it was not thought worthwhile trying to cure them”. In 1948 came the NHS, better living standards and food; now more of us grow older, spending more of our old age in good health, though [health inequalities remain stark](#).

I felt a different person, more comfortable with myself. I got to the point where I thought: I’m just going to be who I am

It became normal to grow old, but not normal to like it. Why else do we have anti-wrinkle creams; “60 is the new 40”; “old” as an insult and a youth-supremacist society? Sarah Lamb is professor of anthropology at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and author of Successful [Ageing](#) as a Contemporary Obsession. “When people say they’re old, the connotations in our public culture are that you’re less vital and open to growing, and have stopped learning,” she says. We’re so steeped in this attitude, we might assume it reflects an objective reality rather than revealing something about our psychology. As Lamb notes, this paradigm “is not the best, most humane or inspirational way to imagine ageing and what it means to be human”. What if older people are just as clueless about growing up as the rest of us?

That seems to be the case, at first, for Graham. He recently retired from academia where, he says, “it was very important to put on a front”. He had to appear authoritative and resilient to survive, overcoming the part of him “who is quite vulnerable, shy and reticent”. For four decades, he says, “I was constantly overriding the person I really was.” And now – are you grown up? “Not really. I’m a month short of 66, which is grown up in numerical terms, but I don’t feel grown up at all.”



Graham: ‘You have to arrive at a point where you enjoy what is happening right now.’ Photograph: Courtesy of Graham

Graham spent his childhood in Bootle, a working-class area of Liverpool, Merseyside, surrounded by a large extended family. Asked to share any early memory, he describes a present received age three, when his sister was born: “It was a plastic guitar. I found that inspiring – music was all around us, when the Beatles were taking off.”

In his mid-30s, Graham took all the adult steps – buying a house, marriage, fatherhood – but the marriage broke down. He devoted himself to his daughter and work but says: “I wasn’t in the land of the living.” Hope came in his 50s, when a local Irish folk centre advertised for violin players. He’d not played since school, but picked his up again and found “it was remarkably evocative, the feeling, that texture. There’s something very tactile about musical instruments, and there’s an excitement. What sound can you get out of this?”

As an adult, Graham had forgotten how to play and didn’t think he would persevere, but he has – for years. After moving back to the north-west, he plays with Yorkshire Late Starters Strings, a charity offering adult beginners the chance to learn and join a community. This has opened up new possibilities for Graham to enjoy a different relationship with others, and

with himself – a later-life growth spurt he desperately needed. He made new friends, grew in confidence. “I felt a different person, more comfortable with myself. I got to the point where I thought: I’m just going to be who I am.” At 63, on holiday, he met a woman who is now his partner. “There’s a kind of Indian summer effect, where there’s not so much pressure to perform or be anyone,” he says.

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After being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, he began living more healthily, and went into remission. “That’s a very important thing about growing up – realising your mortality. You can’t just override physical problems, you’ve got to take care of your body.” Deterioration is inevitable, he says. “A lot of people don’t want to accept that; they want to think they can just keep going. But I’m not the same person I was at 22.” It’s not easy to accept these changes, partly because of how society treats older people. “The negative element to being this age is you feel marginalised and quite redundant” he coughs, as if the word sticks in his throat, “redundant.”

Music helps him feel he’s making the most of his time: “It’s absolutely in the moment. There are very few things like that.” His 30s, 40s and 50s were always about deferred gratification – something was *going to* happen, some article was going to be published, or a grant won. “That was endless. You have to arrive at a point where you enjoy what is happening right now.”

Everything he says sounds very grown up to me; I wonder if it does to Graham. He says, “It’s hard, because I still don’t really know what growing up means.” He’s not the only one. He reflects and adds, “If growing up is getting to be at peace with yourself, that has happened.” As definitions go, it’s the best I’ve come across.

Research by Prof Klaus Rothermund, chair of general psychology at Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany, shows older people are more interested in supporting others, in using their energy for the benefit of younger generations, and in moral standards. While young people tend to

choose long-term aspirations, acting now to reap future benefits, these strategies lose meaning in old age, so people choose goals “where at the moment you act, you already see the meaning of your action”, Rothermund says. His experiments show people of all ages change their goals when they imagine their lives might end imminently. “The crucial thing is, if time is limited, that immediately makes you aware that you cannot do everything. You focus on what is most important.” If we’re lucky, when we grow old we experience this “developmental achievement … living in a way that focuses on what’s truly, lastingly important.”



‘It’s been a very exciting period of my life’: Rabbi Jeffrey Newman at an Extinction Rebellion protest in 2019. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

When I saw a viral video of an elderly rabbi carried by police at an Extinction Rebellion protest in 2019, I wondered what he might have to say about growing up in this final phase of life. What does it feel like for Jeffrey Newman, 78 when we speak? He had been scared of his 70th birthday, he says. From 70 on, “you can’t escape the fact you’re elderly.” I ask what difference it made and he says drily: “Nothing. The good thing about going through these barriers sometimes is to come out the other side and realise, actually, it’s just another day.”

For Newman the change started at 59, when he stopped working at a synagogue, giving him freedom and time “to work out what I really care about”. Since then, “It’s been a very exciting period of my life, learning even more about living in the moment and discovering what it means to be of service … Eldership has been lost in the west,” he says, “and it’s essential that we rediscover it.” He doesn’t have a clear definition – he’s still working that out – but after helping to form an eldership group in Extinction Rebellion and meeting with elders from across the world, he mentions curiosity, kindness, awareness, sensitivity and courage. “It’s got something to do with wisdom. That’s why you wouldn’t ever say or think you’re an elder, because it’s also got something to do with humility. All you can know is that you’re working towards it, not that you’ve ever got there.” With a sigh, I understand the same is true of growing up.



‘Eldership has got something to do with wisdom’: Newman last summer.
Photograph: Frank Dabba Smith

Newman speaks of his arrest at that protest as “an initiation ceremony” into elderhood. It was an act of service. He was afraid, he says, but “it was about being prepared to step out”. It’s a curveball to learn that, for a 78-year-old rabbi, a key milestone of growing up was getting arrested. But as I let go of the idea that I’ll ever arrive at a clear definition and state of adulthood, I seem better able to embrace its contradictions and paradoxes.

If I need any further proof that old age does not necessarily correlate with adulthood, I find it in a woman called Pog. There is a bounce and rhythm to her speech that feels determined, stimulating, playful; it's fitting that her nickname is a shortening of pogo stick. "Now that I've started thinking about it, I'm quite shocked really," she says when we speak. "I truly do not consider that I have grown up. And I'm 90."

Pog was born in Malta, where her father served in the navy. When she was nine, he was killed when the submarine HMS Thetis sank: "It affected my mother's mind, waiting three days to see if they would get them out." When she was 13 her mother was sectioned and Pog was adopted by a cousin. These losses, she says, "made me extremely grateful for the stability I subsequently found in marriage and motherhood." She met her husband, Brian, at church and they had three children. "The kids as teens, oh God, they were menaces, rebels. But they were such fun, and they still are."

Pog feels she grew up most through coping with her late husband's Alzheimer's. He was diagnosed when she was 78. "That's when I learned some very unpleasant things about myself. I lack patience, I lack empathy. Everybody says, 'Oh, you were marvellous with Brian.' But I know the truth. And that was serious growing up."

They lived with Brian's diagnosis for eight years, and Pog became his carer. She didn't want to move him to a home, but their children were worried about the strain on her. "Towards the end, I wasn't able to get out at all," she says, except for a weekly hairdo – her therapy. "I'd only be out for an hour, then I'd dash back."



‘Growing up ... I don’t feel I’m there yet’: Pog with her granddaughter Grace. Photograph: Owen Minton

Brian lived at home until he died, and Pog speaks honestly about the confusing mess of feelings she was left with: “The awful thing is I was so grateful for his death.” Grateful not to have to move him, and not to have to cope any longer: “It was a ghastly state to be in. Anybody looking after somebody with Alzheimer’s is going to have some really bad moments.”

Eighteen months later, the grief hit. “Suddenly everything changed,” Pog says. “I was crying at sloppy feelings and tunes and stuff like that, having memories. I truly mourned.” What followed was “a complete softening” of her personality. “Until then, there’d probably been a shell that was put on for outside viewing.” Pog had always been the person keeping it all together, not realising that she was “putting on a show” – until she wasn’t any more. When a friend recently signed his book “to Pog and Brian”, because that’s how he still thinks of them, she had a “total meltdown of grief”, six years after his death. “It makes me happy there are still chinks in the armour,” she says. Listening to her speak, I understand how mourning can lead to a renewal of life, to a deepening of our understanding of ourselves and of others, and, at every life stage, to the most meaningful kind of internal growth.

“I do think I have grown up as far as that’s concerned,” Pog says. “But for God’s sake, how old was I? 85!” And she still doesn’t consider herself a real adult. “There’s still a long way to go. The real sort of inside growing up, the mental attitude, I don’t feel I’m there yet.”

Rather than telling herself off about this, she sees its value. “One thing that really pleases me is the childish pleasures. Where you clap your hands and say, ‘Oh! Look at that!’ Somehow, I’ve still got that, and I love it.” This brings to mind Graham playing his violin, Rabbi Jeffrey discovering how to be of service – it is a choice to come alive and to continue coming alive, to grow throughout life. I ask if she thinks she will finish growing up in her lifetime. She says she hopes not, “because in a way, that’s a sort of immortality, isn’t it? While I may accept the fact I’m going to die and all that stuff, if there’s still a tiny spark that says there might be something more to learn, isn’t that something to look forward to?”

When I Grow Up: Conversations With Adults in Search of Adulthood by Moya Sarner is published by Scribe at £16.99. To support the Guardian and Observer, order your copy at guardianbookshop.com. Delivery charges may apply.

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‘I’m 80 and I’ve got more energy than most people’: the Arizona cheerleader squad for retirees – in pictures

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Automotive industry

A living room on a skateboard: how electric vehicles are redefining the car

Future EV designs offer drivers more space and leisure, with fewer parts making production more sustainable



The Hyundai Seven concept vehicle appears revolutionary, but it builds in features most EV designers are aiming at. Photograph: Ringo Chiu/Zuma/Rex/Shutterstock



[Jasper Jolly](#)

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Sat 11 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT

Take any petrol car sold today and show it to a mechanic working on a Ford Model T 100 years ago and there is a fairly good chance they would understand roughly how it works. An internal combustion engine at the front turns the wheels, carrying a driver behind a steering wheel, some passengers and luggage.

The advent of electric cars changes everything. No longer will the shape of the car be defined so rigidly by bulky engines, exhaust gas handling or driveshafts. At the same time, digital technology promises to replace everything from rear-view mirrors to the human driver. Never has the car industry had to cope with so many changes all at once.

All of these changes will come to a head in the next few years, says Adrian van Hooydonk, the design boss for BMW Group. Carmakers' main concerns will be electric power and integrating fast-evolving digital technology – all while improving environmental sustainability. "It will be a reinvention," he says.

Here are some of the most striking changes we can expect to see.

‘The skateboard’



A General Motors Hummer EV chassis in Lansing, Michigan. Photograph: Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

Already the lack of an internal combustion engine has had an impact. Look at the front of a [Tesla](#) and one thing becomes clear: there is no grille needed to provide air to the engine.

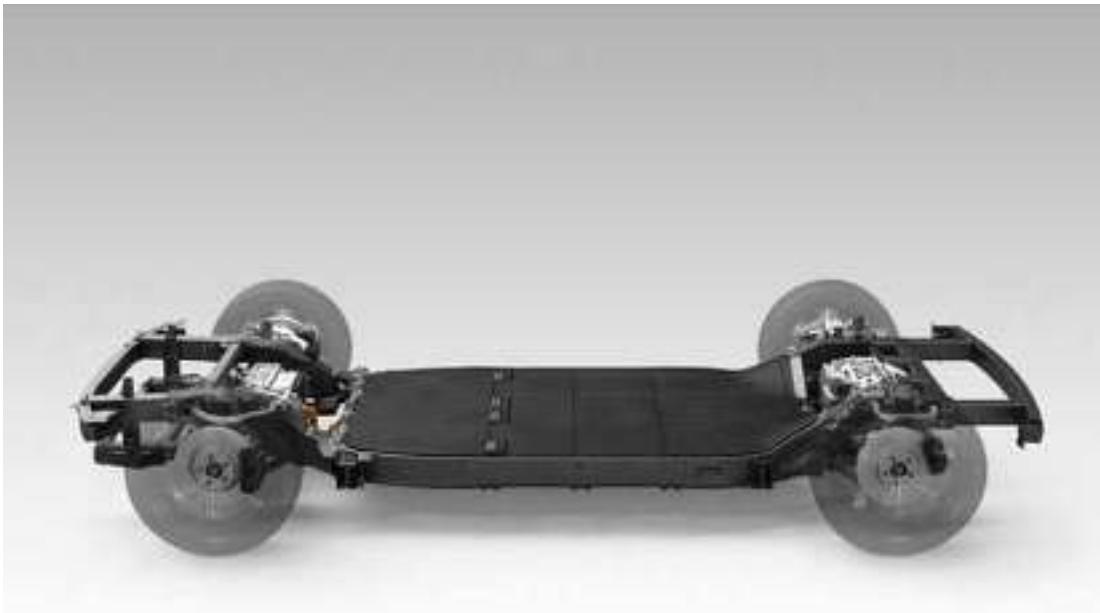
Rival manufacturers (in catchup mode to Tesla, the [world's most valuable carmaker](#)) are using the newfound design freedom to provide models such as the Hyundai Ioniq 5 and the Honda e that go for smaller but stronger lights in a package offering retro futurism that might have featured in a 1980s sci-fi film.



The Hyundai Ioniq 5 won the 2022 World Car of the Year award.
Photograph: Andrew Kelly/Reuters

But the changes will go far beyond superficial styling. Electric cars are built with a “skateboard” design, with a flat bed of batteries and wheels and motors at either end. Electric motors are also smaller than bulky internal combustion engines, meaning there is no need for an expanse of bonnet in front of the driver.

The US startup Canoo is one of the most notable examples of this. Its “lifestyle vehicle”, which may be delayed until early next year by supply chain problems, will have a notably flat front, giving it a boxy shape unlike most modern cars.



An EV ‘skateboard’ containing batteries and motors in an almost flat configuration. Photograph: Hyundai/Canoo

However, aerodynamic considerations still rule to some extent. The UK van startup Arrival initially [planned a vertical front windscreen](#), but eventually opted for a more traditional raked design because the air resistance reduced the vehicle’s range.

More interior space



The Hyundai Seven concept. Photograph: David Swanson/EPA

The skateboard means electric cars tend to be a few centimetres taller, and many carmakers have started with bulky sports utility vehicles (SUVs) first so they can fit in more batteries. But there is still more space for passengers.

In combustion engine cars “the mechanics took up a tremendous amount of space in the overall footprint,” says Mark Adams, design director for Vauxhall-Opel. What that space is repurposed for in an EV is then “really up to the individual vehicle and what you’re trying to do as a brand”.

Citroën, one of Vauxhall’s stablemates under the Stellantis conglomerate, has already shown one option: the Ami is a [tiny, no-frills two-seater car for pootling around cities](#). It will launch later this summer in the UK at less than £8,000.



Citroën's electric Ami. Photograph: Ed Alcock/The Guardian

In France the Ami can be driven by anyone over 14 years of age, with no need for a driving licence.

Adams believes the electric revolution could finally arrest the move towards bigger SUVs. “The days of the growing cars forever more are gone,” he says. “We don’t need to have massive footprint cars any more.”

Fewer car parts



The BMW Vision Circular on display in Munich in September 2021.
Photograph: Sascha Steinbach/EPA

Producing zero exhaust emissions is not the only major change to how cars look and feel. Reducing waste at end of life is increasingly seen as crucial for carmakers, and that means using fewer parts with fewer complicated mixes of materials where possible.

For instance, a car's front grille can contain 10 to 15 pieces, so dispensing with it reduces complication when it comes to fixing or recycling. BMW's i Vision Circular showed how a car could be made with only seven materials – all recyclable. Achieving that at scale will be another matter, however.

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Forget the steering wheel

The most conspicuous absence in future cars will eventually be the steering wheel. Driverless cars are already clocking up millions of miles on roads, and it seems inevitable that mostly or fully autonomous cars (known as level 4 and level 5 in industry jargon) will – eventually – come on to the market.

“If you then switch it to full autonomous you don’t necessarily need to stay in that same position,” says Vauxhall’s Adams. “We’re all looking at that space.”

Changing “one big thing changes 100 smaller things”, he adds. Less driving means less need for easily accessed controls, so cars will swap the aeroplane cockpit, stuffed full of buttons and switches, for a cleaner look which is more about leisure.

Overall, digitalisation will have an even bigger effect on car design than even electrification, says van Hooydonk.

Living room on wheels



Hyundai’s chief designer, SangYup Lee, sits inside the Seven Concept at Automobility LA in California in November 2021. Photograph: David Swanson/EPA

Canoo calls its US-targeted model a “loft on wheels”, while the Korean carmaker Hyundai’s concept Seven vehicle has swivelling lounge chairs and banquette seating that it describes as a “living space on wheels”. It is clear that some cars are going to be treated more as extensions of home that happen to move as drivers are freed to do other things.

All that free time on the move may give people more time for other activities. Cinema-style projectors or virtual reality entertainment are two options in the works. Car consultancies and big tech companies from Apple and Alphabet to Spotify and WeChat believe the car will be the next place where they can sell a huge array of services such as films, games and music.

Eventually, interiors could move from “living room” to “bedroom”, although putting beds rather than seats in cars throws up tricky safety problems. Nevertheless, the idea of going to bed at home and waking up at work, or even in another country, is no longer a Jetsons-style pipe dream.

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There's a new breed of young, violent, far-right activist in Britain: 'white jihadis'

[Matthew Collins](#)

The neo-Nazi founder of the banned terror group National Action was jailed this week. Sadly, there are more like him



'Alex Davies began outlining the framework for his neo-Nazi youth movement a decade ago.' Alex Davies arrives at Winchester crown court, 20 April 2022. Photograph: Andrew Matthews/PA

Sat 11 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 08.19 EDT

[Alex Davies](#), the co-founder of the proscribed far-right terror group [National Action](#), was sentenced to more than [eight years in prison](#) this week, bringing the total number of people convicted of membership of the group to 19. Formed in 2013, National Action espouses extreme antisemitic and anti-

immigrant views, and presented itself as better organised and more disciplined than other groups in a British neo-Nazi scene previously on the verge of collapse.

When [it was banned](#) by the then-home secretary, Amber Rudd, in December 2016, National Action was the first far-right organisation to be proscribed since the second world war. But it wasn't the first such group in that period to espouse extreme neo-Nazi beliefs or promote the ideology of terror and violence – nor will it be the last.

Davies, 27, a former University of Warwick student, began outlining the framework for this neo-Nazi youth movement a decade ago, while he was being monitored by the government's controversial Prevent programme.

Disaffected by the demise of the British National party (BNP) and in his own words, given the “all clear” by Prevent, Davies had considered joining, aiding and abetting the similarly minded [National Front](#) (NF) and another fascist successor group, [Patriotic Alternative](#), as well as the UK Independence party (Ukip), before striking out on his own with National Action.

Davies described himself as a socialist who had wanted his new group, NS131 (National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action), formed in 2017, to launch housing campaigns in and around Swansea. The group prided itself on positioning campaigns on issues such as housing and anti-fox hunting to burnish its image.

Along with his National Action co-founder, Ben Raymond, who was also [jailed late last year](#), Davies was hellbent, according to Mark Dennis QC, on “the usurping of the state and undermining democracy.” Dennis commented further that Davies “remains an adherent of Adolf Hitler and all that he stood for.”

Davies and others were admirers and adherents of Hitler and the Nazis. But it was not a single historical figure or movement that guided their hatred. That would vastly underestimate the breadth of influences that Raymond and

Davies injected into their dark, and mostly online, corner of the fascist milieu.

Raymond and Davies first began proselytising for what they called “white jihad” in 2013. They cultivated a community where beliefs such as satanism were found alongside calls for violent jihad and sexual exploitation. For its disciples, it would finally “rid” the British far right of its old pub brawlers and gangsters (as typified by 1990s gangs such as Combat 18), with their “Judeo-Christian” guilt and superstitions. “White jihad” appeared designed to enthuse and push new disciples towards a race war, leading to a dystopian society governed by race and enforced by violence.

The old far-right claims of protecting “our women” and “our children” were stripped away: this new breed of race haters hated women as well, and wanted to encourage their exploitation, sharing dark fantasies about the virtue and necessity of using rape against both women and children. When arrested, these new far-right adherents are increasingly found in possession of exploitative images of young children. Their justification tends to be that this “enables” them to “desensitise” themselves, in preparation for the acts of terrorism and murder ahead.

People convicted of continuing membership in National Action have included rail workers, would-be models, university graduates, a single mother, a serving soldier and even a serving Metropolitan Police officer. Representing belief in an ideology normally considered the domain of knuckle-dragging neanderthals, at the very least National Action could be said to have drawn in an eclectic mix of individuals.

Recent trials have revealed that far-right suspects have been in possession of documents extolling the virtues of killing women or producing anthrax, as well as – chillingly – details of how to produce firearms using a 3D printer.

The one true constant to this Nazi terrorism has been the idea of “leaderless resistance”, and the “lone wolf” (although many are not truly lone actors), as well as increasing youth. And that is worrying. How many of us would know if a son (or, more rarely, a daughter) was exploring these ideas alone in their bedroom?

We (thankfully) haven't witnessed a successful large-scale act of terrorism from a far-right extremist since the [1999 London nail bombings](#). However in the years since National Action was proscribed, 70 people have been convicted of far-right terror offences, including many who had plotted and prepared to carry out acts of murder and terrorism. We must be vigilant and educate ourselves to this new terror threat, if we are to prevent atrocities in the future.

- Matthew Collins is head of intelligence at [Hope Not Hate](#) and author of Nazi Terrorist: The Story of National Action

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OpinionWhales

‘Forever chemicals’ are killing whales – and harming us

[Ella Al-Shamahi](#)

Their use is linked to the rise in whale strandings on British beaches, but partial bans keeps letting industry off the hook



A sperm whale stranded on Pegwell Bay, Kent, in September 2019.
Photograph: ZSL/UK CSIP/PA

Sat 11 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT

In the aftermath of 9/11, scientists noticed a curious impact on the stress hormones of North Atlantic right whales. Ships are ubiquitous in our oceans but, for a brief window, immediately after the planes flew into the twin towers, there was a dramatic drop in traffic along the North Atlantic eastern seaboard, reducing underwater noise. While the world above ground was reeling, our underwater neighbours were thriving.

So often we think of the golden age of whaling as being over. Japanese and Icelandic whaling ships are now pariahs in the international community. But too often, out of sight is out of mind, and it remains easy to ignore the impact of our actions above ground on marine life. However, whales are increasingly forcing us to take note, as more of them than ever are beaching on our shores.

Whales have always [beached](#) across UK coastlines, but there is nothing natural about this latest surge in whale deaths, which is why we decided to shadow marine stranding investigators (Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme in Scotland and the [Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme](#) in England and Wales) exploring the rise in whale strandings on our island for Channel 4 – think CSI but for cetaceans.

When whales beach, especially large ones, it's very likely that they will beach again. Their bodies are designed to work in water, but on land their sheer size crushes their insides and they start to boil alive. That's part of the reason why there is a mad dash by [British Divers Marine Life Rescue](#) to get beached whales back into the water before their injuries become too great and they inevitably beach again.

That's how I found myself face to face with a [dead sei whale](#) at the foot of Scotland's most famous human-made landmark: the Forth Bridge. The whale had beached just a day earlier and we had tried to get to it then, but just as we arrived the team refloated it. We had hoped that it might survive its first beaching, but this time, the endangered animal – the world's third largest species of whale – was washed up dead.

One of the reasons I went into television was a visceral understanding of the power of an image. And this image spoke for itself. A majestic mammoth of a creature taking its final resting place in the shadows of industrialisation.

As a palaeoanthropologist, I'm used to seeing dead things, but the dead that I deal with are long dead – bones, not flesh. When you see flesh, it adds a sense of immediacy. I was supposed to be presenting to camera that day; instead I struggled to muster the energy. I felt utterly defeated by the sight.

For many of us, the call to “save the whale” is a cause we are sympathetic to. But too often, the practical steps we need to take to get there – whether it’s reducing climate change, ship strikes, noise or sonar – stump us. Those last few might appear complicated at first glance and would affect our way of life too much (not true), and tackling the first one has us dilly-dallying on the world stage. But what about chemical pollution, an issue very much in our self-interest?

It is imperative that we understand that whales are the canary in the coalmine for our relationship with chemical pollutants. Too many “forever chemicals”, or [PFAS](#), still persist in nature, nicknamed as such because they barely degrade. [PCBs](#) are one such chemical, and despite them being banned 40 years ago, killer whales are still dying in our waters from PCB poisoning. So deadly is the long-term impact that researchers suspect it is responsible for the crash in the birthrate we have seen in our only resident UK killer whale pod – the “[West Coast Community](#)” – which hasn’t had a calf born in 25 years.

Legacy chemicals are the gift that keeps on giving, and by the time we understand what they do to the environment, wildlife and our health they are already in the system – so we can’t afford to dawdle. That’s why our heel-dragging on plastic pollution is so frustrating – it’s everywhere and found in everything from salt to human lungs. Terrifying preliminary research is now linking plastics to cancer, Alzheimer’s disease and infertility in men.

It’s in our interest to demand of our leaders better oversight and research. To this end, 30 NGOs have [written](#) to the government asking for a ban on the non-essential use of PFAS. The problem is that when only some of these chemicals are banned, manufacturers just switch to others that are only slightly chemically different.

The EU appears to be going in the right direction, and it’s vital that as one of the most prominent island nations we not only follow suit, but lead this fight. So if you care about saving the whales (and your health), write to your MP and ask them to support this cause.

It's time to stop asking, "What killed the whale?" and start looking in the mirror for answers.

- [What Killed the Whale?](#), presented by Ella Al-Shamahi, airs on Channel 4 at 9pm on Sunday 12 June and will be available on All 4
-

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/11/forever-chemicals-killing-whales-harming-humans-strandings-bans>

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OpinionBrexit

Even the Murdoch press is now waking up to the truth: Brexit was an act of self-harm

[Michael Heseltine](#)

When the most anti-EU newspapers are pointing to the policy's inevitable failures, it's time our government admitted the truth



'Brexit has had dire consequences for the economy.' Lorries queue at the entrance of the Port of Dover, February 2022. Photograph: Glyn Kirk/AFP/Getty Images

Fri 10 Jun 2022 10.48 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 13.23 EDT

My love of gardening is grounded in the thrill of renewal: the first snowdrop bulb, the first songbird to break the silence, that shaft of warmth in early March. This week, as a veteran party member and supporter of every

Conservative leader from Churchill to Cameron, I have detected something similar: the renewal of my party's European legacy.

The disastrous consequences of Brexit for [living standards](#), for our economic wellbeing and for Britain's reputation abroad, have so far been obscured by Covid, the war in Ukraine and the headline-grabbing story of our prime minister's lack of [truthfulness and integrity](#). But this week, the British press perhaps unintentionally revealed the real world that is emerging as a result of Brexit.

While readers of the Guardian have been kept closely informed about the continuing tragedy of Brexit, it's only now that other parts of the British press have begun to consider the truth of its legacy. The economies of three of the regions that voted most heavily for Brexit were "smaller at the end of last year ... than at the time of the vote", [wrote David Smith](#) in the business section of this week's Sunday Times. Despite a weak pound making Britain's goods cheap for foreign buyers, "exporters are ... struggling", [Jim Armitage wrote](#) in the same paper. "First-quarter figures last week showed exports of food and drink to the EU were down 17%, or £614m, on pre-Covid levels. Exports to non European countries increased by 10.7%, or £223m, but not enough to offset the European decline."

Brexit was meant to be a "new beginning for the Tory party," Jeremy Warner wrote this week in the [Daily Telegraph](#), "but by making trade with Europe more difficult and costly it has so far only added to the country's travails". In its coverage of recent OECD warnings, the [Daily Mail reported](#) that the UK economy "is set to flatline next year – performing worse than every other G20 country except for sanctions-crippled Russia". Most of these countries have also felt the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the Covid epidemic – but not, of course, Brexit.

It goes on. Earlier this week, the [Times reported](#) the vice-chancellor of Cambridge University's warnings that a failure to agree terms to remain part of the EU's largest science funding scheme is "already harming researchers". On the same day, the paper published an opinion piece by Iain Martin, a prominent Brexiteer, [who wrote](#): "Painful as it is, we need to talk about Brexit". In the same paper was a story about Brexit immigration rules being

to blame for “airport chaos”, and an opinion piece by Simon Nixon, [who warned](#) that “the outlook for the UK is deteriorating”.

Not all those who voted to remain agreed with me that the campaign to rejoin the EU needed to begin the day after the referendum. But in my view, democracy is a vehicle of choice. Successive governments reverse each other’s mistakes. The bigger the mistake, the more urgent the need to reverse. It may take time. Brexit took 43 years. Initially, that process began slowly. It picked up pace and virulence with the acquisition of major newspapers by Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, and with the replacement of David English, a staunch European, with Paul Dacre at the Daily Mail. Over time, the public were fed a diet of deception, culminating in the [lies of the Brexit campaign](#) itself.

Here we come to the core of the matter. [Brexit](#) carried clear promises. No border between Northern Ireland and the Republic; new trade deals to replace the single market; a golden future with rising living standards. But a million Europeans have left our country, and Brexit has had dire consequences for the health service, social services and the economy.

Perhaps worst of all is the imminent publication by the government of laws to [break its word](#) over the Northern Ireland protocol. Trust is a characteristic of infinite value. It is the rock on which democracy stands. This government regards it as an optional extra to be used when convenient, and disregarded when not. You hear this on every doorstep, read about it in every opinion poll. I overheard two ladies talking about the prime minister: “I wouldn’t want him to marry my daughter. I wouldn’t want him to rent my house, I wouldn’t want him to manage my money.” Brexit is at the heart of the deception that the British people are feeling so keenly. That is why the issue will not and should not go away.

I have always been sceptical of the approach to politics where so-called experts in opinion manipulation send out ministers like parrots to tell us what they would like us to believe. “Need to move on. Draw lines in the sand, squawk. Get on with the job, squawk … squawk”.

This issue of trust is not going away. Everyone knows that the prime minister effectively lost the [vote of confidence](#). More than 40% of his

colleagues openly voted against him. Significantly more will have voted for him not out of any confidence but for a range of reasons. When I stood against Margaret Thatcher, her majority evaporated within days when the real judgment of her colleagues was about to be tested for the second time.

Yet as we have seen, and in some cases almost despite themselves, even the most Europhobic parts of our press are beginning to shine a light on the inevitable failures of Brexit and – perhaps inadvertently – to fertilise the green shoots of a return to truth-telling in politics, to British values, and to economic common sense.

I say to all those who have supported the European vision of prime ministers from Churchill through to Cameron: now is the time to restore this vision of our country as a major European partner in one of the world's most powerful and influential organisations. We owe that to generations that are yet to come.

- Michael Heseltine is a former Conservative deputy prime minister

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[Opinion](#)[US Capitol attack](#)

Trump's forces are preparing for the next storming of the Capitol. This time, they plan to win

[Jonathan Freedland](#)



The danger to US democracy didn't end on 6 January – his followers are now ripping up the safeguards that foiled them



Scenes from 6 January 2021 are shown onscreen during the House hearing into the Capitol attack Photograph: Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.41 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 16.23 EDT

The pictures are appalling, the words terrifying. If Thursday's opening session is anything to go by, the [primetime televised hearings](#) into the storming of Capitol Hill on 6 January 2021 will be both revealing and disturbing. But though their focus is on a winter's day 18 months ago, they are not about America's past. They are a warning about its future.

Make no mistake, the revelations of what exactly took place when a violent mob broke into the halls of the US Congress, seeking to overturn a democratic election by preventing the formal certification of Joe Biden's victory, are a valuable, and shocking, addition to the historical record. The House committee that has been investigating the attempted insurrection for the past year – gathering in excess of [140,000 documents](#) and speaking to more than 1,000 witnesses – discovered that Donald Trump's response, on learning that the rioters were chanting "Hang Mike Pence", was to say that his vice-president "deserves" it.

Previously unseen footage and fresh testimony buried the suggestion, made by one Republican congressman, that the behaviour of the insurrectionists of

6 January was like a “[normal tourist visit](#)” or that it was, as Fox News’s most watched host, Tucker Carlson, was still insisting on Thursday, no more than a “forgettable, minor outbreak of violence”. Instead, one police officer, Caroline Edwards, who suffered a traumatic brain injury as the Capitol was breached, described being stampeded, knocked unconscious, pepper-sprayed and teargassed. There was so much blood on the floor, she slipped over. “It was carnage,” she said. “It was chaos.”

What’s more, those around Trump knew that the animating cause of this violence was a lie. They knew that Biden had won and Trump had lost. Trump’s attorney general, William Barr, testified that he regarded the claim that the 2020 election was stolen as “bullshit”. Trump’s daughter Ivanka agreed. Plenty of those [Republicans](#) in Congress who went along with the lie knew it was garbage – and they knew that they were breaking their oath in indulging it. The investigators revealed that “multiple” Republican congressmen had hastily sought presidential pardons from Trump for what they did, namely trying to overturn a legitimate election.

Some Republicans take comfort from the thought that voters have got other things on their minds just now, that as midterm elections approach Americans will be more preoccupied with Biden’s failures to tame inflation than Trump’s incitement of an insurrection. Petrol at \$10 a gallon today will matter more than the gasoline the Republican president threw on the fire of his supporters’ rage a year and a half ago.

Dispiritingly, that view might be correct on the politics. [Democrats](#) are unlikely to shift their fortunes in the present by laying out a case, even a compelling one, about the past. But that does not make 6 January a lost cause, still less an irrelevant one. Because none of this is about the past. It is about now.

The most obvious proof is Trump himself. He’s had some [setbacks](#) in this primary season, where his favoured candidates in internal party contests have not always prevailed, but his dominance of the Republican party endures. Most assume that if Trump wants to be the Republican presidential nominee in 2024, he will be. Of course, he remains utterly unrepentant about the events of 6 January. On the eve of Thursday’s hearing, he posted on his

new social media site that that day “represented the greatest movement in the history of our Country to Make America Great Again”.

Unseen footage of January 6 played in House committee hearing – video

But even if Trump does not regain, or attempt to regain, the presidency, he is still part of the US’s future. Whatever his next moves personally, Trumpism is now the defining creed of the Republican tribe. Polls find hefty majorities of Republican voters believing the lie, adamant that Trump was the real winner in 2020. Whether the nominee is the former president himself or a more disciplined politician – the likes of Florida governor Ron DeSantis – Trumpism, with its commitment to permanent culture war and its contempt for democratic norms, is now a central feature of the American landscape.

But here’s why these current hearings should be regarded less as a past judgment than a future warning. On 6 January, the determination of the pro-Trump forces to subvert a democratic election was not in doubt. They failed only because enough restraints were in place to thwart them, whether it was state-level election officials determined to count the votes, and count them fairly, or a court system that threw out wholly groundless claims of electoral fraud. But 2024 will not be the same as 2020. Because Republicans have been busy.

Methodically and across the US, Republicans have been working to dismantle the guardrails that keep American democracy on track. In 2021 alone, at least 19 Republican-ruled states passed measures whose official purpose was tackling (nonexistent) voter fraud but whose practical effect will be voter suppression, making it harder for low-income and minority Americans in particular to cast a ballot – and those efforts are continuing.

More alarmingly, several Republican state legislatures have sought to put themselves or their allies in charge of what used to be non-partisan election machinery, installing Republicans – including “stop the steal” Trump loyalists – in the offices where votes get counted and certified. Worse, there are moves to make state legislatures the sole authority over elections, cutting out the courts altogether: so the Republicans who dominate, say, the Wisconsin legislature could decide that they and they alone will allocate the state’s electoral votes, regardless of who Wisconsin’s citizens actually voted

for. Rerun 2020 in this new, altered environment and states that held firm in 2020, giving Biden the victory he had legitimately won, could hand power in 2024 to the loser.

The key shift here is in the Republican party itself. On Thursday night, Liz Cheney, vice-chair of the House committee investigating 6 January, did an admirable job, telling her fellow Republicans that when Trump is gone their “dishonour will remain”. But she is an outlier, isolated and ostracised from her party.

Next week sees the 50th anniversary of the Watergate break-in. But if that event were to happen now, it would play out very differently. The rightwing media would not even cover it, just as Fox did not cover Thursday’s hearing. It’s inconceivable that Senate Republicans would turn on a Republican president the way their predecessors turned on Richard Nixon, driving him from office. We can know that, because they did not turn on Trump.

Nearly a decade ago, the scholar David Runciman wrote a book called [The Confidence Trap](#). It argued that the problem with democracy is that each time it survives a crisis, people wrongly assume that it’s indestructible. We’re confident that democracy can survive anything because it survived the last thing. In today’s America, that confidence now looks badly misplaced. The US only narrowly survived Trump on 6 January 2021 – and the defences that kept the peril at bay are steadily getting weaker.

- Jonathan Freedland is a Guardian columnist. To listen to his podcast Politics Weekly America, search “Politics Weekly America” wherever you get your podcasts

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[China](#)

US warns of ‘stark’ stakes in Taiwan Strait if status quo unilaterally altered

Defence secretary says US does not support Taiwan independence, which China says would prompt it to take island back



US secretary of defence Lloyd Austin delivering his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Photograph: How Hwee Young/EPA

[Vincent Ni](#) and agencies

Sat 11 Jun 2022 13.07 EDTFirst published on Fri 10 Jun 2022 20.29 EDT

The US has warned of “especially stark” stakes in the [Taiwan](#) Strait if the status quo is unilaterally altered, as China reiterated its resolve to take the island back if it declares independence.

Speaking at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in [Singapore](#) on Saturday, US defence secretary Lloyd Austin said Washington does not

support Taiwanese independence, and the Joe Biden administration “categorically” opposes any change of the status quo.

Austin’s comments came as his Chinese counterpart, Wei Fenghe, was earlier reported as saying Beijing will “not hesitate to start a war no matter the cost” if independence was declared in Taiwan.

Taiwan’s foreign ministry denounced China’s claims of its sovereignty as “absurd” and thanked the US for the show of support. “Taiwan has never been under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government, and the people of Taiwan will not succumb to threats of force from the Chinese government,” said ministry spokesperson Joanne Ou.

“As part of our one-China policy, we’ll continue to fulfil our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act. That includes assisting Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defence capability,” Austin said. “And it means maintaining our own capacity to resist any use of force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardise the security or the social or economic system of the people of Taiwan.”

Tensions over Taiwan have escalated in particular due to increasing Chinese aircraft incursions into the island’s air defence identification zone (Adiz). President Biden said during a visit to Japan in May that Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it was attacked by China. The White House has since insisted its policy of “strategic ambiguity” over whether or not it would intervene has not changed.

In his keynote speech on Saturday, Austin blasted China’s “provocative, destabilising” military activity near Taiwan and said the US would do its part to manage tensions with China and prevent conflict despite Beijing becoming increasingly aggressive in the Asia-Pacific region. He told the Shangri-La forum the US would continue to stand by its allies, including Taiwan.

“That’s especially important as the PRC [China] adopts a more coercive and aggressive approach to its territorial claims,” Austin said. There had been an

“alarming” increase in the number of unsafe and unprofessional encounters between Chinese planes and vessels with those of other countries, Austin said.

A senior Chinese military officer called Austin’s speech “confrontational”. Despite Washington’s repeated claim that it does not support Taiwan’s independence, Beijing has long suspected otherwise. The suspicion has been exacerbated by the breakdown of mutual trust in recent years as power competition intensifies.

Earlier, Wei Fenghe reportedly told Austin that Beijing would “smash to smithereens any Taiwan independence plot and resolutely uphold the unification of the motherland”.

With concerns mounting over China-Taiwan tensions, Japan’s prime minister, Fumio Kishida, said in a keynote address to the summit that his government would consider acquiring a preemptive strike capability because “Ukraine today may be east Asia tomorrow”.

The world must be “prepared for the emergence of an entity that tramples on the peace and security of other countries by force or threat without honouring the rules”, he said. He did not mention China by name in his address, but repeatedly called for the “rules-based international order” to be upheld.

Kishida said he would lay out a “free and open Indo-Pacific plan for peace” by next spring in which Japan would provide development aid, patrol boats, maritime law enforcement capabilities and other assistance to countries in south-east Asia and the Pacific to help them better guard themselves.

Japan would provide such support to at least 20 countries, train at least 800 maritime security personnel and provide about \$2bn in assistance over the next three years, he said.

Kishida told his audience that Japan’s defence enhancement would be transparent and within the scope of its constitution.

He said the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region was deteriorating because of increasing tensions in the East and South China seas and around Taiwan.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its threat to use nuclear weapons had made things worse but the trend must be reversed, Kishida said, noting his position as the leader of the only country that has suffered nuclear attacks.

"I must admit that the path to a world without nuclear weapons has become even more challenging," Kishida said.

He described North Korea's repeated launches of ballistic missiles, including ICBMs, and development of nuclear weapons as a serious threat to regional peace and stability. "The non-transparent buildup of military capacity, including nuclear arsenals, around Japan has become a serious regional security concern," he said.

The threat may damage non-proliferation efforts by creating a reluctance among possessors of nuclear weapons to abandon them, and a desire among others to develop them, Kishida said.

Austin said in his speech, which focused on the US commitment to Asia, the US would maintain its presence in the region but Washington understood the need to prevent conflict.

"We do not seek confrontation or conflict. And we do not seek a new cold war, an Asian Nato or a region split into hostile blocs," he said.

Austin also referred to Ukraine, which has been a priority in Washington and other western capitals over the past three months. "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is what happens when oppressors trample the rules that protect us all," Austin said. "It's a preview of a possible world of chaos and turmoil that none of us would want to live in."

As well as over Taiwan, China and the US have been at loggerheads over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with Washington accusing Beijing of providing tacit support for Moscow.

China has called for talks to end the war, but has stopped short of condemning Russia's actions and has repeatedly criticised American arms donations to Ukraine. China's expansive claims in the South China Sea have also stoked tensions with Washington.

Wei is to deliver a speech at the summit on Sunday. The three-day forum, concluding on Sunday, is taking place for the first time since 2019 after twice being postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With Reuters, Associated Press and Agence France-Presse

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[The ObserverChina](#)

Chinese police arrest nine after women attacked at restaurant

Footage shows man striking woman and dragging her outside after she pushes him away



Footage of the incident was widely circulated online. Photograph: [@badiucao/Twitter](#)

[*Vincent Ni*](#) and agencies

Sat 11 Jun 2022 03.57 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 15.33 EDT

Nine men have been arrested over a vicious attack on a group of women at a restaurant in northern [China](#), in a case that prompted outrage over predatory sexual behaviour and violence against women.

CCTV footage of the incident widely circulated online shows a man placing his hand on a woman's back as she shares a meal with two companions at a

barbecue restaurant in the city of Tangshan in Hebei province in the early hours of Friday.

After the woman pushes him away, the man strikes her before others drag her outside and deal a barrage of blows as she lies on the ground. Another woman is also knocked to the floor.

The video quickly went viral on China's internet and renewed a debate about sexual harassment and gender-based violence in a country where the conversation around women's rights has grown in recent years despite pressure from a patriarchal society, internet censorship and patchy legal support.

Last year, a man threw hot liquid at Xiao Meili, a well-known Chinese feminist, in a restaurant [after she asked him to stop smoking](#). Despite being on the receiving end of the violence, Xiao said she was then repeatedly trolled on China's internet, where many blamed her for causing trouble.

Internet censors blocked keywords linked to the ♦MeToo movement after a wave of women accused university professors of sexual harassment in 2018. Campaigners also say domestic abuse remains pervasive and under-reported.

Tangshan police said on Saturday that all nine of the men involved in the latest violent incident had been arrested. Responding to the national outrage, the Communist party chief in the city, Wu Weidong, was quoted by local media as saying the men would be punished according to the law and that the authorities should launch a campaign to eradicate "gangsters and evil forces".

Two women treated at hospital following the incident were "in stable conditions and not in mortal danger", while two others sustained minor injuries, authorities said on Friday.

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The attack has shocked China and prompted many to ask why this has happened. “The reason that these men felt they could freely assault the woman for rejecting their harassment is because so many men in the past have gone unpunished by the authorities for doing the same,” said Yaqiu Wang, a senior China researcher at Human Rights Watch.

On the social media site Weibo, the related hashtag has generated more than half a billion views and tens of thousands of comments on Saturday, where many users, particularly women, urged the authorities to crack down on gender-based violence.

“All of this could happen to me, could happen to any of us,” said one commenter in a post liked more than 100,000 times.

“How is this sort of thing still happening in 2022?” wrote another. “Please give them criminal sentences, and don’t let any of them get away.”

China Women’s News, published by the All-China Women’s Federation, said in a commentary on Saturday that “there can only, and must only, be zero tolerance for such vicious cases of serious violations of women’s rights and interests”.

Early this year, a video clip that showed a woman with a chain and heavy lock around her neck prompted China’s premier, Li Keqiang, to vow to crack down hard on the trafficking of women and children.

Last year, a Chinese man was sentenced to death for murdering his ex-wife as she livestreamed on social media in a case that shocked the nation.

Agence France-Presse and Reuters contributed to this report

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Smoking

Written warning on every cigarette in Canadian world-first

‘Poison in every puff’ message proposed amid government concern photo warnings on tobacco packages have lost impact



The Canadian government expects health warnings on each cigarette to be introduced in the latter half of next year. Photograph: Jonathan Brady/PA

Associated Press in Toronto

Fri 10 Jun 2022 22.25 EDT

Canada is poised to become the first country in the world to require that a warning be printed on every cigarette.

The move builds on Canada’s mandate to include graphic photo warnings on tobacco products’ packaging, a policy that started an international trend when it was introduced two decades ago.

“We need to address the concern that these messages may have lost their novelty, and to an extent we worry that they may have lost their impact as well,” the minister of mental health and addictions, Carolyn Bennett, said at a news conference on Friday.

“Adding health warnings on individual tobacco products will help ensure that these essential messages reach people including the youth, who often access cigarettes one at a time in social situations, sidestepping the information printed on a package.”

A consultation period for the proposed change was set to begin on Saturday, and the government anticipated the changes coming into force in the latter half of 2023.

While the exact messaging printed on cigarettes could change, Bennett said the current proposal is: “Poison in every puff.”

Bennett also revealed expanded warnings for cigarette packages that include a longer list of smoking’s health effects, including stomach cancer, colorectal cancer, diabetes and peripheral vascular disease.

Canada has required the photo warnings since the turn of the millennium, but the images haven’t been updated in a decade.

Rob Cunningham, a senior policy analyst with the Canadian Cancer Society, said he hoped the warnings printed directly on cigarettes became popular internationally, just as the package warnings did.

“This is going to set a world precedent,” he said, adding no other country had implemented such regulations. He was hopeful the warning would make a real difference.

“It’s a warning that you simply cannot ignore,” Cunningham said. “It’s going to reach every smoker, with every puff.”

The move also drew praise from Geoffrey Fong, a professor at the University of Waterloo and principal investigator with the International

Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project.

“This is a really potentially powerful intervention that’s going to enhance the impact of health warnings,” Fong said.

Smoking rates have been steadily falling over the years. The latest data from Statistics Canada, released last month, shows 10% of Canadians reported smoking regularly. The government is seeking to cut that rate in half by 2035.

StatCan noted that roughly 11% Canadians 20 and older reported being current smokers, compared to just 4% of people aged 15 to 19.

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[Washington Post](#)

Washington Post fires reporter Felicia Sonmez amid social media controversy

Termination letter accuses Sonmez of insubordination and maligning co-workers after colleague retweeted offensive joke



The Washington Post said Felicia Sonmez was undermining its reputation for journalistic integrity and fairness after she criticized colleagues.
Photograph: Pablo Martínez Monsiváis/AP

Associated Press

Fri 10 Jun 2022 18.31 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 18.54 EDT

The [Washington Post](#) has fired its reporter Felicia Sonmez, who triggered a vigorous online debate this week over social media policy and public treatment of colleagues after she criticized a fellow reporter for retweeting an offensive joke.

The Post said on Friday it would not comment on personnel issues. But a copy of a termination letter sent on Thursday, accusing her of “insubordination, maligning your coworkers online and violating the Post’s standards on workplace collegiality and inclusivity” was published on the Mediaite website and quoted in other news accounts.

The outspoken political writer, whose second stint at the Post began in 2018, declined comment on Friday.

The incident began when Sonmez tweeted a screen shot of an offensive joke that a colleague, Dave Weigel, had sent out on Twitter, adding the comment: “Fantastic to work at a news outlet where retweets like this are allowed.” The Post suspended Weigel for a month for his retweet, according to published reports.

That prompted another reporter, Jose Del Real, to criticize Sonmez online. While saying Weigel had been wrong, Del Real called for compassion. “Rallying the Internet to attack him for a mistake he made doesn’t actually solve anything,” he wrote. That led to a contentious back-and-forth, with Sonmez accusing Del Real of attacking her.

As an online debate widened and drew in more people, the Post’s executive editor, Sally Buzbee, sent out two memos calling on staff members to show respect for each other. The second, on Tuesday, was more stern: Buzbee wrote that “we do not tolerate colleagues attacking colleagues either face to face or online.”

As it consumed more attention, a handful of Post employees tweeted their support of the newspaper as a good place to work. Sonmez noted that those people were among the newspaper’s best-paid stars, and suggested there has been a longstanding double standard in how social media policy is applied to them.

She also retweeted a screen shot that said Del Real had blocked her on Twitter, adding the comment, “So I hear the Washington Post is a collegial

workplace.” While it was consuming attention, another Post reporter, Lisa Rein, tweeted to Sonmez: “please stop.”

Sonmez, who worked at the Post in the early 2010s, left and rejoined, sued the Post and its top editors last year, charging discrimination in barring her from covering stories related to sexual assault after she had previously gone public as an assault victim herself.

In the termination letter, signed by human resources officer Wayne Connell, the Post said that in questioning the motives of colleagues, Sonmez was undermining the Post’s reputation for journalistic integrity and fairness.

“The same is true of your baseless derision directed to our policies and practices, and our commitment to a safe and supportive work environment,” he wrote.

Sonmez’s union, the Washington-Baltimore News Guild, said it was committed to ensuring that workers are only disciplined with just cause, but that it did not comment on individual personnel issues.

One Post columnist, Karen Attiah, tweeted on Friday that Sonmez had “always been incredibly kind and supportive” of her, and had reached out when Attiah had been the target of online abuse.

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[Australian military](#)

Australian defence minister warns China risks sparking arms race

Richard Marles outlines vision of economic cooperation and military deterrence but warns lack of transparency can upset balance

- [China will ‘start a war’ if Taiwan declares independence](#)
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Australia has recommitted to the Five Power Defence Arrangements. In Singapore, from left, are New Zealand's Peeni Henare, Malaysia's Hishammuddin Hussein, Singapore's Ng Eng Hen, Australia's Richard Marles and Britain's Kara Owen. Photograph: Syawalludin Zain/AP

Guardian staff and Australian Associated Press
Sat 11 Jun 2022 02.23 EDT

China's military buildup must be accompanied by transparency and reassurances to its neighbours or risk triggering an arms race, Australia's deputy prime minister and defence minister, Richard Marles, has said.

Speaking in Singapore at the Shangri-La Dialogue on Saturday, Marles laid out a vision of economic cooperation balanced with military deterrence, but sounded a warning about militarisation in the [Asia Pacific](#).

"China's military buildup is now the largest and most ambitious we have seen by any country since the end of the second world war," he said.

"So it is critical that China's neighbours do not see this buildup as a risk to them. Because without that reassurance, it is inevitable that countries will seek to upgrade their own military capabilities in response. Insecurity is what drives an arms race."

However, China was not going anywhere and its economic success was connected to Australia's own, he said.

Marles said Russia's invasion of Ukraine had shown economic interdependence was not enough to dissuade conflict between nations.

Investment in military deterrence would continue to be necessary to show the risks of conflict outweighed any benefits.

"China is not going anywhere and we all need to live together and hopefully prosper together," Marles said. "China's economic success is connected to that of our own and the region."

"Australia's approach will be anchored in a resolve to safeguard our national interests, and our support for regional security and stability based on rules."

He said the rule of law, not power, would govern conduct between states.

Paraphrasing the former Australian prime minister Paul Keating, Marles said China would need to accept restraints on its power as it looked to take a leadership role in the region.

The communist superpower's militarisation of the [South China Sea](#) was intended to "deny the legitimacy" of its neighbours' claims to the waterway.

Marles said it should give nations "concern" that China had failed to criticise Russia's invasion of Ukraine despite committing to principles of sovereignty.

"When it comes to the security and stability of our own region, there will be continuity in Australian defensive policy," he said.

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This would mean a continuation of the Australia-US alliance, commitment to Aukus and an "accelerated" push to military quantum technology, AI, undersea warfare capabilities and hypersonic munitions.

"Australia's investments in defence capability are a necessary and prudent response to the military buildup we see taking place in the Indo-Pacific," Marles said.

"They aim to contribute to an effective balance of military power. A balance of ensuring no state will ever conclude here that the benefits of conflict outweigh the risks."

On the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue, the deputy prime minister recommitted to the 50-year-old Five Power Defence Arrangements group involving Malaysia, [Singapore](#), Australia, New Zealand and Britain.

Reuters reported on Saturday the Malaysian senior defence minister, Hishammuddin Hussein, expressed concern incidents and accidents could "spiral out of control" in the region, while Marles was reported to have said the arrangement was not something Australia took for granted.

A war of words erupted between the US and Chinese defence ministers over Taiwan after Wei Fenghe reportedly told his counterpart, Lloyd Austin, Beijing would “not hesitate to start a war no matter the cost” if Taiwan declared independence.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jun/11/australian-defence-minister-warns-china-risks-sparking-arms-race>

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January 6 hearing: Trump was at heart of plot that led to ‘attempted coup’

House panel makes case in primetime broadcast, revealing Trump said perhaps Mike Pence deserved to be hanged by rioters

- [January 6 hearing - live](#)

Capitol riot: House committee shown dramatic evidence of 'attempted coup' – video report

*Lauren Gambino in Washington
@laurenegambino*

Fri 10 Jun 2022 09.02 EDTFirst published on Thu 9 Jun 2022 20.01 EDT

The House select committee investigating the deadly January 6 assault on the US Capitol in 2021 said [Donald Trump](#) was at the center of a sprawling conspiracy to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election that culminated in an “attempted coup”.

With a shocking new accounting of the worst attack on the halls of Congress in more than two centuries, the committee outlined in gripping detail over the course of two hours on Thursday night the grave threat posed to American democracy then and now by the former president’s actions.

In new evidence, Congresswoman Liz Cheney, a Republican of Wyoming and the committee’s vice-chair, said of Trump: “Aware of the rioters’ chants to ‘hang Mike Pence’ [his vice-president], the president responded with this sentiment: ‘Maybe our supporters have the right idea.’ Mike Pence ‘deserves’ it.”

“The American people deserve answers,” said Congressman Bennie Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat and chair of the committee. “So tonight, and over the next few weeks, we’re going to remind you of the reality of what happened that day.

Thompson and Cheney laid out what they described as the “unconstitutional” misconduct of a former president who continues to peddle the lie that the election he lost to the Democrats’ [Joe Biden](#) was stolen from him – a lie, they argue, that he knows to be false.

“All Americans should keep in mind this fact,” Cheney said during the primetime proceedings, “on the morning of January 6, President Donald Trump’s intention was to remain president of the United States despite the lawful outcome of the 2020 election and in violation of his constitutional obligation to relinquish power.”

Their presentation featured never-before-seen video from the attack by extremist supporters of Trump who stormed the US Capitol to try to stop Congress from certifying Biden’s win.

In a cinematic display meant to grip a weary public, the panel weaved footage of the violence together with live testimony and videotaped depositions from some of Trump’s closest allies and family members.

These included the former attorney general William Barr, Donald Trump’s daughter and White House adviser Ivanka Trump, his son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner, and a longtime aide and spokesperson, Jason Miller. The effect was piercing.

The first of six public hearings offered revelations on what Thompson described as a “sprawling, multi-step conspiracy aimed at overturning the presidential election”.

Members of the audience gasped when Cheney said Trump, after being informed the mob was calling for Pence to be hanged, told aides that perhaps his vice-president “deserved” it. Trump was furious that Pence, presiding over a joint session of Congress in what is typically a ceremonial role,

refused to reject the certification of Biden's victory, as Trump publicly and privately pressured him to do.

The committee showed a clip of Barr saying he "repeatedly" told Trump "in no uncertain terms" that he had lost the election and the claims of it being "stolen" because of widespread voting fraud were "bullshit".

In another interview, Ivanka Trump said she "accepted" Barr's determination that the presidential election had been fair.

On Friday morning, Trump posted on his own Truth Social platform, having been banned from Twitter, calling Barr "weak and frightened" and his own daughter "checked out".

The morning after the first Jan 6 hearing, Trump is on Truth Social going after Bill Barr. He also says his daughter Ivanka was not involved in looking at the election results as she had "long since checked out" and claims he never said "hang Mike Pence."
pic.twitter.com/3xtT64sVbe

— Meridith McGraw (@meridithmcgraw) [June 10, 2022](#)

Cheney also announced that multiple House Republicans sought pardons from Trump for their involvement in the insurrection, including Congressman Scott Perry of Pennsylvania, who declined a request to testify before the committee. Perry's office denied the allegation.

The evening presentation also included witness testimony from Nick Quested, a [British documentary film-maker](#) who was embedded with the far-right Proud Boys group that led the storming of the Capitol. Footage he filmed helped chronicle the Proud Boys' involvement in planning the assault.

On Friday morning, Quested told ABC's Good Morning America that at the point the far right extremists he was filming breached the first barriers on the outskirts of the Capitol "it all changed" as men protesting far left "antifa" turned into rioters challenging the outnumbered police.

“It crossed the rubicon at that point,” he said and the mob was pouring over the Capitol steps “like water”.

“We saw so many things that were so troubling ... it felt like there were 60,000 people pouring onto the steps of the Capitol like water.” — Documentarian Nick Quested discusses what he witnessed at the Jan. 6 riots and hearings. <https://t.co/tpStQdPP97> pic.twitter.com/oYj56hJlqH

— Good Morning America (@GMA) [June 10, 2022](#)

The panel also [heard from Caroline Edwards](#), a Capitol police officer who described in harrowing detail how she was assaulted by the mob, some armed with bats, clubs and bear spray. Edwards said she was knocked unconscious on the steps and after she came to, she ran to help overwhelmed officers trying to stop insurrectionists breaking into the Senate.

The scene was like a “war zone” she said, and she was slipping on her fellow officers’ blood. “It was carnage. It was chaos,” she said.

Drawing on the findings of their nearly [year-long investigation](#), which includes more than 100 subpoenas, 1,000 interviews and 100,000 documents, the select committee will attempt to establish a comprehensive sequence of events that built to the cold January day when Trump encouraged his supporters to “fight like hell”.

The attack, which played out in real-time on national television, left more than 100 police officers injured, as they clashed with a pro-Trump mob. Nine people lost their lives [in connection with the riot](#), including a woman who was fatally shot by a Capitol police officer as she attempted to breach the House chamber.

Convincing a deeply polarized American public that the Capitol riot was not a spontaneous act of violence but the culmination of a months-long plot by Trump and his allies to undermine the results of a free and fair election is no easy task for the committee.



Donald Trump speaks to supporters from the Ellipse near the White House on 6 January 2021. Photograph: Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

Thompson argued that American democracy “remains in danger” as many Republicans at local and national level continue to boost the myth that the 2020 election was stolen from Trump and use it in their own election campaigns.

“The conspiracy to thwart the will of the people is not over,” Thompson said.

“January 6 and the lies that led to insurrection have put two and a half centuries of constitutional democracy at risk,” he added. “The world is watching what we do here.”

The [select committee](#) is composed of seven Democrats and two Republicans.

Speaking from the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles before the hearing on Wednesday, Biden said the assault on the Capitol was a “clear and flagrant violation of the constitution”. “A lot of Americans are going to see for the first time some of the details,” he said.

Hundreds have been charged in connection with the events of January 6, including some with seditious conspiracy.

The hearings will resume next week.

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Ivanka Trump

Ivanka Trump says she does not believe father's claim 2020 election was stolen

Ex-president's daughter tells House January 6 panel she accepted William Barr's view that voter fraud claims had 'zero basis'

January 6 hearings – follow live

'Complete nonsense': William Barr and Ivanka Trump reject Trump's fraud claims – video

[Maanvi Singh](#) and agencies

[@maanvissingh](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 22.35 EDT Last modified on Sat 11 Jun 2022 00.12 EDT

Donald Trump's daughter and former White House adviser [Ivanka Trump](#) told the congressional panel investigating the insurrection at the US Capitol on 6 January 2021, that she does not believe her father's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him because of voting fraud.

Ivanka Trump was seen in a video deposition, shown to the public for the first time during the first hearing of the House panel.

She said her perspective changed after hearing that Bill Barr, who was Trump's attorney general for most of 2020, until he resigned that December, had explained to her father repeatedly that he had lost the election.

"I respect Attorney General Barr. So I accepted what he was saying," Ivanka Trump told congressional investigators.

Cheney plays a clip of Ivanka Trump telling the January 6 committee she accepted Barr's conclusion that the election result wasn't affected by fraud pic.twitter.com/jcawWjXIyy.

— Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) [June 10, 2022](#)

And what Barr was saying was that his justice department had discovered no significant fraud to support Donald Trump's claim – one the former president is still making – that massive voter fraud in several states caused the 2020 election to be “stolen” from him.

The committee showed a video of Barr's appearance before panel investigators. In that video, Barr called his former boss's fraud claims “bullshit” and said that he had “repeatedly told the president in no uncertain terms that I did not see evidence of fraud that would have affected the outcome of the election. And frankly, a year and a half later, I still haven't.”

He added that he told the president at the time that there was “zero basis” for his allegations that the election was rigged against him.

Barr said he spoke to Donald Trump shortly after the November 2020 result and “I made it clear to him that I did not agree with the idea of saying the election was stolen, and putting out this stuff, which I told the president was bullshit, and I didn't want to be a part of it.”

NBCNews: In a tape Chairman Thompson played of the Jan. 6 committees's interview with William Barr, the former AG said he “repeatedly told the president in no uncertain terms that I did not see evidence of fraud that, you know, would have affected the ou...
pic.twitter.com/FFw16P9zKW

— The Believer ™ (@maxvaldes) [June 10, 2022](#)

Ivanka Trump was asked by committee investigators how Barr's words affected her perspective about the election.

“It affected my perspective,” she said.

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US Capitol attack

January 6 hearing: five key takeaways from the first primetime Capitol attack inquiry

The House select committee presented their findings that the US Capitol attack was the 'culmination of an attempted coup'

Capitol riot: House committee shown dramatic evidence of 'attempted coup' – video report

[Maanvi Singh](#)

[@maanvissingh](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 02.59 EDTFirst published on Fri 10 Jun 2022 00.34 EDT

The first primetime hearing from the House select committee investigating January 6 presented gut-wrenching footage of the insurrection, and a range of testimony to build a case that the attack on the Capitol was a planned coup fomented by [Donald Trump](#).

After a year and half investigation, the committee sought to emphasize the horror of the attack and hold the former president and his allies accountable.

Here are some key takeaways from the night:

Attack on January 6 was the ‘culmination of an attempted coup’

Presenting an overview of the hearing and the ones to come, the House select committee chair, Bennie Thompson, and vice-chair, Liz Cheney, presented their findings that the violent mob that descended on the Capitol was no spontaneous occurrence.

Video testimony from Donald Trump's attorney general, his daughter and other allies make the case that the former president was working to undermine the 2020 election results and foment backlash. "Any legal jargon you hear about 'seditious conspiracy', 'obstruction of an official proceeding', 'conspiracy to defraud the United States' boils down to this," Thompson said. "January 6 was the culmination of an attempted coup. A brazen attempt, as one rioter put it shortly after January 6, to overthrow the government. Violence was no accident. It represented Trump's last stand, most desperate chance to halt the transfer of power."

Trump's own team contested election lies

As Trump carried on his lies that victory was stolen from him, his own administration and allies agreed the election was legitimate.

Former attorney general William Barr testified that he expressed Trump's claims of a stolen election were "bullshit". A Trump campaign lawyer told Mark Meadows in November "there's no there there" to support Trump's claims of widespread voter fraud. Even Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter, said [she was convinced](#) by Barr that the election was legitimate.

'Complete nonsense': William Barr and Ivanka Trump reject Trump's fraud claims – video

A gut-wrenching review of a violent day

Graphic footage and harrowing testimony came from [Capitol officer Caroline Edwards](#), who on the first line of defense against the attacking mob, reiterated the terror of the insurrection.

Edwards compared the scene to a war zone, saying she was slipping on others' blood as she fought off insurrectionists. "It was carnage. It was chaos. I can't even describe what I saw," she said. The officer sustained burns from a chemical spray deployed against her, and a concussion after a bike rack was heaved on top of her. Officers and lawmakers watching the hearings teared up as they relived the violence of that day.

Work of undermining election continued as violence ensued

As the attack was being carried out, and the mob was threatening Vice-president Mike Pence's life, Trump and his team continued to work to undermine the election.

After Pence refused to block the election certification, Trump and his supporters turned against him. Trump instigated the riot through a series of tweets.

As the mob cried "Hang Mike Pence!" the committee presented evidence that Trump suggested that might not be a bad idea. "Mike Pence deserves it," the president then said. As violence ensued, "the Trump legal team in the Willard Hotel war room", continued attempts to subvert the election results, Cheney said.

Committee presents case that attack was premeditated

Footage and testimony from the film-maker Nick Quested, one of two witnesses at the hearing, suggested the Proud Boys had planned to attack.

On the morning of January 6, Quested testified that he was confused to see "a couple of hundred" Proud Boys walking away from Trump's speech and toward the Capitol. The committee implied that this might have allowed them to scope out the defenses and weak spots at the Capitol.

'I experienced it': film-maker offers glimpse into US Capitol attack – video

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/09/january-6-hearing-five-key-takeaways-us-capitol-attack>

[Fox News](#)

As America watched Capitol attack testimony, Fox News gave an alternate reality

Tucker Carlson leads January 6 counter-programming, petulantly refusing to show the hearing: ‘We’re not playing along’



Fox News’ primetime host Tucker Carlson claimed the attack on the Capitol was ‘a forgettably minor outbreak’. Photograph: Richard Drew/AP

[Adam Gabbatt](#)

[@adamgabbatt](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.43 EDT

The millions of people who tuned into America’s main television channels on Thursday heard how the January 6 insurrection was “the culmination of an attempted coup”, a “siege” where violent Trump supporters mercilessly attacked police, causing politicians and staffers to run for their lives.

On the [Fox News](#) channel, however, there was a different take on the historic congressional hearings exploring the attack on the Capitol in Washington DC.

The deadly riot was, according to the channel's primetime host Tucker Carlson, "an outbreak of mob violence, a forgettably minor outbreak by recent standards, that took place more than a year and a half ago".

This was the alternate reality that Carlson, Fox News' most-watched host, presented as he opened his hour-long show. He followed it up with a boast: the rightwing network would not be covering one of the most consequential political hearings in recent American history.

"The whole thing is insulting," Carlson said of the primetime House select committee hearing on the insurrection, which revealed devastating new details on how Donald Trump appeared to [support the assassination](#) of his vice-president and how Trump's supporters created a "war zone" outside the Capitol.

"In fact, it's deranged. And we're not playing along. This is the only hour on an American news channel that will not be carrying their propaganda live.

"They are lying and we are not going to help them do it."

We're not playing along with the January 6 show trial hearing. The whole thing is insulting. They are lying, and we're not going to help them do it. <https://t.co/GT9NLRN9D2> pic.twitter.com/PDT9g758br

— Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson) [June 10, 2022](#)

What followed instead was an hour of obfuscation, misdirection and what-about-ism, as Carlson, aided by a selection of guests that included one man who was [fired](#) from the Trump administration after he spoke at a conference attended by white nationalists.

Carlson's first guest was Jason Whitlock, host of Fearless. Whitlock immediately parroted what was to become the line of the night.

"There was no insurrection," Whitlock said. "There was a riot, a small one, that got a little bit out of hand."

The scenes broadcast on other TV channels made this claim laughable. Non-Fox News viewers were watching previously unseen footage that showed police officers being kicked and beaten, and people carrying Trump 2020 flags breaking into the Capitol building.

Fox News viewers weren't seeing those.

"If something noteworthy happens we will bring it to you immediately," Carlson had said during his opening monologue.

It turned out that Carlson has an unusual definition of noteworthy, given that as the committee was detailing how Trump, on hearing that his supporters were chanting that Mike Pence should be hanged, said: "Maybe our supporters have the right idea. Mike Pence deserves it," Carlson was merrily chatting with Tulsi Gabbard, the former Democratic representative who was railing against Congress passing a \$40bn aid bill for Ukraine.

Gabbard – who has kept a relatively low profile since she gave a spirited defense of Vladimir Putin days before the Russian leader ordered the invasion of Ukraine – seemed happy to join Carlson in downplaying what was taking place, insisting that Congress should be focusing on other matters.

Carlson happily took up that theme. Several times he opined on why Congress was holding this two-hour hearing when gas prices have gone up, there are drug deaths, and, most memorably, "this country has never in its history been closer to a nuclear war."

Through the first half of Carlson's show, two tactics emerged: downplay the insurrection, and complain that the House wanted to investigate it. As he entered the home stretch, Carlson came up with a new, conspiracy-minded, trope.

“The point is not to get to the truth,” he said of the hearing. “It’s to hide the truth.”

According to the Fox News host, the purpose of the commission is to provide a pretext “for the Democratic party to declare war against millions of American citizens who oppose their agenda”.

To support his point, such as it was, Carlson – finally – showed some of the hearing.

“Liz Cheney is helping them,” he said. “Here she is just moments ago screeching about disinformation.”

Fox News cut to a clip of Cheney speaking in an extremely measured tone about how Trump attempted to overturn the result of the 2020 election through a misinformation campaign – a campaign that Cheney said “provoked the violence on January 6”.

“She is off on another planet,” Carlson said. “Why is Liz Cheney abetting the destruction of America’s civil liberties, and our sacred norms?”

Fox News typically has [more than 3 million viewers](#) in the 8pm hour, but [announced earlier this week](#) that it would not air the hearing, instead relegating coverage to the Fox Business channel, which averages fewer than 100,000 viewers.

The channel stuck true to its boycott promise. Occasionally while Carlson talked a video stream of the committee would appear in a little soundless box, floating off to the right of the host’s head, but that was largely it.

While the hearing rolled on, Carlson rattled through his guests. A man running as a Republican for Congress said people at the Capitol had legitimate grievances over election fraud, before conceding that things became “a little bit dicey”. Another guest made vague claims about the entire insurrection being cooked up by the FBI.

Carlson’s final interviewee was Darren Beattie, a rightwing activist who was fired as a Trump speechwriter after it [emerged](#) he had attended a conference in 2016 alongside a prominent white nationalist.

Beattie's take – nodded along to by Carlson – was that “the feds” were responsible for the riot on January 6.

“It’s a clear hoax, we know it happened.”

Carlson might well have nodded. Last year he hosted a documentary, Patriot Purge, about the January 6 attack which floated the conspiracy theory that violence that day was instigated by leftwing activists. Carlson has also suggested FBI operatives organized the attack on the Capitol.

As Carlson praised Beattie’s reporting, courage and general standing as a person, it brought to mind something Carlson had said earlier, after he had spent several minutes criticizing the hearing with Charlie Hurt, a writer for the rightwing Washington Times newspaper.

“You and I entered journalism about the same time, about 30 years ago,” Carlson told Hurt.

“It seemed honorable then. It seems really shameful now.”

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How to age wellPhilosophy

In your own time: how to live for today the philosophical way

What's gone is gone, but don't waste time worrying about that.
Or on what comes next. The ideal way to age is to be in the moment



Photograph: baona/Getty Images/iStockphoto



[Oliver Burkeman](#)

[@oliverburkeman](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT

Arguably the most useless observation ever made by an ancient Greek philosopher – putting aside, for now, Pythagoras’s theory that [fava beans contained the souls of the dead](#) – was Epicurus’s argument that we shouldn’t fear death, because we won’t be around when it happens. Nobody gets upset about the fact that they didn’t exist before their birth, he reasoned, so why feel bad about the fact that you won’t exist again soon?

But I’ve never met anyone who found this remotely consoling. It would be one thing never to have been born in the first place. Once you’ve been born, you’re invested, whether you like it or not. And getting older is thus inevitably a matter of getting nearer and nearer to the certainty that, any day now, your finite time will run out before you’ve done more than a handful of the limitless number of things you could in principle have done with it, or spent more than a tiny flicker of time with the people you care about the most.

As if it weren't cruel enough that your time is running out, you'll also experience your dwindling years as passing more quickly

"Up till now, life has seemed an endless upward slope, with nothing but the distant horizon in view," said one patient quoted by the psychotherapist [Elliott Jaques](#), who went on to coin the term "midlife crisis" – but "now suddenly I seem to have reached the crest of the hill, and there stretching ahead is the downward slope with the end of the road in sight". "Downward" is the right word here, for multiple reasons, one of which is the implication of acceleration. As if it weren't cruel enough that your time is running out, you'll also experience your dwindling months and years as passing more quickly as you age. So you'll have less and less time, and each portion of that time will feel less long.

What's truly noteworthy about the awareness of finitude, though, isn't the fact that it eventually grips most of us by the throat (at any age between about 35 and 65, according to [Carl Jung](#), the great explorer of the "second half of life") but that we manage to stave it off for so long. After all, from the viewpoint of the cosmos, a 10-year-old who is destined to live to 90 is only a tiny bit further from the end than they'll be when they're 80. It's a testament to our evolved talent for postponing the confrontation with mortality that we manage to do all sorts of worthwhile things – launch careers, start families, acquire possessions, produce art – that we might forgo if we were paralysed by the knowledge that it would all be over so soon.

In the second half of life, though, there's much to be said for abandoning the fight against the truth. A central feature of the modern experience of time is that we focus too heavily on instrumentalising it – on dwelling exclusively on our future purposes, hurrying through our lives to some point at the end of the day or the week when we can finally relax, or for some further-off moment, like when you finally get on top of your to-do list, or when the kids leave home, or you retire from work. The result is what's been called the "when-I-finally" mindset: the sense that real fulfilment, or even real life itself, hasn't quite arrived yet, so that present experience is merely something to get through, en route to something better. The person stuck in such a mindset, wrote [John Maynard Keynes](#), "does not love his cat, but his

cat's kittens; nor, in truth, the kittens, but only the kittens' kittens, and so on forward for ever to the end of cat-dom".

It's hard to shake the outlook entirely. But getting older helps, because the awareness that time is drawing to a close makes it increasingly untenable to live for the future. At 20, it's easy to imagine that real life hasn't properly begun, but at 40, it's a bit of a stretch, and at 60 it's plainly absurd. And so it becomes ever easier to face what was true all along: that this is real life. That there's no impending moment of truth when you'll finally feel in a better position to do whatever it is you really want to do with your time – and that the only viable moment in which to do it is right now.

You grasp the truth that life isn't a dress rehearsal for something better, but you wish you'd figured that out sooner

This is the point at which any sane person will feel at least a modicum of regret: you grasp the truth that life isn't a dress rehearsal for something better, but you desperately wish you'd figured that out several decades sooner. The trick is not to try to deny or eradicate the regret, but not to let it stop you seizing the moment, either – because refusing to live fully on the grounds that you ought to have lived more fully in the past is as silly as refusing to live fully on the grounds that you're still waiting to live fully in the future.

This, I think, is the kernel of truth in the cliched advice about the importance of "living in the moment": not that you should try to meditate yourself into a mystical state of total presence or concentration, but just that to recognise the fact that the past is past, and that soon you won't have any future left – so you really might as well be here. It's not so bad. Often enough, it's wonderful. And in any case, there's nowhere else to be.

Oliver Burkeman's most recent book is [Four Thousand Weeks: Time and How To Use It](#), published by Vintage (£16.99). To support the Guardian and Observer order your copy at [guardianbookshop.com](#). Delivery charges may apply.

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[Jurassic Park](#)

Interview

‘We ain’t in science-fiction any more!’ Laura Dern on the return of Jurassic Park

[Catherine Shoard](#)



‘We’re constantly reminded how many people need our help’ ... Laura Dern. Photograph: Art Streiber for Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment

Back battling prehistoric foes 30 years after the first film, the Oscar winner explains why apocalypse seems more likely than ever – and why men in power are the real dinosaurs



[@catherineshoard](#)

Fri 10 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.34 EDT

On the final day filming Jurassic Park in 1992, Hawaii was hit by [the largest hurricane in its history](#). Laura Dern stood on the beach with her co-star [Sam Neill](#) and watched the waves rise. Was he worried, she asked? “You know, I think we might die, Laura,” he said. She laughed.

That sounds about right. Dern is an optimism pro, cheerful and resilient as a windsock. Yes, humans are probably doomed, she thinks, but what an exciting time to be alive!

She beams behind the face mask (she’s currently shooting a movie, so catching Covid would be expensive). Doesn’t the Soil Association in the UK

do wonderful work? Isn't the popularity of plant-based protein terrific? "And look at the hopeful rediscovery of bicycles!"

No negative words have yet been spoken about Dern, an actor of depth and daring who also happens to be game and engaged. None will be added here. She is immediately convincing. A category four hurricane didn't stand a chance.

Anyway, back in Hawaii, the cast and crew holed up in their hotel ballroom. Steven Spielberg played cards with the children. Dern shared rations with Neill and Jeff Goldblum, who was about to become her boyfriend for four years. The chandelier rocked and the ceiling buckled. The power failed. Gusts reached 145mph. By the morning, all the sets had been destroyed. The shoot was cancelled. (Richard Attenborough slept through the whole thing.)

Getting the band back together ... watch the trailer for Jurassic World Dominion.

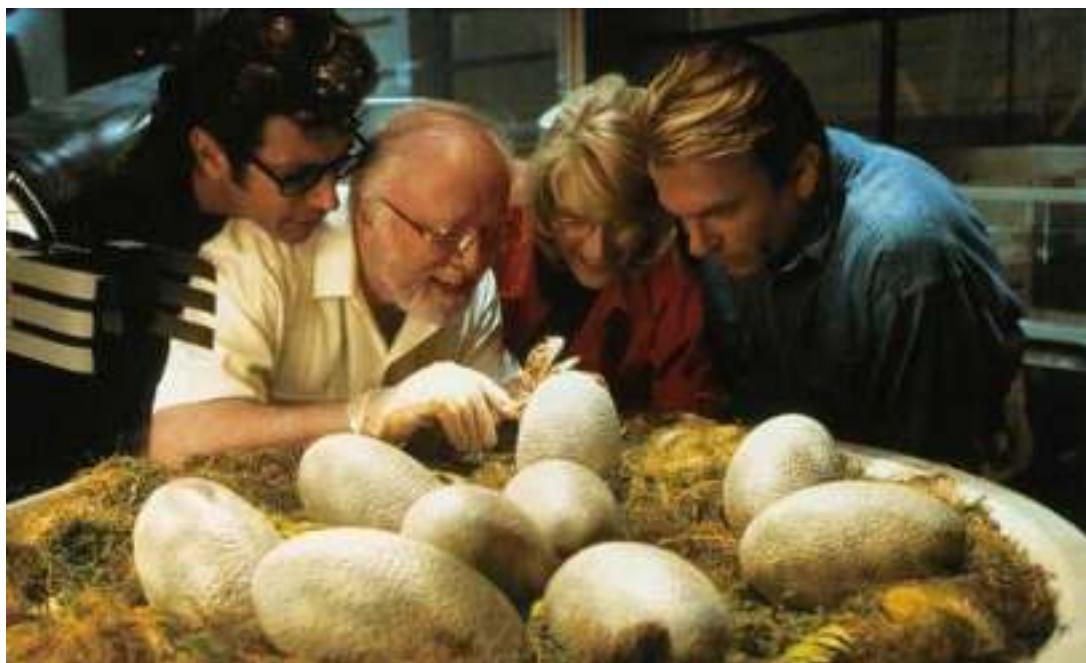
"You go through something like that and it changes everything," says Dern. "Steven and Jeff and Sam became my family. And remained my family all these years. Steven was there when my baby was born, and at my son's baptism."

Dern, it should be said, has been claimed by a lot of tribes. David Lynch, her five-time collaborator, is "home". Her [Big Little Lies](#) co-stars (Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman and Meryl Streep) are "sisters". She has "a really beautiful familial energy" with the couple Greta Gerwig and Noah Baumbach, who directed her respectively in [Little Women](#) (as beatific Marmee) and [Marriage Story](#) (her ruthless divorce lawyer won her a Bafta, an Oscar and a fifth Golden Globe).

But the Jurassic WhatsApp group sounds especially intense: "It's all: 'I got married! I gave a speech! I directed for the first time! I had a baby!'" That is because, she says, making the new movie induced a surprising level of déjà vu: "There was a sense of family that you could never otherwise get ... unless you were on the first [Jurassic Park](#)."

The shoot began in July 2020. [Jurassic World Dominion](#) was one of the first productions to start during Covid – and had the highest stakes. [If it failed](#), there was a real sense that the industry might follow. The cast, the producers and the director, Colin Trevorrow, holed up in the Langley hotel, near Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire, for five months, with a 107-page safety manual. They had a gym, a pool and Frisbee Sundays. [Judging by the videos](#), Goldblum never stopped playing the piano.

“We lived together,” says Dern. “We made food together. We figured out what made us scared. We went through the presidential election together. It was a huge time. *Huge*.”



First bite ... Jeff Goldblum, Richard Attenborough, Dern and Sam Neill in Jurassic Park. Photograph: Universal/Allstar

A strange and unsettling shoot, then, for a strange and unsettling movie. The sixth film – and the first to reunite Dern, Goldblum and Neill – is an unexpectedly radical beast.

Dern’s character, Dr Ellie Sattler, has moved from paleobotany to soil science. She is divorced and happy, unlike her old flame Dr Alan Grant (Neill), lonely with his fossils. “Ellie’s like: ‘This is amazing. It’s kind of

sexy! I do whatever I want! I'm dating! My children are grown! I'm a major scientist effecting change!"'

Her current focus is a plague of enormous locusts ravaging the globe, feeding solely on non-GM crops. Might they be the creation of the enigmatic owner of a hi-tech dinosaur reserve in the Dolomites? Along with Grant, she goes to find out, on the invitation of the "in-house philosopher", Dr Ian Malcolm (Goldblum).

All pretty topical, Dern thinks. Even pre-Covid, Trevororow was sending her news stories about "genetically modified mosquitoes being released in Florida to help potential disease issues. A swarm of locusts seen over Kansas who weren't eating certain seeds. I'm reading these articles and I'm like: we ain't in science-fiction any more! Jurassic Park is an everyday story now! Other than a T rex walking down the street."

We gotta all figure this out together, because otherwise we're not gonna have a home any more

In the film, Goldblum's Malcolm is promoting a book called *How the World Will End*. How does Dern think it will happen? She is not sure, she says, "but I'm not incredibly hopeful". She recommends John Doerr's book *Speed & Scale*, a net-zero manual by the former venture capitalist. "I like to believe that compassion is a required academic course in high schools. Considering other people's safety and wellbeing should be our priority. Nurturing our soil, reforesting, sacrificing our dependency to eating beef and cheese.

"We're the *consumer*," she continues (Dern has a winning way with emphasis). "So if we say we're not gonna buy things that are genetically modified and sprayed with petrochemicals, then put on a truck in a ton of plastic and shipped to our house, because we'd rather have them today than in three days, I think we'd change a lot of companies' mindsets."

Her hope is that Earth returns to "a massive gorgeous ocean of predominantly sea life", with animals free to roam as humans "spread out a

bit more” thanks to “planetary travel”. “I like that idea. Because the other answer is full extinction. Just like the movie proposes.”

That’s the thing about Jurassic World Dominion. It is more ideologically ambitious than you might at first clock. Yes, there is the overt caution against genetically modifying dinosaurs for use as weapons of mass destruction. But the discussion of how to manage a peaceful coexistence between humans and animals who ought to be extinct is, Dern explains, intended as political metaphor.

“It’s brilliantly subversive and kind of tongue-in-cheek,” she says. “How are we modern people gonna peacefully coexist with the ‘dinosaurs’ who were here first? And those boys made *all the rules*. And when they enter the room, we are dealing with bullies.”



Breakthrough ... with Kyle MacLachlan in *Blue Velvet*. Photograph: Landmark Media/Alamy

She lowers the mask for coffee. “I feel privileged that you and I can have this conversation so that you can impact people reading. We are all having the same conversation, but in isolation, which is how bullies work, right? They isolate us and we think the world is so paralysing that hopefully we’ll do nothing so they can keep making more money and not have to worry

about the inevitable, which is climate change. We gotta all figure this out together, because otherwise we're not gonna have a home any more."

Few could accuse Dern of not being a doer as well as a thinker. She made her film debut at seven, in *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, the Martin Scorsese film starring her mother, Diane Ladd. That summer, she spent time with her father, Bruce Dern, on the set of Alfred Hitchcock's *Family Plot*.

At 16, she gained legal emancipation from her parents, not because they weren't close – a book of [conversations between Dern and Ladd](#) is out next year; Bruce's 86th birthday was [heartily celebrated](#) on her Instagram on Sunday – but so she could work adult hours. At 18, she made [Blue Velvet](#) with Lynch. *Wild at Heart* came a few years later, then *Rambling Rose*, which won her and Ladd Oscar nominations.

On Goldblum's advice, she followed *Jurassic Park* with Alexander Payne's abortion satire *Citizen Ruth*. The template was set for a smart shuffle of popcorn and credibility. She made *Little Fockers*, then *The Master*; Kelly Reichardt's *Certain Women*, then *The Founder*, a broad biopic about the man who started McDonald's. [Star Wars: The Last Jedi](#) was followed by [The Tale](#), a story of surviving sexual assault.



Family affair ... with her parents, Diane Ladd and Bruce Dern, in 2014.
Photograph: Barry King/FilmMagic

It has been a similar story on TV: high-profile, but happy to be unpopular. Remember not only her raging alpha mother in Big Little Lies, but also that Dern played the lesbian to whom Ellen DeGeneres came out in her sitcom in 1997. It stalled Dern's career for a year and led to death threats of such plausibility that she required a full security detail.

Her confidence came young and consciously. Her parents had already lost a daughter, Diane, who drowned at 18 months, and Ladd was told that she couldn't have any more children. Dern was a welcome surprise, but her parents, still reeling with grief, separated when she was two.

"I was terrified, being on my own with Laura," Ladd has said. "I had to force myself not to be overly protective because I had lost one child. The result was that it worked the other way. I allowed her to be a free thinker, and that helped her become her own person."

Indeed, Dern's precocity – and perseverance – has extended outside her profession. At school, she led a successful student protest against their teachers' low wages. At 17, she left home and moved in with Marianne Williamson, the self-help guru and [2020 US presidential candidate](#), then in her 30s and running a metaphysical coffee shop. Activism was prioritised over washing up.



‘Brilliantly subversive’ ... with Varada Sethu and Sam Neill in Jurassic World Dominion. Photograph: Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment

Since then, Dern has campaigned for immigrants' rights, Down's syndrome awareness and gender pay parity, among other causes. Last month, she and her daughter marched in New York against [anticipated changes to the US's abortion laws](#).

When we meet in London, it is two days after [the Uvalde shootings](#). Her daughter and her friends – who, she tells me proudly, recently persuaded their school to switch to electric buses – are proposing a mass walkout. “What if we just said: kids in America aren’t going to school, because schools aren’t safe until you change gun laws in this country?”

Dern has spoken about how much her children – Ellery, 20, and Jaya, 17, by her former husband, the musician Ben Harper – were affected by the shootings a decade ago at [Sandy Hook](#). Their sense of fragility has deepened, she says.

“The shock for them over the last five years, of watching how our country has changed and seeing a level of racism that may have been there but, as progressive, biracial kids growing up in LA, I don’t think they were aware of – I think that has been devastating to witness.”

I really appreciate a great man. There's nothing like great men

It is the inertia that is most enraging, says Dern. “There has never, ever been a world where any Democrat or liberally minded politician or caring conservative parent said: ‘We are gonna take everybody’s guns.’ So they created a *story*. The narrative is: ‘They’re gonna take our guns!’ and it’s been feeding American culture all these years. And now we have [weekly mass shootings](#).

“No boy with mental health history – no *human being* – should ever be able to go into a store and legally buy an AR-15 and 300 rounds of ammunition. You can have a hunting rifle and you can have guns to protect your family or whatever, but there are still profound ways we can effect change so that semiautomatic and automatic weapons and no background checks are not a part of our country.”

Dern leans forward, all poise and cogency. Forty years of professional empathising, as well as navigating Hollywood, have made her a realist. These are moderate opinions, coherently articulated – she is not calling for a ban on guns, after all.

In the first film, Sattler’s aside about dinosaurs eating man and women inheriting the Earth was hailed as a welcome note of radical feminism in a mainstream blockbuster. In the new film, the prophesy appears to have been fulfilled – a female scientist has reproduced though cloning. Dern is far too warmly inclusive – and too politic – to cheerlead for such a future.

“I really appreciate a great man,” she says, laughing. “There’s nothing like great men. I’m raising a really kind son. I think it’s such an exciting time to be knowing a new generation of young men who respect and love women and lift them up as leaders. And that’s just so gorgeous. My son and his friends go: ugh, how do we not have a female president running this country?”



Dern, with her children, Jaya and Ellery, and stepson Charles, at the Oscars, February 2020. Photograph: Eric Gaillard/Reuters

What do they think is the reason? “Oh, they just don’t *understand* it,” she says. “And I know *exactly* why.” A mirthless chortle.

In Jurassic World Dominion, the stable door is swinging open and the velociraptors are licking their lips. It is too late to learn lessons; there is time only to try something new in a last bid for survival.

Dern has adopted that mindset. She quotes a member of staff at her daughter’s school: “Compassion and advocacy are the only two things I really need to teach any of you. I don’t know that history is ever going to be as valuable.”

Modernity must be embraced; its advantages far outweigh the pull of the past. “We have such *constant access*,” she says, gesturing at my phone. “The gift of that is that we can’t turn away from the faces of the children that are lost, or the faces of newborn babies whose mothers are having to hand them over at the border to Poland.”

She lowers her mask again – for urgency, not coffee. “We don’t get to cover our eyes any more. We’re constantly reminded how many people need our help, if we’re privileged enough to help.”

Jurassic World Dominion is in cinemas now

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[The Rolling Stones](#)

The Rolling Stones review – world's greatest rockers are still a gas, gas, gas



Mick Jagger performing during the Rolling Stones' Sixty tour at Anfield.
Photograph: Dave J Hogan/Getty

Anfield, Liverpool

While Abba perform as avatars, Jagger and co remain the real deal with the

rip-roaring verve of stars several decades younger

Dave Simpson

Fri 10 Jun 2022 05.34 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 10.45 EDT

Mick Jagger recently said rock'n'roll “isn’t supposed to be done in your 70s”, but he seems determined to prove this wrong. While [Abba have returned as digital avatars](#) of their young selves, the Stones’ frontman is his own living, breathing Jagger-tar. He turns 79 next month and has a replacement heart valve but sustains the stage energy of someone several decades younger. Alongside him, fellow grinning septuagenarians Keith Richards (78) and Ron Wood (75) sway elegantly like ancient trees in a breeze, playing their guitars with a swagger that suggests that time, however improbably, is still on their side.

Well, almost. Each show on this 60th-anniversary tour opens with a tribute to Charlie Watts, [whose death aged 80](#) last year was a reminder that even Rolling Stones are mortal. Watts’s approved successor, American drummer Steve Jordan, is merely 65. He plays on the beat rather than behind it, but brings his own fills to Tumbling Dice and has clearly accustomed himself to the peculiarities of anchoring the Stones’ wayward, ramshackle glory and a catalogue brimming with copper-bottomed classics.

Brown Sugar, their second-most performed song ever, was recently retired – its references to slavery and sexuality proving too controversial for the modern era – but a stellar setlist stretches from 1963’s Lennon and McCartney-penned single I Wanna Be Your Man (“Since we’re in Liverpool ...”, drawls Jagger) to the 2020 reggae-tinged lockdown single, Living in a Ghost Town.



Fighting the sands of time ... Mick Jagger (centre) with the Rolling Stones.
Photograph: Jim Dyson/Redferns

There's a punchy Street Fighting Man; 19th Nervous Breakdown and Get Off My Cloud are kinetic. Out of Time – the 1966 song never performed before this tour – and a hymn-like You Can't Always Get What You Want start the first of many singalongs. It's not just the songs, though, it's the delivery: Jagger's voice is stadium-strong and the guitars cut through with a raw power usually polished out of gigs this size.

"It's great to see you. It's great to see anybody," jokes the indestructible Richards, while Jagger quips about visiting local landmarks: hugging Cilla Black's statue was "closer than I ever got in real life!" After bassist Darryl Jones brings the funk to Miss You, dusk descends and the stage glows red for Paint It Black and Sympathy for the Devil, brilliantly unsettling songs that acknowledge the darkness like nothing else in rock.

Then it's into Gimme Shelter as images of bombed Ukraine remind us that war currently is "just a shot away". As the clock passes the two-hour mark, Jagger is still Jumping Jack Flash incarnate, tearing into Satisfaction, a song he once said he didn't want to be singing when he was 30.

They're deep into uncharted territory now. No other band has rocked this hard for this long, but an Anfield roar of You'll Never Walk Alone goes up to honour a group who are clearly still worthy of the title of the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world.

- [The Rolling Stones](#) play Hyde Park, London, on 25 June and 3 July.
-

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You be the judge: should my boyfriend put his phone on silent?



Illustration: Joren Joshua/The Guardian

He says he needs it on for work; she says the constant bleeps and ringtones drive her to distraction. You make the call on who's guilty

- [Find out how to get a disagreement settled or be a You be the judge juror](#)

*Interviews by [Georgina Lawton](#)
[@georginalawton](#)*

Fri 10 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 21.05 EDT

The prosecution: Ravinda

Derek's phone constantly pings, beeps, chimes and buzzes – and it is driving me bonkers

My boyfriend Derek never puts his phone on silent and it drives me up the wall. We've recently moved in together after three years of dating and now work remotely in the same flat for most of the week.

I noticed it a bit before, but now that we're living together, it is driving me bonkers. He loves having his phone on full volume all the time. Europe's The Final Countdown blasts out each time he gets a call, and he has those clangy bells for his app notifications and texts. He takes a lot of calls and I can hear his phone constantly beeping, chiming and buzzing.

I've asked him if he could keep his phone on silent, but he says that the alerts help him stay focused and on top of his work. I tell him the world won't stop turning if he doesn't reply to a text or call from a client immediately, but he won't have it. I used to enjoy sitting at the dining table with him as we worked, but now I've retreated to the tiny office we have in the spare room. I can't concentrate with all the noise.

It's not just work – he keeps his phone on loud in the evenings, too. Our conversations and private time are constantly interrupted by alerts announcing some Instagram updates.

Derek's phone is constantly glued to his hand, and he lights up when it pings. It's a dopamine thing, I suppose. I think he's addicted to it.

He says the alerts help him stay focused and on top of his work

The only other people I know who have their phones on full volume are over-60s who aren't very good with technology. Derek and I are only in our early 30s. He should know how to use his phone on silent.

At night I've forced him to put his iPhone on "do not disturb" mode so we can sleep uninterrupted, but even that was a big deal for him. He said: "What if there's an emergency?" But if it's midnight, we shouldn't be disturbed.

Derek suffers from phone Fomo (fear of missing out), but he needs to turn the volume down when he's working in the house. If he won't, I'll have to ask him to move to a co-working space. I am not putting up with it any longer.

The defence: Derek

Phone notifications are supposed to make a sound. That's how notifications work

The sound on my phone is always on. Phones make a sound for a reason – so that we can stay on track of our notifications and messages. I don't know why Ravinda is so offended by this concept. Having the sound on is not an "older people" thing, like Ravinda always jokes. Lots of people I know think keeping your phone on silent mode is annoying.

I don't have a particularly stressful job, but I do work from home and manage my own digital marketing business. I'm constantly arranging calls and replying to my clients, so of course I want to keep everyone happy. Ravinda's role isn't as full-on as mine, so perhaps she doesn't understand. Yes, my phone volume is turned up to the max, but I like it that way. I don't think my ringtone is any more annoying than the next person's, and the sound for my notifications is the default option on the iPhone.

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list of our weekly highlights.

Perhaps I do get a bit of a thrill out of feeling busy all the time. I don't want to miss out on what's going on during the work day, and in the evening I like to keep up to date with social media posts. I also have sound alerts for my emails and trending news topics that interest me: anything crypto-related, for example.

Ravinda's role isn't as full-on as mine, so perhaps she doesn't understand

I used to keep the sound on during the night when my phone was charging near my bed, but I've stopped that at Ravinda's request. I suppose it's better for us both if we can sleep without it going off. Sometimes I do worry that I'll miss out on a last-minute request from a client or a finance update though.

Ravinda said she couldn't work next to me because of my phone alerts, but that's not true. We're both frequently in meetings and on calls, so surely it's best if we have our own space so we don't distract one another. It's not my phone's fault that we have to work at home.

I can try to be more present after work and not be as focused on my notifications when they aren't super-important. But I will continue to have my phone on full volume. It makes my life easier.

The jury of Guardian readers

Should Derek put his phone on silent?

Derek, there's no need for full volume and all the alerts that are bleeding into your home lives. There's no excuse for that level of intrusion: you can get notifications through vibrating alerts or a smart watch. The lack of compromise shows a lack of consideration for Ravinda. Be the better person here.

Simon, 48

Derek needs to ask why he derives so much of his self-worth from clients and pings on his phone. Rather than undermining Ravinda, he ought to think about accommodating and prioritising her presence when they're sharing space and time.

Sophie, 34

Perhaps Derek and Ravinda can work in separate rooms in “office” houses, then Derek’s phone can be as loud as he likes. Because even when a phone is on silent, phone conversations by either of them will distract the other when sharing a work space.

Tone, 61

Sharing a work and home space requires negotiation and compromise. For harmony, Derek needs to find a decibel level and tone agreeable to Ravinda. There’s a thrill to switching your phone to silent!

Sharon, 54

Derek is guilty. It’s inconsiderate to have your phone on full volume without a very good reason, especially when people are trying to work. He should either work elsewhere or get a different, quieter notification setup, like a smartwatch that vibrates.

Kathryn, 25

You be the judge

So now you can be the judge. In our online poll below, tell us: should Derek put his phone on silent?

We’ll share the results on next week’s You be the judge.

The poll will close on Thursday 16th June at 9am BST

Last week’s result

We asked if Sally should start [clearing out her old books](#), as the clutter annoys her husband Andy.

79% of you said no – Sally is innocent
21% of you said yes – Sally is guilty

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2022.06.10 - Opinion

- Right in front of our eyes, Britain's entire political order is being demolished
- Sheryl Sandberg isn't the first woman to realise that work in your 50s is no walk in the park
- The disappearance of journalist Dom Phillips in Brazil should leave you incandescent with rage
- Everyone is sick – illness in 2022 has medieval vibes

OpinionConservatives

Right in front of our eyes, Britain's entire political order is being demolished

Aditya Chakrabortty



From housing to health, the institutions are crumbling. This could be a historic chance to craft radical change from chaos



Illustration: Eleanor Shakespeare/The Guardian

Fri 10 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.37 EDT

The critical observation about this week's Tory mutiny comes from neither frontbench politician nor pundit, but a former backroom boy who faced a putsch nearly 30 years ago. Jonathan Hill served as political secretary to John Major while the then prime minister negotiated the Maastricht treaty, and suffered constant, debilitating attacks from the "bastards" on his own backbenches. A ruling party exhausted after a decade in power, its members were minded only to fight turf wars and marinade themselves in tawdry scandal. It was a low period in British politics whose high point came when Major faced a vote of no-confidence. Yet Lord Hill [thinks Boris Johnson's situation is even more dangerous](#) – for one vital reason.

Back in the early 90s, he says, "there wasn't a sense that all of our institutions were collapsing, that Whitehall was collapsing and No 10 didn't work". What does that look like? Let me pick just three stories from the past few days – items you may have missed amid the Westminster melee, which is at present centred around flogging an already disastrous revival of the right-to-buy scheme. Since Johnson's aides had hoped this would be health week, let's make that our theme.

On Monday, a huge survey of nursing staff showed eight out of 10 [reporting](#) that their last shift had had insufficient nurses to look after patients safely and effectively. In other words, staffing levels in today's NHS are so low as to put patients in danger. At the weekend, sick and injured people at major hospitals in Devon were [waiting more than 15 hours to be seen in A&E](#).

And – as Huw Edwards still says – finally: the nursing director of the West Midlands Ambulance Service admits that patients are “dying every day” because of delays, and [predicts](#) that his entire service will capsize within two months. “Around August 17 is the day I think it will all fail,” says Mark Docherty. “That date is when a third of our resource [will be] lost to delays, and that will mean we just can't respond … It will be a bit like a Titanic moment. It will be a mathematical [certainty] that this thing is sinking, and it will be pretty much beyond the tipping point by then.”

You may ask why we haven't heard more about these grave developments, and I would agree. Yet don for a moment the green visor of our finest media commentators. On the one hand, a region comprising almost [6 million Britons](#) faces losing its ambulances; on the other, doesn't Jeremy Hunt look tasty?

I could carry on. Petrol will [soon hit £2 a litre](#). Swaths of our transport infrastructure are mired deep in chaos that shows no sign of ending soon. As schools wind up for summer, it is shamefully obvious that kids from less well-off families will never get the resources essential to catch up on the education they missed during the pandemic. And when elections roll around, polling stations [open right next to food banks](#).

What turns these symptoms of acute crisis into a chronic national breakdown is, as Lord Hill says, the rottenness of our political institutions. So profound is their decay that they can no longer properly face the problems, let alone tackle them.

Still reeling from the revelations of lockdown booze-ups, No 10 is focused solely on saving Big Dog. Cabinet ministers dare not call a halt to the entire farrago, perhaps realising that under another leader two-thirds of them would struggle to find gainful employment as milk monitors.

Huge tranches of the press have shredded their credibility through years of declaring that Boris Johnson was a, to quote [the Times's leader column](#), “pragmatic, responsible” leader while Jeremy Corbyn spelled “economic chaos”.

The Treasury and the Bank of England have spent the decade and a half since the banking crash assuring the public that everything is under control – that their policies and £900bn of [quantitative easing](#) will spur a recovery that will be the envy of the rich world, even while the actual result is an economy stuck stubbornly in second gear and a historic squeeze on workers’ living standards. The OECD forecasts that next year the UK will languish among the worst performing economies in the entire G20 – second only to Vladimir Putin’s pariah state.

The greatest exhaustion of all lies in the realm of political ideas. The unparalleled expertise of Boris Johnson’s team in prosecuting culture wars is no use to it now that there is an economic crisis where it is flush out of ideas. Just look at the government’s wheeze this week for dealing with the housing crisis: to copy Margaret Thatcher’s fire sale of council homes and extend the principle to property owned by housing associations and charities. This is itself a policy that George Osborne [scraped together five years ago](#), before dropping it back to the bottom of the barrel.

But that is the modern Tory party all over: whenever it wants to right the wrongs of Thatcherism, its solution is yet more Thatcherism – only this time with Boris bombast where ideological conviction should be. Listen to them now: tax cuts! Levelling up! Privatisations! Except even the most blinkered of Tories can catch the pungent whiff of policies that years ago went putrid.

Something much bigger than the fate of Johnson or his wretched party is at stake now, something that happens only every few decades. Right in front of our eyes, an entire political order is dying. Just as the second world war led to Clement Attlee and the 1970s produced Thatcher, so post-crash, post-pandemic Brexit Britain stands at a historic hinge point.

In his forthcoming book, [The Death of Consensus](#), the BBC documentary maker Phil Tinline traces how those two crises produced a new political settlement. Each time, he argues, insiders were able to take the chaos and

craft from it a compelling and wide-ranging narrative for radical change. In 1940, the then journalist Michael Foot and friends adopted the pseudonym of Cato and wrote Guilty Men, a polemic that yoked the humiliation of Dunkirk to the misery of the Depression and, as Tinline writes, tied “the appeasers in parliament to their cronies in the City”. The result was a sensation, selling out 12 impressions in four weeks. And it was followed by many similar works, each taking a sledgehammer to an orthodoxy ripe for toppling.

How many such people stand ready today to do something similar is a big question. Perhaps Thatcher’s greatest achievement was to tell the British that “there is no alternative”, while doing her damnedest to make that the case – filleting the BBC, cowing the Labour party and crushing the unions. The Iron Lady acted as a giant bulldozer against any powerful opposition, and today the view from SW1 remains barren.

Not so in this country’s hinterlands. A few years ago, while reporting for this paper on the political and economic alternatives [springing up](#) in a country roiled by austerity, I kept coming across people who could see how the system was failing them, their families and homes – and they were right. They can read their maps of power; they can see where it lies. What they need now is to get their hands on its levers.

- Aditya Chakrabortty is a Guardian columnist
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OpinionWomen

Sheryl Sandberg isn't the first woman to realise that work in your 50s is no walk in the park

[Gaby Hinsliff](#)



Reaching 50 brings with it all kinds of unforeseen hurdles. No wonder so many women who can afford to are quitting altogether



Sheryl Sandberg with Mark Zuckerberg, pictured last year. Photograph: Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

Fri 10 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 08.44 EDT

Sheryl Sandberg is leaning out. The queen of “can do” American feminism is [quitting](#) Meta (formerly Facebook) after 14 years at the top of one of the world’s most powerful companies, for a future that sounds suspiciously vague. Apparently she wants to focus on feminist philanthropy, plus “parenting our extended family of five children”. (Having been [widowed](#) seven years ago, Sandberg will remarry this summer and will help raise her fiance Tom Bernthal’s children plus her own two teenagers.) What happened, some wonder, to the woman who in her bestselling book Lean In urged other working mothers to just push themselves harder?

Perhaps she simply wants out of an increasingly toxic industry, accused of inadvertently fuelling hate speech, conspiracy theories and poisonous populist movements around the globe. For months Silicon Valley has buzzed with rumours that Sandberg, a committed Hillary Clinton supporter, was more troubled than other executives by social media’s seeming role in the rise of Donald Trump, and that she was simultaneously losing [internal arguments](#) about its future. She stressed her closeness to founder Mark Zuckerberg in her resignation statement. But that won’t stop speculation that she has had enough, and would rather spend the billions earned defending

this morally sticky wicket on more uplifting causes. Her Lean In charitable foundation had, she said, never mattered more to her, “given how critical this moment is for women”, a nod perhaps to the gut feeling many American women have of hard-won female progress sliding into reverse.

Perhaps we’ll have to wait for her next book to find out. But Sandberg isn’t the first 52-year-old woman to take stock of her life and decide it’s not too late to change, or even to discover that this is a messier and more unforgiving decade than it looks.

So many of us imagine we’ll have life sorted by 50: children on the road to independence, more time for yourself, and the professional confidence born of years of experience. Stick at it through the early childbearing years, we tell ourselves, and things can only get easier. For some, midlife really is about reaping the rewards of leaning in. But it can also be a time of drama and surprises, as women who have hauled themselves over all the early hurdles fall at a second set of fences they simply hadn’t been expecting.

Illness takes its toll for some. So do the sleepless nights and fog of anxiety that menopause can bring. And while teenage children don’t wake you up in the middle of the night like babies do, they can’t be as easily handed over to someone else. Interviewing parents of children with mental health problems recently, I was struck by how many had quietly adapted their working lives to cope. Trotting off to the office every day isn’t easy when your child is self-harming or refusing to go to school.

Britain hasn’t experienced the much-hyped Great Resignation supposedly seen in the US, as the pandemic prompted some to reconsider what really matters to them and chuck in corporate jobs. Instead, we’ve seen something more like the Great Early Retirement, with an unexpected rise in over-50s giving up work that piqued statisticians’ curiosity.

In March a [report](#) from the Office for National Statistics concluded that almost half were just retiring, often earlier than expected having saved money in lockdown. But one in five Britons of both sexes gave their [reasons](#) for stopping work as stress and mental health problems, or simply “I did not

want to work any more”. Here are burnt-out and exhausted people, a feeling perhaps exacerbated for some by two stressful years on the Covid-19 frontline. Another 8% of women cited caring responsibilities. But there wasn’t a box to tick for finally coming up for air at 50, and concluding that you’d rather chew your own arm off than do this for another two decades; or for the gloomy realisation that seniority hasn’t brought the returns your younger self imagined.

Polling conducted last year by Sandberg’s Lean In foundation with the British midlife women’s platform [Noon](#) found 71% of women expected being older to count against them at work, and half had experienced sexism and ageism around the menopause. Women have always been held to a different standard than that applied to men, Sandberg declared, but “as we get older those challenges are exacerbated”.

Working life is long now, which is fine if you love what you do – but if you don’t then 52 shouldn’t be too old to change, or it wouldn’t if midlife retraining was funded generously enough to make it an option for those who can’t afford a career break. The bigger challenge for many older women, however, is getting work to love you back.

The gloss has worn off Sandberg’s original brand of middle-class professional feminism, with its emphasis on individual women redoubling their efforts rather than on structural reforms. Too many women have concluded that, as Michelle Obama memorably put it, “[sometimes that shit doesn’t work](#)”, and some will see Sandberg’s departure now as proof of that.

Yet like many women who give up seemingly glittering careers, I wonder if she isn’t attempting to exchange a power that isn’t all it was cracked up to be for influence, and a different definition of success. An older, wiser Sandberg has the financial and cultural clout to become an interesting advocate for older women if she chooses. How ironic it would be if in leaning out she finally found her way in.

- Gaby Hinsliff is a Guardian columnist
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The disappearance of journalist Dom Phillips in Brazil should leave you incandescent with rage

[Lucy Jordan](#)

Jair Bolsonaro's dog-whistle politics is risking the lives of Indigenous people and the reporters who tell their stories



A vigil outside the Brazilian embassy in London for Dom Phillips and Bruno Araújo Pereira on 9 June.

Photograph: Victoria Jones/PA

Thu 9 Jun 2022 08.43 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 03.40 EDT

It's now more than four days since veteran [Brazil](#) correspondent Dom Phillips and Indigenous expert Bruno Araújo Pereira disappeared in the Javari Valley, a remote part of the western Amazon thought to have the world's highest concentration of uncontacted people.

Pereira, a longtime defender of Indigenous rights who previously worked for Funai, Brazil's government Indigenous rights agency, had reportedly received threats for his work monitoring illegal activities in the region.

Phillips and Pereira were last seen early on Sunday while travelling in a boat on the Itaquaí river in the northern Brazilian state of Amazonas, near the border with Peru. Itaquaí is a remote, lawless, and strategically important area for illegal trafficking, fishing and mining. It is home to a [growing presence](#) of armed gangs. Diplomats, NGOs and media organisations are now [calling on the Brazilian government](#) to rapidly expand and accelerate their search-and-rescue mission.

The official response has been woefully inadequate. The army initially said that it would only launch a rescue mission once given orders from a higher command, wasting precious hours immediately after the pair disappeared. It took [days](#) to deploy a helicopter to the region.

Indigenous groups that have been searching on the ground since Sunday released a [statement](#) saying they had repeatedly called on multiple federal agencies for help. Yet with the exception of six military police officers and a team from Funai, federal agencies and armed forces have been “absent from the effort”, they said. As the Indigenous leader Sônia Guajajara put it when she recently asked [US climate envoy John Kerry](#) to intervene personally: “The search is so slow, and it is pitiful that we continue to live in a situation where there is no security.”



Journalist Dom Phillips talks to two Indigenous men in Brazil in 2019.
Photograph: João Laet/AFP/Getty Images

Many of us reporters here in Brazil know Phillips personally. He's been here for 15 years, a dogged, sharp-eyed journalist and an incredibly kind man. He is never too busy to help out a fellow reporter, a generosity that shapes his work: he covers under-reported stories because he cares deeply about giving a voice to Brazil's marginalised groups. He takes on risky assignments because he believes the stories he tells matter that much. As his wife, [Alessandra, puts it](#), "I want you to know that Dom Phillips, my husband, loves Brazil and he loves the Amazon. He could have chosen to live anywhere in the world but he chose here."

Of course, we don't yet know exactly what has happened. But for those of us who have been following Brazil's grim political reality for the past three years, we're not just sad, worried and fearful. We're also incandescent with rage. As time passes, foul play becomes an even more likely explanation. This is it, we want to scream. This is the logical consequence of three years of encouraging violence against Indigenous people and journalists.

Under president Jair Bolsonaro, attacks on the press have increased. He peppers his speeches with anti-Indigenous, anti-conservation dog whistles. Bolsonaro has consistently presented environmental protections and

Indigenous rights as mere impediments to economic development; nuisances that stand in the way of a more muscular, industrial Brazil. Many appear to have taken him at his word. Invasions and violence against Indigenous people have increased and deforestation has soared under his presidency. In 2019, farmers in Pará [set the forest on fire](#) to show Bolsonaro they got the message and approved of it.

And it hasn't only been words. The Bolsonaro administration has made multiple attempts to bolster these grudges in law. Several bills are being processed in Brazil's congress that, directly or indirectly, threaten Brazilian Indigenous lands, either by opening them up to economic interests such as mining or by curtailing Indigenous people's rights to their land in the first place. The message this has sent has been clearly received: do what you like to Indigenous people because there will be no repercussions. Invade their land, cut down their trees, contaminate their rivers. Even [kill them](#), if that's what it takes.

How do we continue asking other reporters to take on these risks? What message does it send when people such as Phillips and Pereira vanish, only to be met with a pitiful official response? There is no risk assessment in the world that can mitigate against three years of dangerous propaganda coming from the very top of government.

Bolsonaro's response, when asked about the disappearance, was callous and dismissive. He appeared to blame Phillips and Pereira. [They shouldn't have been there](#), he said, on an "adventure". Anything could happen. But as many of the men's colleagues have pointed out on social media, reporting in the field isn't an adventure. Advocating for Indigenous rights isn't an adventure. It's a public service. It's a moral imperative. One that this government has made all the more necessary, and all the more dangerous. And that's why advocates and reporters – brave, kind people such as Phillips and Pereira – will keep on taking these risks. And why we must keep holding the government to account.

- Lucy Jordan is the Brazil correspondent for *Unearthed* in São Paulo

- *Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at guardian.letters@theguardian.com*
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Everyone is sick – illness in 2022 has medieval vibes

[Brigid Delaney](#)



All day in bed, I am texting others who are in bed, who are all texting others in bed – and we're comparing



'People are getting Covid twice, or recovering from Covid and then getting something else pretty much straight away, or they are *not* recovering; their sickness is lingering into days of double digits.' Photograph: Dawid Kalisinski/Alamy

Thu 9 Jun 2022 13.30 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 18.43 EDT

Now is the winter of our discontent! After two years of plague, after a summer of torrential rain and flooding and more plague, after an autumn of mould and more rain and even more plague, comes the sickness.

It's like singing a round. You meet someone who's got it or is getting over it, then you get it and then the people you live with get it, and then you think you get over it but it returns to the start with a new variation of the old illness and everyone gets sick again. Tra-la-la ...

Some students [have been forced to return](#) to remote learning, [workplaces are reporting](#) a 50% increase in the number of workers on sick leave, [hospitals are dangerously understaffed](#) and at capacity.

We're all sick, or if we're not sick we are recovering from being sick, or we are about to get sick.

People are getting Covid twice, or recovering from Covid, then getting some other sickness pretty much straight away, or they are *not* recovering; their sickness is lingering into days of double digits (one person I know has been sick for 54 days!). The sick wonder with dread if they have the extended mix of the sickness, the long version: The Sickness – Uncut? They wonder if this is now *them*, forever.

As for me, after two years of no winter flu, I am hovering between the kingdom of the well and the kingdom of the sick. My body can't decide which way to go. It's mostly sick but I can still buy my own groceries, which is the metric of whether you are sick or not – can you shop for your own chicken soup?

Today my cough started deepening, moving further down into my lungs (hang on, where are my lungs? Just above the belly button?). Anyway, the cough was *descending*, like a pit worker going into a mucoid mine ...

I keep a watch on my symptoms as I did once with a sourdough starter in 2020, during my year of perfect health. Is the sickness growing? What form is it taking? What is the consistency of my phlegm? What are my lymph nodes trying to tell me? Will the ride be gnarly and or will it be mild and soporific? Will it be one of those sicknesses where you sleep a lot, or will it be one where you can't sleep at all? Will my ears start to ache? Will I google "head transplant"? Or will it go away overnight if I go to bed at 6pm?

This flu season feels more like a communal event

That's the thing about sickness, it's unpredictable almost moment to moment. It can trick you into thinking you are getting better, that you are in the last days of it, when suddenly one day you wake up and you are so much worse.

The unpredictability is dialled up this year. Friends are reporting new symptoms, things they've never experienced before when ill – like hallucinations, like stuff streaming from their eyes, like no sense of taste or smell, like a swollen tongue. Sickness in 2022 has medieval vibes.

One sick friend (a friend who had been sick for many weeks) told me: “I know four people who have had foot and mouth in the last six months – and none of them have children. My inner ear got all fucked up. I didn’t even know that was a thing! It’s crazy how much everyone is getting sick, all of the time – everyone!”

All day in bed, I am texting others who are in bed, who are all texting others in bed – and we’re comparing. How is it today? Better or worse? Where’s your cough at? Can you smell anything yet? Have you got food? Can you get meals, because I’m too sick to bring you anything – but I can recommend this really good food app.

On Twitter the conversation continues, as people treat the platform like a giant WebMD.

“I’m 24 hours in ... and my main question is how in god’s name does my body create so much mucus?” tweeted one friend, forcing me to imagine the large volume of his mucus pouring from his body.

Another friend pleaded: “People who have had Covid and lost taste/smell how long did it take to get it back?? Just wondering the range on how long I could be in for.”

Being sick is, of course, banal – there’s nothing more boring than someone telling you about their cold in great detail.

But after two years of no winter flu season, it has somehow been transformed into what feels like a new experience – *novel*, like the coronavirus promised to be.

This is a different way of doing sickness than pre-pandemic. Maybe because we became so accustomed to being vigilant about Covid symptoms, about washing our hands, about hearing on the daily press conferences messages related to our health. As a result, this flu season feels more like a communal event, where discussion of our individual pathologies, symptoms and sickness takes place more openly and in public forums such as Twitter,

engaging the hive mind in a search for a pattern, a shape, a way through and hopefully out of this kingdom of the sick.

Susan Sontag in her 1978 essay, *Illness as Metaphor*, argued that the language of illness (she was specifically referencing cancer and tuberculosis) relied so heavily on metaphor because it was taboo, and our culture could not approach it openly because of the dread surrounding illness.

The antidote to this, she suggested, was to discuss illness openly and plainly, without euphemism, mystery or aversion.

Challenge accepted! This winter we are not shutting up about our bodies. We describe in plain and grindingly banal (yet also vaguely grotesque) detail all the things our body is doing: the sensations and excess of substances it's producing, its sleeping and waking patterns, its effect on our digestive and elimination systems, its stresses on our lungs and brains and blood pressure.

These times have no use for metaphor.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/10/everyone-is-sick-illness-in-2022-has-medieval-vibes>

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[China](#)

Xi Jinping says ‘persistence is victory’ as Covid restrictions return to Shanghai and Beijing

Both cities back on high alert, with new lockdowns in Shanghai , and the shutdown of entertainment venues in Beijing

- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Workers in protective suits set up barriers outside a building, following the coronavirus disease outbreak, in Shanghai Photograph: Andrew Galbraith/Reuters

*Helen Davidson in Taipei
@heldavidson*

Fri 10 Jun 2022 01.34 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 04.22 EDT

Xi Jinping has reiterated China's commitment to zero-Covid, declaring "persistence is victory", as Shanghai and Beijing were hit with new lockdowns, shutdowns, and mass testing drives just a week after the cities [celebrated](#) the easing of restrictions.

In response to China's worst outbreak of the pandemic, Shanghai spent months under an arduous and strict citywide lockdown, while Beijing authorities imposed localised lockdowns, venue and public transport shutdowns, and work-from-home orders. In the last week both [had begun easing restrictions](#), with authorities praising the containment of the community outbreaks of the Omicron variant.

But on Thursday both cities went back on high alert for Covid cases, with new lockdowns in Shanghai districts home to millions of people, and the shutdown of entertainment venues in Beijing's populous Chaoyang district. The return to restrictions sparked alarm and frustration among residents.

On Friday, China's official state media reported that the president demanded officials effectively coordinate epidemic prevention with economic and social development, and "resolutely overcome some of the difficulties". According to the Xinhua report, Xi made the remarks on Wednesday while visiting Sichuan.

"Persistence is victory," Xi said. "We must unswervingly adhere to the general policy of 'dynamic clearing', strengthen confidence, eliminate interference, overcome paralysing thoughts, pay close attention to the key tasks of epidemic prevention and control, and resolutely consolidate the hard-won results of epidemic prevention and control."

China's government remains steadfast on its "dynamic clearing" policy of reacting swiftly to outbreaks in order to bring community case numbers back to zero. The resource intensive policy includes mass quarantine centres for people considered close contacts – often as far removed as being a neighbour in the same building but several floors away. Its impact has had a significant effect on China's economy.

Experts predict that China will struggle to meet its economic growth target of about 5.5% this year as virus lockdowns force business shutdowns and snarl supply chains.

Half of Shanghai's residents, about 14 million people, were this week ordered to undergo testing. All residents of the affected districts, which include Pudong and Xuhui, have been ordered to stay inside until it is completed, with some residents sent notices detailing two days of confinement and 12 days of testing.

A lockdown was also imposed in Minhang district. New barricades were again erected around some buildings or streets. Hundreds of thousands of people are still unable to leave their homes, and a city health official said Thursday that residents in seven districts must get swabbed from Saturday under a drive to “test all who should be tested”.

“We must not be slack to the slightest degree or let down our guard,” said the official.

The news prompted alarm and unease among residents, with reports of crowded grocery stores as people again stocked up on essentials, just days after [celebrating a return to a more normal life](#).

Officials on Thursday traced three Shanghai infections to the Red Rose, a popular beauty salon in the trendy former French Concession area of the Xuhui district. The shop, which reopened in 1 June when the city did, had served 502 customers from 15 of Shanghai's 16 districts in the past eight days, a local media outlet, The Paper, reported.

“When is this ever going to end?,” one Weibo user commented on the Red Rose. “I just want to have a normal life.”

“I do not know what else we can do, can we prevent infectious diseases?” said another. “We do nucleic acid tests every day, we worry every day! As long as there are humans, there must be infectious diseases! I voluntarily face life, old age, illness and death! Friends, what do you think?”

Some urged people to wait for the epidemic to clear before going out to “fool around”. Others said blaming people who caught the virus was a case of “Stockholm syndrome”.

“Why would anyone scold the infected people? They did not violate the law, and this is the freedom of the people,” one said.

China reported 73 new local infections on Friday, including eight in Beijing and 11 in Shanghai, according to the National Health Commission.

Reuters contributed to this story

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/10/xi-jinping-says-persistence-is-victory-as-covid-restrictions-return-to-shanghai-and-beijing>.

US Capitol attack

‘It was a war scene’: Caroline Edwards describes Capitol attack violence

The Capitol police officer, who was injured in the insurrection, said she saw colleagues ‘bleeding, on the ground, throwing up’



Caroline Edwards, a Capitol police officer injured in the January 6 attack, testifies. Photograph: Drew Angerer/Getty Images

[Sam Levine](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 23.27 EDTFirst published on Thu 9 Jun 2022 23.20 EDT

Caroline Edwards, a Capitol police officer who sustained a brain injury during the January 6 attack, gave a chilling recollection of the brutal violence of that day on Thursday, telling the committee investigating the attack it was a “war scene”.

Her testimony offered key evidence for underscoring the stakes of the congressional hearing. It showed viewers at home that the attack on the

Capitol in Washington DC was not an accident, but rather an intentional effort to inflict violence.

“I can remember my breath catching in my throat because what I saw was a war scene,” she told the committee. “Officers on the ground. They were bleeding, on the ground, throwing up,” she said.

“I was slipping in people’s blood,” she added. “I was catching people as they fell. It was carnage. It was chaos. I can’t even describe what I saw.”

Edwards is believed to have been one of the first officers injured during the attack, the New York Times [reported last year](#). The committee played several clips of her being attacked.

She described standing near a barricade as members of the Proud Boys, a far-right group that played a key role in the violence, escalated their attack. She described telling her sergeant they would need more people to defend the Capitol before a bike rack was thrown on top of her and she hit her head on nearby stairs, causing her to black out.

But after regaining consciousness, Edwards, then 31, returned to defending the Capitol. “Adrenaline kicked in. I ran towards the west front, and I tried to hold the line at the Senate steps at the lower west terrace. More people kept coming at us.”

In her testimony, she recalled seeing a fellow police officer, Brian Sicknick, after he had been pepper-sprayed and how he was pale. “He was ghostly pale, which I figured at that point that he had been sprayed and I was concerned,” she said.

Sicknick died in the immediate aftermath of the attack but a medical examiner ultimately determined he died of a stroke. His mother and girlfriend attended the hearing on Thursday. After the hearing concluded, Edwards turned to his girlfriend, Sandra Garza, and said “I’m so sorry,” and hugged her, [according to the Wall Street Journal](#).

Edwards didn't hesitate when she was asked to recall a memory that stuck out to her from that day.

"It was something I'd seen out of the movies," she said. "I saw friends with blood all over their faces," she said. "Never in my wildest dreams did I think that as a police officer, as a law enforcement officer, I would find myself in the middle of a battle."

"I'm trained to detain a couple of subjects and handle a crowd, but I'm not combat trained," She said. "That day, it was just hours of hand-to-hand combat."

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US Capitol attack

How a documentary film-maker became the January 6 panel's star witness

Nick Quested, who was embedded with the Proud Boys after the 2020 election, will supply first-hand knowledge of the riots

'I experienced it': film-maker offers glimpse into US Capitol attack – video

Hugo Lowell in Washington

Thu 9 Jun 2022 23.00 EDTFirst published on Thu 9 Jun 2022 20.13 EDT

When the House select committee investigating the January 6 Capitol attack on Thursday got to the witness testimony at its inaugural hearing, it heard from an individual with first-hand knowledge about [how the far-right Proud Boys group](#) came to storm the Capitol.

The panel's star witness, Nick Quested, is an Emmy award-winning British documentary film-maker who founded the indie film company Goldcrest and embedded with the Proud Boys in the weeks after [Donald Trump](#) lost the 2020 election as part of a project about division in America.

"We chose the Proud Boys because they've been so vociferous in rallies and protests around America, and they've emerged as a political voice and force, particularly in the summer of 2020," Quested told the Guardian. "We felt they were a group worth following."

Quested spent much of the post-2020 election period following around the Proud Boys and is considered by the select committee as an accidental witness to the group's activities and conversations about [planning to storm the Capitol](#) on January 6.

The documentary film-maker shot footage of some of the most crucial moments connected to the attack, starting with rallies in November and December 2020 which the Proud Boys attended alongside other militia groups, including the Oath Keepers and the 1st Amendment Praetorian.

Quested then managed to capture on camera a late-night rendezvous between Enrique Tarrio, the leader of the Proud Boys, and Stewart Rhodes, the leader of the Oath Keepers, in an underground parking garage near the Capitol the day before January 6.

The US justice department has referenced that encounter in [indictments for seditious conspiracy](#) against Rhodes and other militia group members, though Quested has told the select committee he does not believe that was a meeting to coordinate storming the Capitol.



Members of the the far-right group Proud Boys march to the US Capitol building in Washington DC on 6 January 2021.

Photograph: Leah Millis/Reuters

Quested also filmed the Proud Boys marching up the National Mall from the Save America rally at the Ellipse to the Peace Monument at the foot of Capitol Hill, where the group's members found themselves stopped from moving further by the edge of the US Capitol police perimeter.

Over several tense minutes, he photographed Joseph Biggs, one of the Proud Boys indicted for seditious conspiracy, having a brief exchange with another man in the crowd, who then confronted Capitol police in a moment widely seen as the tipping point of the riot.

The confrontation sparked the crowd to overturn the police barricade – despite Quested holding on to the fencing to keep it upright – and Quested filmed the charge up Capitol Hill towards the inaugural platform on the west side of the Capitol building.

“Why did I go over to the barriers in the first place? Look, there’s two types of people in this world. There’s people who walk to disturbances and people who walk away. I walk towards disturbances,” Quested said.

“I didn’t know there was a confrontation happening. I felt a disturbance in the crowd and I moved towards that confrontation. And that confrontation happened to be Ryan Samsel shaking the barriers. And then the weight of the crowd overwhelmed the officers at the barrier.”

Late in the day on January 6, Quested filmed Tarrio’s reaction to news about the Capitol attack in real time, having gone to see Tarrio in Baltimore, Maryland, where he had retreated after being ordered out of Washington by a local judge the day before.

Quested discussed his footage and more at the select committee’s inaugural hearing pursuant to a subpoena, having already testified on multiple occasions behind closed doors about his recollections and experiences around the Proud Boys on January 6.

The film-maker – originally from west London and educated at St Paul’s school in London – followed the Proud Boys in the post-election period after covering conflict zones including Afghanistan, Iraq, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Syria.

Among other works, Quested produced [Restrepo](#), the 2010 Oscar-nominated film that followed a platoon in Afghanistan for a year, and directed the 2018 duPont-Columbia award-winning film Hell on Earth, as well as more than 100 hip-hop videos, including with Dr Dre.

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Journalist safety

Dom Phillips: sister of missing journalist still hopeful he will be found

Sian Phillips joins London vigil for Briton and the Brazilian Bruno Araújo Pereira who have vanished in Amazon

Vigil held in London for missing journalist Dom Phillips and campaigner Bruno Pereira – video

[Jamie Grierson](#) in London, and [Tom Phillips](#) in Atalaia do Norte

Thu 9 Jun 2022 11.51 EDTFirst published on Thu 9 Jun 2022 07.06 EDT

The sister of a British journalist missing in the Amazon has said she still has hope he will be found.

Sian Phillips was joined by supporters at a vigil for her brother Dom Phillips, who has worked as a freelance correspondent for the Guardian, and the Brazilian Indigenous affairs official [Bruno Araujo Pereira](#) outside the Brazilian embassy in central London on Thursday.

The two men [vanished from a remote part of the rainforest](#) more than three days ago, having reportedly last been seen early on Sunday in the São Rafael community.

Some people held red roses while others clasped red and black posters that read “Find Dom and Bruno” and featured images of the missing pair’s faces, as they stood in silence in a line outside the entrance of the embassy from 8am.

In a statement to the press, Sian Phillips, with her partner, Paul Sherwood, and twin brother, Gareth Phillips, by her side, said: “We had to come this morning, to ask the question: where is Dom Phillips? Where is Bruno Pereira?

“And we are also here for my brother’s wife, Alessandra Sampaio. We are here with my brother’s nieces and sister-in-law too.

“We are here because Dom is missing, he is lost doing the important job of investigative journalism. We are here to make the point that why did it take so long for them to start the search for my brother and for Bruno.

“We want the search to carry on.”

Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira filmed on Amazon expedition in 2018 – video

She spoke about how her brother was a “great writer and journalist, a caring man … and cares about the environment and loves Brazil” and that the whole family loved him.

When asked about the chances of her brother being found, she added: “We all still have hope. We have hope.”

In Atalaia do Norte, the isolated Amazon town where Phillips and Pereira spent their last night before heading into the [Javari reserve](#), locals voiced shock and anger at their disappearances.

“I still can’t believe it,” said Marivalda Rabelo Laranhaga, the receptionist at the hotel where they stayed before starting their journey last Thursday afternoon.

“He seemed such a polite and kind person … a journalist who was truly dedicated to his work,” Laranhaga, 31, added of Phillips, as Indigenous rescue workers prepared to head back out onto the river to continue their search.

Meanwhile, O Globo newspaper reported claims that a significant suspect in the case had been seen loading a shotgun and leaving Atalaia with four other people on a powerful motorboat after Phillips and Pereira visited the town.

Amarildo da Costa de Oliveira, 41, also known as Pelado, was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly carrying a firearm without a permit, a common

practice in the region.

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At the vigil in [London](#), Louisa Casson, the head of forests at Greenpeace UK, explained the meaning of the red roses. “We wanted something that conveys the love and admiration everyone here has for Dom and Bruno and for their work and amplifying the images already on social media with this clear message of find Dom and Bruno,” she said.

At 9.30am a letter was given to the Brazilian ambassador from Greenpeace UK’s executive director, Pat Venditti, and Phillips’s family.

Casson added that the letter presented “an urgent call on the Brazilian government to dedicate all necessary local and federal resources to the search mission for Bruno and Dom”.

A [Guardian editorial](#) has called on authorities to scale up the so-far lacklustre response. “The government is highly unlikely to change course without international pressure,” it says. “That must first be brought to bear to produce an adequate response to this disappearance.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/jun/09/dom-phillips-sister-sian-missing-journalist-brazil-amazon-hopeful>

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- Ukraine UK to send long-range rocket artillery despite Russian threats
- Health ‘Demoralised’ nurses being ‘driven out’ of profession, RCN survey finds
- 'Seems a natural step' Thousands of UK workers begin world's biggest trial of four-day week
- Rwanda Home Office offers asylum seekers choice between war zones they fled and Rwanda
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UK to send long-range rocket artillery to Ukraine despite Russian threats

M270 launch systems have 50-mile range and can target Russian artillery that has been attacking cities in eastern Ukraine

- [Russia-Ukraine war: latest updates](#)



An M270 MLRS heavy rocket launcher participates in the LIST 22 live-fire Lightning Strike military exercises at the Rovajärvi training grounds on May 23, 2022 near Rovaniemi, Finland. Photograph: Sean Gallup/Getty Images

[Dan Sabbagh](#) in Kyiv

Sun 5 Jun 2022 19.01 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 06.48 EDT

Britain is to supply long-range rocket artillery to Ukraine, despite a threat on Sunday from Russia's president, [Vladimir Putin](#), to bomb fresh targets if similar weapons from the US were delivered to Kyiv.

The UK will send a handful of tracked M270 multiple launch rocket systems, which can hit targets up to 50 miles away, in the hope they can disrupt the concentrated Russian artillery that has been pounding cities in eastern [Ukraine](#).

Ben Wallace, the UK defence secretary, argued the decision to ship the rocket launchers was justified because “as Russia’s tactics change, so must our support to Ukraine”. The move risks further provoking an already irritated Kremlin.

Before the British announcement, Putin told Rossiya state television that [Russia](#) would retaliate further if the US went through with the delivery of HIMARS rocket artillery that the White House promised last week.

Russia will strike harder if Ukraine is supplied with longer-range missiles, says Putin – video

“We will strike at those targets which we have not yet been hitting,” said the Russian leader, who has been closely involved with operational military decisions throughout the three months-plus of the war. He did not specify what those targets were.

In the small hours of Sunday morning, [Russian cruise missiles struck a railway depot](#) in the eastern Dniprovsky suburb of Kyiv. Ukraine said the strike hit a rail car repair works; Moscow said it had destroyed tanks sent by eastern European countries to Ukraine.

It was the first time anywhere in the capital has been hit for over five weeks. One person was hospitalised, and a plume of smoke rose and was visible from high points in the capital.

Five cruise missiles were launched from Tu-95 bombers, one of which was intercepted, Ukraine’s air force said, in an attack that represented a change of approach on the part of Russian forces. Kyiv was last hit on 28 April.

Russia’s ministry of defence claimed it was targeting an arsenal of T-72 tanks that had been delivered from eastern European countries, suggesting it

now wants to target the supply of western arms. But Ukrainian officials said the statement was false.

[Smoke rises above Kyiv after first airstrikes on city in five weeks – video](#)

Oleksandr Kamyshin, the chairman of the board of Ukrainian Railways, said: “There are no such tanks at the plant, as well as no military equipment. There are only cars that we repair. These carriages we need for export – these are, in particular, grain carriages.”

The UK, in conjunction with the US and other western nations, began the war by promising only to supply “defensive weaponry” to help Ukraine repel the Russian invasion. But as Russia has made gains in the east and the south of the country, western countries have gradually sent more lethal arms.

London said it had been cooperating closely with Washington. The British announcement comes a few days after the US said it would send four similar truck-mounted HIMARS systems. The US and UK systems are intended to be complementary. The ranges of both are far greater than any land weapons Ukraine currently has.

Like the US, the UK has sought assurances from Kyiv that the M270s would not be used to strike targets within Russia. A British defence source said the weapons will be used “to defend Ukraine, in Ukraine”. They added: “We have confidence that the weapons will be used appropriately.”

[Graphic](#)

Britain did not say how many M270s it was sending, although the number is small and will be comparable to the US decision to send four HIMARS. Ukrainian troops will be trained on how to use the launchers in the UK, the MoD added, and Kyiv’s forces will be supplied with the appropriate rockets “at scale”.

However, Putin said he believed the west’s goal was to prolong the war in Ukraine, which has now gone on for over three months, after the Russian president launched an unprovoked invasion on 24 February.

“All this fuss around additional deliveries of weapons, in my opinion, has only one goal: to drag out the armed conflict as much as possible,” Putin added.

Ukraine’s nuclear energy company, Energoatom, also warned on Sunday that a Russian cruise missile had come dangerously close to the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear power plant, in the south of the country, at about 5.30am, apparently heading for Kyiv.

It said the missile “flew critically low” over the site and that Russian forces “still do not understand that even the smallest fragment of a missile that can hit a working power unit can cause a nuclear catastrophe and radiation leak”.

Elsewhere, Britain’s [Ministry of Defence said](#) that [Ukrainian forces had counterattacked in Sievierodonetsk](#) in eastern Ukraine, “likely blunting the operational momentum Russian forces previously gained” but offered no assessment of whether the effort was pushing the invaders back.

On Saturday, Serhiy Haidai, the Ukrainian governor of Luhansk province, said his country’s forces had regained about 20% of the city in Donbas, which had been under days of attack from concentrated Russian shelling and airstrikes.

Haidai repeated that claim on Sunday, adding that eight Russians had been taken prisoner and that the occupiers had “lost a huge number of personnel”. A humanitarian headquarters in neighbouring Lysychansk had been struck with 30 shells overnight, the governor said.

Ukrainian forces were “successfully slowing down Russian operations” in Donbas and were making “effective local counterattacks in Sievierodonetsk”, [said the Institute for the Study of War](#), a US thinktank, overnight.

The research group, which closely monitors the fighting, said that Russia “may still be able to capture Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk” and that it appeared that “Ukrainian defences remain strong in this pivotal theatre”.

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Britain's Ministry of Defence said Russia was relying on "poorly equipped and trained" separatist forces from Luhansk to conduct the clearance of the city, a tactic it said had been previously employed by Moscow's forces in Syria. "This approach likely indicates a desire to limit casualties suffered by regular Russian forces," it added.

One Ukrainian presidential adviser urged European nations to respond with "more sanctions, more weapons" to the strike on Kyiv – and appeared to criticise the French president, Emmanuel Macron, [who had said in an interview](#) on Friday that Russia must not be humiliated in Ukraine so that a diplomatic solution could eventually be found.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the head of the president's office, tweeted: "While someone asks not to humiliate Russia, the Kremlin resorts to new insidious attacks. Today's missile strikes at Kyiv have only one goal – kill as many Ukrainians as possible."

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Nursing

‘Demoralised’ nurses being ‘driven out’ of profession, RCN survey finds

Only a quarter of shifts have the planned number of registered nurses on duty, according to Royal College of Nursing report



Four out of five respondents said staffing levels on their last shift were not enough to meet all the needs and dependency of their patients. Photograph: Jane Barlow/PA

[Nadia Khomami](#)

[@nadiakhomami](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

Only a quarter of nursing shifts have the planned number of registered nurses on duty, a survey of more than 20,000 frontline staff has suggested.

According to the Royal College of [Nursing](#) (RCN), most nurses warn that staffing levels on their last shift were not sufficient to meet the needs of patients, and that some are now quitting their jobs.

The RCN said the findings shone a light on the impact of the UK's nursing staff shortage, warning that nurses were being "driven out" of their profession.

In her keynote address to the RCN's annual congress in Glasgow, the general secretary, Pat Cullen, is expected to warn of nurses' growing concerns over patient safety.

Four out of five respondents said staffing levels on their last shift were not enough to meet all the needs and dependency of their patients. The findings also indicated that only a quarter of shifts had the planned number of registered nurses on duty, a sharp fall from 42% in 2020 and 45% five years ago, said the RCN.

"Our new report lays bare the state of health and care services across the UK," Cullen will say. "It shows the shortages that force you to go even more than the extra mile and that, when the shortages are greatest, you are forced to leave patient care undone.

"Don't ever think that it is normal to not have enough staff to meet the needs of patients. It is not. Today, members are letting the full truth be known – nursing is saying loud and clear: 'Enough is enough.'"

Cullen said now was the time to break the cycle. "It is your professional duty to be concerned about unsafe staffing and we have your back. Twenty-five thousand registered nurses left last year – a sharp rise on the year before, at the very moment we cannot afford to lose a single individual. The pressure is too great and the reward too little."

Nursing staff, she will add, are being driven out by the shortage of staff and poor culture. "To those from government listening to my words – we have had enough. The patients and those we care for have had enough. We are

tired, fed up, demoralised, and some of us are leaving the profession because we have lost hope.”

Last spring, [official figures showed](#) that the NHS was facing a deepening staffing crisis, with the number of unfilled posts across health services in England rising to 110,192.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/06/demoralised-nurses-being-driven-out-of-profession-rcn-survey-finds>

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Productivity

Thousands of UK workers begin world's biggest trial of four-day week

With work changed for ever by the pandemic, businesses are testing whether pilot represents a recognition that 'the new frontier for competition is quality of life'



Researchers will analyse how employees respond to having an extra day off, in terms of areas including stress and burnout, job and life satisfaction, health, sleep, energy use and travel. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

[Julia Kollewe](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

More than 3,300 workers at 70 UK companies, ranging from a local chippy to large financial firms, start working a four-day week from Monday with no loss of pay in the world's [biggest trial of the new working pattern](#).

The pilot is running for six months and is being organised by 4 Day Week Global in partnership with the thinktank Autonomy, the 4 Day Week Campaign, and researchers at Cambridge University, Oxford University and Boston College.

The trial is based on the 100:80:100 model – 100% of pay for 80% of the time, in exchange for a commitment to maintain 100% productivity.

Platten's Fish and Chips in Wells-next-the-Sea on the north Norfolk coast is participating, along with the Sheffield software firm Rivelin Robotics, the London-based inheritance tax specialists Stellar Asset Management, and Charity Bank in Tonbridge, Kent.

Joe O'Connor, chief executive of the not-for-profit group 4 Day Week Global, said the UK was at the crest of the four-day week wave: “As we emerge from the pandemic, more and more companies are recognising that the new frontier for competition is quality of life, and that reduced-hour, output-focused working is the vehicle to give them a competitive edge.”

Some of the other companies involved provide education, workplace consultancy, housing, skincare, building and construction recruitment services, food and beverages, and digital marketing.

Researchers will work with each participating organisation to measure the impact on productivity in the business and the wellbeing of its workers, as well as the impact on the environment and gender equality.



Wyatt Watts, team leader at Platten's Fish and Chips, said morale had already improved within his team since the business joined the trial. He hopes the extra time to rest will boost his energy levels and productivity.

Photograph: Handout

Government-backed four-day week trials are also due to begin later this year in Spain and Scotland.

Juliet Schor, a professor of sociology at Boston College and lead researcher on the pilot, described it as a “historic trial”. “We’ll be analysing how employees respond to having an extra day off, in terms of stress and burnout, job and life satisfaction, health, sleep, energy use, travel and many other aspects of life,” she said.

“The four-day week is generally considered to be a triple-dividend policy – helping employees, companies, and the climate. Our research efforts will be digging into all of this.”

Wyatt Watts, 25, team leader at Platten's Fish and Chips, said: “When I first heard we were going to be working less hours with the same pay, I thought to myself, ‘What’s the catch?’ Usually I’m so exhausted from work I don’t have the energy, so hopefully having that extra time to rest will boost my energy levels.”

He said the decision to join the pilot was already having an impact. “Morale has improved and we’re hoping that our productivity at work is going to be higher.”

Ed Siegel, chief executive of Charity Bank, said it was proud to be one of the first banks in the UK to embrace the four-day week. “We have long been a champion of flexible working, but the pandemic really moved the goalposts in this regard. For Charity Bank, the move to a four-day week seems a natural next step.

“The 20th-century concept of a five-day working week is no longer the best fit for 21st-century business. We firmly believe that a four-day week with no change to salary or benefits will create a happier workforce and will have an equally positive impact on business productivity, customer experience and our social mission.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jun/06/thousands-workers-worlds-biggest-trial-four-day-week>

Immigration and asylum

Home Office offers asylum seekers choice between war zones they fled and Rwanda

High number of first 100 people to be sent to Rwanda are from Sudan, despite being small number of those crossing the Channel



A group of refugees arriving into port on a coastguard vessel in Dover.
Photograph: REX/Shutterstock

Diane Taylor

Mon 6 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 04.37 EDT

The [Home Office](#) is offering to fly asylum seekers back to the conflict zones they escaped from if they do not wish to be sent to Rwanda, the Guardian has learned.

Documents issued to the first group of asylum seekers facing removal to the east African country state that the Home Office voluntary returns service can help them go back to their home country.

The document adds: “You have the option to leave the UK voluntarily. However, should you be removed it will be to [Rwanda](#). ”

All of those who face being sent to Rwanda have had their asylum claims deemed ‘inadmissible’ by the Home Office because of their method of reaching the UK – generally crossing the Channel in a dinghy.

The letter adds: “There is no right of appeal against the decision to treat your asylum claim as inadmissible.”

Those currently detained for offshoring include Syrians, Sudanese, Afghans, Eritreans, Iranians and Iraqis, some of whose home countries are active conflict zones.

Karen Doyle of Movement For Justice, said: “It’s as if the Home Office is saying to this group of asylum seekers: ‘Here’s a hell we created for you in Rwanda but you can choose to go back to the hell you escaped from instead.’ This is not a choice. These are refugees who cannot return home. In practice this is ripping up the UK’s stated commitment to refugees.”

A significant number of those in the first group of 100 who have been targeted for offshoring to Rwanda are from Sudan.

Sudanese are not the largest nationality group to arrive in the UK on small boats in the first quarter of this year where they ranked seventh with 137 arrivals between January and March of this year. They have a 92% grant rate for asylum claims.

The largest nationality groups arriving on small boats were Afghans with 1,094 people followed by Iranians with 722 arrivals. Legal challenges against the plans have been mounted by Home Office workers’ union PCS and several refugee and human rights charities.

A group of asylum seekers facing offshoring [embarked on a hunger strike this week](#) and on Friday dozens in Brook House detention centre near Gatwick airport started a protest in the exercise yard.

Mohammed, 25, from Sudan, who is currently detained and facing offshoring to Rwanda, previously told the Guardian it had taken him more than three years and a journey of more than 5,000 miles to reach the UK after fleeing a massacre in his village in his home country. He said he was devastated by the threat of offshoring.

Clare Moseley, chief executive of Care4Calais, said: “It is deeply disturbing that the profile of people issued with Rwanda notices does not reflect those who cross the Channel in the largest numbers. Sudanese refugees often have no money to pay people smugglers and yet represent more than a third of those being sent to Rwanda.

“We are told that more than 25% of those crossing the Channel in the first three months of this year are Afghans yet they do not appear to be facing offshoring in such large numbers. The Rwanda plan is highly political. Is the selection process more so?”

A Home Office spokesperson said: “Our world-leading partnership with Rwanda is a key part of our strategy to overhaul the broken asylum system and break the evil people-smugglers’ business model.

“We have now issued formal directions to the first group of people due to be relocated to Rwanda later this month, where they will be given the opportunity to rebuild their lives there. This marks a critical step towards operationalising the policy and we remain fully committed to working with Rwanda to offer safety to those seeking asylum and ultimately save lives.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/06/home-office-offers-asylum-seekers-choice-between-war-zones-they-fled-and-rwanda>

[**Carbon bombsFossil fuels**](#)

Environmentalists join forces to fight 'carbon bomb' fossil fuel projects

Coalition of lawyers, journalists and campaigners challenge climate-busting mega projects exposed in Guardian investigation

- [Revealed: the 'carbon bombs' set to trigger climate breakdown](#)



Pump jacks operate at sunset in an oilfield in Midland, Texas. The US is the leading source of emissions from carbon bomb mega projects. Photograph: Nick Oxford/Reuters

[Matthew Taylor](#) Environment correspondent

Mon 6 Jun 2022 04.08 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.08 EDT

A coalition of environmental lawyers, investigative journalists and campaigners has launched a group to challenge the “carbon bomb” fossil fuel projects revealed in a Guardian investigation.

After a meeting in May, more than 70 NGOs and activist groups from around the world have formed a [“carbon bomb defusal” network](#) to share expertise and resources in the fight to halt the projects and prevent the catastrophic climate breakdown they would cause.

The [Guardian investigation identified 195 carbon bombs](#), gigantic oil and gas projects that would each result in at least a billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions over their lifetimes, in total equivalent to about 18 years of current global CO₂ emissions. About 60% of these have started pumping.

The US is the leading source of emissions from these mega projects, with its 22 carbon bombs spanning the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico to the foothills of the Front Range in Colorado to the [Permian Basin](#). Together they have the potential to emit 140bn tonnes of CO₂, almost four times more than the entire world emits each year.

Saudi Arabia is the second biggest potential emitter after the US, with 107bn tonnes, followed by Russia, Qatar, Iraq, Canada, China and Brazil.

The new campaigning network aims to coordinate legal challenges and activist campaigns against these projects and the companies and politicians supporting them.

Organisers plan to create a central hub to formalise the burgeoning movement and urge other groups of activists, journalists and lawyers to sign up.

“It only takes a handful of dedicated people – lawyers, campaigners, activists – to defuse a carbon bomb,” said Kjell Kühne, from the University of Leeds, who led the [carbon bomb research](#). “And we need such a team for each and everyone of these projects. These will be the epic battles of the ‘keep it in the ground’ movement.”

The 350.org environmentalist group is one of those backing the new campaign. Its chief executive, May Boeve, said: “With our local and global partners [we] are campaigning fiercely to keep fossil fuels in the ground and diffuse these carbon bombs to make staying at 1.5 possible, and avoid

irreversible and catastrophic climate change. We need to take action at the scale of the crisis by stopping all fossil fuel projects and transitioning to 100% renewables for all.”

Several prominent climate justice groups in the global south are also involved in the new network.

Nnimmo Bassey, from OilWatch Africa, said: “We call for global solidarity against the carbon bombers and work together to stop the expansion of fossil fuels extraction, take direct actions and litigate to ensure that polluters are held to account over their ecological misbehaviours.”

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Carroll Muffett, the president of the Center for International Environmental Law, also backed the project, warning the oil majors were “racing to open massive new oil and gas frontiers from South America to southern Africa, asking governments and people across the global south to gamble their futures on fossil fuels when it is clear that fossil fuels have no future.”

Alongside those organisations that have signed up, organisers say other groups of environmental lawyers, investigative journalists and philanthropic funders have expressed an interest in the movement.

Mark Hertsgaard, from Covering Climate Now, a network of more than 500 news outlets, said there had been huge interest from journalists after the Guardian investigation.

“[The carbon bombs investigation] ranks as one of the landmark climate investigations in years, not just because it reveals how fossil fuel companies and governments are giving the finger to humanity’s chances of hitting the 1.5C target, but also because its insights and data offer other newsrooms abundant opportunities for further reporting that can hold the companies and governments accountable and ... stop as many of these carbon bombs as possible.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/06/environmentalists-carbon-bomb-fossil-fuel-projects-coalition>

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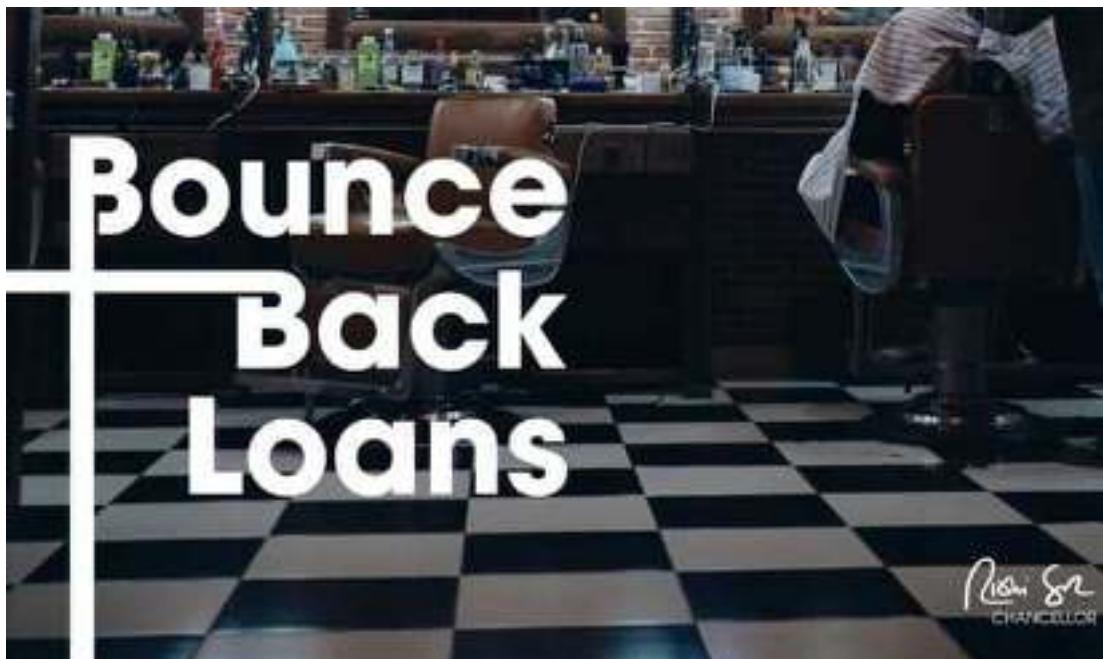
2022.06.06 - Spotlight

- Covid fraud How bounce back loans paid for cars, watches and even porn
- 'I had to tape my fingers together to stop me tearing the skin' The reality of living with Tourette syndrome
- Martin Scorsese on Ray Liotta in Goodfellas 'The new guy never missed a beat'
- 'Bloody cheek, I'm not ageing' Simon Hattenstone interviews his 94-year-old mum, Marje

Coronavirus

Covid fraud: how bounce back loans paid for cars, watches and even porn

As details emerge, concerns grow about Treasury's efforts to recover almost £5bn wrongly claimed



Advertising for the Treasury's bounce back loans scheme, which was widely exploited. Photograph: HM Government

[Jasper Jolly](#) and [Kalyeena Makortoff](#).

Mon 6 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

When Keith Hamblett, a fruit and vegetable seller from Tyne and Wear, asked his bank for a government-backed loan in the autumn of 2020, the economy was still in trouble after lockdowns, and coronavirus cases were rising.

The Covid bounce back loan scheme was a welcome relief for many smaller companies, and Hamblett received £28,000.

But there was a problem: he had ceased trading, meaning he was not eligible for the support. Then, contrary to the terms, he withdrew £10,000, spending £2,400 on a luxury watch and the remainder on his own living costs. He then filed a bankruptcy petition with liabilities of £61,692.

These details have emerged via an Insolvency Service register of disqualified directors, which is publicising new cases of fraud, misrepresentation, error or misuse each week.

Other cases – flagged by the insolvency firm Real Business Rescue – include directors who spent tens of thousands on a Range Rover, a jetski, buy-to-let property, flying lessons and even pornographic websites.



Details from the Insolvency Service register of disqualified directors show loans were spent on Range Rovers and other luxury items. Photograph: Manfred Schmid/Getty Images

Britain's already overloaded courts system is bracing itself. A wave of Covid loan fraud cases is already hitting, as law enforcement agencies start to bring

the perpetrators to book. Government accountants estimate nearly £5bn was wrongly claimed.

MPs, campaigners and those involved in the law enforcement effort are worried. They have told the Guardian that efforts to recover the money are underfunded. They say government agencies have asked ministers for more cash, but it has been refused.

And they worry that even if budgets were increased, years of cost-cutting means there just are not enough officers with the skills and training to pursue white-collar crime.

There is evidence ministers have turned down requests by law enforcement for more resources. The National Investigation Service (Natis), a Kent-based body little-known even in anti-corruption circles, was given the massive job of investigating bounce back loan fraud in the summer of 2020.

However, buried in a National Audit Office report published in December was the revelation that the government rejected Natis's request for £39m over three years, instead giving it only £6m.

The decision was baffling, said the NAO, given the government's own statement that for each £1 invested, Natis would recover £8 for the taxpayer. "The Treasury wouldn't cough up any more money for it," a person involved in funding conversations said.

Launched in April 2020, the bounce back scheme was one of Rishi Sunak's biggest interventions during the first months of the pandemic, as the chancellor attempted to firewall the economy.

During the nearly 11 months it operated, the scheme handed out £47bn. The cash was distributed by 28 high street banks and other lenders, with applicants able to borrow up to £50,000 each.



The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, pictured on the day the bounce back loans scheme was launched. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/PA

The loans were underwritten by the taxpayer, which means the Treasury will refund banks if borrowers default.

The money was intended to help company owners keep their businesses going, and could only be granted if the borrower was a going concern. But billions were wasted – claimed by businesses that had already gone under, or by criminals who had no legitimate business at all.

Natis is thought to be drowning under huge caseloads. It received more than 2,100 intelligence reports by October 2021, but only had capacity to pursue a maximum of 50 cases a year.

Synectics Solutions, a fraud data company, was granted access to loan application information for two unnamed major bounce back lending banks. It found 45% of applications were for businesses that showed no evidence of trading at all, before or after March 2020. In 6% of cases there was evidence that raised “concerns the money may be siphoned off to the other companies”.

Enforcement also suffers from a hugely fragmented approach, meaning it is often not clear who is responsible for investigating crimes. There are at least

16 agencies across government responsible for countering fraud, not including police forces. Local and regional police, the National Crime Agency, Natis and the Insolvency Service have all been involved in arrests.

After the Treasury [minister Lord Agnew resigned in protest at the lack of action](#) on fraud, Sunak bowed to pressure in March by [creating the Public Sector Fraud Authority](#) – with £25m of new money.

The funding has been welcomed, although the body’s “data analytics experts and economic crime investigators” are expected to help existing agencies, rather than launch their own prosecutions. They will not start until July, more than two years after the bounce back scheme started.

Meanwhile, the cases keep coming. Deniz Atay, of north-west London, secured a £50,000 loan in October 2020, according to the Insolvency Service, despite his business having ceased to trade. He used some of the money to buy two vehicles that he later sold.

Graeme Cameron, of Nottinghamshire, who ran The Milestone pub, used most of a £20,000 bounce back loan for his own purposes, before going back in March 2021 for another “top-up” loan of £25,000 after he had ceased trading. Again, he spent the money on personal expenses.



One person used the the majority of a £50,000 loan in June 2020 for personal spending, including on gambling. Photograph: Bet_Noire/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Nathan Hill, of Exeter, obtained £50,000 using turnover figures for his business, Troopa Courier Services, that he could not back up with evidence. He used the majority of the £50,000 loan in June 2020 for personal spending, including on gambling, as well as transferring cash to other people. None of the individuals disqualified responded to requests for comment.

Ministers will be watching one case with particular attention: Tarek Namouz, a 42-year-old former pub landlord from London, [appeared in court last month](#) accused of sending thousands of pounds in bounce back loans to fund the terrorist group Islamic State in Syria. A case management hearing is scheduled for July.

Susan Hawley, the executive director of campaign group Spotlight on Corruption, said: “The same skills you need for tackling corruption and fraud have been decimated through the years. No one’s bleeding, or shouting. You can’t have an immediate response to it. Fraud is always being deprioritised as a low-harm issue.”

Spotlight on Corruption is pushing for more transparency, taking the British Business Bank (BBB), the semi-independent body that administered the scheme on behalf of the government, to a tribunal to try to compel it to release the names of all borrowers. The bank has so far refused, saying it would harm commercial interests.

Agnew has agreed to appear as a witness at the tribunal, which is expected to issue a ruling later this year.

“This mishandling is going to remain in the public domain for years, with anyone associated with it shredded by a thousand humiliations,” he told guests at an anti-fraud event in Westminster last month.

“Someone with some courage in government needs to do the right thing and open up the data. It will force the pace and make things happen.”

Some blame the banks, saying they were too lax in their checks on borrowers, and are not spending enough on recovering lost funds – simply drawing on the 100% government guarantee instead.



Lord Agnew announces his resignation as Treasury minister in the Lords in January. Photograph: PA

Agnew recently [launched a public attack on Starling Bank](#), claiming the lender did not run adequate checks and used the scheme as an opportunity to grow its loan book and, in turn, its valuation.

By June 2021, it had distributed £1.6bn of bounce back loans. The bank's chief executive, Anne Boden, said she was "shocked" by Agnew's comments, and asked him to withdraw his statements.

Boden said Starling had been open and transparent about its approach to bounce back loans and was one of the "most active and effective banks fighting fraud".

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The exploitation of the bounce back loans comes on top of the estimated [£5.5bn of Covid supported funds to have been lost to fraud or error](#),

including furlough, the self-employment income support scheme and Sunak's eat out to help out package for hospitality.

A government spokesman said it had stopped nearly £3bn in potential fraud on Covid schemes, adding: “Our £400bn Covid support schemes were implemented at unprecedented speed and protected millions of jobs and businesses at the height of the pandemic.

“We’re cracking down on anyone who sought to defraud our schemes and bringing them to justice.”

For Meg Hillier, the Labour MP who heads the Commons public accounts committee, chasing fraud is worth the investment not only in order to claw back money, but also for a “deterrent effect” – making gangs think twice before targeting future government schemes. It is, she said, “a good way of spending taxpayer money”.

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‘I had to tape my fingers together to stop me tearing the skin’: the reality of living with Tourette syndrome



‘We used to call them “my habits” when I was little, because I don’t think anyone knew what they were’ ... Ed Palmer. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

The singer Billie Eilish has spoken about living with the condition that affects 300,000 people in the UK. For many, trying to suppress their tics is exhausting. But others have learned to control their symptoms and use the energy as a driving force



[Emine Saner](#)

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Mon 6 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT

Last month, the singer [Billie Eilish](#) talked candidly about her [experience of living with Tourette syndrome](#). “I never don’t tic at all,” she told the talkshow host David Letterman. “The main tics that I do constantly, all day long, are: I wiggle my ear back and forth and raise my eyebrow and click my jaw.” She also flexes muscles in her arms, she says. “These are things you would never notice if you’re just having a conversation with me but, for me, they’re very exhausting.” The interview raised awareness of a condition that is still misunderstood – and helped to debunk some prevalent myths.

Although more than 300,000 people in the UK are known to have Tourette syndrome (TS), the real figure is likely to be much higher. But one common misconception is that the condition is characterised by loud, involuntary swearing – known as coprolalia. This only affects 10-20% of people with the

condition; people with TS have a huge range of tics that can involve making sounds and movements, and often have co-occurring conditions, such as ADHD and obsessive compulsive disorder. So, how does it feel to live with this condition?



Billie Eilish talked candidly about living with Tourette syndrome in an interview with David Letterman. Photograph: Nina Prommer/EPA

Ed Palmer, 30, is a doctor and lives in Birmingham

We used to call them “my habits” when I was little, because I don’t think anyone knew what they were. I would open my eyes really wide and say I was trying to get air into them. I was diagnosed at 14 – my mum had Googled it and thought that it could be Tourette syndrome.

There are periods when the tics got worse. In the run-up to exams, when I was stressed, I would stretch my fingers so much that I would end up tearing the skin between them. I would have to tape them together to stop me doing it. The eye tic would make my eyes red and I would get bad headaches. I’d bite my cheek and move my teeth and gums in a certain way causing my gums to bleed.

I felt that, for the most part, my tics were manageable – it was just during periods of stress that they were bad, so I was referred to a doctor to help me cope with the anxiety, more than the tics themselves. I remember saying to the specialist that if there was a tablet that would permanently take away my tics, I wouldn't take it. It's part of who I am.

I actively suppress them if I'm having an interview, or seeing a patient and I am conscious that it is distracting for them, or if I'm doing something practical where I need to keep still. I'm training to be a psychiatrist, but when I was working in hospitals, a surgeon once asked if I was safe to operate. Coming from a medic, it was slightly ignorant and the way that it was phrased was quite accusatory. I said, in no uncertain terms, that it wasn't a problem.

My most common tic is I move and stretch my neck, so I'll get someone ask: "Have you done something to your neck?" Then I decide whether to give them the long explanation, or just go: "Oh yes, I've pulled a muscle."

As a doctor, I think it gives me an insight into what it's like to have a diagnosis or a chronic health condition. I was never clinically interested in Tourette syndrome, but having done the clinic at a children's hospital, I loved it. When a child is diagnosed, a thousand things go through a parent's head. I think it was reassuring for them to see a doctor who had the same condition as their child.

Laura Allan, 20, is a student and lives in Glasgow

At school, I would get kicked out of class for eye-rolling and sighing, because the teacher thought I was being rude, but I didn't know I was doing it. I would hum a lot, the most inane, humming noise. We didn't know they were tics, it was brushed off as me just being an anxious child.



‘I’m not in control’ ... Laura Allan

When I was 14, I started developing these shrieking, hiccup noises. It was happening several times a day, mostly when I was stressed. For someone who didn’t like attention, it made me incredibly anxious – I was having panic attacks and didn’t want to be in school. I had heard of Tourette syndrome but I thought it was just a thing that made people swear.

When I was 17, it got even worse, with physical and vocal tics – random words would come out, and I started hitting myself. It was so bad I stopped going to my classes. Then the pandemic hit, and I tried to study at home, but it’s difficult to read and take information in when you’re constantly moving – I ended up with no qualifications.

I’m now studying childcare and I’ve been working on a placement in a nursery. I’ve noticed that my tics go away when I’m around children, maybe because I’m so focused and relaxed, it’s the most amazing thing. Music also helps – if I’m listening to music, I tic a lot less and sometimes I don’t tic at all.

My college class doesn’t know the true extent of it, because, while I have told some of them, I always suppress it, so they haven’t heard most of my vocal tics. It’s exhausting. When I get home, the tics all come out. I struggle

to be able to talk because a vocal tic will come out, and then another one, and then I'll end up hitting myself. There have been at least three occasions when I've knocked myself out because I've punched myself that hard in the head.

The vocal tics scare me because I could catcall someone, I could get arrested. My neurologist told me to make sure I've always got something on me saying I have Tourette syndrome, in case a police officer pulls me over. I don't tend to go out. I isolate myself in case something offensive comes out vocally. My neurologist is trying out different medications in the hope that something works, but he said my case is one of the worst he's ever seen.

Society jokes about Tourette syndrome being a swearing condition but it is so much more than that. I'm not in control of whether I get hurt or bruised. My thoughts, speech and actions are out of my control and it's exhausting, my brain is constantly active. It causes people a lot of physical pain, and a lot of emotional pain, too. You just have to take every day as it comes.

Genna Barnett, 31, is a senior programme manager for a charity and lives in London



'Neurodiversity has almost become cool, which has helped me' ... Genna Barnett. Photograph: Katherine Anne Rose/The Observer

I was diagnosed when I was seven. I remember child psychologists asking me to draw how I felt. I drew myself with a bubble inside my stomach expanding; the only way to burst it was to do a tic – it's quite a good description for how it still feels.

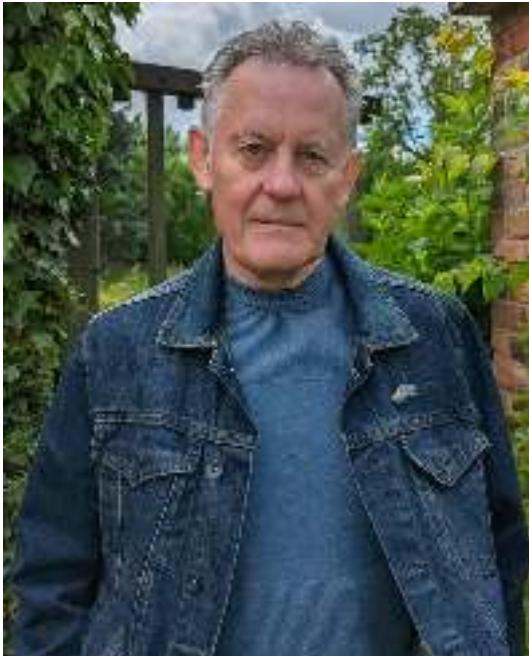
I used to make loud noises, like hiccupping. I would tap my fingers on my cheeks and jerk my shoulders and arms. I have this tic, where I tense my stomach muscles. When I was younger, I worried it would make me urinate, so I would go to the toilet excessively, like 20 times a day.

From the age of seven to 25, I was extremely ashamed and embarrassed. I tried to hide it, and never spoke about it. I had a close group of friends that were cool with it but I did have random people coming up to me in the corridors, which wasn't great. It really affected my confidence and I had very low self-esteem.

I still make noises but they're much quieter. People will say: "What is that?" or make fun of it, then I have to explain it, but most of the time my tics are quite subtle. People just think I'm doing weird stuff with my eyes or I have a cough. I don't think they would know unless I told them.

It's only in the last three years that I've become proud of it, and I'm now a trustee for the organisation [Tourettes Action](#). Neurodiversity has almost become cool, so that wider context helped me and I became more secure and confident in who I was. I never thought too much about how embarrassed and ashamed I felt, then I started questioning it. I would hate for my children, and other young people today, to feel like that.

David Masters, 71, is a retired lecturer and lives in Bury St Edmunds



‘For decades, I thought I must in some way be an inadequate human being’
... David Masters

Even if you find ways of coping, the effort of suppressing tics can be as tiring as ticcing itself. One of the things that people with TS frequently say is that if they can find an activity that focuses them sufficiently, their tics go away. I found that art was something I could get utterly absorbed in, and I went to art college. Then I became a teacher and a lecturer; at times, I would tic, but on the whole my tics would go because I was so enthusiastic and absorbed.

I wasn’t diagnosed until my 40s. I went to a neurologist because I was having strange muscle spasms in my arm, and he said: “There’s nothing seriously wrong, but do you know you have Tourette syndrome?” I said, almost instantly: “You’ve just explained why my life has been the way it has.” It gave me a new confidence.

The tics I have include noises – coughs and squeaks – but mostly physical tics, which involve shrugging shoulders, turning the head and blinking the eyes to the point where it becomes painful. I now realise my mother had TS, but more severely than me. When I was diagnosed, I had to decide, as she was getting quite old at that point, whether I would tell her, and I chose not

to – I think she would have felt guilty that she had passed on something to me.

In most cases, there are co-occurring conditions. I've had anxiety and bouts of depression. Tense situations, lack of sleep and anxiety are all the ingredients that will bring on some fairly severe tics. You learn to watch yourself and see things coming. For decades, I thought I must in some way be an inadequate human being. I'm grateful that the opportunity arose for someone to tell me what it was; everything fitted in to place.

Paul Stanworth, 50, is a musician and lives in Sussex



‘Music was always my medicine’ ... Paul Stanworth

In my mid-20s, I was working for the police doing an office job. For the first nine months, I was the star of the department. Tourette syndrome gives you an enormous amount of energy and if you can channel that energy, you can put it to good use. But, after a while my tics started getting worse and, because I was sitting at a desk and was forced to be quiet all day, I had no release for them. I would go to the top of the stairs and have this massive outburst of tics, almost like a spasm, but I still didn't know what it was.

The GP referred me to a psychotherapist, and when he said: “I think you’ve got Tourette syndrome and possibly OCD,” it was a relief. I cried because I was happy that they had found out what it was.

I have breathing rituals, where I have to breathe in when I look at certain things and breathe out when I look at other things, and also when I hear certain words. Usually, you breathe in for something you like and out for something you don’t, clean or dirty, good or bad. I’ve needed surgery as a result of some of my tics. There’s a tic in my arm, which meant I ended up having surgery for tennis elbow; and I had this habit of cracking my nose by jerking it to the side. After 10 years or so, I’d done some damage, so had to have surgery to repair it.

I’m still conditioned to suppress it, but I do tell people about it, too. If someone spots me and I’m doing a group of tics, where I’m jerking my head to one side, squeezing my face up or making a little noise, they don’t instantly think it’s Tourette syndrome, they might think I’m just a bit weird. Then, I feel I have to explain it, but I’d rather not. I wish there was more awareness.

I’m married with two kids. I’ve been very open with them about it, and they know there’s a chance they could develop some tics. I sat down with my wife before we had children, and we had that conversation. I was worried, but she said: “We’re in the best position to support them if they have, because we’ve got that understanding.”

I was medically retired from the police, and I knew I couldn’t sit still in an office ever again, so I had to work out another way to make a living; I always played music as a hobby, and now it’s my full-time job. Music was always my medicine, and a lot of people with Tourette syndrome say performing arts can be a good way of managing it. I love what I do. Those with Tourette syndrome have wonderful talents, driven by this unique energy. It drives me – I’m more passionate than I’ve ever been, and I don’t think I would be like that without the energy that I get from it.

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Movies

Martin Scorsese on Ray Liotta in Goodfellas: ‘The new guy never missed a beat’

The great director remembers the actor’s astonishing performance in his gangster classic – and the day the distraught star had to play a euphoric scene right after receiving tragic news



‘He had to be dangerous, disarming – and innocent’ ... Liotta with Robert de Niro in Goodfellas. Photograph: Warner Bros./Barry Wetcher/Allstar



[Martin Scorsese](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 03.58 EDT

We had some problems trying to get Goodfellas made. It came at a low moment in my career and the studios were not exactly eager to work with me. And it was a big production, with locations all over New York and many speaking parts. We also needed to find just the right actor to play the lead, Henry Hill. The part required a rare combination of qualities. He needed to be dangerous. He needed to be disarming. He needed to be vulnerable. Within the context of the world we were dealing with, he had to be something close to an innocent, the guy who was always there, witnessing everything, along for the ride. And, it goes without saying, he needed to look and act like he might have come out of that world.

Eventually, it came down to a handful of names. One of them was [Ray Liotta](#).

Like everyone else in and out of the movie business, I was stunned by his performance in my friend Jonathan Demme's Something Wild. Halfway through the picture, he walked in and more or less took it over. You couldn't take your eyes off of him. But Ray's role in Something Wild was finite, and I wondered if he could carry a whole picture.

I found him distraught in his trailer. His mother was dying. He kept saying: 'Why does she have this terrible cancer?'

Two very interesting things happened. My producer, Irwin Winkler, did not see Ray in the role. He didn't think he had enough charm to counterbalance all the violence and the excess. One night, while Irwin was having dinner in a Santa Monica restaurant with his wife Margo and his friend Richard Zanuck, Ray politely approached him and asked for a couple of minutes of his time. They walked into a quiet corner, they talked, and right then and there Ray persuaded Irwin.



'Just what the role needed' ... Liotta, with Martin Scorsese and Paul Sorvino. Photograph: DMI/The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock

When [The Last Temptation of Christ](#) had its world premiere at the Venice film festival, I was crossing the lobby of the Excelsior hotel on my way to an interview. Ray and I saw each other from across the lobby, and he headed toward me to say hello and check in with me. He came near and then he hit a wall of security. Instead of throwing a fit and demanding that he be allowed through, he reacted quietly and calmly, observed the rules and patiently defused the situation. He looked at me, I looked at him, and we signalled that we would talk, and he walked away. I watched it all very closely, and I

saw him handle the situation with quiet authority and a real elegance. Actually, that was just what the role needed. When I look back on it, I believe that was the moment when I knew I wanted Ray to play Henry Hill.

The word “fearless” is used quite often to describe actors, and with good reason: actors need to be fearless. They have to jump in and just go, and they have to stumble and fail and risk appearing ridiculous as they’re finding their way into a role. That’s just part of the work. On Goodfellas, we were working improvisationally in most scenes, and many members of the team had known each other and worked together for years, including my mother and my father. Into that walked the new guy, Ray Liotta, and he never missed a beat. It felt like we’d worked together for years.



‘Everyone came together in an emotional bond around Ray’ ... Liotta with Joe Pesci in the classic film. Photograph: Snap/REX/Shutterstock

I will never forget the day we shot the scene where Henry, Tommy (Joe Pesci) and Jimmy (Robert De Niro) bring their tribute money from the Air France heist to Paulie, played by Paul Sorvino. When they were setting up, I got word that Ray had just gotten a call with bad news. I went right to his trailer and found him completely distraught. His mother was dying. I remember that he kept saying: “She adopted me and raised me, she’s the sweetest woman there is – why does she have this terrible cancer? Why?”

I told him that he had to go to be with her, but he was adamant: he wanted to do the scene before he left. We walked to the set together, everyone was told what was happening, and something extraordinary happened when we rolled. The scene was all about the euphoria of the characters after making their first big score, and everyone came together in an emotional bond around Ray: as everyone was laughing and celebrating, they were mourning with him at the same time. Laughter and tears, tears and laughter ... they were one and the same. Ray did the scene so beautifully, and then he left to be with his beloved mother. It was a rare experience.

We had many plans to work together again but the timing was always off, or the project wasn't quite right. I regret that now. When I watched Ray as the divorce lawyer in [Marriage Story](#) – he's genuinely scary in the role, which is precisely why he's so funny – I remember feeling that I wanted to work with him again at this point in his life, to explore the gravity in his presence, so different from the young, sprightly actor he was when I met him.

I wish I'd had the chance to see him just once more, too – to tell him just how much the work we did together meant to me. But maybe he knew that. I hope so.

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‘Bloody cheek, I’m not ageing’: Simon Hattenstone interviews his 94-year-old mum, Marje



Mother and son ... Marje and Simon, this month Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

The Guardian writer is approaching 60 and feeling a bit creaky. So who should he talk to about growing old gracefully? His mum, of course



[Simon Hattenstone](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT

Mum is relaxing on her sofa. She does lots more of that these days – watching TV, reading, doing crosswords, being waited upon. Mind you, it has taken Marje till her mid-90s to get there. A couple of years ago, she felt guilty if she'd not gardened, cooked, emptied the bins, driven to the shops in her ancient Nissan Micra, and visited the “elderly” at the local care home by lunchtime. It took a bad leg break for all that to change.

Now at 94, she's learning how to take it easy. I'm approaching 60. What advice would she give me on ageing? “Just accept it gracefully,” she says. Has she found it difficult? “No, I don't think I have. Most of the years I was fortunate that I didn't look horrendously old.” You don't look it now, I say. “Yes, but I am horrendously old.” She laughs.

She knows she's lucky – she's got two kids and four grandchildren who love her to bits, has managed to stay in her own home with the help of amazing carers, and her brain is still in fine fettle even though her short-term memory

isn't what it was. But that has its advantages, too. She's not going to hold a grudge for long.

Marje is the youngest of four children, the rest of whom have long since died. She was never a confident child, despite being made head girl at her secondary school. She often says she thinks her parents had had enough of parenting by the time she arrived. "Have I ever told you, my mother used to say that Golda [the oldest girl] was the clever one and Renee [the second oldest] was the pretty one. I was aware she'd missed me out." She has told me. Plenty of times. In fact, Marje was smart and gorgeous – and oblivious to it.

Her adulthood hasn't been plain sailing, though she's quick to point out that few of us get an easy passage. When I was young, she nursed me through three years of encephalitis surrounded by people telling her either I was going to die or that there was nothing wrong with me. In Dad's later years she nursed him through psychotic depression. She has so many qualities (kindness, wisdom, a great sense of humour and an almost feral ability to protect her kids) though for most of her life she lacked the confidence to see those qualities in herself. Ironically, one of her greatest gifts was to make others feel good about themselves while she often felt worthless herself.



Life lessons ... Marje and Simon Hattenstone at her home in Manchester.
Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

But that's all a long time ago. For many years she has been shedding the uncertainties of the past. At 60, she says, she was just beginning to get into her stride. "I thought I was at a very good age because most of my worries and anxieties had left me." What like? She points her finger at me. "I suppose if you have children you worry about them as much as anything." Mum has two – my sister Sharon is two years older than me. "Sharon went along very smoothly, but you always did the unexpected. So that gave me anxieties."

I expect her to talk about my illness, but she doesn't. Maybe that's too obvious. "This example sounds ridiculous, but that time you came home with massive high heels, my heart sank." I remember it well. I was 12, and they were glorious – black matt-plastic with a four-inch platform and five-inch heel. Why did they worry you so much? "I used to think, 'he'll make such a display of himself.'" The shoes disappeared, mysteriously. "I didn't want to get rid of them so I hid them," she confesses. I thought she'd burnt them. "No, I didn't. I knew that would be going too far."

I wasn't sufficiently confident in my own judgment to be able to accept what other people said

Marje was a curious mix – she hated convention, but was also hidebound by it. She wasn't religious but grew up among an orthodox Jewish community, and was terrified of causing offence by doing the "wrong" thing. "I wasn't sufficiently confident in my own judgment to be able to accept what other people said."

Despite everything she was unconventional for her time – a diffident free spirit. She went to Birmingham to do a two-year teaching diploma, taught in Glasgow at the age of 19, lived in Israel for two years just after independence, became an inspirational teacher of special needs children, and got engaged twice before marrying Dad.



Simon with his father and mother, circa 1984. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

In the lounge, there are photographs of Dad and Alex, who became her boyfriend after Dad died 15 years ago. It was a fabulous, unlikely romance. When Marje lived in Israel, she and Alex were good friends. After his wife died he rang Marje and reintroduced himself, some 65 years since they had last seen each other. He still lived in Israel. They became inseparable – chatting and playing, eating and drinking, planning and reminiscing, dancing and romancing, all over Skype. They never met physically. They thought it might ruin what they had. Alex died in 2017. Who do you think about more, Dad or Alex? “I think of them both in different ways.” What do you think of when you think about Dad? “He was a good man; a very principled man. I’ve heard you say that, too. Fair.”

It was Alex, though, who made her feel loved. “It was all spoken out loud. He was a very open man. He said what he thought, and what he thought about me was all good so that made me feel great.” Do you regret not meeting physically the second time around? “No. I think it would have been very difficult.” She would have been prepared to visit him if he had encouraged her. “I used to say he was more sensible than I was, and that’s why he didn’t encourage me to go, because he knew it would be far from perfect. I think we would have both been in for a bit of a shock.”

After Alex died, Mum struggled. Her osteoarthritis was playing up, she broke bones in her back, and would often tell me ageing isn't for wimps. She seemed lonely by herself, but wanted to stay in her own home and be in control. Last year she reached a low with the leg break, a series of infections, and a lengthy hospital stint. It all resulted in a new, happier, stage of ageing – back at home with the support of carers.

Of course, there are days when she is down. One time we speak just before our daily Zoom crossword. I ask if she's still enjoying life. "It's a moot point," she says. "Generally, the quality's going down a bit. As it does. I suppose it's closer to a yes than a no."

What do you miss doing most? "Going out for a walk on my own two feet." She hates being pushed in a wheelchair. You're doing pretty well, though, I say. "I'm doing all right. Of course I am. Yeah. OK, are we playing kid?"

Should I ask you more questions tomorrow? "No, ask them me now and get it done with!"

Marje was an early adopter of technology. She was on Skype way before me

Do you worry about money? "No, I don't care, I know you and Sharon are attending to it. I reckon I've got enough to see me through to the end of my days." She had always hoped to leave something for the grandchildren. Now if the money runs out, so be it.

I ask if she has regrets. "I'm not telling you my regrets that's for sure, for sure, for sure. Have I? Yes. But it's stupid to think about regrets. There are certain things, Simon, I can't talk about. This is too personal."

On balance, Marje is in a good place. I ask how important it is that she has a healthy relationship with me and Sharon. "Incredibly important. That's the backbone of my life; the biggest thing that keeps me going." Marje was an early adopter of technology. As Sharon and I live in London, and she's in Manchester, Skype has played a huge part in keeping us close. She also

seems more aware that it's not a given for parents and children to get on. "I suppose a lot of people simply don't like each other," she says.

What are you proud of? "You and Sharon," she says. That's a cop-out, I say. "OK, going back a lifetime, I'm pleased that I was good at my job when I was teaching handicapped children. I was made for that. I loved it." Marje loves talking about her time at Bethesda – or to give the place its full title Bethesda Home for Crippled and Incurable Children, in Cheetham Hill. She adored the kids, and would take them home to her parents at weekends (the 1950s were very different times). On one occasion, one drank Dettol and she had to pile the kids and wheelchairs into her car and whisk them off to hospital. "I got tremendous satisfaction from that job. It was perfect for me – half teaching, half nursing." She began to believe in herself.

What frightens you most about getting old? "Don't laugh at me," she says. "I never want to become a smelly old woman. That's number one. People say when you get old you become yuck. I don't want people to say that about me."

Anything else?

I no longer have to chase the anxieties away. They've gone

"Well just that you're aware that your time is curtailed, and you sometimes think how's it going to be? Then you think well everybody's got to go through it, you're not the only one, so you get on with it."

Marje says she never thought about dying when she was younger. And now? "I would do if I didn't stop myself." You seem so phlegmatic these days, I say. "I am now." Why? "I no longer have to chase the anxieties away. They've gone."

That's wonderful, I say. What made them go? "There was a time when I cared a lot about what other people thought of me. When I was young, every word that came out of my mouth I was thinking: is that right, is that wrong? Everything I did. Now I don't care." She smiles. "Maybe because there aren't many people left who think about me!"

My fab mum Marje at 94 taking her first independent steps nine months after breaking her leg. This makes me well happy. Background commentary provided by the almost legendary [@mayahattenstone](https://twitter.com/TZT80UkIIIV)
pic.twitter.com/TZT80UkIIIV

— Simon Hattenstone (@shattenstone) [March 29, 2022](#)

Marje has made us promise that if she gets horribly ill or incapacitated, we won't keep her alive longer than she wants. But for now she is looking ahead. She recently took her first unsupported steps since breaking her leg. Yesterday she was in the kitchen making Passover biscuits. There's only so much relaxing you can do at 94. And she has set herself a new goal. By August, she plans to be walking properly and have done with the wheelchair. We filmed her taking those first steps a few weeks ago. After reaching the end of the room, Marje waved at the camera triumphantly and hobbled back to the sofa. "I think I'm on my way," she said.

A couple of weeks have passed. Marje's walking is improving hugely. She's even made it up and down the stairs. I tell her we need to do a photo to go with the piece. She asks me to remind her why we did this interview. It's for a special supplement on ageing, I say.

"Bloody cheek," she replies. "I'm not ageing!"

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2022.06.06 - Opinion

- I shouldn't tell you this, but Tory MPs have a new survival strategy: 'Boris? Who's Boris?'
- Some people think they would rather die than have help brushing their teeth – but care is not tragic
- The dead shellfish littering our beaches tell you a lot about safety and secrecy in Britain
- I may be wrong but I think Boris Johnson is done for. I can't see his Tory cult surviving

[**Opinion**](#)[**Boris Johnson**](#)

I shouldn't tell you this, but Tory MPs have a new survival strategy: 'Boris? Who's Boris?'

Secret Tory staffer

Ministers will do anything to defend the PM, but others feel the best thing is to distance themselves and hope for the best



'Many new MPs see their only viable chance of re-election being with Boris Johnson as the leader.' Photograph: Henry Nicholls/Reuters

Mon 6 Jun 2022 04.50 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 13.03 EDT

Working for a Conservative MP, I hear a lot of talk about the party's internal business. Sometimes it's what people say directly to me, but more often than not they just have the conversations around me.

One question is, understandably, coming up a lot: will [Boris Johnson](#) be ousted, and if not, why not? The answer depends on who you're talking about.

A very common view among more senior MPs and Tory staffers is that the recent intake of Conservative backbenchers, often those from the “red wall” seats, are often of low ability, even not hugely clever. Both 2017 and 2019 elections were sudden, and there just wasn’t enough time to vet candidates.

A lot of them don’t have especially good non-political careers to fall back on, so being an MP is all they have. These MPs are not especially good at holding the prime minister to account. In part, they sometimes just don’t understand very well how politics and parliament work. But also, all they want is to stay in parliament, and so are less willing to stand up to the government. For now, many see their only viable chance of re-election being with Johnson as the leader. Not least because the question asked by most Tory MPs is, who next? They don’t especially care if the party wins a majority at the next election, not least because there doesn’t seem to be any plan for government.

As long as there is no credible alternative, and they believe they can hold on to their seat with him at the helm, they will not push for him to go. The one thing that could persuade some to change their minds is if the Conservatives [lose both byelections](#) next month. But even winning one of the byelections could be enough to save Johnson. These new MPs have no other desire but to be re-elected so they can continue their fantasy of being important and influential. They have no qualms about supporting a man they know is not fit for office, and who is now even getting [booed](#) by a crowd of royalists.

Don’t ‘over-interpret’ booing of Boris Johnson, says Grant Shapps – video

While ministers – particularly Nadine Dorries – will generally say absolutely anything to defend the prime minister, more widely in the party, I’ve seen different MPs adopt varying strategies. Some are just keeping their heads low, trying as much as possible to avoid campaigning and the media. Others are more proactive, and still campaign locally, but make sure to never mention Johnson or the government.

The approach they adopt depends in part on where their constituency is located, and how long they have held the seat. Well-established MPs in traditionally Tory constituencies can afford to sit it out and rely on loyalists. But if you're in a more marginal or red wall seat it needs more effort, highlighting efforts in parliament, and funding secured for the area. Only an election will tell if either tactic will work, but one thing is clear: for now, they are all trying to distance themselves from Johnson and his cabinet.

And what about us staffers? While our counterparts in Labour and the Liberal Democrats plan for ideas they think will move the country forward, Conservative aides spend their day defending the latest nonsensical political message CCHQ has decided on to make people think Brexit works, such as imperial measures and crowns on pint glasses, something rushed through to appeal to the core vote and distract from the latest troubles.

There is no such thing as Johnsonism, just a pact made by those MPs who used him to get elected, and they will do what they can to keep him in office. Time will tell if there are enough of these to keep the prime minister in a job.

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OpinionDisability

Some people think they would rather die than have help brushing their teeth – but care is not tragic

[Lucy Webster](#)

For disabled people like me, care can be brilliant and has enabled me to experience university, holidays abroad and nights out dancing with pals. There is nothing to pity in that



‘My personal assistants and I, live life at full speed’ (posed by models).
Photograph: wundervisuals/Getty Images

Mon 6 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 05.55 EDT

I’ve seen it so many times: the head tilt, the look of concern and sympathy. You would think I had just announced a family bereavement, rather than mentioned that, because of the nature of my disability, I need 24-hour care.

This response is not unusual. The thought of a relatively young person (I'm 27) needing care generates pity like nothing else. Behind the condescension, I suspect there lurks a specific dread: the reminder that, one day, you too could need care. The horror!

The thought of having care workers conjures all sorts of unpleasant images, including the idea of a life cut short and potential unreached. Care, to most people, is the bad thing that happens before you die. But to need care long before it becomes end-of-life-care signifies a failure of youth; the epitome of tragedy.

Well, I'm here to tell you that's not true. For disabled people like me, care is brilliant, fulfilling and life-enabling. It is so good that lots of us are desperate to receive more of it, instead of wishing that we needed less. The choice is not between a life with care and a life without it, but between a life with care and no life at all.

There is a fundamental misconception about what care entails. People often assume it to be much more clinical than the reality. Yes, my personal assistants (PAs) dress me, wash me and take me to the loo, but they also come shopping with me, cook me tasty dinners and share a pint with me and my friends in the pub. We spend a lot more time laughing (usually at ourselves) than we do thinking about the bathroom (itself the site of much hilarity). Is this really what it looks like to live a tragic life?

The things that I have enjoyed and been most proud of would not have happened without good care. From experiencing university (the studying *and* the partying) to holidaying in far-flung places, my life has been made possible by the young women who help me. Without them, I wouldn't have the countless warm memories of nights spent at the theatre, or gossiping and dancing with pals. It is impossible to conceive of being able to work without my PAs – I certainly wouldn't have had the opportunities that led to me writing this column. But I have, and you are reading it, and I cannot see anything to pity in that.

Of course, relying so heavily on a team of care workers has its downsides, from recruitment to managing rotas, to just wanting to be alone sometimes.

It's hard. But life is hard for many people – yet no one would turn to someone who's just been made redundant, for example, and say: "If I were you, I don't think I could go on." Some people seem to think they would rather die than have help brushing their teeth. It truly boggles the mind.

Many fail to see the possibilities that care creates – not to mention the friendships that flourish within the care relationship. My PAs, past and present, are some of my best friends – but even this sentiment can give rise to unwanted sympathies. People assume it means I can't make friends elsewhere (for the record: also not true). My PAs are my friends not because they have to be but because we like each other. And because the bonds of trust, understanding and a shared lived experience are incredibly strong; often, they are the only ones who really see the effect inaccessibility and ableism have on my life.

Receiving care is anything but a tragedy. My PAs and I, live life at full speed. I defy anyone to look at us – really look at us – dancing round the kitchen or popping out for dinner, and feel sorry for us.

Lucy is a political journalist, writer and disability advocate

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OpinionPollution

The dead shellfish littering our beaches tell you a lot about safety and secrecy in Britain

[George Monbiot](#)



Environmentalists fear a toxic disaster is occurring on the seabed, and government denials seem less and less plausible



Illustration: Thomas Pullin/The Guardian

Mon 6 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 14.51 EDT

With every passing week, it looks more like a cover-up. The repeated mass strandings of crabs and lobsters on the coast of north-east England, and the ever less plausible explanations provided by the government, are the outward signs of an undersea disaster and a grim new politics.

Last October, beaches around the Tees estuary and along the coast of North Yorkshire were [suddenly covered](#) in dead and dying crabs and lobsters. The government launched what it called an “investigation”. In January, [hundreds of dogs](#) reportedly fell ill after being walked on the same beaches. In February, a government [press release](#) announced that the mass death of sea creatures was caused by an “algal bloom” – a rapid increase in the population of algae that can release toxins into the water and affect other wildlife.

No report was published, no data, no evidence of any kind. An algal bloom in October seems highly unlikely in north-east England, as such blooms require high temperatures and clear water: the sea at the time was almost certainly too cold and turbid. No bloom had been noticed by the fishing community or any other water users.

Soon after the press release was published, another [mass death](#) of crabs and lobsters was reported on the same coastline. While an algal bloom in October is implausible, an algal bloom in February is impossible. The government reopened its investigation, but promptly [shut it down](#) again, on the extraordinary grounds that a few healthy crabs and lobsters [had been caught](#). Nothing to see here.

Last month, there was [another mass stranding](#) of crabs and lobsters on the same beaches. Divers reported that the seabed immediately south of the River Tees was a “dead zone”: even the seaweed was dying.

The government has still not published its evidence. When I asked, it refused to send it to me. It was unable to produce a convincing explanation for this refusal. So we have no means of determining whether its methodology was robust, whether its data gathering, management and analysis was sound, or whether its conclusions reflected its results. Transparency is a basic scientific principle: if it’s not published, it’s not science.

A coalition of local commercial fishers and anglers raised the money for an [independent investigation](#) by the marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones. He made a series of freedom of information requests, which revealed that the government’s only evidence for an algal bloom consisted of satellite images. But such images, without corroboration by water sampling, can be misleading: [plumes of sediment](#) can give [similar results](#). Astonishingly, although there is no evidence that it conducted such sampling, the government concluded not only that a bloom had occurred, but that it was caused by a particular, toxic species: *Karenia mikimotoi*. This is the stuff of science fiction. *Karenia* thrives in temperatures between 20 and 24C. The average water temperature on this coast in October is 13C. There is no plausible mechanism by which a *Karenia* bloom could cause the mass death of lobsters and crabs without also killing large numbers of fish, sea urchins and many other species.

The freedom of information requests revealed something else: that the levels of a pollutant called pyridine in the north-eastern crabs the government tested were up to 74 times higher than those found in crabs caught in Cornwall. Pyridine is highly toxic to aquatic life. Despite this finding, the government press release claimed it has “ruled out chemical pollution as a

likely cause". It says that "[pyridine was not present](#) in water and surface sediment samples collected off the Tees". Until we see the evidence, we have no means of knowing when, where and how such samples were taken, or how were they assessed.

Pyridine is a waste product of heavy industry, and is also manufactured as a base for insecticides and marine biocides. Several of the industries once located on the Tees estuary are likely to have produced it. Deere-Jones found that there were very high levels of pyridine derivatives in sediments in the estuary. A dredger [started work](#) in the [mouth of the Tees](#) at the end of September, deepening the channel. Deere-Jones's hypothesis is that the dredger inadvertently exposed contaminated mud. This was then [dumped](#) at the legal disposal sites farther offshore. The currents flowing southwards, he believes, spread these sediments down the coast. As pyridine attaches itself to particles that fall to the seabed, and accumulates up the food chain, it is likely disproportionately to affect bottom-living scavengers such as lobsters and crabs.

The government's insistence that chemical pollution was not responsible might seem hard to understand. But consider this. In July, work begins on the [Teesside freeport](#), the biggest and most spectacular of the government's fabled "Brexit opportunities". The [project is being overseen](#) by the Conservatives' favourite mayor, Ben Houchen.

Constructing the Tees freeport will require a massive dredging operation. To enable ships to dock at the new South Bank Quay in the Tees estuary, a crucial component of the freeport, the channel needs to be [deepened](#) from 9m to 13m, and the "berth pocket", where the vessels moor, to almost 16m. This means excavating historic sediments that are likely to contain the chemical legacy of Teesside's old industries. Questions have been raised about whether these sediments have been [properly tested](#) before dredging begins. If they turn out to be highly contaminated, the expense of removing them safely could be prohibitive.

Freeports have been [a magnet](#) for money-laundering, tax evasion, corruption, smuggling, counterfeiting, [drug trafficking](#) and terrorist money flows. Just before the government launched its [consultation](#) proposing 10 freeports in the United Kingdom, Brussels announced that it was [clamping](#)

down on freeports in the European Union. This helps the UK to consolidate its position as the world's financial entrepot for organised crime, now a major sector of our economy. In conjunction with the City of London, which acts as a global hub for tax havens, the flow of criminal money into our property market and the complete collapse of the prevention of fraud and the regulation of waste dumping (a traditional preserve of the mafia in poorly regulated economies), freeports may secure this country's place as the favoured destination of the rich and unscrupulous. That's what Brexit opportunity means.

It's possible to prevent some of the criminal uses of freeports if they are tightly regulated. However, the government has so far failed to commit to the OECD's protocol for preventing illicit trade, and boasts of "cutting red tape" in developing the ports: in other words, dismantling regulations.

If Tim Deere-Jones's thesis is correct, marine ecosystems are already feeling the effects. The government could be obscuring the likely impacts of the freeport's construction before it has begun. Those dead crustaceans look to me like a tide of dirty money, washing up on our beaches.

- George Monbiot is a Guardian columnist
- *Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at guardian.letters@theguardian.com*

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OpinionConservative leadership

I may be wrong but I think Boris Johnson is done for. I can't see his Tory cult surviving

[Polly Toynbee](#)



Polls show he's increasingly reviled and his party's attempts to counterattack are chaotic. The end feels nigh



Boris Johnson and the Labour party leader, Keir Starmer, at the platinum jubilee pageant in London. Photograph: Hannah McKay/AP

Mon 6 Jun 2022 05.35 EDTFirst published on Mon 6 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

The jubilee coup is under way. The rumbling turmoil in the Tory party is a wonder to behold – but it runs deep, stretching far further back in time than Boris Johnson's brief calamitous leadership.

The old chameleon party used to pick itself up and start all over again with some new face and logo, feigning ignorance of all that went before. Not this time. This is a party riddled with eccentric ideologues too remote from moderate election-winning ground to select any leader but one of their ilk. The [54 MPs' letters](#) required to trigger a vote against their leader have arrived on the doormat of the 1922 Committee's chair, Graham Brady. The vote will take place tonight. "Red wall" MPs have turned white at the latest JL Partners Wakefield poll putting Labour [20 points ahead](#). "Blue wall" MPs face the even more astounding prospect of the Liberal Democrats upending a massive 24,000 majority in Tiverton and Honiton. The stampede to save themselves seems to be on.

Julius Caesar and [Macbeth quotes](#) litter the airwaves. I might add A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Titania awakening to find she's been

sleeping with Bottom. Boris Johnson's defenders raise only guffaws when they [tell the Sun](#): "While these self-obsessed rebels stir up trouble, Boris is working hard to ease the cost of living."

[Boos](#) from royalists outside St Paul's as Johnson arrived for the Queen's jubilee thanksgiving service, and the indignity of [Mumsnet questioners](#) impugning his honesty chime with polls and the public mood. Which malicious cleric made the PM read that punishingly inappropriate Bible [passage](#) extolling, "Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure"? No one believes him – nor that he's working hard for us. He is busted with the public, his ratings abysmal, a bourn, one pollster tells me, from which no politician has ever returned.

They say he will have to be dragged out, clinging to No 10's handle. Now the vote has been triggered, the rebels need 180 backers to oust him, but allies say a one-vote win is enough, defying Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May, who won but departed with dignity and tears after losing support. For now, watch the dangerous spectacle of Johnson hurling everything at shoring up Tory MPs' votes. Grammar schools are back, he says, but that doesn't fly with the public, only with Tory cultists. The absurdity of imperial measurements appals business and even makes the Sun, tussling with bushels, groats and chains, laugh incredulously: "It's [firkin hard](#)," it said.

Johnson's latest desperate effort reprises a Thatcher triumph that turned to disaster: he will sell [millions of housing association homes](#) to bribe voters with a 70% discount, demolishing what's left of Harold Macmillan's social housing building bonanza.

And then, reckless and feckless, he may this week unveil his law to override the Northern Ireland protocol. The EU warns that would trigger a trade war, but he may wrongly think breaking apart the Good Friday agreement could be his Falklands moment. Pull it all down, the more mayhem the better, revive that Brexit enthusiasm. It's where to go when all else fails.

Rebels warn that if he won't budge, they will boycott all his legislation. Johnsonites retaliate by warning the whip will be withdrawn from rebels, so they can't stand as [Conservatives](#) again. And then there is the nuclear threat:

if too many vote against him, he might launch a shock general election, just to lose them all their seats in revenge. *Après moi, le déluge* – the thinking of every megalomaniac.

We see the battle played out in arch-Tory newspapers, where MPs and ministers attack and counterattack. Noticeably few defend their leader – only the desperados, Nadine Dorries, Jacob Rees-Mogg, Grant Shapps and Priti Patel, deficients who would be swept away by any newcomer. But all critics and loyalists are grappling with the same hard question: is there any further point to Johnson? Is he – in the face of a perfect political storm – still the best way for them to save themselves and keep their seats?

And if they cut him loose, what next? Civil war? Disintegration? Old [Labour](#) hands see their plight. They recognise a party seized by ideologues and fanatics, just as Labour has been to varying degrees in the past. They recognise a party not just infiltrated but devoured by the Brexit party and all the viruses attached to their Brexit-mania. Tory moderates are largely driven out, even the most distinguished. Johnson dithered over joining the Brexit side in the referendum, but once he helped win it by a whisker, the party hired him as its jockey to ride Brexit across the line, to “get it done”. But here we are and Brexit seems not to be done after all. Which way now, but chaos?

There is a brokenness in everything they touch, an anti-Midas touch. Pollsters tell me that there is no appetite in red or blue walls for their libertarian retro tunes of deregulation: cut the green crap, forget the climate crisis and pollution, axe Kitemarks and food standards. Those wild things only excite the Tory hardcore. But the cultists hold sway, so any leadership candidate will still need to cleave to their free-market and culture war obsessions.

It means they will struggle to align themselves with the public, for ordinary British voters want what they have basically always wanted: rules, laws, regulations to keep them safe and leaders who can deliver them. These Tories are as rebarbative to voters as once were Michael Foot and Jeremy Corbyn.

Think hard, Johnson says. Come up with something. So their latest brainwave is to target an imaginary Waitrose woman. You can see why, as under Johnson the Tories have a “huge” woman problem, says Patrick English of YouGov. Forty-five per cent of women back Labour, only 29% the Conservatives. But everything about this latest desperate ploy is wrong. Waitrose has just 4.8% of grocery sales, and its shoppers won’t like being class-tagged and politically pigeonholed. The archetype, we are told, is called “Catherine” – so the party has probably just lost a lot of Catherines too. And what of all non-Waitrose shoppers, especially those who saw their Waitrose stores in Wolverhampton, Marlow, Scarborough and Stevenage close down? Catherine won’t save them and neither, you must now assume, will the hitherto lauded dark political skills of Johnson’s go-to strategist Lynton Crosby. He has dug Johnson out before, but some holes are just too deep.

I may be wrong. How often have Labour people stood on the brink of toppling Tory hegemony, only to watch Conservatives rescue themselves with their ruthless instinct for survival? But talk to people, read the runes, feel the shifting ground. This time the ruling party’s breathtaking incompetence and hubris is weighed down by public service failures and a brutal cost of living crisis. I see no sign these cultists know how to abandon their alien creeds to save themselves.

Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist

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2022.06.06 - Around the world

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Kazakhstan

Kazakhs vote to strip founding figure Nazarbayev of privileges in referendum

Preliminary results show 77% of voters backed constitutional changes after January protests in which more than 230 people died



Kazakhstan's former president Nursultan Nazarbayev addressing the nation amid the January bloodshed. Photograph: Elbasy.kz/Reuters

Agence France-Presse in Nur-Sultan

Mon 6 Jun 2022 01.46 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 06.14 EDT

Kazakhs have overwhelmingly voted for constitutional changes in a referendum after deadly unrest ended founding leader Nursultan Nazarbayev's three-decade grip on Central Asia's richest country, the election commission says.

"The referendum can be considered validated," electoral commission chair Nurlan Abdirov said on Monday, citing preliminary results that 77% of

voters had backed the move.

It reported a turnout of over 68% in Sunday's referendum.

The January bloodshed, which grew out of peaceful protests over a spike in car fuel prices, left more than 230 people dead and prompted authorities to call in troops from a Russia-led security bloc.

The drive for a “New Kazakhstan” in the wake of the violence has come from the man that Nazarbayev hand-picked to replace him as president in 2019, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Tokayev, 69, described the snap referendum as a shift from “super-presidential” rule.

But it is the absence of special privileges for 81-year-old Nazarbayev that is the most eye-catching change to the constitution.

Prior to January's crisis, Tokayev was widely seen as ruling in the shadow of Nazarbayev and his super-rich relatives.

Even after stepping down as president, Nazarbayev retained the constitutional title of “elbasy”, or “leader of the nation” – a role that afforded him influence over policymaking regardless of his formal position.

The new constitution will exclude that status.

Another amendment prevents relatives of the president from holding government positions – a clear nod to the influence of Nazarbayev's family and in-laws, who lost powerful positions in the aftermath of the violence.

Kazakhstan's New Year crisis remains poorly understood, with a days-long internet shutdown at the peak of the unrest helping to further obscure the events.

Protests stirred in the oil-producing west over a New Year fuel price hike, but it was Almaty – 1,200 miles (2,000km) away – that became the centre of

armed clashes, looting and arson.

Nur-Sultan, which was called Astana prior to 2019, remained largely untouched.

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[US Capitol attack](#)

Capitol attack panel to unveil new evidence against Trump at public hearings



Donald Trump holds a rally to contest the certification of the 2020 presidential election results, in Washington, on 6 January 2021. Photograph: Jim Bourg/Reuters

Committee intends to reveal previously secret White House records, photos and videos to prove how Trump broke the law

[Hugo Lowell](#) in Washington

Mon 6 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.09 EDT

The House select committee investigating the Capitol attack will unveil new evidence at Watergate-style public hearings this week showing [Donald Trump](#) and top aides acted with corrupt intent to stop Joe Biden's certification, according to sources close to the inquiry.

The panel intends to use the hearings as its principal method of revealing potential crimes by Trump as he sought to overturn the 2020 election results, the sources said, in what could be a treacherous legal and political moment for the former president.

As the justice department mounts parallel investigations into the Capitol attack, the select committee is hoping that the previously unseen evidence will leave an indelible mark on the American public about the extent to which Trump went in trying to return himself to the Oval Office.

“They’re important for setting a record for posterity, but they’re also important for jolting the American public into realizing what a direct threat we had coming from the highest levels of government to illegitimately install a president who lost,” Norman Ornstein, a political scientist and emeritus scholar at the conservative thinktank the American Enterprise Institute, said of the hearings.

The panel’s [ambitions for the hearings](#) are twofold, the sources said: presenting the basis for alleging Trump broke the law and placing the Capitol attack in a broader context of efforts to overturn the election, with the ex-president’s involvement as the central thread.

At their heart, the hearings are about distilling [thousands of communications](#) between top Trump White House aides and operatives outside the administration and the Trump campaign into a compelling narrative of events about the events of 6 January, the sources said.

In order to tell that story, the sources said, the select committee intends to have its senior investigative counsels reveal previously secret White House records, photos and videos that will be presented, in real time, to starkly illustrate the live witness testimony.

On Thursday night, at the inaugural hearing at 8pm, the panel's chairman, Bennie Thompson, and the vice-chair, Liz Cheney, are likely to make opening arguments, outline a roadmap for the hearings, and give an overview of the events of 6 January, and the preceding weeks.

The panel is likely to focus on broad themes for the following four hearings, such as how Trump used false claims of voter fraud to undermine the 2020 election and future races, and how he tried to use fake electors to deceive Congress into returning him to office.

House investigators are also likely to focus on how Trump directly pivoted to the 6 January congressional certification – and not the December deadlines for states to certify their electors – as an inflection point, and how his actions led straight to militia and far-right groups' covert maneuverings.

The panel is then likely to reserve its most explosive revelations for the final hearing in prime time, where the select committee members Adam Kinzinger and Elaine Luria are expected to run through Trump's actions and inactions as the 6 January attack unfolded.



The House select committee meets to consider a vote to recommend contempt of Congress charges for Dan Scavino and Peter Navarro, on 28 March. Photograph: Drew Angerer/Getty Images

The list of witnesses has not yet been finalised, the sources said, but it is expected to include top aides to former vice-president Mike Pence, aides to Trump's former chief of staff Mark Meadows, and people with direct knowledge of militia group activities on 6 January.

From a legal perspective, the panel has already alleged in court filings that Trump and his external legal adviser, John Eastman, violated multiple federal laws to overturn the 2020 election outcome, including obstruction of Congress and defrauding the United States.

The select committee hopes that by revealing new evidence in hearings, the sources said, it can convince beyond a reasonable doubt the American public and potentially the justice department that the former president violated laws to reverse his 2020 election defeat.

Among the highlights of the already-public evidence include the revelation that Eastman, Trump's external legal adviser, admitted to Pence's counsel, Greg Jacob, that his scheme to obstruct Congress on 6 January was unlawful, but pressed ahead with it anyway.

The internal White House schedule for 6 January that the select committee obtained through the National Archives, meanwhile, showed that Trump would have known he had no plans [to march with the crowd to the Capitol](#) when he falsely promised that at the Ellipse rally.

House investigators are in many ways making their case to the American public, the sources said, since it is not certain whether the panel will make criminal referrals to federal prosecutors, given they are not binding on the justice department, which has the sole authority to file charges.

But that quest will come with its own challenges, and the panel's greatest difficulty is perhaps not so much whether they can show wrongdoing by Trump and his top advisers, but whether it can get Republican and independent voters to care.

The repeated delays in holding the hearings have meant House investigators were able to finish most of the evidence-gathering they intended to conduct (the committee initially anticipated holding them sometime in “the spring, then in April, [then in May](#), and now in June).

Committee counsel recently told one witness who had been assisting the investigation for months that it didn't expect to ask for any more assistance, according to two sources familiar with the inquiry. “We are pretty much done,” the counsel told that particular witness.

But the consequence of the decision to delay the start of public hearings, and the constant drip of news from the investigation, is that it might have driven some “6 January fatigue” – which Trump's allies on Capitol Hill are intent on weaponising to defend Trump.

The former president's most ardent defenders in Congress and top Republicans led by the House minority leader, Kevin McCarthy, are planning aggressive counter-programming to the public hearings that slam the panel as partisan, according to party aides.

The Republican National Committee has also circulated a one-page memo of talking points, Vox [earlier reported](#), requesting that Trump surrogates attack

the investigation as “rigged” – even though multiple federal courts have ruled the inquiry is fully legitimate.

Overcoming counter-programming to cut through to Republican and independent voters could pose a challenge, the panel’s members have privately discussed. After all, the sources said, the panel is not trying to convince [Democrats](#) of Trump’s role in the Capitol attack.

The prospect of collective public exhaustion over 6 January-related news, with each new revelation seemingly more shocking than the last, appears to have also pressed the select committee to cut its June hearings schedule from eight hearings to now six.

According to a draft schedule reviewed by the Guardian and [first reported last week](#), the panel anticipates holding just the first and final hearings – on 9 June and 23 June – in prime time at 8pm. The other four – on the 13th, 15th, 16th and 21st – will be at 10am.

Still, the target audience for the select committee is not Republicans but swing voters, Ornstein said. “I don’t have any expectation that Republicans who believe the election was stolen will change their minds. But it’s about the other voters and whether it will jolt the Democratic base into understanding what the stakes are.”

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[Ryanair](#)

Ryanair forces South Africans to do Afrikaans test to prove nationality

Airline accused of discrimination after it introduces test due to ‘high prevalence of fraudulent passports’



Ryanair was criticised over why the test was conducted in Afrikaans.
Photograph: Paul Faith/AFP/Getty Images

[Kalyeena Makortoff](#)

[@kalyeena](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 05.29 EDTFirst published on Mon 6 Jun 2022 03.34 EDT

Ryanair is facing accusations of racial discrimination after forcing South Africans to take a test in Afrikaans before boarding flights home from the UK and Europe.

The budget airline, which claimed the “simple questionnaire” was part of efforts to tackle fraudulent South African passport holders, is facing

criticism for conducting the general knowledge test in a language that is the third most used in the country and had a controversial role in the oppression of black citizens during apartheid.

Some also questioned the content of the test, saying topics including which side of the road South Africans drive on would not in itself determine whether someone was a genuine passport holder.

A spokesperson for the airline said that “due to the high prevalence of fraudulent South African passports, we require passengers travelling to the UK to fill out a simple questionnaire issued in Afrikaans. If they are unable to complete this questionnaire, they will be refused travel and issued with a full refund.”

The test appears to have been enforced by the airline after the South African government raised concerns over an alleged spate of ID fraud, saying criminals were manufacturing and selling fake South African passports.

However, it is unclear why the [Ryanair](#) test has been conducted in Afrikaans rather than others such as Zulu and Xhosa, which are the first and second most used across South African households.

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One South African passenger told the Financial Times that Ryanair’s test was “extremely exclusionary” and said the airline had not considered the implications of the test given that black South Africans were forced to use Afrikaans during the apartheid regime. “It definitely does amount to indirect racial discrimination,” they said.

The policy also sparked a backlash on social media, with one Twitter user saying Ryanair was “restricting the movement of South African people based on whether or not they speak the language of the white Afrikaans minority. Not a good look. Pretty racist.”

@Ryanair is restricting the movement of South African people based on whether or not they speak the language of the white Afrikaans minority. Not a good look. Pretty racist. <https://t.co/xcIOIzYxAB>
pic.twitter.com/ig88PrSiwM

— Fred Raybould (@FredRaybould) [June 5, 2022](#)

The UK high commission in South Africa [confirmed via Twitter](#) that the test is not a British government requirement.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jun/06/ryanair-south-africans-afrikaans-test-nationality-passports>

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[Music](#)

Alec John Such, founding member of Bon Jovi, dies aged 70

New York-born Such played bass for American rock band in its 1980s heyday



Alec John Such (second right) with Bon Jovi bandmates (from left) David Bryan, Tico Torres, Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora before a gig in 1984.
Photograph: Paul Natkin/WireImage

The Associated Press

Sun 5 Jun 2022 17.54 EDT Last modified on Sun 5 Jun 2022 18.06 EDT

Alec John Such, the bassist and a founding member of [Bon Jovi](#), has died. He was 70.

Jon [Bon Jovi](#) on Sunday announced the death of Such, the New Jersey rock band's bassist from 1983 to 1994. No details of when or how he died were immediately available.

“He was an original,” Jon Bon Jovi wrote in a post on Twitter. “As a founding member of Bon Jovi, Alec was integral to the formation of the band.”

Alec, you will be missed pic.twitter.com/yK0RlgVkJc

— Jon Bon Jovi (@jonbonjovi) [June 5, 2022](#)

Jon Bon Jovi, 60, credited Such for bringing the band together, noting that he was a childhood friend of drummer Tico Torres and brought guitarist and songwriter Richie Sambora to see the band perform. Such had played in a band called the Message with Sambora.

Such, born in Yonkers, New York, was a veteran figure on the thriving New Jersey music scene that helped spawn Bon Jovi. As manager of the Hunka Bunka Ballroom in Sayreville, New Jersey, Such booked Jon Bon Jovi & the Wild Ones before joining the singer-songwriter’s band. He played with Bon Jovi through the group’s heyday in the 1980s.

Such left the band in 1994, and was replaced on bass by Hugh McDonald. He later rejoined the band for their induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2018.

“When Jon Bon Jovi called me up and asked me to be in his band many years ago, I soon realised how serious he was and he had a vision that he wanted to bring us to,” Such said at the Hall of Fame induction. “And I am only too happy to have been a part of that vision.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/jun/05/alec-john-such-founding-member-of-bon-jovi-dies-aged-70>

Animals farmedBird flu

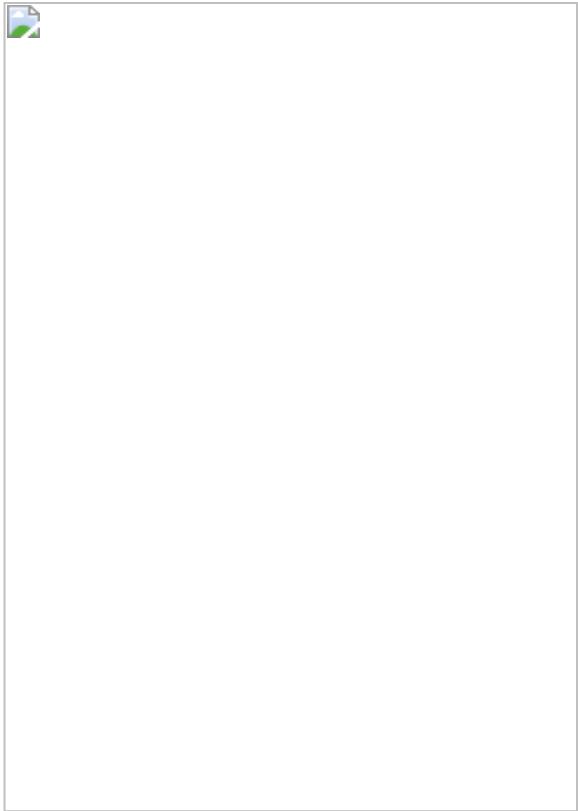
US bird flu outbreak: millions of birds culled in ‘most inhumane way available’

Controversial killing method used in 73% of culls this year despite vets urging its use to be limited



Dead ducks are dumped into a disposal lorry at a farm. More than 38m birds in the US have been culled during this year’s bird flu outbreak. Photograph: Jo-Anne McArthur/We Animals Media

Animals farmed is supported by



[About this content](#)

Marina Bolotnikova

Mon 6 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 11.21 EDT

The US poultry industry has increasingly switched to “the most inhumane method available” to cull tens of millions of birds during the latest outbreak of avian influenza, according to government data.

Outbreaks of the disease, also known as bird flu, have wreaked havoc across Europe and the US this year, with 38 million birds killed in the US so far.

But how these birds are killed has generated controversy, with veterinarians

and animal welfare campaigners urging an end to the use of the [ventilation shutdown](#) method, which kills animals by sealing off the airflow to the poultry sheds and increasing temperatures to lethal levels.

Workers have [described the method](#) as like “roasting animals alive”. European officials have said it should not be used in the European Union.

In the US, however, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) [lists ventilation shutdown](#) with supplemental heat as “permitted in constrained circumstances” for “depopulation”.

A new analysis has found that it has now become the main method for killing birds, used in nearly three-quarters of culls.

The analysis of US Department of Agriculture (USDA) data by the [Animal Welfare Institute](#) found 73% of culls in the US in February and March (the most recent period for which data is available) [involved the use](#) of ventilation shutdown.

This represents a dramatic shift from the last [bird flu epidemic](#), in 2015, which resulted in the killing of 50 million farmed birds in the US. During that outbreak, the animals were predominantly killed by carbon dioxide poisoning or smothered in a blanket of firefighting foam.



More than two-thirds of culls in the US so far this year involved the use of ventilation shutdown. Photograph: Jo-Anne McArthur/We Animals Media

“The default method of killing seems to have changed from foam to ventilation shutdown,” said Dena Jones, director of the AWI farm animal programme, who said the design of poultry housing “ensures they won’t be able to humanely kill them”.

A USDA spokesperson said “some housing designs do not allow for effective depopulation using foam” and that the carbon dioxide method was “hindered by supply shortages”. The department financially compensates farmers for culling animals.

Activists have protested against the widespread use of ventilation shutdown, most notably [by disrupting basketball games](#) to draw attention to Glen Taylor, the billionaire owner of the Minnesota Timberwolves team who also owns an Iowa egg farm where [5.3 million hens were killed](#) using ventilation shutdown.



The burial pit for some of the millions of chickens at an egg plant in Rembrandt, Iowa. Photograph: Dan Brouillette/The Guardian

A coalition of vets and animal rights advocates have urged the AVMA to reclassify the method as “not recommended”. The lack of response so far from the AVMA “harms animals and the veterinary profession’s reputation as caring advocates for animals”, according to Crystal Heath, a vet and co-founder of the ethical veterinary group Our Honor.

In the EU and the UK, birds are culled with carbon dioxide gas or nitrogen-infused foam, which are considered to be more humane methods than using firefighting foam when carried out correctly because they render the animals unconscious before killing them, Jones said.

The European Food Safety Authority says ventilation shutdown should not be used, but there have been reports of producers in France being given emergency permission to use it.

The EU also considers the use of firefighting foam to kill birds as inhumane because it entails “drowning in fluids or suffocation by occlusion of the airways”.

The USDA did not respond to a question about whether any steps were being taken to require less painful cull methods or prevent ventilation shutdown from becoming the default in future outbreaks.

Sign up for the [Animals Farmed monthly update](#) to get a roundup of the biggest farming and food stories across the world and keep up with our investigations. You can send us your stories and thoughts at animalsfarmed@theguardian.com

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/06/us-bird-flu-outbreak-millions-of-birds-culled-in-most-inhumane-way-available>

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- [Long Covid Care for 2m Britons ‘woefully inadequate’, say top nurses](#)
- [Financial sector City donations worth £15m raise concerns over influence on UK politics](#)
- [Live Russia-Ukraine war latest: Sievierodonetsk sees ‘fierce street fighting’; Zelenskiy says peace talks ‘at level zero’](#)
- [Russia-Ukraine war What we know on day 104 of the invasion](#)
- [Ukraine Russia walks out of UN security council meeting over claim it is using food as ‘stealth missile’](#)

Long Covid

Care for 2m Britons with long Covid ‘woefully inadequate’, say top nurses

Royal College of Nursing highlights lack of specialist NHS clinics and disparities in care around the UK



The NHS has set up specialist clinics to treat people with long Covid but the number reporting symptoms has doubled to 2m in the year to May. Photograph: Victoria Jones/PA

[Denis Campbell](#) and [Linda Geddes](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 19.01 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.11 EDT

NHS services for the 2 million Britons struggling with long Covid are “woefully inadequate” given how many people are being diagnosed with the condition, nurses’ leaders have warned.

There are too few specialist clinics to handle the soaring demand for treatment, with only a tiny number of sufferers receiving any help, the Royal

College of [Nursing](#) (RCN) said.

The Office for National Statistics estimated [last week](#) that the number of people in the UK suffering with continuing symptoms of Covid such as fatigue, muscle pain and breathing problems has doubled in a year from 1 million in May 2021 to 2 million last month.

The NHS has responded to the soaring number of long Covid patients by setting up clinics to assess, diagnose and treat them and refer them on to other services, such as cardiology departments for those with heart problems.

But the RCN claimed that “existing services are woefully inadequate to meet the level of demand”. Warning of a “postcode lottery in access to care, it has also voiced concern that “diagnosis and treatment vary hugely across the UK, with long Covid treated as a physical condition in some clinics but predominantly as a psychological condition in others”.

While England already had 89 long Covid clinics by last July, Northern Ireland only has one and Wales and Scotland have still not set up their first ones.

“With over 2 million sufferers there aren’t enough specialist services to meet the growing demand, and the help patients get varies hugely across the country,” said Helen Donovan, the RCN’s professional lead for public health.

“Of the 2 million people self-reporting long Covid, only a fraction are aware of, or accessing, the treatment available. In April only a tiny fraction of sufferers, 4,500, were awaiting an assessment at a long Covid clinic in England.”

Nurses should be much more involved in providing the care to long Covid patients, given their expertise in managing long-term conditions such as cancer and diabetes, Donovan added. Clinics are usually run by respiratory doctors who are helped by physiotherapists and sometimes occupational therapists and psychologists, she said.

Layla Moran, the Liberal Democrat MP who chairs the all-party parliamentary group on coronavirus, said: “Around 2 million people in the UK are living with long Covid and yet the government is still failing to fully grasp the enormity of the challenge this condition presents to people’s livelihoods, the economy and our public services.”

The Guardian has approached the Department of [Health](#) and Social Care for a response.

Meanwhile, about half of people with long Covid may be affected by sleep disturbances, data suggests.

Cinthya Pena Orbea, at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, US, analysed data from 962 patients attending the centre’s reCOVer Clinic, which provides care for individuals with chronic or new Covid symptoms at least 28 days after diagnosis, between February 2021 and April 2022. Of these individuals, 8% reported severe sleep disturbances while 41% reported moderate sleep disturbances.

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People with higher body mass indexes (BMIs) and anxiety were more likely to be affected, while black patients were three times more likely to experience moderate-to-severe sleep disturbances, even after adjusting for demographics. The findings were presented at the [Sleep 2022 meeting](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Separate research published in [Brain Science](#) in April found that 51% of those presenting to a long Covid clinic in Texas reported disrupted sleep, and that poor sleep quality was associated with increased depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress.

Neither study was able to disentangle whether anxiety contributed to people’s sleep problems, or vice versa – or if other symptoms, such as pain, were the source of their sleep problems. “Future work should follow patients to examine if sleep, fatigue and mental health symptoms spontaneously

remit with time,” said Sara Nowakowski at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, who led the Texas-based research.

A Department of Health spokesperson said: “Long Covid is a new challenge for healthcare systems all over the world and the UK is leading the way on research, treatment, and care.”

They added: “We are backing our world-leading scientists with over £50m to better understand the long-term debilitating effects of Covid, and the NHS has committed £224m to support people with ongoing symptoms of Covid, with over 90 specialist clinics across England.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/07/care-for-2m-britons-with-long-covid-woefully-inadequate-say-top-nurses>

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[Financial sector](#)

City donations worth £15m raise concerns over influence on UK politics

Total donated to parties by financial firms and individuals tied to the sector over two years, report says



The skyline of the City of London. The Conservative party was the largest recipient of City donations to political parties, accounting for more than £11m. Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

[Kalyeena Makortoff](#) Banking correspondent

[@kalyeena](#)

Mon 6 Jun 2022 17.30 EDT Last modified on Mon 6 Jun 2022 17.37 EDT

Concerns have been raised over the City's influence on Westminster, after a report found financial firms and individuals tied to the sector donated £15m to political parties and gave £2m to MPs during the pandemic.

The campaign group Positive Money tallied the gifts, expenses and donations handed to MPs, peers and their parties, as well as the value of income from politicians' second jobs, saying it contributed to finance's "oversized influence" on policymaking.

It found banks, insurers and lobby groups held a "disproportionate" amount of meetings with the Treasury, accounting for a third of minister meetings in 2020 and 2021, and argued that led to favourable policies such as deregulation, and an economy that was "structurally reliant" on the City of London.

The Conservative party was the largest recipient of City donations to political parties, accounting for more than £11m or 76% of donated cash over the two-year period.

"Once the scale of big finance's influence over government is laid bare, it becomes obvious how banks get bailouts and tax cuts while the rest of us get austerity and tax rises," said David Barmes, a senior economist at Positive Money.

The report, titled The Power of Big Finance: How to Reclaim Our Democracy From the Banking Lobby, found 47 MPs received £2.3m between them – an average of £48,936 each – from the financial sector between January 2020 and December 2021. While 26 did no work in return for the payments, those who did were paid an average of £2,738 an hour, 180 times the average UK wage of £15.15.

About £1.2m of that total was collected by just five Conservative politicians, including former prime minister Theresa May, who was paid more than £200,000 for speeches at events run by JP Morgan and Amundi Asset Management, and the health secretary, Sajid Javid, who was paid a total of £175,000 for his former role as a senior adviser for JP Morgan, as well as speeches for firms including HSBC.

JP Morgan was the biggest spender among City firms in Westminster as a result, having paid £300,000 on salaries and speaker fees during the period.

The Eurosceptic Conservative MP John Redwood was the highest City earner among his peers, receiving nearly £471,000 for roles including his position as chief global strategist at investment manager Charles Stanley, and an advisory role to private equity firm EPIC.

In the House of Lords, the report found a fifth of peers registered paid positions at financial firms, including more than half of the peers on a committee responsible for investigating matters related to economics and finance.

Positive Money also raised concerns about the revolving door between Westminster and the City. That issue of possible conflicts of interest became prominent during the recent Greensill scandal, after former prime minister David Cameron and ex-civil servants were found to have lobbied ex-colleagues on behalf of the now-collapsed lender Greensill Capital.

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“Access to public institutions isn’t just the exceptional case of a few bad apples bending the rules – such as David Cameron’s lobbying on behalf of ... Greensill Capital – but represents a far wider systemic problem,” Positive Money said.

It is now recommending a ban on second jobs for MPs – aside from public service roles – and introducing longer cooling-off periods and bans on lobbying by ex-ministers, civil servants and regulators. It is also calling for a cap on political party donations and the amount that politicians can be paid for speeches, as well as requiring all party parliamentary groups to disclose sources of funding.

TheCityUK and UK Finance declined to comment on the report, saying the issue was a matter for individual donors.

The Treasury said that as the department responsible for the financial services sector, it was “entirely right that ministers and officials meet regularly with representatives from the sector, as is standard with policy engagement.

“There is a clear policy in place on declaration and management of interests for those working in government, with steps being taken to avoid any conflict of interest.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jun/06/city-donations-worth-15m-raise-concerns-influence-uk-politics>

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[Ukraine war live](#)[Ukraine](#)

Zelenskiy says stalemate with Russia is ‘not an option’ – as it happened

This live blog is now closed, you can find our [latest coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war here](#)

Updated 4d ago

[Samantha Lock](#) (now); [Joanna Walters](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#) and [Martin Belam](#) (earlier)

Tue 7 Jun 2022 20.20 EDTFirst published on Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.43 EDT



A man surveys his destroyed house, where a rocket protrudes from a bed, in Lysychansk, Donbas. Photograph: Aris Messinis/AFP/Getty Images

[Samantha Lock](#) (now); [Joanna Walters](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#) and [Martin Belam](#) (earlier)

Tue 7 Jun 2022 20.20 EDTFirst published on Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.43 EDT

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Show key events only

Live feed

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From 5d ago

[11.41](#)

Nearly 600 people ‘detained in torture chambers’ in Kherson, says Ukraine

Ukraine has accused the Russian army of abducting residents in the Kherson region in the south of the country and keeping them in “torture chambers”.

Tamila Tacheva, the Ukrainian presidency’s permanent representative in Crimea, said in a briefing:

According to our information, about 600 people are detained in specially equipped basements, in torture chambers, in the Kherson region.

About 300 people are “in the basement” in Kherson city and the rest are in other settlements of the region, Tacheva said, according to Ukrainian state news agency, Ukrinform.

She added:

They are detained in inhuman conditions and are victims of torture.

Those being detained are “mainly journalists and activists” who organised “pro-Ukrainian rallies in Kherson and its region” after Russian troops occupied the territory, as well as prisoners of war, Tacheva said.

Some Ukrainians held in the Kherson region – civilians but also detained combatants – have been sent to jails in Crimea, she added.

Repr Ukraine's President in Crimea: in Kherson region about 600 people abducted by russia's invaders. They're facing inhuman treatment&torture. Some (both civilians &POWs) are taken to Crimea. Abducted people from the Zaporizhzhia region are also being taken to Crimea pic.twitter.com/TFP2iI5FYW

— Ukrainian Mission to OSCE & UN in Vienna (@UKRinOSCE) [June 7, 2022](#)

It was not possible to independently verify these claims.

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Updated at 12.01 EDT

[4d ago](#) [20.20](#)

Summary

That's all from me, Samantha Lock, for now. Please join me a little later when we launch our new live blog covering all the latest developments from [Ukraine](#).

Here is a comprehensive run-down of where things currently stand as of 3am.

- **Ukrainian forces are finding it hard to stave off [Russian attacks in the centre of Sievierodonetsk](#) but Moscow's forces do not control the frontline eastern city, regional officials say.** Russian forces have [seized residential quarters of the key eastern city](#) and are fighting to take control of an industrial zone on its outskirts and the nearby towns, Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu said. The Luhansk governor, Serhiy Haidai, conceded that Russian forces control the industrial outskirts of the city. Satellite imagery from Maxar Technologies showed significant damage in Sievierodonetsk and nearby Rubizhne.
- **Some 800 civilians have taken refuge in a chemical factory in Sievierodonetsk,** according to a lawyer for Dmytro Firtash, whose company owns the facility. “These 800 civilians include around 200 out of the plant’s 3,000 employees and approximately 600 inhabitants of the city of Sievierodonetsk,” Lanny J. Davis, a US lawyer, noted in a statement published on the company website.
- **More than 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers who surrendered in the southern port city of Mariupol have been transferred to Russia,** according to Russian state-owned news agency, Tass. More Ukrainian prisoners of war will be taken to [Russia](#) “later on”, the outlet cited a Russian law enforcement source as saying. Some residents who managed to escape are saying they were given no choice but to travel to Russia in what Kyiv regards as “deportations”, Agence France-Presse added.

- A stalemate with Russia is “not an option”, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said, reiterating a plea for foreign help in the war. “Victory must be achieved on the battlefield,” he said in an interview with the [Financial Times](#) on Tuesday, adding that he “simply cannot see the preconditions for ending the war”. Victory meant restoring “all” of Ukraine’s territory, including Crimea – annexed by Russia in 2014 – and separatist-held areas, he suggested.
- Russian proxy fighters in east Ukraine have said they are [opening a trial against two Britons](#), Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner, who were captured fighting alongside Ukrainian soldiers in Mariupol. The two men, who are serving in the Ukrainian military, and Ibrahim Saadun, a captive from Morocco, were shown sitting in a courtroom cage reserved for defendants in a video released on pro-Russian social media channels on Tuesday.
- Ukraine’s first deputy minister of agrarian policy and food, Taras Vysotskyi, said it would take six months to clear the coast of Russian and Ukrainian mines. His remarks dealt a blow to [a proposal under discussion where ships leaving Ukrainian ports would be given safe escort](#) by Turkish naval vessels.
- The European Union needs to build warehouses and extend railway tracks across the Ukrainian border to help Kyiv in its attempts to move more grain out of the country to those who need it, says the country’s trade representative. Ukraine will not be able to export more than 2m tonnes of grain a month, around a third of pre-war levels, as long as its main trade routes through its Black Sea ports [remain blockaded by Russia](#), said Taras Kachka.
- The World Bank has approved \$1.49bn of additional financing for [Ukraine](#) to help pay wages for government and social workers, expanding the bank’s total pledged support for Kyiv to over \$4 billion.

The latest round of funding is supported by financing guarantees from Britain, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Latvia.

- **Russia is ramping up oil exports from its major eastern port of Kozmino as it aims to offset the impact of EU sanctions with the surging demand from Asian buyers.** Sources told Reuters that Russia has already increased the amount of crude pumped to Kozmino on its main Asian oil route, the East Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline, by 70,000 barrels per day (bpd).
- **The United States Treasury Department has banned US money managers from buying any Russian debt or stocks in secondary markets**, on top of its existing ban on new-issue purchases, in its latest sanctions on Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine.
- **Former German chancellor Angela Merkel said she tried to prevent the situation in Ukraine and has no regrets while in office.** “It’s a great sadness that it didn’t work out, but I don’t blame myself for not trying,” Merkel said during a televised interview on Tuesday, speaking on the 2014 Minsk agreement with Russia.
- **Moscow’s Chief Rabbi has reportedly fled Russia, after coming under pressure to support Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.** Journalist Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt tweeted late on Tuesday: “Can finally share that my in-laws, Moscow Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt and Rebbetzin Dara Goldschmidt, have been put under pressure by authorities to publicly support the ‘special operation’ in Ukraine — and refused.”

[Ukrainian forces are finding it hard to stave off Russian attacks in the centre of Sievierodonetsk.](#)

Ukrainian forces are finding it hard to stave off Russian attacks in the centre of Sievierodonetsk.

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[4d ago](#)[20.00](#)

Ukraine is launching a ‘Book of Executioners’, a system to collate evidence of war crimes Kyiv says were committed during Russia’s occupation, President [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#) said on Tuesday.

Ukrainian prosecutors say they have registered more than 12,000 alleged war crimes involving more than 600 suspects since the Kremlin started its invasion on 24 February.

Next week, a special publication is to be launched - ‘The Book of Executioners’ - an information system to collect confirmation of data about war criminals, criminals from the Russian army,” Zelenskiy said in a video address.

Zelenskiy said this would be a key element in his longstanding pledge to bring to account Russian servicemen who have committed what Ukrainian authorities have described as murders, rape and looting.

“These are concrete facts about concrete individuals guilty of concrete cruel crimes against Ukrainians,” Zelenskiy said.

He cited the Kyiv suburb of Bucha, where investigators found what they say is evidence of mass executions.

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[4d ago](#)[19.56](#)

Moscow's Chief Rabbi has reportedly fled Russia, after coming under pressure to support Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Journalist Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt tweeted late on Tuesday: "Can finally share that my in-laws, Moscow Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt and Rebbetzin Dara Goldschmidt, have been put under pressure by authorities to publicly support the 'special operation' in Ukraine — and refused."

Moscow's Chief Rabbi has fled Russia, after coming under pressure to support Putin's invasion of Ukraine (and the propaganda campaign presenting it as a "de-Nazification" effort) <https://t.co/mARx5WOJb8>

— Emma Graham-Harrison (@_EmmaGH) [June 7, 2022](#)

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[4d ago](#)19.48

More than 31,000 Russian servicemen have already died in Ukraine, president Zelenskiy has claimed, adding that the frontline situation has not changed significantly over the past 24 hours.

"The hottest spots are the same. First of all, Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Popasna," he said in his latest address.

More than 31,000 Russian servicemen have already died in Ukraine. Since February 24, Russia has been paying almost 300 lives a day for a completely pointless war against Ukraine. And still the day will come when the number of losses, even for Russia, will exceed the permissible limit."

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[4d ago](#)19.19

Ukraine's president [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#) has also provided an update as to **Ukraine's application to join the EU**.

In his latest [address](#), he said he held a meeting on Tuesday on communication with the European Union and with individual EU member states on Ukraine's application and candidate status.

Diplomatic activity in this direction does not stop even for a day. I hear daily reports, including on the preparation of procedural decisions in the European Union.

The team of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our diplomats, the team of the government in general - all, absolutely all are working to achieve a significant historical decision already in June, which we all expect. For its part, Ukraine has done all, absolutely all the necessary work for this.

As they say in such cases: the ball is in the court of European structures, European countries.”

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[4d ago](#)[18.48](#)

Stalemate with Russia ‘not an option’, says Zelenskiy

A stalemate with [Russia](#) is “not an option”, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said, reiterating a plea for foreign help in the war.

Ukraine’s fierce resistance of Russia’s invasion led to a stalemate in parts of the country, with Moscow re-focussing its forces in the east.

In an interview with the [Financial Times](#) newspaper on Tuesday, he said:

Victory must be achieved on the battlefield.

We are inferior in terms of equipment and therefore we are not capable of advancing.

We are going to suffer more losses and people are my priority.”

Asked what Ukraine would consider a victory, Zelenskiy said restoring the borders Ukraine controlled before Russia’s invasion on 24 February would be “a serious temporary victory”.

But he said the ultimate aim was the “full de-occupation of our entire territory”.

Asked about talks with Russia, which have been suspended since late March, Zelenskiy said he had not changed his position, adding that war should be ended at the negotiating table.

He said he was ready for direct talks with Vladimir Putin, adding that there was “nobody else to talk to” but the Russian president.

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[4d ago](#)[18.40](#)

Today so far

It's not long before 2am on Wednesday in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

News continues to come in about Ukrainian prisoners of war captured by Russian invading forces in Mariupol.

We'll have more coming up, so please stay tuned as the blogging passes from the Guardian US team over to our colleagues in Australia, where Samantha Lock will keep you abreast as things happen.

Here's where things stand:

- **More than 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers** who surrendered in the southern port city of Mariupol after weeks taking a last stand have been transferred to Russia, the Russian state-owned news agency Tass reports.
 - The **World Bank** approved \$1.49 billion of additional financing for Ukraine to help pay wages for government and social workers, expanding the bank's total pledged support for Kyiv to over \$4 billion.
 - **Rubizhne**, on the outskirts of the embattled industrial hub of Sievierodonetsk, in the Luhansk area of the Donbas has been severely damaged after weeks of bombardment, new images show.
 - **The United States Treasury** Department has banned US money managers from buying any Russian debt or stocks in secondary markets, on top of its existing ban on new-issue purchases, in its latest sanctions on Moscow.
 - **Ukraine's ambassador to Israel**, Yevgen Korniychuk, is urging Israel to sell its Iron Dome rocket interception system and provide anti-tank missiles to defend civilians against Russia's invasion.
 - **Radiation levels** in the area surrounding Ukraine's Chornobyl, or Chernobyl, nuclear power plant are normal after detectors came back online today.
 - **Some residents of devastated Mariupol** who managed to escape are saying they were given no choice but to travel to Russia in what the Kyiv government regards as "deportations".
 - **Russian proxy fighters** in east Ukraine have said they are opening a trial against two Britons, Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner, who were captured fighting alongside Ukrainian soldiers in Mariupol.
 - Those are the main developments since our last summary, but prior to that, the leading news emerged of alleged "torture chamber" detention by Russian soldiers of abducted residents in the Kherson region.
- •

[4d ago 18.17](#)

More than a thousand Ukrainian soldiers who surrendered in Mariupol transferred to Russia - Russian source

Breaking news is coming through from Tass, the Russian state-owned news agency, declaring that more than 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers who surrendered in the southern port city of Mariupol after weeks taking a last stand have been transferred to Russia, Reuters reports.

More Ukrainian prisoners of war will be taken to Russia “later on”, Reuters is further reporting, with Tass citing a “Russian law enforcement source”.

Ukraine has said it is working for all the prisoners to be returned while some Russian legislators say they should be put on trial.



A view shows destroyed facilities of Azovstal steel plant during Ukraine-Russia conflict in the southern port city of Mariupol, Ukraine May 22, 2022. Photograph: Alexander Ermochenko/Reuters

More details will be forthcoming, no doubt, and we'll bring them to you as they emerge.

Previously, the Guardian's Pjotr Sauer [had reported](#), more than 900 Ukrainian troops who had been trapped at Mariupol's besieged Azovstal steel plant, where Ukrainian forces held out for weeks, had been sent to a prison colony on Russian-controlled territory within Ukraine, Moscow has said, and their fate had been uncertain.

Now, it appears, they and more of their comrades, have been taken to Russia proper.

It's probably fair to say that, if that is confirmed, their fate is currently even more uncertain.

Surrender at the besieged steel works came in the middle of last month, after it became clear that any remaining troops would, in fairly short order, be obliterated by Russian forces, with hope of rescue or reinforcements expired.

Just a few days earlier in May, the last remaining civilians holed up at the steel works were evacuated, and my colleague Emma Graham-Harrison sent [this dispatch](#).

What remains of Mariupol is now under Russian control, and there are reports of an "[epidemic of cholera](#)" among those remaining in the occupied city, with sewage and water supply problems and dead bodies rotting in the streets.

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Updated at 18.21 EDT

[4d ago](#) [18.00](#)

The [World Bank](#) said on Tuesday its board of executive directors approved \$1.49 billion of additional financing for Ukraine to help pay wages for government and social workers, expanding the bank's total pledged support for Kyiv to over \$4 billion.

The World Bank said in a statement that the latest round of funding for [Ukraine](#) is supported by financing guarantees from Britain, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Latvia.

Ukraine's economy is in tatters.



Two boys sit on swings on a playground in front of a destroyed residential building in the town of Borodyanka on June 7, 2022, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Photograph: AFP/Getty Images

The project is also being supported by parallel financing from Italy and contributions from a new Multi-Donor Trust Fund.



The World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC, picture snapped in April, 2022. Photograph: Stefani Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images

The news came as the bank also warned that the global economy faces a protracted period of weak growth and high inflation reminiscent of the 1970s as the impact of a two-year pandemic is compounded by [Russia's invasion](#) of Ukraine, my colleague Larry Elliott reported earlier.

In its half-yearly economic health check, the Washington-based Bank said echoes of the [stagflation](#) of four decades ago had forced it to [cut its growth forecast](#) for this year from 4.1% to 2.9%.

David Malpass, the Bank's president, said: "The war in Ukraine, lockdowns in China, supply chain disruptions and the risk of stagflation are hammering growth. For many countries, recession will be hard to avoid."

Read more of Larry's report [here](#).

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[4d ago](#) [17.32](#)

Rubizhne, on the outskirts of the embattled industrial hub of Sievierodonetsk, in the Luhansk area of the Donbas that invading Russian forces are trying to subdue, some new satellite images are emerging showing severe damage.

The US satellite firm Maxar Technologies has just tweeted these pictures.

Before (March 29, 2022) and after (June 6, 2022) [#satellite #images](#) showing the destruction of buildings in Rubizhne, [#Ukraine](#). Location: 48.985938, 38.403.274. pic.twitter.com/XTjsNTudz4

— Maxar Technologies (@Maxar) [June 7, 2022](#)

The Kyiv Independent news outlet reminds us that there has been heavy fighting over Rubizhne for weeks.

⚡Satellite picture shows heavy destruction in Rubizhne.

A satellite image released by Maxar Technologies shows significant destruction in the city of Rubizhne, Luhansk Oblast, where heavy fighting has been ongoing for weeks.

Photo: Maxar Technologies pic.twitter.com/SFgDGIGboL

— The Kyiv Independent (@KyivIndependent) [June 7, 2022](#)

Also this:

Parts of the [#Ukrainian](#) cities of [#Rubizhne](#) and [#Severodonetsk](#) are significantly destroyed, new satellite images taken on Monday by Maxar Technologies show. [#Ukraine #Russia #Donbas #Donetsk #Luhansk](#) pic.twitter.com/ebT0MWv4NT

— Said Pulido (@Super_Said) [June 7, 2022](#)

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[4d ago 17.16](#)

Fighters with the resisting Ukrainian forces and the invading Russians appear to be bogged down in some key parts of southern and south-eastern [Ukraine](#), fighting old-school trench warfare amid the boom of artillery.

Footage is often hard to verify in terms of exact location and time of filming in this 100+ days of conflict, but the sight and sound in this clip is in some way timeless.

POV from a Ukrainian trench taking Russian artillery fire
pic.twitter.com/4HZF26HLmR

— OSINTtechnical (@Osinttechnical) [June 7, 2022](#)

CNN's Matthew Chance just aired a dispatch from Kryvyi Rih in southern Ukraine, where he reported on forces dug in and "grinding front lines" as the "bone-shaking" artillery guns pound away at each side.

He indicated that from what he was witnessing, in an exclusive report, that the Ukrainian and Russian forces have "fought themselves to a standstill" right now.

That was despite messages coming out from the Ukrainian authorities that Ukraine was making progress. But officers on the ground were also expressing grim satisfaction that Russia had not toppled the country within days as they claimed Vladimir Putin must have envisioned.

Here was Chance's recent online report about Russia striking the capital Kyiv again after a long hiatus.

Russian missiles strike Kyiv for the first time in weeks. Why are Putin's sights back on the capital? [@mchancecnn](#) reports
<https://t.co/DC7HpQobkZ>

— The Lead CNN (@TheLeadCNN) [June 6, 2022](#)

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Russia-Ukraine war: what we know on day 104 of the invasion

Russia claims control of 97% of Luhansk as UN warns war is creating a human trafficking crisis

- [Russia-Ukraine war: latest updates](#)
- [See all our Russia-Ukraine war coverage](#)



A rescue team work at the scene after shelling in the Leninsky district of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine on Monday. Photograph: Alexei Alexandrov/AP

[Samantha Lock](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#) and [Martin Belam](#)

Tue 7 Jun 2022 13.54 EDTFirst published on Mon 6 Jun 2022 20.35 EDT

- **Russia's defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, said Moscow's forces have control of 97% of Luhansk in eastern Ukraine.** Russian forces have

seized residential quarters of the key eastern city of Sievierodonetsk and are fighting to take control of an industrial zone on its outskirts and the nearby towns, Shoigu said. The Luhansk governor, Serhiy Haidai, conceded that Russian forces control the industrial outskirts of the city.

- Ukraine accused the Russian army of abducting about 600 residents in the Kherson region in the south of the country and keeping them in “torture chambers”. Tamila Tacheva, the Ukrainian presidency’s permanent representative in Crimea, said about 300 people, “mainly journalists and activists”, are being held in Kherson city and the rest are in other settlements in the region.
- Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said fighting has taken to the streets of Sievierodonetsk while admitting that Russian forces have the numerical advantage. In his latest national address, Zelenskiy insisted that Ukraine’s forces had “every chance” of fighting back and are “standing strong”.
- The Ukraine president also said he believed Russian troops intend to capture the city of Zaporizhzhia, a large industrial hub in the south-east of the country, which would allow its military to advance closer to central areas. “There are more of them, they are more powerful, but we have every chance to fight on this direction,” he said.
- According to Ukraine’s general staff of the armed forces, Ukrainian helicopters reportedly struck at clusters of enemy forces in the Kherson region, and planes at ammunition depots in the Mykolayiv region. “The enemy lost more than 20 people and up to 10 units of military equipment,” the report added.

- One person was killed and three injured after a Russian strike hit Ukraine's second city, Kharkiv, according to its mayor, Ihor Terekhov. [Russia “does not leave Kharkiv alone and constantly keeps people in fear”](#), Terekhov said on national television.
- Russia has begun handing over bodies of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks, the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol where their [last-ditch stand](#) became a symbol of resistance against Moscow's invasion. Dozens of bodies have been transferred to Kyiv, where DNA testing is under way to identify the remains, according to both a military leader and a spokesperson for the Azov battalion.
- Russian officials in occupied Mariupol have shut down the southern port city for quarantine over a possible cholera outbreak, according to Ukrainian authorities. Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to the mayor of Mariupol, said the Russian-occupied city [is bracing itself for an epidemic](#) as dead bodies and litter are piling up in the city.
- The leader of Ukraine's pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk, Denis Pushilin, has confirmed the death of a Russian general, Maj Gen Roman Kutuzov, during the war in Ukraine. A reporter of state-run Rossiya 1 earlier said [Kutuzov was killed while leading forces from the Russian-controlled east into battle](#). If confirmed, he would be at least the fourth Russian general to have been killed in combat since February, and Ukraine claims the number is higher.
- Some Russian fighters have gone public with appeals to Vladimir Putin for an investigation into battlefield conditions and whether their deployments to the front are even legal. Russia's assault on Ukraine's east has brought it some battlefield success but there is

evidence that high-level casualties are growing and some units may be approaching exhaustion.

- Ukraine's first deputy minister of agrarian policy and food, Taras Vysotskyi, said it would take six months to clear the coast of Russian and Ukrainian mines. His remarks dealt a blow to a proposal under discussion where ships leaving Ukrainian ports would be given safe escort by Turkish naval vessels.
- Russian lawmakers voted to take Moscow out of the jurisdiction of the European court of human rights. The Russian state Duma approved two bills, one removing the country from the court's jurisdiction and a second setting 16 March as the cutoff point, with rulings against Russia made after that date not to be implemented.
- Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, declared himself "very happy" at the UK prime minister Boris Johnson's confidence vote win. Zelenskiy described Johnson's narrow victory on Monday evening as "great news". In a cabinet meeting today, Johnson said Zelenskiy must not be "pressured" into accepting a bad peace deal with Russia and that Britain would "remain at the forefront" of support for Kyiv.
- The former Russian president and close ally of Vladimir Putin, Dmitry Medvedev, lashed out at those who "hate" Russia, calling them "degenerates" and vowing to "make them disappear". Medvedev, who is now deputy head of the security council, did not say who "they" were but his remarks are an example of the increasingly aggressive language used by Russian officials.
- Ukraine's state nuclear company, Energoatom, has criticised a plan by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to send a

delegation to a Russian-occupied nuclear plant in Zaporizhzhia, southern Ukraine, saying it “did not invite” such a visit.

- **The UK Ministry of Defence’s daily assessment of the situation on the ground** says: “Russia’s broader plan likely continues to be to cut off the Sieverodonetsk area from both the north and the south. Russia made gains on the southern, Popasna axis through May, but its progress in the area has stalled over the last week. Reports of heavy shelling near Izium suggests Russia is preparing to make a renewed effort on the northern axis.”
- **Sexual violence in Ukraine remains prevalent and underreported as Russia’s invasion is “turning into a human trafficking crisis”** according to the UN. “Women and children fleeing the conflict are being targeted for trafficking and exploitation,” Pramila Patten, the UN special representative on sexual violence, told a UN security council on Monday. “Sexual violence is the most consistently and massively underreported violation.”
- **The Ukrainian navy said it has pushed back a fleet of Russian warships more than 100km from its Black Sea coast.** The group of Russian vessels were “forced to change tactics” after carrying out a naval blockade on Ukraine’s coast for weeks, [the navy command of Ukraine’s armed forces said on Facebook](#). It has not been possible to independently verify this information.
- The defence ministry in Belarus has said its armed forces have begun conducting **combat-readiness training exercises**.

- A court in Fiji has ruled Russian-owned superyacht Amadea be removed from the Pacific island nation by the US because it was [a waste of money for Fiji to maintain the vessel](#) amid legal wrangling over its seizure. The yacht is linked to sanctioned Russian oligarch Suleiman Kerimov.
- On Monday the European Council president, Charles Michel, accused Russia of using food supplies as “a stealth missile against developing countries” and blamed the Kremlin for the looming global food crisis. Michel’s remarks prompted Moscow’s UN ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, [to walk out of a security council meeting](#).
- Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, said there were credible reports that Russia was “pilfering” Ukraine’s grain exports to sell for its own profit. Blinken said the alleged theft was part of broader Russian actions to export Ukraine’s wheat crop and worsen a global food security crisis. “Now, Russia is hoarding its food exports as well,” he said. Ukraine’s President Zelenskiy said there could be as many as 75m tonnes of grain stuck in Ukraine by autumn.

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Russia

Russia walks out of UN security council meeting over claim it is using food as ‘stealth missile’

UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia walks out after Charles Michel accuses Moscow of being ‘solely responsible for this looming food crisis’

- [Russia-Ukraine war - latest updates](#)
- [What we know on day 104 of the invasion](#)



Russian UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia walked out of a security council meeting over accusations Moscow was weaponising the food crisis.
Photograph: John Lamparski/NurPhoto/REX/Shutterstock

Agencies

Tue 7 Jun 2022 01.27 EDT

European Council president Charles Michel has accused Russia of using food supplies as “a stealth missile against developing countries”, and blamed the Kremlin for the looming global food crisis, prompting Moscow’s UN ambassador to walk out of a security council meeting.

Michel addressed Russian ambassador Vassily Nebenzia directly at a council meeting on Monday, saying he saw millions of tons of grain and wheat stuck in containers and ships at the Ukrainian port of Odesa a few weeks ago “because of Russian warships in the Black Sea”.

He said Moscow’s attacks on Ukraine’s transport infrastructure and grain storage facilities, and its tanks, airstrikes and mines were preventing [Ukraine](#) from planting and harvesting.

“This is driving up food prices, pushing people into poverty and destabilising entire regions,” Michel said. “Russia is solely responsible for this looming food crisis. Russia alone.”

Michel accused Russian forces of stealing grain from areas in Ukraine that it has occupied “while shifting the blame of others,” calling this “cowardly” and “propaganda, pure and simple”.

Nebenzia walked out, giving Russia’s seat to another diplomat. Russia’s deputy UN ambassador Dmitry Polyansky said later on Telegram’s Russian channel that Michel’s comments were “so rude” that the Russian ambassador left the security council chamber.

Nebenzia later told Reuters: “I couldn’t stay”, claiming it was because of “the lies that Charles Michel came here to distribute”.

Amid a worsening global food crisis, US secretary of state Antony Blinken said there were “credible reports” that Russia was “pilfering” Ukraine’s grain exports to sell for profit. Blinken said the alleged theft was part of broader Russian actions during its war in Ukraine that have hit Ukraine’s ability to export its wheat crop.

Prices for grains, cooking oils, fuel and fertiliser have soared since the invasion, which began on 24 February. Russia and Ukraine account for

nearly a third of global wheat supplies, while Russia is also a fertiliser exporter and Ukraine is an exporter of corn and sunflower oil.

With Associated Press and Reuters

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2022.06.07 - Spotlight

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Interview

‘Kate Winslet calls me mummy!’ – Jean Smart on Hacks, Mare of Easttown and superstardom

[Rachel Aroesti](#)



‘I’m a smartass, just like Deborah’ ... the actor in Hacks. Photograph: HBO Max

She has been a TV regular for 50 years. But playing a blistering, diva-like standup in Hacks has launched Smart into orbit. The actor talks about her ‘Jeanaissance’ – and ending up in an ambulance during Easttown



Tue 7 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.41 EDT

There are 18 participants on my video call with Jean Smart, the veteran actor whose striking return to the spotlight has brought about what US commentators are calling “the Jeanaissance”. It’s a rather grand title but it seems justified – especially if this high-security interview experience is anything to go by. The disorientating vetting procedure involves multiple texts and emails, two different Zoom calls, one “breakout room” and 16 industry bods silently observing our interview. Clearly, the 70-year-old is extremely hot property in TV land.

Smart may not be a household name in the UK but she’s an increasingly familiar face. Across the Atlantic, she’s long been both. The actor first found fame in the mid-1980s as one of the leads in *Designing Women*, a trailblazing sitcom set in an Atlanta interior design agency populated by female characters who were, she says, “so distinctive, so original and so

detailed”. But it wasn’t just progressive in a feminist sense: “No one had done a show about southerners that made them real three-dimensional characters, so that was fun!”

Later, she won two Emmys for her extended guest star stint as old school-pal Lana Gardner on Frasier, while the 2000s and 2010s brought a string of standout supporting roles in everything from 24 and Fargo to Samantha Who? and Watchmen. Yet it wasn’t until last spring, when she was simultaneously starring in the exceptionally sharp sitcom [Hacks](#) and stealing scenes as Kate Winslet’s mother in the dark detective drama [Mare of Easttown](#), that the world seemed to decide an effusive celebration of Smart’s talent was long overdue.

Hacks gave me a taste of comedy without the scary parts – because the crowd were all extras who were paid to laugh

Hacks – whose first season was finally released in the UK on Prime Video in April, with season two following this Friday – has proven a particularly satisfying showcase for Smart’s skills. She plays Deborah Vance, a very glam and terrifyingly cutthroat old-school standup who butts heads with Ava Daniels, the “cancelled” Gen Z comedy writer tasked with breathing new life into her increasingly stale Las Vegas residency. Smart is so convincing as Deborah – a blisteringly acerbic diva hellbent on avenging those who have wronged her – that interviewing her becomes an increasingly frightening prospect the more episodes of this snappy, emotionally knotty sitcom I devour.



‘So distinctive’ ... in *Designing Women* in 1986. Photograph: CBS/Getty Images

As it turns out, there is not a hint of derision or dismissiveness to Smart in real life. She is, however, as coiffed, glossy and gorgeous as Deborah. “We both like leopard print and sequins,” she says, eyebrow raised. The pair also have a wry sense of humour and a feel for a punchline (“I’m a smartass like her – sarcasm is in my arsenal”).

Yet Smart doesn’t seem to share Deborah’s gilded-cage lifestyle. The latter would be conducting this interview in a gleaming corner of her sprawling mansion. Smart is sitting in front of a shelf unit crowded with books and framed family photos (including a picture of her late husband, the actor Richard Gilliland, whom she met on the set of *Designing Women*). The impression is of a cosy, low-key home.

In fact, everything about Smart radiates well-adjusted serenity. One of the themes of Hacks’ new season is Deborah’s professional anxiety: she worries she has become irrelevant and unwanted. Surely that’s something an actor who has been jobbing for almost 50 years could relate to? Not so, apparently. “Even when there were times when I wasn’t getting a lot of work – which thankfully didn’t last for long – I always had that confidence it would work out,” she says, keen to point out that she doesn’t identify with

the rage and indignation that roil through Deborah's life as a result of having been betrayed by her husband and sister.

I fell over a bannister in Easttown and Kate was still calling me Mummy as we waited for the ambulance

"Her bitterness is her battery. I've never understood people who say, 'Somebody broke my heart. I'm just never going to trust men again.' You think: 'Why are you treating a relationship with one person as if it has anything to do with half the population of the world?' But she's never let herself try to get past it. It fuels her."

It quickly becomes apparent that everything to do with the gratifyingly sour Hacks is infinitely more lovely off-screen. The unforgiving job of a standup, for example, was transformed into something safe and sanitised for Smart, who had all the fun of cracking jokes "without the scary parts – because the crowd are all extras who are paid to laugh". Delivering Deborah's sets came relatively easily, but Smart didn't see the appeal of standup much beyond that. "The difference between being a standup and doing a play on stage is you can be bombing in a play and you don't have to really face it – because 99.9% of the time you're not addressing the audience directly. But if you're a standup, it's painfully obvious when you're doing poorly. That's got to be the worst feeling in the world."



Ice-cream scoffing Fruit-Ninja obsessive ... with Winslet in *Mare of Easttown*. Photograph: HBO

Another savage aspect of the show that's decidedly warmer in real life is Smart's relationship with Hannah Einbinder, who plays Ava. On screen, their professional collaboration is fraught. Deborah, a traditional comedian for whom a great punchline is non-negotiable, rails against Ava's looser, gag-lite approach – a way for the show to cleverly probe comedy's generation gap. But in season two, the pair's personal dynamic becomes increasingly twisted as they develop an intimate and unhealthy mother-daughter bond.

Behind the scenes, however, Smart and Einbinder's friendship sounds heartwarming. When Smart was recently awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, her *Hacks* co-star gave a droll but hugely affectionate speech. "We just laugh all the time," says Smart, "and send each other silly text messages – a cartoon I saw or a joke I heard." She smiles. "Because I love seeing back that 'hahaha!' or 'lolololol!'"

Clearly, Smart is somebody who bonds with her co-stars. In *Mare of Easttown*, she played Kate Winslet's ice-cream-scoffing, Fruit Ninja-obsessed mother – another combative, but marginally less dysfunctional mother-daughter relationship. Smart says Winslet insisted on calling her

“mummy” when the camera’s weren’t rolling. At one point, Smart had an accident on set: she was leaning on a bannister for comic effect and fell right over it. “So I’m lying in a heap at the bottom of the stairs and they’re waiting for the ambulance to arrive. Kate was supporting my back because it hurt so bad. And she was saying, ‘It’s all right, mummy. It’s all right. They’re coming.’

“Later, when they got me an ambulance, the guy getting ready to hook up the morphine drip said, ‘Boy, your daughter was sure worried about you.’ I said, ‘What? Oh no! That actress is playing my daughter – didn’t you recognise her?’” When Smart told him it was Winslet, he was devastated to have missed his chance to speak to her. “I said, ‘Could you get back to the morphine, please, fanboy?’”



Garlanded frequent guest star ... in Frasier. Photograph: NBC Universal/Getty Images

In Hacks, Deborah is continually forced to reckon with her own parenting decisions, such as bringing Deborah Jr on tour with her back when she was a child. “Dragging her to all these awful clubs where she stayed up too late and got into alcohol and was hanging around with horrible male comedians. She thought it was out of love – she just wanted her little girl with her. Of

course, her daughter remembers that it was highly inappropriate and that's what makes it so painful."

Has Smart felt a similar pull? "Oh, it's terrible," she says of a working mother's predicament. While filming *Mare of Easttown* in Philadelphia, she "flew home twice a week" to be with her son Forrest, whom she adopted with Gilliland in 2009; she also has an older son, Connor. "It was exhausting, but I wanted to. I had to."

Despite having entered her eighth decade last year, Smart is showing no signs of slowing down. And her next film role may take her profile to another level. In *Babylon*, directed by *La La Land*'s [Damien Chazelle](#), she plays a British film critic in the golden age of Hollywood. Smart has never done an English accent on screen, but going by her Winslet impression during this call, she has it nailed. The film – which also stars Brad Pitt as 1920s heartthrob John Gilbert, Margot Robbie as Clara Bow and Tobey Maguire as Charlie Chaplin – seems like Oscar-bait. It wouldn't be surprising if it provides Smart with something new to go on her already crowded awards shelf.

Promisingly, Smart says playing this critic won't be a complete departure from Deborah. "She knows she intimidates people – that people are a little afraid of her because they know she has the power to make or break a career. There's an interesting twist in a big scene I have with Brad – you see a side of her you haven't seen."

And with that teaser, my time is up: I am halfway through thanking her, when all the machinery behind the interview springs into action and I'm ejected from the call. Left, like everyone else, to marvel at the Jeanaissance from afar.

- *Hacks* is on Prime Video in the UK, HBO Max in the US and Stan in Australia.

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[**France**](#)

From hunger striker to MP candidate: the rise of France's 'humanist baker'

Between 15 hours of baking and three hours' sleep, Stéphane Ravacley is trying to knead a little faith back into French politics



Stephane Ravacley in 2021 during his campaign to save his Guinean apprentice from deportation. Photograph: Sébastien Bozon/AFP/Getty Images



[Angelique Chrisafis](#) in Besançon

[@achrisafis](#)

Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 14.51 EDT

After dark in a bakery kitchen, Stéphane Ravacley was bashing blocks of butter with a giant rolling pin as he prepared his croissant pastry. “A lot of French people have lost faith in politics,” he said, shaping the first of 500 croissants. “They’re not voting, they don’t feel listened to, and it’s my battle to win them back.”

The 53-year-old baker who hails from what he calls the “bottom rung of the social ladder” has captured France’s imagination as one of the most improbable newcomers in this weekend’s first round of the parliamentary elections.

Ravacley’s outsider challenge to [Emmanuel Macron](#)’s centrist party in the Doubs near the Swiss border in eastern France is focusing attention on the newly re-elected president’s image problem as being aloof, especially concerning people’s everyday worries.

Macron is seeking a centrist parliamentary majority in order to have a free hand for his policies, such as raising the pension age and overhauling the

benefits system. But turnout on 12 and 19 June is expected to be at a record low of less than 48% amid a growing mistrust of the political class. Some voters feel that the real battle will take place with street demonstrations against Macron's policies from the autumn, so there's "not much point" in voting, as one unemployed man said on a housing estate in the eastern town of Besançon.



Stephane Ravacley (centre) delivers a speech during a campaign meeting in Besançon on 15 May. Photograph: Sébastien Bozon/AFP/Getty Images

A historic alliance of parties on the left, led by the radical [Jean-Luc Mélenchon](#), is seeking to make big parliament gains, and is predicted by pollsters to triple its seats and become the main opposition to Macron's centrists. [Marine Le Pen](#)'s far-right National Rally is also seeking to increase its seats.

Ravacley, who does not belong to a political party, is running for parliament for the leftwing alliance, backed by the Greens. He argues that the French parliament, which is overwhelmingly middle-class with a high level of formal education, needs more working-class, manual labourers who understand the way French people think. He grew up in eastern France, in a poor family who worked the cereal fields. His mother died in a tractor accident when he was four, leaving his father with three children.

Quick Guide

French parliamentary elections

Show



What's happening?

France votes in two rounds of parliament elections on 12 and 19 June, which will set the balance of power for the next five years. The results will define Emmanuel Macron's capacity to deliver his domestic policy, such as raising the pension age and overhauling benefits.

How does the vote work?

Voters choose 577 parliament representatives for the National Assembly in a "first past the post" voting system. Most constituencies go to a second-round run-off between two or three, sometimes four, candidates. The top scorer wins.

What do the polls look like?

Macron's centrist grouping is seeking an absolute majority, which requires winning at least 289 seats.

It is hard for pollsters to accurately predict the number of seats of the final result.

Two polls in early April suggested Macron's grouping might take between 275 and 315 seats. If Macron's grouping wins the greatest number of seats, but falls short of an absolute majority, it would have to seek support on legislation from allies, potentially on the right.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon's alliance of leftwing parties has been predicted in polls for [Ifop-Fiducial](#) and [Elabe](#) to greatly increase its number of seats to between 155 and 205, which would make it the main opposition force.

Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party has historically been limited by the absence of proportional representation and is predicted by pollsters to increase its seats to between 20 and 65.

Photograph: Johanna Geron/X07006

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Ravacley is known as the “humanist baker of Besançon”. He became famous last year for going on [hunger strike](#) in defence of his Guinean bakery apprentice, Laye Fodé Traoré, an orphan who had arrived in France as an unaccompanied minor aged 16, but faced deportation when he turned 18. Ravacley’s protest tapped into national concern for unaccompanied minor migrants. Stars including the actors Omar Sy and Marion Cotillard signed an open letter to Macron on his behalf. Still, it took 11 days of hunger strike and Ravacley’s sudden hospitalisation for the authorities to make contact and begin processing Traoré’s paperwork, allowing him to stay.

“When I went on hunger strike, I was initially met with silence from the authorities and that changed me as a person,” Ravacley said. “I’ve become a monster now – a kind and gentle monster – I really understand that if you want to change things you have to fight for it.”



Stéphane Ravacley working with Guinean apprentice Laye Fode Traoré in January 2021 after the baker's campaign to save him from deportation ended in victory. Photograph: Sébastien Bozon/AFP/Getty Images

The baker's campaign schedule is gruelling. He works on his croissants until 10pm, sleeps three hours, rises at 1.30 am to bake bread for his shop until midday, briefly naps, then sets off in his old Renault Twingo full of flour-sacks as he canvasses in his eastern constituency that spreads from the housing estates of Besançon to the small villages outside.

Ravacley still supports migrants who arrived as unaccompanied minors, as well as French young people leaving the care system, which has opened him to far right attacks. Last week, one of his election posters was sprayed with the Nazi swastika and racist slurs. "I'll never give in to hate," he said.

In an election described by pollsters as lacklustre and dull, Ravacley has become a high-profile figure. During last month's Cannes film festival, the Dardenne brothers directing-duo, whose [latest film](#) is about young migrants in Belgium, dedicated their film to Ravacley. They called his hunger strike a "great act of resistance in our era".

Ravacley said: "I was rolling out my croissants, as usual at that time of night, the phone rang and someone said: 'Put on the TV, they're talking

about you at Cannes.’ Incredible.”

The town of Besançon, run by a Green mayor since 2020, saw a high vote for the left’s Mélenchon in the presidential race – he topped the poll in the first round, beating Macron and Le Pen. Ravacley’s challenge is whether the new leftwing alliance can now persuade voters to turn out again in the parliamentary elections, particularly on housing estates where abstention is high.

On the estates of Besançon’s Clairs-Soleils neighbourhood, as Ravacley knocked on doors, people said their biggest concern was making ends meet, as well as the climate crisis, but that trust in politics was low.

Outside a primary school, Ahmed, 32, an accountant collecting his two daughters, said he recognised Ravacley from TV. “It’s important to have someone in parliament who understands people’s everyday concerns, and we’re really struggling with the cost of food and petrol,” he said. “If I vote, I’ll vote for him. But I’m not really sure if it’s worth voting any more, nothing ever changes.”

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Nabia Hakkar-Boyer, a regional councillor for the Socialist party, and Ravacley’s runningmate, said: “He comes across as down to earth and different to other candidates. He looks like the voters themselves, and he understands their lives. He always has flour on his trousers and he works more than 15 hours a day.”

Since the *gilets jaunes* anti-government protests of Macron’s first term, there has been a demand for “ordinary citizens” to play more of a role in political decision-making. Under pressure, Macron promised this month that he would set up a vast democratic consultation with the French people, but he is yet to spell out in what form.

Ravacley is not the only citizen protester who has turned parliamentary candidate this year. Rachel Keke, a hotel housekeeper who led a [two-year](#)

strike for better conditions for cleaners at a hotel on the edge of Paris, is running for the left alliance east of the capital.

Meanwhile, Ravacley has even made his flour-encrusted, worn-down work shoes a campaign argument. “I’ll go to the National Assembly in my magic shoes,” he said. “They keep my feet on the ground.”

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[The age of extinction](#)[Illegal wildlife trade](#)

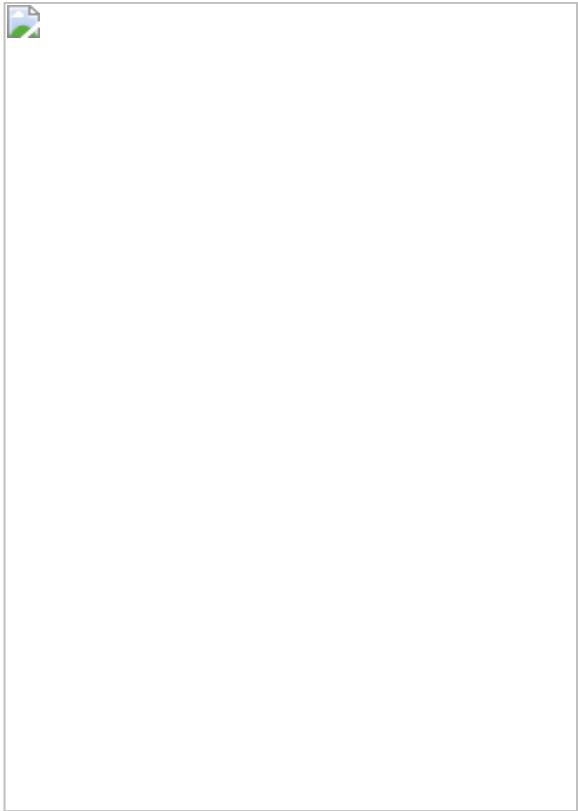
Kangaroos in the street and a suitcase of iguanas: India's exotic pet problem

Abandoned marsupials and other trafficked species reveal the country's growing illegal trade, driven by a desire for exclusive and costly status symbols



Forest officials in West Bengal rescued three kangaroos, allegedly being smuggled to Nepal. One later died. Photograph: Courtesy Belakoba Forest Range Office

The age of extinction is supported by



About this content

Kalpana Sunder

Tue 7 Jun 2022 02.45 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 23.39 EDT

From the red-eared slider turtle, cockatoo and falcon to the yellow-cheeked gibbon, capuchin monkey and orangutan, nothing is too much for those demanding unusual pets in [India](#). But it was the sight of three kangaroos wandering the streets of West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district in April that brought home the extent of the country's exotic pet trade.

The malnourished kangaroos were intercepted after tipoffs from local residents. One of the rescued marsupials later died, while the remaining two

are recovering and will be rehomed at a nearby zoo.



A red-eared slider turtle smuggled into India. Photograph: Traffic India

A senior forestry official told [the Indian Express](#) at the time: “We are surprised as to who brought these kangaroos here, and how. We suspect they were being smuggled to Nepal.”

The kangaroos were the latest in a series of trafficking cases of exotic species into India in the last few years: in April, [five exotic monkeys and a wallaby](#) were rescued in Assam, shortly after five siamang gibbons were found in the same state; 30 exotic birds and a red-eared guenon, native to Africa and listed as vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list, were intercepted at the Mizoram-Assam border in [January 2021](#); in [July 2020](#), also in Assam, a kangaroo, blue macaws, capuchin monkeys and Aldabra giant tortoises were rescued; and in [October 2019](#), the customs department at Tiruchirappalli international airport in Tamil Nadu seized a suitcase packed with exotic reptiles, including iguanas.

According to a [report](#) by [Traffic India](#), more than 70,000 native and exotic wild animals were seized at India’s airports between 2011 and 2020, with many featured on the IUCN red list and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites) appendices.

The most common non-native species seized was the red-eared slider turtle, followed by the Chinese pond turtle.

The growing number and diversity of exotic species being smuggled into India has surprised everyone

Dr Saket Badola, Traffic India

The exotic animals are sold in markets and pet shops across India, as well as online. A two-year [study](#) found as many as 84 exotic reptile species were traded in India between 2018 and 2020.

“India is both a source and destination of illegal wildlife trade, and is at times a transit route, too,” says Jose Louies, head of wildlife crime control at the [Wildlife](#) Trust of India. “The exotic animal trade into India is driven by the demand of people who would like to own something exclusive and costly, as a style or status symbol, with disregard for their natural habitat. Most of the animals end up in a zoo, as the country of origin may not repatriate them.”



Exotic birds are among the growing numbers of species being smuggled and sold in markets and pet shops across India. Photograph: Traffic India

Dr Saket Badola, head of Traffic India, says: “The number and diversity of exotic species being smuggled into India has surprised everyone. We attribute it to the growing number of Indians with disposable incomes and the influence of social media, where people are exposed to exotic species being kept as pets around the world.”

Traffickers are exploiting a loophole in India’s 1978 [Wildlife Protection Act](#), which protects native species but does not cover imported or exotic species. Trade in any exotic species listed by Cites is allowed only with import and export licences, certificates and permissions from appropriate authorities. However, the animal may be freely traded once it has entered India.

In June 2020, India’s ministry of environment, forest and climate change offered amnesty to Indians in possession of exotic species without documentation. More than [32,000 people](#) declared animals, including kangaroos, iguanas and lemurs, according to a report by IndiaSpend, a data-driven journalism initiative.

“The concerns with this illegal trade are manifold,” says Badola. “Besides threatening the species in their natural habitat, they can spread zoonotic diseases as they travel across the globe, carrying pathogens and viruses not seen in this part of the world. Lots of invasive imported species can threaten the local species, too.

“Most of the illegal shipments come via air, as many species are very expensive. To minimise losses they are hidden in plastic boxes and bottles, in hand baggage, checked baggage or air cargo. Others that come by land are trafficked through the porous borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal.”

Many animals that are seized are repatriated, but if their country of origin is unclear, they are quarantined then sent to local zoos or wildlife parks.

“The major concern is that invasive species that reach the country as part of this international trade could impact our biodiversity,” says Louies.

Traffic is working with customs officers at airports, training staff to be aware of illegal contraband beyond gold or narcotics. They have also developed an online course about the wildlife trade, including relevant laws, red flags to watch out for at airports and how to handle seizures of dangerous species.

Campaigners hope that the [wildlife \(protection\) amendment bill, 2021](#) will be passed by the Indian parliament this year, increasing the number of species protected under the law.

“The proposed amendment empowers the government to regulate or prohibit the import, trade, possession or proliferation of invasive alien species which pose a threat to the wildlife or habitat,” says Debadityo Sinha of the [Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy](#).

But, he adds: “The proposed definition of ‘invasive alien species’ is limited to only species which are not native to India. Ideally, this definition should include any species not native to the geographical range. We have many examples which indicate that species from one geographic area can become invasive and pose a threat to local biodiversity when introduced to other geographic areas within the country.”

Find more [age of extinction coverage here](#), and follow biodiversity reporters [Phoebe Weston](#) and [Patrick Greenfield](#) on Twitter for all the latest news and features

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Women behind the lens: a moment of tenderness in a violent world



Si los padres que toca en la fina por la noche, no les mienten
que ellos no están, se quedan
familia si que está en Venezuela es la calle de
los que los llevan a la otra parte.

‘During the day, I think everything is fine but at night I realise that something in me broke and I cannot sleep because I have nightmares that I am in Venezuela in the streets again or that I am walking aimlessly.’
Photograph: Daniela Rivera Antara

Adriana walked from Venezuela to Peru with her son, Mateo, a dangerous journey that ended in a daily fight for survival. She says all the risks she took were for her son

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[About this content](#)

Daniela Rivera Antara

Tue 7 Jun 2022 04.30 EDT Last modified on Wed 8 Jun 2022 10.02 EDT

A few weeks after I returned to Peru in 2019, I read about the high numbers of femicides and sexual assaults that had occurred that year. The statistics didn't include Venezuelan migrant women.

I knew I wanted to photograph this community without focusing on the violence that had become too common in their lives; it seemed unnecessary and traumatising. I also didn't want to produce the same images we regularly see of migration.

When I met Adriana, one of the youngest women I photographed for my series, Silence of Dawn, she told me the worst part of her experience of living in [Peru](#) was when she went to bed. In her sleep, she relives the three

months she walked across Venezuela with her son, wearing a pair of Crocs and dragging a broken suitcase behind her.

I walked to Peru followed by journalists who photographed my son while we crossed the mountains of Colombia without shoes or a jacket. I was homeless in Venezuela, that is why I left. There are moments when I look back and realise we both could have died.”

Adriana says she was sexually assaulted in Cucuta, Colombia, after leaving Venezuela in January 2020. She and her son arrived in Lima in March 2020.

In Lima, she sold coffee on the street, and every time she returned safely home, she said she counted her blessings.

In Peru, it has become common to view Venezuelan women as sex workers, a stereotype that impacts every aspect of their lives. The women I met openly shared their experiences as I tried to understand why they were being treated this way.

I took the photo above as Adriana played with her son, Mateo. She teased him, pretending to be sick and to fall asleep. Mateo’s tenderness, as he offered his mum crackers, highlighted his desire for play, where time and context don’t exist.

Their mundane possessions held a world of significance that connected them to a home that no longer existed. Adriana said all of the decisions she has made were for her son. The risks she has taken every day since leaving home were for him.

I asked her to write down the moments that had shaped her life as a migrant. The photos felt incomplete without the emotion conveyed by the overlaid handwriting. I wanted everyone I photographed to be involved in the process. Besides craving connection, it was important they felt safe in sharing their world, in a place where they were misunderstood.

Daniela Rivera Antara is a photographer and writer who was born in Peru and raised between Lima and Australia. Her work looks at gender-related

issues, particularly of displacement, inequality and identity

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[**Opinion**](#)[**Brexit**](#)

How do you convince a leaver Brexit was a bad idea? Make them stand in a queue

[Zoe Williams](#)



‘Sovereignty’ and ‘taking back control’ seem a lot less attractive when you’re stuck at an airport or struggling with red tape



‘It was always going to be foreign holidays where the sharp point of reality hit the hot-air balloon of taking back control’ ... passengers queue at Heathrow. Photograph: Mark Thomas/Alamy

Tue 7 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 09.19 EDT

I hate the phrase “the architects of Brexit”, partly because I still long for an alternate world in which Brexit vanishes as a word and concept, and partly because to say it has “architects” credits it with a degree of structural soundness it doesn’t possess. Nonetheless, there is a man, Daniel Hannan, who has been hurling himself at this project of disintegration since his student days, so let’s call him one of its architects. [Writing in the Telegraph](#), he casually dropped in that it would have been easier for all of us if we had stayed in the single market. Tell you what would have been helpful, pal: saying this with any kind of force between 2016 and 2019, when it might have changed or meant anything. This is just the way zealots are – it is pointless to try to hold them to account or pose any questions about their sheer brass neck. They will chase you off a cliff and then ask mildly why you didn’t think to pack your parachute.

Nevertheless, it’s hard to get that sour, familiar taste of injustice out of your mouth. Hannan is allowed to say this, since from him it is original, even novel; when a fierce proponent of this idiotic scheme says that maybe it went too far, that’s news, folks. If any of the rest of us said it, it would be

repetitive, predictable, irrelevant – a faux pas, even, like telling strangers how many push-ups you can do or the time you dreamed about a fox.

When a leaver gets stuck in an airport queue in Málaga for three hours, while their EU counterparts glide through and swipe all the best hire cars, they are allowed to curse the forces of bureaucracy, but if a remaineर did it, we'd be remoaning again. As the titans of the airline industry – Ryanair's Michael O'Leary, Jet2's Steve Heapy – blame chaotic scenes at airports and stranded passengers on the combined forces of [Brexit](#), the odd Tory schmuck will go through a rote denial, but their heart isn't really in it. Their voices sound a bit tired and you know the day is coming when they shrug and say: "Maybe this wasn't such a great idea after all. Perhaps we should go back to the drawing board, start with a little light customs union. There, that isn't so hard, is it?" And when, so choked with outrage that we can't even breathe, let alone formulate words, we are reduced to conveying our disapproval with hand signals, our Brexit overlords will turn round, all innocent, and say: "Isn't this what you said you wanted? Politicians who can admit when they have made a mistake?"

It was always going to be foreign holidays where the sharp point of reality hit the hot-air balloon of taking back control. The nightmare for EU citizens trying to figure out how to stay in the UK and whether to even bother, that's a private matter, playing out in individual households. Staff shortages, supply chain problems, even tailbacks at ports, can all be filed under "other people's problems", at least for a while. Airports, though – families in Gatwick having their longed-for trip to Corfu cancelled with 15 minutes notice talking through their disappointment on radio phone-ins; students stuck in Mykonos; queues at borders that a thousand people will use the last 4% of their phone battery to post on Instagram – are moments that are just too readily dramatised. No amount of rhetoric can erase them and, sooner or later, there will be reverse-ferreting all over the place.

Looking back, I wish we had fought the entire EU referendum campaign on the hassle of it all. A bit less "Project Fear", a bit more "Project Ball-ache". Is that really what you want, for yourself, for your descendants? More admin, more queueing, more gigantic pains in your neck? Is anything worth that? We could have met every lofty soliloquy about "global Britain" with a

half-raised eyebrow and a quiet, “You know what sovereignty really means? It means waiting for things and filling in forms. It means doing everything you least like in life, much more often.”

Oh well, at least we’ll know better for next time.

Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist

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Opinion[Boris Johnson](#)

Boris Johnson won the confidence vote but in every other way he is the big loser

[Martin Kettle](#)



The prime minister is damaged; so are the country and his party. His relief will not be long-lived



'Boris Johnson is not yet out of the woods.' Photograph: Alberto Pezzali/AFP/Getty Images

Mon 6 Jun 2022 16.36 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 03.09 EDT

After a snap contest whose abbreviated timetable was tailored to his advantage, Boris Johnson [won the vote of confidence](#) tonight only by 211 to 148 votes, with all 359 Conservative MPs casting ballots. It is a win, but it is also a disaster for the prime minister.

The real victor in the 2022 Tory leadership confidence vote was not Johnson. He is irreparably damaged. Politicians don't recover from such things. Nor was the victor the Conservative party. The winners were the parties of opposition: Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and the nationalists.

That is because, with the unpopular Johnson losing his electoral allure but now reconfirmed, but only just, as Tory leader, the opposition parties are now on course to oust the [Conservatives](#) from office in the next general election. A new Tory leader might have had time to rebuild the party's image. Johnson cannot do that.

However much Downing Street may pretend otherwise, this is not the end of the story, for three main reasons. First, and most immediately, Johnson is not yet out of the woods. That's partly because of the forthcoming [privileges committee inquiry](#) into whether Johnson lied to MPs. But a pair of Tory defeats in this month's two by-elections – in Wakefield, where the main challenger is Labour, and in Tiverton and Honiton, where the challenge comes from the Lib Dems – would terrify Tory MPs once again and reignite the leadership issue.

Some of Johnson's critics argued that this week's contest should not have occurred until after those by-elections. Technically, there can now be no challenge to the leader for 12 months. Yet the Tory party's rulebook is a malleable thing. If the demand on the backbenches and in the constituency associations is loud enough, a way is likely to be found. Things have just got more unstable.

The day in three minutes: Boris Johnson wins no-confidence vote – video

Second, there's the situation at Westminster. The Tory party was already difficult enough to manage. Now it is even more ungovernable than before. The scale of the vote against Johnson is very large. A hundred and forty-eight MPs voted against Johnson – more than those that voted against Theresa May in 2018. This deals a lasting blow to the prime minister's authority. With Jeremy Hunt now openly offering an alternative, there are now at least two Tory parties in parliament. The internal conflict has become louder and more obvious. It will be much harder for Johnson to get his way on policy. He can propose but not dispose.

Third, the swirling divisions over what the Tory party now stands for will endure. An anti-Johnson backbench memo circulating today complained that “the entire purpose of the government now appears to be the sustenance of [Boris Johnson](#) as prime minister”. The Tory divisions are not just about personalities and office parties, but about policies. None of the reasons why Johnson's critics called for this week's contest will go away. And as Jesse Norman put it in his devastating critique of Johnson, these things “make a decisive change of government at the next election much more likely”.

Four of the last five Conservative premiers have now faced party votes on whether they should stay in office. None has managed to turn their votes of confidence to advantage. Johnson is now in the same boat as Margaret Thatcher in 1990, John Major in 1995 and Theresa May four years ago. He is no longer an electoral asset. The Heineken has gone rancid. By reconfirming him as leader, Tory MPs have made their own task of re-election much harder and made a change of government at the next election much more likely.

Martin Kettle is a Guardian columnist

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OpinionWales

Wales's glorious march to the World Cup is symbolic of a confident, resurgent nation

[Darren Chetty](#)

The Welsh football team is thriving, and in those joyful Cardiff scenes on Sunday you could see our culture in rude health too



‘It was always the World Cup that we dreamed about.’ The Welsh squad celebrate victory over Ukraine in front of Wales fans at the Cardiff City Stadium on Sunday. Photograph: Tom Jenkins/The Guardian

Mon 6 Jun 2022 11.26 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 04.55 EDT

Wales is on a high. Whether it’s the unstoppable rise of [Welsh language music](#) or the quiet popularity of Mark Drakeford, there is a growing sense of confidence in Welsh identity. And to top it off, last night, Wales [sealed its place](#) in the 2022 World Cup after winning against Ukraine at the Cardiff

City Stadium. Every one of the players in the Welsh team performed with passion, commitment and that added ingredient that has eluded us in the past: luck.

Football World Cups are for other countries – or at least that's how it felt until now. Rugby has long been considered Wales's national sport. But increasingly it's football that is a source of national pride. All Welsh football fans grew up knowing that [1958 was the last time](#) we reached the World Cup finals; that Brazil are the only team to have ever knocked Wales out of a World Cup tournament; that it took Pelé to beat us. But [footage](#) of that 1958 match is in black and white. Wales had only had a capital city for two years before qualifying for the tournament.

I remember the first [Wales](#) game I watched aged eight, when Wales played against Scotland in 1981. Wales were worthy winners. The game was also my initiation into the football culture surrounding the Welsh national team. It wasn't all friendly and inclusive. A series of minor scuffles broke out between Swansea and Cardiff fans, who were more interested in club rivalry than supporting their national team. This was an era when racism was rife on the terraces. I remember when the Wales defender George Berry was racially abused by Welsh fans at the Vetch Field stadium in Swansea.

“Just missing out” was what I, and all those of my age, had come to expect from our national football team. At times, even this felt like an aspiration. In 1982, a Welsh team full of top-flight players somehow failed to win a home game against Iceland, whose team they had thrashed the previous year. And in 1993, Wales narrowly [missed out on the World Cup](#), losing out to Romania after a penalty kick smashed against the crossbar.

The [2016 Euros](#) changed Welsh football culture. The diverse team were managed by Chris Coleman, who is of mixed heritage, and captained by Ashley Williams, who has a Jamaican and Welsh background. On the pitch, the team produced the performance of the tournament when they [knocked out Belgium](#) in the quarter finals. Nobody cared about club loyalty, or the fact that all three scorers had been born in England. The squad played with confidence and camaraderie, and even Uefa gave Welsh fans an “[outstanding contribution](#)” award.

But it was always the World Cup that we dreamed about. The Football Association of Wales has forged a vision for Welsh football and Welsh culture, particularly through its use of Welsh music. In the Welsh FA's videos on social media, I've been introduced to great Welsh bands, including those that sing in Cymraeg. I first heard Adwaith's superb song Fel i Fod in a video showcasing the Wales women's team, while the rousing folk songs of Dafydd Iwan are part of the carefully curated playlists heard before and after matches.

As the child of migrants, I get rather nervous about attempts to connect ideas of belonging with language and ancestry. The decision to screen a new version of Iwan's song Yma o Hyd by the Welsh drill artist Sage Todz before the Ukraine match was an understated masterstroke, in my view. Racism persists in Wales, and it will take more than gestures and symbols to eradicate it. But FA Wales has decided to foreground its values, and I'm thankful for that.

Last night we sang songs in Cymraeg and English. We applauded loudly after the Ukrainian national anthem and when both sets of players took the knee. Club rivalry didn't matter. We were one nation together stronger under bucket hats. As Iwan returned for a post-match encore and the Wales squad sang along, we all joined in the chorus of Yma o Hyd. Some people even knew the words to all the verses.

If I'm getting a little carried away, well: that's what a World Cup qualification can do to you, I know this now. Whatever happens next, this group of players will do this multilingual, multicultural, multiracial nation proud.

- Darren Chetty is a writer, teacher and researcher. He is co-editor of Welsh (Plural): Essays on the Future of Wales

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Day of pleading and threats ends with Boris Johnson in post. Just about

[John Crace](#)



Prime minister has won the vote but lost his leadership after Tories finally turn on him in large numbers



It may be weeks, it may be months, but Johnson is toast. Photograph: Hollie Adams/AP

Mon 6 Jun 2022 16.08 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 00.14 EDT

Only last week every cabinet minister was insisting that there would not be a vote of no confidence in [Boris Johnson](#). That such an idea was pure media confection. Imagine their surprise then to wake up this morning and hear Graham Brady announce that the number of letters to trigger a vote had been exceeded. Nice to have a government with its finger on the pulse. The rest of us had already had today inked in the diary. A fifth day of the jubilee celebrations.

Within minutes the Convict had drafted a letter to all his MPs with a list of his achievements. Largely imagined. He had got all the big decisions right. Apart from the ones he had got hopelessly wrong. It was time to move on from Partygate. It was what the public wanted. Apart from those militant monarchists [who had booed him at St Paul's](#).

“PLEASE VOTE for ME” it ended with a liberal sprinkling of bold capitals. Not forgetting the PS that everyone who voted for him would be guaranteed a ministerial post in the next reshuffle. At this rate the total number on the government payroll would be well over 300. Luckily, no one

would be capable of doing the maths. No one became prime minister by underestimating the collective stupidity of their MPs.

Then came the threats. Anyone who didn't immediately tweet their support for the prime minister would be sacked from whatever job they happened to hold. Almost immediately, Liz Truss duly obliged. Even though she was almost bound to vote against him. She still imagines she's in with a chance of winning the leadership. Sketchwriters are backing her all the way. For the lols. Rishi Sunak was next to tweet, even though he knows everyone hates him and that he's politically finished. But then he's a bit pathetic and has no self-worth.

Other cabinet ministers followed throughout the morning. Even Penny Mordaunt, though her support was decidedly lukewarm. Her focus was on the anniversary of D-day. Remembering the sacrifices of others. Expecting Boris to sacrifice himself for the sake of the country and the Tories was clearly a non-starter. She also fancies her chances.

Priti Patel was the one refusenik. She still hasn't forgiven the Convict for depriving her of the sole responsibility for deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda. She misses the look of abject fear as people are put on the plane. But the overall message from the cabinet was that they were all completely shit and couldn't be trusted to take over from a man who wasn't trusted by the country.

A few of the rebels put their heads above the parapet. First Jesse Norman. Then John Penrose, Johnson's own anti-corruption tsar. What took you so long, John? Which bit of industrial scale law-breaking did you miss? Lastly came Jeremy Hunt with his own leadership bid. Theresa May just purred quietly. This was by far her best day as an MP since she had become prime minister herself.

This was all too much for Nadine Dorries, who threw herself to her inamorato's defence. Jeremy was just a complete bastard. Worthless. And he'd completely fucked up the health service which is why 150,000 people had died of Covid. A great start to Johnson's "health week". And could she just shout to the world: "I LOVE BORIS!" It was completely unhinged. She has no idea that every time she speaks she creates another couple of rebels.

Every time the Convict is in trouble, he makes a point of phoning President Zelenskiy. To ask for advice from someone who is genuinely loved by his country. Today was no exception. It's turning into a very one-sided relationship. The Ukrainian president should start billing Johnson for therapy sessions. God knows what advice Zelenskiy gave him but by 4pm when Boris went down to address the 1922 Committee, he appeared to have completely forgotten that he was in deep trouble and needed the help of his MPs to bail him out of his latest fix.

There was a loud banging as Johnson entered the Boothroyd room in Portcullis House – there always is: duplicity comes as second nature to most MPs – but rather less noise on his way out. No one was going to publicly say that Boris had lost the room, but it was far from clear he had done enough to win back those intending to vote for a new leader. The never-shy-and-retiring Steve Baker was first out to speak to the media huddle. Enough was enough. The prime minister had broken the law and had to go. It's no more than any organisation should expect of its leader.

As the other MPs made their way to various corners of Westminster, Johnson's top spinner came to deliver the official verdict. An architect of chaos very much in the image of his master. It had been a complete triumph, he said. The MPs had fallen down to worship in front of their leader. Not that they had any choice because there was no one worth having as leader instead.

This had been serious Boris, the spinner said. “There had been a lot of detailed policy stuff in there.” Though when pressed, he couldn’t remember any of it. Details. Details. There would also be tax cuts. But he hadn’t a clue what. More details. Details. He ended by saying that Boris really wasn’t sorry for anything. Least of all his lies. And that the vote was pretty much a waste of everyone’s time. A sociopath to the last.

“Who here doesn’t get pissed? Who here doesn’t like a glass of wine to decompress?” I put my hand up but was ignored. Boris would go to all the parties again if he had the choice. It was totally tone deaf. No recognition of breaking the law. Contrite Boris was last week’s Boris. It was almost as if he had nothing but contempt for his MPs and was goading them to vote against him. An elaborate game of dare.

The queue was at a steady 12 metres long for the first hour, with almost every MP moaning at being made to wait. Ocado shoppers the lot of them. They were, though, surprisingly cheerful. Either they weren't aware their party was suicidal or death was a merciful relief. Douglas Ross had just jumped ship for the second – or maybe – third time. He's a man of flexible principles. But how could The Convict ever go into another election with all of his Scottish MPs at his throat?

Edward Leigh muttered something about Banquo's ghost. May came dressed in a ball gown. She means to party. Michael Gove insisted he had voted for Boris. So that's one in the no column. Hunt chatted to me about his recent event at Hay. He reckons his talk with Rachel Clarke ended in a draw. He'd settle for a similar result today. Everyone had their phones confiscated on the door. No one trusts the whips not to demand proof of loyalty.

A rather troubled looking Convict emerged shortly after 7pm when the queue had died down. Perhaps it's finally dawned on him that his whole premiership has long since stopped being a joke. That his options are rapidly running out. That the populist leader is no longer popular and has nothing left to offer anyone. That he has even lost the support of a large number of his most myopic constituency. His MPs. He probably voted twice – once for and once against – just for old times' sake.

At 9pm on the dot, Brady announced the result. 211 for, 148 against. As expected The Convict had won the vote but lost the leadership. Worse even than the Maybot back in 2018. Johnson would say he was going to hang on – he's a bad loser – but there was no coming back from this. It may be weeks, it may be months but Boris is toast. And the Tories would spend the time fighting each other to the death. While the country is on its knees. At a standstill. What a legacy. Johnson must be so proud.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/06/day-of-pleading-and-threats-ends-with-boris-johnson-in-post-just-about>

2022.06.07 - Around the world

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Gas

EU faces legal challenge over plan to fast-track gas projects

NGOs argue priority list was drawn up without consideration of methane emissions



Part of a section of gas pipeline in Poland. The IEA and the IPCC have said no new oil and gas extraction projects should be built. Photograph: Kacper Pempel/Reuters

[Daniel Boffey](#) in Brussels

Tue 7 Jun 2022 01.01 EDT

An EU plan to fast-track funding and permits for 30 gas projects is facing a legal challenge from NGOs including [ClientEarth](#) and [Friends of the Earth Europe](#).

The [European Commission](#) has been asked to review its backing for infrastructure projects such as the EastMed pipeline, a 1,180-mile (1,900km) gas pipeline to connect offshore gas fields in Israel and Cyprus to Italy.

The EU's executive branch has up to 22 weeks to revise its initial decision or show that it does not violate environmental law, under a [new way of challenging Brussels](#) introduced last year.

Should the commission fail to offer a satisfactory legal justification, the case could be taken to the European court of justice, potentially holding up progress on €13bn (£11bn) worth of projects.

The two NGOs, along with [Food & Water Action Europe](#) and [CEE Bankwatch Network](#), claim the priority list of projects was drawn up by Brussels without consideration of methane emissions, a gas that experts say has a global warming potential more than 85 times higher than that of CO₂ over the next 20 years.

Guillermo Ramo, a lawyer for ClientEarth, said: “This list amounts to a VIP pass for fossil gas in Europe, when we should be talking about its phase-out. The commission did not consider the impact of methane emissions derived from gas infrastructure projects, in spite of evidence that these are substantial. That’s unlawful as it directly clashes with the EU’s own climate laws and its legal obligations under the Paris agreement.”

Every two years, the European Commission compiles a list of priority energy infrastructure projects deemed beneficial to the EU’s 27 member states. Under reforms to the system, no entirely new gas projects can be listed, but projects necessary to secure supply can be included.

Included among them this year are 30 gas projects that are now eligible for streamlined environmental impact assessment, a fast-tracked permitting procedure and EU funding.

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The listed projects involve gas transport, storage or import including pipelines and LNG terminals such as the €7bn EastMed pipeline, the Melita Transgas pipeline, the Cyprus LNG import terminal, the Baltic Pipe and the Poseidon pipeline between Greece and Italy.

The International [Energy](#) Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have said no new oil and gas extraction projects should be built, to keep global warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

The commission did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/07/eu-faces-legal-challenge-over-plan-to-fast-track-gas-projects>

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Global development

Polio outbreak in Pakistan worsens as eighth child reported paralysed

Investigation launched as first cases in a year blamed on vaccine refusal fuelled by clerics and falsification of records by parents



A child's finger is inked to show a polio dose has been given. Some health workers are said to be helping parents avoid vaccinations by falsely marking a child's fingers. Photograph: K Chaudary/AP

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Tue 7 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 04.11 EDT

Pakistan's polio eradication campaign is in disarray after an alarming jump in cases last week. [Eight polio cases have now been reported in children](#) over the past month in North Waziristan district, bordering Afghanistan. They are the [first cases in more than a year](#).

This new outbreak, officials believe, is due to parents falsely marking themselves and their children as vaccinated, and the government has launched an investigation into the outbreak.

North Waziristan is a former Taliban stronghold in north-west [Pakistan](#), where high vaccine refusal rates are thought to be behind the new cases.

“Fake markings and refusals are two key reasons in the recent outbreak, with polio staff conspiring with parents to miss the vaccination,” said an official at Pakistan's polio eradication programme, referring to how [parents suspicious of immunisation have got hold of special pens](#) used by health workers to mark vaccinated children's fingers.

Dr Shahzad Baig, national programme coordinator, said: “The cases are highlighting exactly where the challenges lie, and we are doing our utmost to ensure that the virus remains contained and we fight it till the end.”

Before this surge, the last case of child paralysis as a result of polio was reported in January last year.

The federal health minister, Abdul Qadir Patel, said: “Following the first two cases in April, the polio programme took immediate steps to ringfence this area and prevent the virus from spreading further, particularly in the historic reservoirs [of infection] of Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta.

“Pakistan has had tremendous [success against polio](#) over the past few years, and we are taking all steps to protect the gains made by the programme.”

It was crucial for parents to vaccinate their children every time it was due, said the minister, as every dose of polio vaccine built further immunity.

Nationwide vaccination drives have been carried out door-to-door for the past 25 years. The teams are mostly [female health workers, often volunteers](#), who have to be escorted by security guards.

Three such campaigns have been carried out in January, March and May this year. During the March campaign in north-western Pakistan, [gunmen shot and killed a female polio worker](#). In January, also in the north-west, assailants shot and killed a police officer providing security to the polio team.

Militant groups in Pakistan have killed more than 100 health workers and their security guards since 2012.

According to the World [Health](#) Organization, Pakistan is one of only two countries, with Afghanistan, where the wild polio virus is still endemic.

Anti-vaccination sentiment in Pakistan is deeply rooted. Clerics and others have spread myths that vaccines are a conspiracy by the west to sterilise Muslim children, and a husband was [allowed to divorce his wife](#) for vaccinating their children against polio.

In April 2019, more than 25,000 children were rushed to hospital during a mass panic in north-west Pakistan after the spread of unfounded rumours about polio vaccines causing fainting and vomiting.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jun/07/polio-outbreak-in-pakistan-worsens-as-eighth-child-reported-paralysed>

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[China](#)

Chinese military ‘to have exclusive use of parts of Cambodian naval base’

Reports of presence at Ream base on Gulf of Thailand would significantly expand its presence in Indo-Pacific



Sailors stand guard at the Ream naval base in Sihanoukville in Cambodia. The Chinese are helping to build the base. Photograph: Samrang Pring/Reuters

*Helen Davidson in Taipei
@heldavidson*

Tue 7 Jun 2022 03.13 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 13.14 EDT

A Cambodian naval base being constructed with the assistance of China will include a portion for the exclusive use of the Chinese military, [according to a report in the Washington Post](#).

The Chinese and Cambodian governments [have previously denied reports](#) that Cambodia will allow a Chinese military presence at the Ream naval base on the Gulf of Thailand.

Such a presence would mark a significant expansion in China's military access in the Indo-Pacific, where it currently only has one naval base, in the east African country of Djibouti.

Citing unnamed western and Chinese officials, the Post reported on Tuesday that the base will host the Chinese military in its northern section. One western official told the paper that expansion plans finalised in 2020 called for the Chinese military to have "exclusive use of the northern portion of the base, while their presence would remain concealed".

The Post said a Beijing official confirmed the Chinese military would use a "portion" of the base but denied it would have exclusive use. The official said the area would also be used by scientists, and that China was not involved in any activities on the Cambodian portion of the base.

Sam Roggeveen, the director of the Lowy Institute's international security programme, said the new information, and particularly the apparent confirmation by a Beijing official, "strengthens the case that this is actually happening".

"It's fairly early days, so we don't know what the capacity of the facility will be," Roggeveen said. "Its practical value [to Beijing] is that it would allow China to deploy more readily its warships and coastguard vessels around the region, and to simply have a bit more presence, where once it would need to sail very long distances.

"It's a kind of microcosm really of the broader trend in the region, which is that strategic and military power is shifting from the US and towards China. China will want to become the leading strategic power in Asia, it may even want to become the domination power in Asia. You can't do that without pushing the US out and having foreign bases around the area."

The Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese, who was visiting Indonesia on Tuesday, said he was concerned about the reports and called on the Chinese government to be open about its intentions.

“We are in regular contact with the Cambodian government and we have been consistently assured that no foreign military will be granted exclusive access at Ream,” Albanese told reporters in Makassar. “We’ve been aware of Beijing’s activity at Ream for some time. We encourage Beijing to be transparent about its intent and to ensure that its activities support regional security and stability.”



Cambodia’s prime minister, Hun Sen, shows the indelible ink on his finger after casting his vote in local elections at the weekend. Photograph: Tang Chhin Sothy/AFP/Getty Images

For some years the US has alleged China intends to have a military presence at the base. In 2019 the Wall Street Journal reported a secret deal between Phnom Penh and Beijing, in which the Cambodian prime minister, Hun Sen, reportedly agreed to give China access to the base.

Hun, who has faced questions over billions of dollars in infrastructure loans and business deals with China – including through the [belt and road initiative](#) – denied the report at the time.

“This is the worst ever made-up news against Cambodia,” he told the pro-government Fresh News at the time. “No such thing could happen because hosting foreign military bases is against the Cambodian constitution.”

US diplomats have repeatedly raised concerns with Cambodia about a Chinese military presence at the base. It is known that China has been involved with the works. In June 2016 state-owned China Metallurgical Group Corporation [announced](#) it had signed a cooperation framework agreement with the Cambodian defence department for a “port expansion project” of an unnamed naval military base.

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In October 2020, a senior Cambodian naval official told Nikkei Asia that China was supporting a project to expand the port and develop a ship repair facility. In June 2021, Cambodia’s defence minister, Tea Banh, confirmed to local media that China was helping with the construction at Ream, but it came “with no strings attached”.

“We want to develop a suitable place ... Cambodia alone can’t do it. It is moderately costly as well, but I don’t know how much,” he said, according to Voice of America.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Ream base is scheduled for Thursday, the Washington Post reported, with Chinese officials including the ambassador to Cambodia expected to attend.

Cambodian government departments did not respond to requests for comment. Chinese officials were expected to address the media on Tuesday afternoon at a regular press conference.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/07/chinese-military-to-have-exclusive-use-of-parts-of-cambodian-naval-base-ream-gulf-of-thailand>

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London's economic recovery shows 'levelling up' struggles; stagflation fears rise – as it happened

Rolling coverage of the latest economic and financial news

- [Latest: World Bank cuts global growth forecasts](#)
- Stocks drop as Target warns on profit margins
- [London was fastest-growing region in Q1](#)
- [UK service sector slows as inflation bites](#)
- [Manufacturing orders in Germany fall for third month running](#)
- [Pound weakens amid political uncertainty and economic problems](#)

Updated 5d ago

[*Graeme Wearden*](#)

Tue 7 Jun 2022 10.36 EDTFirst published on Tue 7 Jun 2022 03.03 EDT



The London skyline, including the Square Mile and the Shard. Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

Graeme Wearden

Tue 7 Jun 2022 10.36 EDTFirst published on Tue 7 Jun 2022 03.03 EDT

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London's economic recovery outpaces other UK regions

London's economy is outpacing the rest of the UK, according to new official data which shows the government's levelling up agenda is struggling.

The Office for National Statistics reports that **London's** GDP rose by 1.2% in January-March, much faster than the UK average of 0.8% during the first quarter of 2022.

Wales, at 1%, and the **East Midlands**, at 0.9%, were the only other regions to grow faster than average.

Northern Ireland was the slowest with 0.4% growth, while the **North East, Yorkshire and The Humber**, and the **South West** all matched the average.

The **East of England, North West, Scotland**, and the **South East** were all slightly slower with 0.7% growth.

The report also shows that London, and Northern Ireland, are the only economies larger than their pre-pandemic levels in Q4 2019.

The West Midlands' GDP is still 10% smaller than before Covid-19. That suggests its manufacturing base has been harder hit by the pandemic than the capital, where many employees shifted to home-working.

New model-based estimates of regional GVA by [@ONS](#) show that, as of Q1 2022, only in London and Northern Ireland was activity above its pre-COVID level pic.twitter.com/ocj2WILFjQ

— Alpesh Paleja (@AlpeshPaleja) [June 7, 2022](#)

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Updated at 07.47 EDT

5d ago **10.36**

Closing post

Time to wrap up...

The World Bank has slashed its growth forecasts, and warned of a rising risk of stagflation, as the latest economic data continues to show economies are slowing.

The World Bank now expects global growth of just 2.9% this year, down from 4.1% previously, and fears many countries could fall into recession.

David Malpass, the Bank's president, said:

“The war in Ukraine, lockdowns in China, supply chain disruptions and the risk of stagflation are hammering growth. For many countries, recession will be hard to avoid.”

London's economy is outpacing the rest of the UK, with new data showing the capital was the fastest growing region in the first quarter of the year.

But the UK's services sector has slowed, as inflation hits consumer spending. And with **petrol prices hitting new highs in the UK**, again, households face further pressures.

Germany's economy is feeling the strain too. **Factory orders dropped for the third month in a row**, as the Ukraine war, supply chain problems, high energy prices and China's lockdowns hit demand in April.

The pound came under pressure, with analysts warning that political instability would weigh on sterling after Boris Johnson narrowly won last night's confidence vote among Conservative MPs.

Activity at eurozone construction firms has fallen for the first time in nine months, another sign that Europe's economy is slowing.

But South Africa beat forecasts with 1.9% growth in the first quarter of 2022, as it recovered from the disruption caused by the Omicron variant last autumn.

In other news....

Car retailer Cazoo is cutting 700 jobs.

US retailer Target has announced it will slash prices to shift surplus stock, showing the pressure on retailers as the pandemic spending boom fades.

Britain's competition watchdog has found that JD Sports and Elite Sports, along with Rangers Football Club, broke competition law by fixing the prices of some Rangers-branded clothing to keep them high at the expense of fans.

UK retail spending fell in May, although retailers did get a boost over the jubilee weekend.

PricewaterhouseCoopers has been fined a total of £5m for failures in its audit of the construction firms Galliford Try and Kier, in the latest fines imposed on a "big four" accounting firm.

The cost of food is a big worry for the vast majority of Britons while the number of people who skip meals or use a food bank has jumped in the past year, according to the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

The British Gas owner, **Centrica**, has warned that Rishi Sunak's windfall tax will "damage investor confidence" as Britain attempts to build up green energy supplies.

And pressure is building for an international agreement on a [rescue mission for Ukraine's grain](#), which is desperately needed to feed the world, and which Kyiv urgently wants to sell to get its hands on vital foreign currency.

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[5d ago](#)[10.11](#)

UK petrol prices have hit another record high, as the increase in crude prices continues to hurt motorists.

Petrol prices set a new record of 178.5p a litre, while diesel increased to 185.2p a litre.

It is the third time in six days that a new high has been hit.

Simon Williams, a spokesperson for the RAC, says:

"The cost of filling a 55-litre family car with petrol has now topped £98 for the first time in history.

The RAC believes prices will continue rising, to £2 a litre which would mean a fill-up would rise to "an unbelievable £110," Williams said.

Louise Haigh MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, called on ministers to take action to support motorists:

"The Conservative government are too busy tearing themselves apart to tackle the brutal price hikes facing working people.

“Motorists are being taken for a ride, and this hapless government are too distracted to do anything about it.

“The Conservative government needs to tackle the brutal petrol hikes, and support Labour’s call to put money back in the pockets of working people with an emergency budget.”

BREAKING: The average price of unleaded petrol has hit a record high - now costing 178.50p a litre.

The price of diesel has also increased to 185.20p a litre.

Full story: <https://t.co/cv2asOx3nO>

□ Sky 501, Virgin 602, Freeview 233 and YouTube
pic.twitter.com/v9atrGHhpT

— Sky News (@SkyNews) [June 7, 2022](#)

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[5d ago](#)[09.44](#)

World Bank slashes global growth forecast and warns of 'stagflation'



Larry Elliott

The World Bank has slashed its global growth forecast, warning that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has compounded the damage from the COVID-19 pandemic and could push many countries into recession.

In its Global Economic Prospects report, the World Bank cut its forecast for world GDP growth this year to 2.9%, from 4.1% previously, and warned there is a considerable danger of stagflation.

Our economics editor Larry Elliott writes:

The global economy faces a protracted period of weak growth and high inflation reminiscent of the 1970s as the impact of a two-year pandemic is compounded by [Russia's invasion](#) of Ukraine, the World Bank has warned.

In its half-yearly economic health check, the Washington-based Bank said echoes of the [stagflation](#) of four decades ago had forced it to [cut its growth forecast](#) for this year from 4.1% to 2.9%.

David Malpass, the Bank's president, said:

“The war in Ukraine, lockdowns in China, supply chain disruptions and the risk of stagflation are hammering growth. For many countries, recession will be hard to avoid.”

The Bank said its global economic prospects (GEP) report was the first systematic attempt to compare the current state of the world economy with those during the stagflation of the 1970s.

Here's the full story:

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[5d ago](#)[09.40](#)

Wall Street drops after Target's profit margin cut

Stocks have opened lower in New York, as [Target's plan to cut prices to shift surplus stock](#) raises worries about the strength of the economy.

The broad-based **S&P 500** index has dropped by 0.6%, or 25 points, to 4,096 in early trading, with the **Nasdaq Composite** down 0.9%.

Target is down 6%.

□□ US Pre-Markets □□

Target issues a second profit warning in weeks, as it now wants to offer larger discounts to clear inventory [pic.twitter.com/OsADwm4hSt](#)

— IG (@IGcom) [June 7, 2022](#)

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[5d ago09.32](#)



A ship seen parked at the port of Oakland, in the San Francisco Bay Area.
Photograph: Michael Ho Wai Lee/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock

[The bigger than expected drop back in the US trade deficit in April](#) suggests that net trade will be a large boost to second-quarter GDP growth, predicts **Michael Pearce**, Senior US Economist at **Capital Economics**:

The survey evidence suggests that US exports remain on track for continued growth, albeit at far slower rates than seen in April.

With inventories of some key imported goods now back close to more normal levels, the survey evidence suggests that import growth will continue to slow. That suggests net trade is likely to be more neutral for growth over the rest of this year, having been a persistent drag over the past 18 months.

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[5d ago08.58](#)

British Gas owner says windfall tax will dent investor confidence

Alex Lawson

The British Gas owner, Centrica, has warned that Rishi Sunak's windfall tax will "damage investor confidence" as Britain attempts to build up green energy supplies.

The Centrica chairman, Scott Wheway, and its chief executive, Chris O'Shea, hit out at the [chancellor's 25% levy on oil and gas operators' excess profits](#), which will be used to pay for measures to reduce soaring energy bills.

Centrica – Britain's biggest energy supplier – reported that its annual operating profits doubled to £948m in 2021, aided by a surge in earnings from its North Sea oil and gas arm. It [expects to make a healthy profit](#) again this year.

Speaking at Tuesday's annual shareholder meeting in Leicester, Wheway said:

“We've got every empathy with the plight of many customers presently, that are facing difficulties in managing their energy bills, and we welcome action to help those customers.

“But we also share a lot of concern around choices that may be made to apply taxes to energy production, which – although they may derive short term benefits – can cause medium and long term problems, because we know that the industry that we're in is a very long term industry. And we'd urge everyone thinking of those things to strike the right balance.”

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[5d ago](#)[08.43](#)

The U.S. trade deficit narrowed sharply in April thanks to a drop in imports.

The gap between US imports and exports fell by 19.1% to \$87.1bn in April, with imports of goods and services falling 3.4% to \$339.7 billion, while exports rose 3.5%.

Net trade has dragged on US GDP in recent quarters, but this could aid a return to growth (after US GDP shrank in Q1).

The US [#trade](#) deficit fell -19.1% MoM to \$87.1 bil in Apr with exports up 3.5% MoM and imports down -3.4% MoM. [#Exports](#) of goods grew on higher exports of industrial supplies and foods/feeds while [#imports](#) of consumer goods saw a large decline. ([@BEA_News](#))
<https://t.co/qvrZ7a6l8S> pic.twitter.com/TcDcGCYhyf

— MTS Insights (@MTSInsights) [June 7, 2022](#)

Exports of goods increased by \$6.1bn to \$176.1bn in April, including a rise in food products, industrial supplies and materials, natural gas and oil.

But **imports of goods** decreased by \$13.0bn to \$283.8 bn, including a fall in consumer goods, industrial supplies and materials, and capital goods (such heavy-duty machinery and equipment).

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Updated at 08.57 EDT

[5d ago](#)[08.04](#)



Julia Kollewe

The cost of food is a big worry for the vast majority of Britons while the number of people who skip meals or use a food bank has jumped in the past year, according to the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

Its research shows food prices are a “major future concern” for more than three-quarters of UK consumers (76%), and the number using a food bank has risen from almost one in 10 in March 2021 to nearly one in six this March.

More than one in five (22%) of those surveyed in March said they skipped a meal or cut down the size of meals because they could not afford to buy food.

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[5d ago](#)[07.40](#)

Car retailer Cazoo to cut 750 jobs over recession fears

Around 750 jobs are being axed at online car seller Cazoo across the UK and Europe as it looks to cut costs by more than £200m by the end of next year, PA Media reports.

The British group, which is listed in America, has said it plans to slash its workforce by about 15% and also slow down on hiring new staff under a major cost-savings drive, as it warned over recession fears and consumer cut backs.

Cazoo did not give a breakdown of where the jobs will go, but it is understood the bulk will be across its UK operations - its biggest division - as well as in its European bases in Germany, France and Italy.

The group said the “business realignment” was needed to protect profits in the face of tougher economic times.

But it also comes as firms such as Cazoo have seen online car sales dwindle as pandemic restrictions have been lifted, with used car dealer Carzam collapsing late last week.

#Breaking Online car seller Cazoo has said it will cut around 750 jobs across the business in the UK and Europe as it looks to make savings of more than £200 million by the end of next year
pic.twitter.com/lKCWXdM9Sc

— PA Media (@PA) [June 7, 2022](#)

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Updated at 07.51 EDT

[5d ago](#)[07.26](#)

Target to cut prices to shift surplus stock

Over in the US, retailer Target has announced an aggressive plan to clear out unwanted stock by slashing prices.

The move will hit profitability, with Target also cutting its profit margin expectations for the fiscal second quarter as it tries to shift excess inventory as consumer spending patterns change.

Just three weeks ago, Target warned that rising costs would hit its profits this year -- and it is now taking further steps to clear its shelves.

CEO Brian Cornell has told CNBC that Target wants to make room for merchandise that customers do want, such as groceries, beauty items, household essentials and seasonal categories like back-to-school supplies.

“We thought it was prudent for us to be decisive, act quickly, get out in front of this, address and optimize our inventory in the second quarter — take those actions necessary to remove the excess inventory and set ourselves up to continue to be guest relevant with our assortment,”

Just in: Target is rolling out an aggressive plan to get rid of unwanted inventory. I spoke to CEO Brian Cornell about why it decided to accelerate markdowns -- even though that will hit Q2 profits. [\\$TGT](#)
<https://t.co/qkTW4EnAXk>

— Melissa Repko (@melissa_repko) [June 7, 2022](#)

Target's shares have fallen over 8% in pre-market trading:

Target cuts profit outlook AGAIN

May 18: stock down 25%

This morning: □ <pic.twitter.com/tfahsgApF2>

— Jonathan Ferro (@FerroTV) [June 7, 2022](#)

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Updated at 09.32 EDT

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Kevin Spacey

Kevin Spacey must face sexual abuse lawsuit in New York, judge says

Court rejects actor's push to dismiss case of Anthony Rapp, who alleges sexual advance occurred when he was 14



Kevin Spacey leaves court in New York in May. Photograph: John Minchillo/AP

Reuters

Mon 6 Jun 2022 18.31 EDT Last modified on Tue 7 Jun 2022 11.50 EDT

A US federal judge has rejected Kevin Spacey's bid to dismiss a civil lawsuit in which a fellow actor, [Anthony Rapp, accused](#) the Oscar winner of making an unwanted sexual advance during a party at Spacey's Manhattan home in 1986, when Rapp was 14.

The US district judge Lewis Kaplan in Manhattan said on Monday there was a genuine factual dispute about whether the now 62-year-old Spacey had

forcibly touched Rapp's "intimate parts" to gratify his own sexual desire.

Kaplan said Rapp, 50, who is seeking compensatory and punitive damages, could pursue claims of battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The judge dismissed an assault claim because Rapp had brought it too late.

A lawyer for Spacey did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Spacey has in court papers "categorically" denied Rapp's accusations.

Rapp's lawyer Peter Saghir declined to comment.

Once among Hollywood's biggest stars, Spacey fell from grace after Rapp accused him of misconduct in October 2017, and more accusers came forward.

Last month, British authorities authorized criminal charges against Spacey for alleged sexual assaults against three men between 2005 and 2013. Spacey could [formally face the charges](#) if he enters England or Wales.

The actor's awards have included Oscars in 2000 for best actor in American Beauty and in 1996 for best supporting actor in The Usual Suspects. He also won a Tony in 1991 for best featured actor in a play in Neil Simon's Lost in Yonkers.

Netflix dropped Spacey from his starring role in House of Cards after accusations began surfacing, and the series finished without him.

In the alleged 1986 encounter, Spacey grabbed Rapp's buttocks, lifted him on to a bed and lay on him before Rapp "wriggled out", court papers say.

Rapp has said under oath there was no kissing, undressing, reaching under clothes, sexualized statements or innuendo, and the encounter lasted no more than two minutes.

He sued Spacey in September 2020 and invoked the Child Victims Act, a New York law giving accusers a since-expired window to sue over abuses

from decades earlier.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2022/jun/06/kevin-spacey-sexual-abuse-lawsuit-new-york>

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Headlines thursday 9 june 2022

- [Live Labour says some of Boris Johnson's plans will make housing supply crisis 'even worse'](#)
- [Michael Gove Minister confirms plans to let people use housing benefit to buy homes](#)
- [Explainer How does right to buy work and why is Boris Johnson planning to extend it?](#)
- [Housing How do we fix the crisis?](#)

[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

Boris Johnson promises action on cost of living crisis but says higher wages risk further inflation – as it happened

This live blog has now closed, you can read more on Boris Johnson's comments [about a potential 'wage-price spiral' here](#)

- [Summary and analysis of PM's speech on cost of living and housing](#)
- [Plan to extend right to buy condemned by experts as unworkable](#)
- [Summary of Michael Gove's morning interviews](#)
- [Starmer accuses PM of taking 'wrecking ball' to relations with Ireland](#)
- [Johnson will be out as Tory leader by next election, says Hammond](#)

Updated 3d ago

[Andrew Sparrow](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 11.51 EDTFirst published on Thu 9 Jun 2022 04.32 EDT

Johnson says there could be 'wage-price spiral' as workers demand higher pay – video

[Andrew Sparrow](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 11.51 EDTFirst published on Thu 9 Jun 2022 04.32 EDT

Key events

- [3d ago Afternoon summary](#)
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- [3d ago Greensill scandal could happen again because conflict of interest rules not tough enough, MPs told](#)
- [3d ago Northern Ireland protocol bill expected to be published on Monday](#)
- [3d ago Summary and analysis of Johnson's speech and Q&A on cost of living and housing](#)
- [3d ago Johnson warns of 'wage-price spiral' if workers demand higher pay](#)
- [3d ago Johnson confirms review of mortgage market, saying 'we want to make it easier to get mortgage'](#)

Show key events only

Live feed

Show key events only

[3d ago 11.51](#)

Afternoon summary

- **Boris Johnson has raised the spectre of a 1970s-style “wage-price spiral” that could force the Bank of England to push up interest rates dramatically, if workers demand to be compensated for rocketing prices.** The PM made the speech in a major speech in Blackpool on the cost of living and housing. See [3.33pm](#) for a full summary.
- **Charities and housing experts have criticised plans announced by Johnson to extend right to buy to housing association tenants.** (See [12.01pm](#).) Labour criticised the plans too. **Lisa Nandy**, the shadow levelling up secretary, said:

This speech was yet more evidence that the prime minister and his tired government are out of ideas. You can't solve a housing crisis with back

of the envelope policies that have no realistic chance of success.

Every family deserves the security of their own home, but under the Conservatives housing has become more insecure and unaffordable. Homeownership rates have plummeted. Nearly 200,000 socially-rented homes have been sold off. The impractical proposals announced today will do nothing to fix that.

- [British-EU relations will probably get worse over the next two years because “the narcissistic politics of self-preservation” will continue to prevail in the UK, according to Sir Ivan Rogers, the former British envoy to Brussels.](#)
- [Lisa Nandy, the shadow levelling up secretary, has said she is on the side of both the public and workers as unions prepare to stage major strike action on the rail network in the coming weeks.](#)
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[3d ago11.33](#)

The **Resolution Foundation** thinktank has welcomed the fact that the housing plans announced by [Boris Johnson](#) today would address an anomaly in the benefits system. But only a small number of people are likely to benefit, it said. **Lindsay Judge**, a research director at the foundation, explained:

The prime minister has identified an anomaly within our benefits system, where renters are treated significantly more generously than homeowners on identical incomes. 5.4 million renters receive help with housing costs compared to fewer than 15,000 mortgagors. This is hard to defend in principle.

His proposal is to partially address this by allowing first-time buyers on benefits to keep receiving help with housing costs after they become an owner. This will be significant in cash terms for some – a typical renter on housing benefit currently receives £112 per week in housing support.

However, the number of people affected is likely to be small given that the deposit is the main barrier to home ownership. More than four-in-five families on means-tested benefits have no savings at all and high cost of living pressures means a second change that allows benefit recipients to save into certain savings accounts without seeing their benefits cut is unlikely to lead to a surge in savings. In reality, those most likely to benefit will be receiving support from elsewhere – be that via right to buy or financial support from family members.

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[3d ago](#)[11.22](#)

Starmer accuses Johnson of taking 'wrecking ball' to relations with Ireland and EU



Keir Starmer (right) meeting the Irish president, Michael D Higgins, in the president's office, in Áras an Uachtaráin, during his visit to Dublin.
Photograph: Maxwells/PA

Keir Starmer has accused Boris Johnson of taking a “wrecking ball” to relations with Ireland and the EU. Speaking on a visit to Dublin, where he met the taoiseach (Irish PM), Micheál Martin, and the president, Michael D Higgins, Starmer said the UK should reach an agreement with the EU on changes to the Northern Ireland protocol instead of pushing ahead with legislation to allow it to be changed unilaterally. (See [4.05pm.](#)) Starmer said:

As someone who cares deeply about the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom, I'm concerned about the comments that have been made.

Of course there are challenges with the protocol, but I think that we have faced much greater challenges than that in our shared history and I think we can deal with the remaining issues.

We've faced bigger problems than this. With good faith, statecraft and trust around the negotiating table, which is what a Labour government would bring, these problems can be overcome. But a prime minister

without those attributes taking a wrecking ball to the relationship is not going to help anybody.

Trust is very important in all of this and this prime minister does not have the trust, or I fear he doesn't have the trust, to negotiate in the way that I actually think would lead to a solution to the problems.



Keir Starmer (left) meeting the Irish taoiseach, Micheál Martin, at his office in Dublin today. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

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Updated at 11.33 EDT

[3d ago 11.11](#)

Greensill scandal could happen again because conflict of interest rules not tough enough, MPs told

The [Greensill](#) scandal could happen again because the government has not changed procedures enough since it came to light, Tory peer **Eric Pickles** has warned. PA Media reports:

Lord Pickles, who chairs the advisory committee on business appointments (Acoba), said there is still a “deeply worrying” lack of systems for “managing conflicts” when civil servants leave government departments.

Acoba guides the government on its approach when hiring former ministers and senior civil servants, and when they leave for other jobs.

Pickles gave evidence to the public administration and constitutional affairs committee in the Commons, which was discussing standards in light of the Greensill scandal.

He told the committee: “I am not confident that something like Greensill couldn’t happen again because I don’t believe that departments have put in a system that’s robust and clear. Much of what we exposed on Greensill was that it was all on the basis of a wink and a nod and it all seemed perfectly okay.”

The Greensill scandal relates to lobbying activities on behalf of the now defunct financial services company Greensill Capital, which implicated former prime minister David Cameron.

It also involves the government’s former chief commercial officer, Bill Crothers, who began working as an adviser to Greensill Capital in 2015 while still employed in the civil service.

When asked whether his concerns about government departments’ internal processes for managing possible conflicts for civil servants who leave the service without going through Acoba had been assuaged, Lord Pickles said: “No. If anything my concerns have increased in the last year.

“Government departments are rubber stamping things that are plainly wrong, so you have to go through the process of explaining to the

departments themselves that there's a problem that they need to address. If that is happening at the very top it makes you wonder about what's going on further below the surface.”

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Updated at 11.33 EDT

[3d ago](#)[11.05](#)

Northern Ireland protocol bill expected to be published on Monday

Aubrey Allegretti

The long-awaited plan to “fix” problems with the post-Brexit protocol under which [Northern Ireland](#) is treated differently to Great Britain were hoped to be published today, but have been pushed into next week.

The frenzied focus of government ministers on saving Boris Johnson’s premiership means the controversial legislation to unilaterally override the protocol is likely to be published on Monday.

There will also be a summary of the legal position released, which the government says confidently will show it is not breaking international law. However, the full legal advice will not be disclosed.

It is understood the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, has no upcoming meeting or talks with senior EU figures, so the UK will pursue the plans and leave it up to Brussels to change its negotiating stance.

Given the tumult of the [Brexit](#) days, Tory MPs said they faced a “nerve-wrecking wait” for the publication of the bill. When it starts its progression through parliament it is expected to trigger a significant number of rebellions because many MPs believe it could break the deal signed by the UK and EU.

Today the senior Conservative backbencher **Sir Bernard Jenkin** said he voted for the withdrawal agreement “against my better judgment” and added that if the bill did not seriously improve the chances of restoring the executive in Stormont, “I will vote against it”.

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Updated at 11.09 EDT

[3d ago](#)[10.33](#)

Summary and analysis of Johnson's speech and Q&A on cost of living and housing

Boris Johnson's keynote policy speeches haven't always been a triumph. At times (particularly when Johnson started banging on about olives and bananas) this one started to sound rather peculiar. But in the end it covered a lot of ground, which Johnson fleshed out a bit in his Q&A at the end.

Here is a summary and analysis of the key points. I have not covered the housing announcements much here because they have already been covered extensively in the blog earlier.

On the cost of living and the economy generally

- **Johnson signalled that public sector workers should expect below-inflation pay rises.** Responding to inflation just by putting up pay would be inflationary, he said. And he warned that if a wage-price spiral took hold, the only solution would be higher interest rates. He said:

We can't fix the increase in the cost of living just by increasing wages to match the surge in prices, I think it's naturally a good thing for wages to go up as skills and productivity increase - that's what we want to see.

But when a country faces an inflationary problem you can't just pay more and spend more, you have to find ways of tackling the underlying causes of inflation.

If wages continue to chase the increase in prices then we risk a wage-price spiral such as this country experienced in the 1970s.

- **Johnson restated his desire to cut taxes later this in this parliament.** He is now under intense pressure from Tories to cut taxes and, although he gave no firm commitments, he strongly signalled that tax cuts were being planned. The clearest sign of this came when he was asked about [a report in today's Times](#) claiming ministers are considering cutting income tax by 2p in the pound in 2024, not 1p in the pound (as Rishi Sunak has already promised). Normally ministers play down stories like this (even if they are true, or especially if they are true) because otherwise they risk raising expectations. But Johnson made no attempt to do this, simply telling the reporter who asked: "You are just going to have to contain your impatience there." He also said the government was "strongly inclined to stimulate further growth, further productivity with tax cuts as and when they become sensible".
- **He said the current level of the tax burden was very high and "an aberration".** He said:

The overall burden of taxation is now very high. Sooner or later - and I would much rather it was sooner than later - that burden must come down.

It's an aberration, the burden of tax, caused in no small part by the fiscal meteorite of Covid.

Johnson was right about [the tax burden being very high](#). But he was wrong to imply that this was mainly due to the pandemic. The biggest single tax increase announced recently has been the £12bn a year health and social care levy, which was introduced to fund the promise Johnson made in 2019 to reform social care.

- **He suggested he would like to cut tariffs on food imports.** He said:

We need to grow and eat more of our own food in this country and it is sensible to protect British agriculture from cut-price or substandard food from overseas.

But we are also on the side of British consumers.

We do not grow many olives in this country that I'm aware of. Why do we have a tariff of 93p per kilo on Turkish olive oil? Why do we have a tariff on bananas? This is a truly amazing and versatile country, but as far as I know we don't grow many bananas, not even in Blackpool.

Johnson did not elaborate in his speech on what he meant by this passage, and he was not asked about it in the Q&A. It is probable that he opened a window into a policy debate that is live within government. Some Brexiters think the government should unilaterally reduce tariffs on food imports to cut prices for consumers. But other ministers argue that cutting tariffs unilaterally throws away the main bargaining chip the UK has when negotiating post-Brexit trade deals with other countries.

- **Johnson refused to rule out further cuts in fuel duty.** He said the government wanted companies to pass on the cut already announced to consumers. But when it was put to him that fuel duty was already too high, he replied: "I hear you." He also said the government would continue to do everything in its power to look after the British people.

On housing

- **Johnson effectively confirmed that the Tories no longer feel bound by the commitment in the 2019 manifesto to reach a target of building 300,000 homes by the middle of this century.** Asked if this still applied, Johnson replied: "I can't give a cast-iron guarantee we are going to get to a particular number in a particular year." Michael Gove,

the levelling up secretary, effectively abandoned this target [in an interview last month.](#)

- **Johnson confirmed that the government will extend right to buy for housing association tenants, launch a review of the mortgage market, and make it easier for benefit claimants to save and fund a mortgage.** The full details are in a news release [here](#).

Other topics

- **Johnson said there are too many manned ticket offices in rail stations and some need to close.** He said:

It is time for us all to grasp the nettle of reform, and move – sensibly and responsibly – to the end of some outdated working practices.

There are fully manned ticket offices in this country that barely sell a ticket a week.

Ten years ago, as chairman of Transport for London, I moved to take advantage of new technology by closing those ticket offices on the underground.

It was initially painful and the union chiefs predicted catastrophe, but we successfully made the argument that staff were better and more productively deployed on the platforms, interacting with the public.

The time has come to do the same thing across the transport network.

The union barons will once again protest.

But the winners will be railway staff – whose industry will be placed on a much sounder long-term footing – and the fare-paying travelling public.

Adam Bienkov from Byline Times says the closure of ticket offices on the underground by Johnson as mayor of London was a breach of an election promise.

Boris Johnson boasts about closing all the ticket offices on the Tube when he was Mayor of London, against opposition from unions.

Here's a reminder of what he promised when running for mayor.
pic.twitter.com/TtdcCnrWYL

— Adam Bienkov (@AdamBienkov) [June 9, 2022](#)

- **Johnson said he could cut the size of the civil service without affecting the delivery of government services.** He said:

It cannot be right that the size of the central government has increased by 23% since 2015. There are 91,000 more officials than there were. I believe we have the best civil service in the world but, in view of the pressure now on families, we have got to find efficiencies, prune back Whitehall to the size it was only five or six years ago. I think that's something we can achieve without harming the public services they deliver.

The civil service unions argue that one reason why more officials are needed is that Brexit has created a great deal more work for central government.

- **He said Ukraine should not be forced to accept a “bad peace”.** He said:

Never mind that abandoning the Ukrainians would be morally repugnant, since they are the victims, and they have an absolute right to defend a free and independent country.

We are simply not in a position to tell them what to do ...

To encourage a bad peace in Ukraine is to encourage Putin and to encourage all those around the world who believe that aggression pays.

That would be a mistake that would open the door to further conflict, further instability, further global uncertainty and therefore further economic misery.

This was seen as a rebuke to other European leaders who are more keen on finding a resolution to the war in Ukraine.



Boris Johnson delivering his speech in Blackpool. Photograph: Reuters

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Updated at 10.45 EDT

[3d ago 10.16](#)

And here is [the government press release](#) with full details of the housing package announced today.

The press notice claims 2.5 million people could benefit from the right to buy proposals. It says:

Two and a half million tenants renting their homes from housing associations will be given the right to buy them outright, the prime minister has announced.

In a speech today, he has confirmed an extension of the popular right to buy scheme, which has made home ownership a reality for two million households since the 1980s.

Currently, tenants in council homes are eligible to buy their homes at a discounted price, up to 70% off the market value dependent on how long they have lived there. However, the scheme is less generous for those in homes owned by housing associations.

Extending the scheme could benefit up to 2.5 million tenants who would gain the right to buy, freeing them up to become homeowners, and add value and make improvements to their home as they wish. The government will work closely with the housing association sector on the design of the scheme.

But this is misleading because **Michael Gove**, the levelling up secretary, said clearly this morning that there would be a cap on the number of homes that could be sold under this scheme. See [10.18am](#).

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[3d ago09.41](#)

Here is the [full text of Boris Johnson's speech](#).

I'll post a summary and analysis of the key points from the speech, and the Q&A, shortly.

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[3d ago09.40](#)



Boris Johnson meeting Cassidy, a student, during a visit to Fylde College in Blackpool today. Photograph: Peter Byrne/AFP/Getty Images

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Updated at 09.59 EDT

[3d ago](#)[09.26](#)

Peter Apps from Inside Housing says Boris Johnson's claim to have built more homes as London mayor than Sadiq Khan, his Labour successor, is misleading.

A slightly out of date (but still broadly relevant) factchecker from me on Boris Johnson's claim to be "massively outbuilding" Sadiq Khan as London mayor

TL;DR - no, he did not, if you apply any sort of fair criteria<https://t.co/VmScwvfJcV>

— Peter Apps (@PeteApps) [June 9, 2022](#)

Johnson's claim can only stand up if you credit him with homes started by the preceding Labour government which happened to be finished on his watch, but he had no control over. If you look at the programmes he actually designed, they performed pretty badly

— Peter Apps (@PeteApps) [June 9, 2022](#)

Since we're talking about social housing, I'd also draw particular attention to this bit: pic.twitter.com/iJFH3jaGmV

— Peter Apps (@PeteApps) [June 9, 2022](#)

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Updated at 10.19 EDT

[3d ago](#)[09.13](#)

Johnson warns of ‘wage-price spiral’ if workers demand higher pay

Here is my colleague **Jessica Elgot**'s snap story on the [Boris Johnson](#) speech.

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Housing

Gove confirms plans to let people use housing benefit to buy homes

Minister reveals details of plan to be formally unveiled alongside relaunch of right to buy by Boris Johnson

- [All today's politics news – as it happens](#)



Michael Gove said the plans would help more people fulfil ‘an important desire of the human heart’. Photograph: Tayfun Salcı/Zuma Press Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

*Aubrey Allegretti Political correspondent
@breeallegretti*

Thu 9 Jun 2022 05.05 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 06.08 EDT

Plans to help lower-paid workers use housing benefit cash to buy homes will be announced later on Thursday so that more people can fulfil “an important

desire of the human heart”, [Michael Gove](#) has said.

The levelling up secretary said relaunching the right-to-buy scheme would also encourage more people to purchase their own property, but was criticised for previewing a “dangerous gimmick” and told to “stop wasting time on the failed policies of the past”.

Boris Johnson will formally unveil both measures at a speech in Blackpool on Thursday, as he seeks to move attention away from an [embarrassing confidence vote](#) result in which 41% of Tory MPs tried to oust him.

Labour has said the plans will “make the housing crisis worse” by fuelling further demand without properly addressing supply shortfalls and will not help the poorest.

Gove confirmed reports that Johnson would let benefits claimants who receive housing benefit payments to “use that income in order to get on to the property ladder” in obtaining and sustaining mortgages.

The right-to-buy scheme, first launched by Margaret Thatcher, would also be extended following a pilot in the West Midlands, Gove confirmed. Given it was also touted by another previous Tory leader, David Cameron, in 2015, Gove admitted it was “an extension of policy that we already have”.

However, the cabinet minister told Sky News not everyone eligible would be able to use the scheme. He cautioned that “we will cap the number of people who will be able to benefit from this initially and then it will grow over time”.

In his speech later, Johnson is expected to say that he wants renters to be given the chance to buy properties they let from housing associations at discounts of up to 70% – depending on how long they have lived in them.

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Despite mounting calls from senior Conservatives for the government to bring forward tax cuts given unhappiness at the prime minister and chancellor's approach to tackling the cost of living crisis, Johnson is only likely to make vague commitments to reducing the tax burden at an unspecified point closer to the next election.

Gove denied the government had been “idle” in tackling longstanding problems like helping people join the property ladder, despite the Conservative party being in power for 12 years and criticism over the dearth of new affordable homes. He also pledged that each housing association property sold off would be replaced “like for like, one for one”.

Labour said dramatically increasing the availability of affordable homes was the “only way to really solve the housing crisis for most people”.

Lisa Nandy, the shadow levelling up secretary, said the government’s plans would “make the housing crisis worse” and had not been thought through. She told Sky News: “In principle, it’s a great idea to try to get more people the security of their own home, particularly people who find themselves in the benefits system.

“The problem is that, as always, the government has not thought through the detail. There’s no sign that any of the lenders are onboard with this. The government can say that it wants to open up mortgages to people on housing benefit, but unless the lenders agree to do it, it’s not going to happen.

“There are real practical problems as well: to qualify for universal credit, you’ve got to have savings of less than £16,000, which means that most people who the government are trying to reach with this announcement are not going to have anything near the amount that they need for a deposit on a home in order to qualify for that mortgage.”

Nandy added that Labour would “crack down on unfair leasehold charges” and take “more action to increase the supply of affordable homes”.

Polly Neate, chief executive of the homeless charity Shelter, said that extending right to buy would “put our rapidly shrinking supply of social

homes at even greater risk” and that “if these plans progress we will remain stuck in the same destructive cycle of selling off and knocking down thousands more social homes than get built each year”.

Neate added: “The maths doesn’t add up: why try to sell off what little truly affordable housing is left – at great expense – when homelessness is rising and over a million households are stuck on the waiting list.

“The government needs to stop wasting time on the failed policies of the past and start building more of the secure social homes this country actually needs.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/09/gove-confirms-plans-to-let-people-use-housing-benefit-to-buy-homes>

Housing

How does right to buy work and why is Boris Johnson planning to extend it?

The policy launched by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s remains a core part of the Tory party's identity



Right to buy has shifted almost 2m social housing dwellings into private hands. Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

[Archie Bland](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 04.31 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 05.26 EDT

Even though it is more than 40 years old, the changes wrought by Margaret Thatcher's right-to-buy policy can still be felt in Britain today. It established the story the Conservative party continues to tell about itself, of being crusaders for opportunity for all; it transformed the way people thought about what it meant to own or rent their homes; and it shifted [almost 2m social housing dwellings](#) into private hands. It became the emblematic

policy idea of a prime minister who was pretty unpopular at the time, only to rule for another decade. No wonder Boris Johnson [wants a piece of it](#).

No wonder, either, that he is not the first Conservative leader to propose extending right to buy to housing associations. But there are very good reasons it has not happened before.

This explainer originally appeared in the Guardian's First Edition newsletter. [Sign up here](#).

What is the government expected to propose today?

In his speech to backbenchers ahead of the no-confidence vote, [Boris Johnson](#) promised that if he won, he and the housing secretary, Michael Gove, would “be setting out plans to kindle that dream of home ownership in the hearts of millions who currently believe it is beyond their means.”

The proposed mechanism is to [extend the right to buy](#) to people living in properties owned by housing associations – not-for-profit bodies that rent low-cost homes to about 2.5 million people.

Crucially, housing associations are not state-owned. At the moment, people living in council properties can get a discount of up to 70% of the market value of their home, up to a maximum of £87,000, or £116,200 in London. There is a scheme in place for housing associations but it limits the discount to a maximum of £16,000.

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What did Margaret Thatcher’s model look like?

In his 2015 book [Promised You a Miracle: UK80-82](#), the Guardian columnist Andy Beckett writes that the 1980 Housing Act “envisaged a revolution in how a large minority of Britons lived”. It seemed possible, in

part, because there was an abundance of social housing: 5.5m homes [were provided by local authorities and housing associations](#) in England, or 31% of the total stock.

Now anybody who had lived in council housing for more than three years would be entitled to own it. Tenants were given a 33% discount on market value at the three-year point, rising to 50% after 20, up to a ceiling of £50,000. And they were guaranteed 100% mortgages by the local authority. Against average property prices in 1980 of £23,500, it was an extraordinarily good deal for those able to take advantage of it.

How did it play out in practice?

Right to buy was a hugely powerful – even life-changing – policy for exactly the aspirational working-class voters who Thatcher was trying to woo. By the end of 1982, more than 240,000 homes had been sold to their tenants in England alone. But within a few years a significant gap was visible between tenants who were buying and those who were not.

A government study published in 1986 found buyers were “disproportionately drawn from the middle-aged and the better-off”. Their incomes were more than double those of people who remained tenants. Meanwhile, rents for the worse-off council tenants who remained rocketed – going up 55% relative to earnings in a decade.

What does the landscape look like today?

In the 42 years since the scheme was introduced, 1,992,799 sales to tenants have been completed, the government says. [Fewer than 5% of the homes sold off have been replaced](#), according to the charity Shelter, and the available stock has dropped from that 5.5m figure to 4.2m by 2020.

Meanwhile, a large proportion of right-to-buy homes are now in the hands of private landlords: in 2017, Inside Housing magazine [reported](#) that 40% of them were being rented out, and their tenants were paying more than twice the rent charged by local authorities. Average property prices in Britain have gone from that 1980 figure of £23,500 [to £278,436](#) as of March.

In other words, the 1980s right-to-buy generation received a huge financial windfall from the government, which accrued as the property market rocketed – and their successors are paying exorbitant private rents, up 15% in two years, because there is no council housing to put them in. [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) abandoned the policy several years ago.

Where does the idea of extending the scheme to housing associations come from?

It has been around from the beginning. In 1982, [the Guardian reported](#) on proposals to make much the same change Johnson is proposing today – news which led the director of the National Federation of Housing Associations (now the National Housing Federation) to complain: “Charities have a duty that lasts in perpetuity … it is vital to keep these homes for the old, the disadvantaged and the young in the future.”

The change never happened – but a version of the idea popped up in David Cameron’s 2015 manifesto, only to be jacked after an unsuccessful [pilot in the West Midlands](#), which found that nothing like enough of the properties being sold off were being replaced with new stock – a red line for housing associations that were participating. (We might think of [Nick Clegg’s claim](#) that either Cameron or George Osborne once told him: “I don’t understand why you keep going on about the need for more social housing – it just creates Labour voters.”)

Could Johnson succeed where others failed?

Experts are sceptical. Gavin Smart, the chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, [says the scheme is “not the answer”](#) and would “be at the expense of the poorest households”, arguing that the estimated £70,000 subsidy a household would be better spent on addressing the housing stock crisis. Theresa May’s former housing adviser Toby Lloyd [points out](#) that offering affordable housing tenants sale discounts could create tension with private renters.

Others point to the fact that … not many people living in housing associations seem to *want* this right very much. A [report](#) on the West

Midlands pilot found just 1.2% of households would be expected to buy under the scheme. Experts also note the fundamental problem – which is that the housing associations that own the homes have historically never welcomed the idea, and it would be extremely expensive to win them over.

In other words, the best hope for opponents of the policy is that it will never happen in the first place. And indeed, one report this morning suggests internal estimates have priced a national version of the scheme at about £3bn a year, far in excess of an intended budget of £500m. That probably means any changes will be limited to more pilot programmes. Another Boris Johnson magic trick: a rabbit pulled out of a hat, which immediately disappears.

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How do we fix the UK housing crisis?



Housing solutions article header image 5x3 version Composite: Getty

Experts give six ways of tackling the biggest problems

- [Timeline: how did owning a home become unaffordable?](#)

Hilary Osborne, Pamela Duncan and Lydia McMullan

Thu 9 Jun 2022 03.40 EDTFirst published on Thu 1 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

How do you fix a housing crisis that has its foundations in policy decisions that go back decades? Unsurprisingly, there is not one answer.

The issues of high house prices – illustrated by the large swathes of Great Britain in which key workers are priced out – as well as a lack of affordable rented homes and homelessness will need a wide range of measures to tackle. We asked experts for their ideas.

1

Build differently

“The UK’s housing affordability crisis has been building for decades, with younger generations locked out of home ownership and spending long periods of time living in often high-cost, poor-quality private rented accommodation,” says Lindsay Judge, research director at the Resolution Foundation thinktank.

“Sadly, if anything, the pandemic has made housing even less affordable for young people.”

Judge says a fresh approach is needed that includes building more homes in high-demand areas of the UK, such as the major cities.

The National Housing Federation, which represents housing associations across England, suggests new skills and methods of construction could help in future. “This includes building homes in factories out of materials such as timber frames, and then assembling them on site over only a few days,” the NHF says. “Such methods enable homes to be built more cheaply, to a higher standard and more quickly.”

The NHF says research from the National Audit Office has suggested that if modern methods of construction are used instead of traditional bricks and

mortar, it could be possible to build up to four times as many homes with the same amount of on-site labour.

2

Improve the private rented sector

Judge describes the private rental sector as the “‘wild west’ of Britain’s housing stock”, and the Resolution Foundation says it should be professionalised. The thinktank suggests policy should be “moving to indefinite tenancies, and creating a tenants’ loans system to tackle the mounting arrears crisis without causing mass evictions”.

The campaign group Generation Rent says private tenancies should be reformed. Dan Wilson Craw, the group’s deputy director, says this will “give renters the certainty that they can live in their home long-term, and can plan their lives – whether or not they have a decent shot at home ownership”.

Many tenancy agreements last six months, or a year, and after that households can be asked to move on. This makes it difficult for people to put down roots and for families to plan for schooling, and generally means an extra cost for renters who have to arrange a move.

“Growing numbers of renters are reaching their 40s having been unable to save enough for a deposit, with little prospect of a bank lending a mortgage if it won’t be paid off until retirement age,” says Wilson Craw. “They therefore face renting in insecure tenancies for the rest of their lives, and no proposed home ownership initiatives will overcome this.”

There are also problems around rental deposits, with tenants asked to find a downpayment before they have money back from their existing landlords. The National Residential Landlords Association says as part of the forthcoming renters’ reform bill “the government should develop either a financial bridging facility or a deposit builder Isa to make it easier for tenants to move home without needing to find money for a fresh deposit each time”.

The NRLA is also calling for tenants to get more help to use existing rules that allow them to challenge rent increases they believe to be unfair in tribunals.

3

Overhaul property taxes and mortgages

Despite changes in recent years to rein-in buy-to-let through tax changes, Generation Rent says the system still encourages speculation in property, to the detriment of aspiring owner-occupiers.

“Landlords can get interest-only mortgages, which puts them at an advantage over owner-occupiers,” says Wilson Craw. “Council tax bears little relation to a property’s value, so a wealthy household can pay the same tax on a home with three spare bedrooms as a family of four crammed into a two-bedroom flat. These policies incentivise investors to put as much money into property as they can get their hands on, pushing up prices.”

4

Help struggling renters

“The economic fallout from the pandemic has left millions of families worried about paying rent,” says Darren Baxter, housing policy and partnerships manager at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation thinktank. “The government should immediately introduce a targeted package of grants to support renters in arrears, ensuring that they can stay in their homes.”

In March 2020 the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was increased to cover the bottom 30% of rents, but from April this year it will be frozen again in cash terms, meaning the gap between rental costs and support available will start to widen again. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation wants the government to reverse its decision to freeze LHA so that it is recoupled to the real cost of renting.

The NRLA says housing support in the benefits system needs to reflect the average cost of renting in any given area.

5

Sort out pay

High housing costs is one part of the equation, but the other is pay. In recent years wage increases have lagged behind house price rises. Many of the key workers the Guardian has included in its analysis have jobs in the public sector jobs, where pay rises have been frozen for years.

Baxter says: “Many key workers are employed in sectors with higher levels of insecurity, low levels of pay and few opportunities to progress, such as care workers and delivery drivers.

“Alongside increasing the supply of genuinely affordable housing and better support for renters on low incomes, we need to see the social security system strengthened, employment rights improved and continued commitment to increase the national living wage.”

6

And of course, build more affordable housing

Everyone we asked agrees that more affordable housing is needed. Currently, about half is provided by developers through section 106 agreements on new private estates and blocks. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation says plans to replace that system with a national infrastructure levy, the details of which are unclear, need to ensure that there is not even less social housing built in future.

Several of the groups which responded to us cited research for the National Housing Federation and Crisis that was carried out by Heriot-Watt University. The research says 145,000 affordable homes should be built

annually for the next five years, of which 90,000 a year should be for social rent. This is the lowest-cost housing that councils and housing associations provide, with rents tied to local incomes. In recent times fewer than 7,000 new homes a year have been created in this category in England.

“The bottom line is, you cannot solve affordability without genuinely affordable homes,” says the housing charity Shelter. “That means we need to address the chronic shortage of social homes in this country. This shortage is at the heart our housing emergency.”

Shelter points out that building social housing will be an investment, as it will cut the housing benefits being paid to private landlords.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, says the rules around the right to buy should be changed, so that councils get to keep all of the money raised from sales. “The proportion that can be reinvested to build more social housing should also be increased,” Baxter says.

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Interview

‘I feel like I’ve got the best job in the world!’ – Amy Lennox, the knockout star of Cabaret

[Tshepo Mokoena](#)



‘At the end of every performance, I just get spat out’ ... Lennox at Playhouse theatre, where she is starring in Cabaret. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Observer

As a kid growing up in Aberdeen, she rebelled against singing. Now she’s proving sensational in the classic Weimar musical – but finds its present-day parallels chilling



[@tnm](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.39 EDT

Let’s get one thing straight: although Amy Lennox sings and is Scottish, she is not related to Annie Lennox. She is, however, used to people making the assumption. She laughs, remembering a breakfast radio appearance from 2016 on which the host kept referring to Annie, thinking it was her mum.

“I was half-asleep,” she says. “Then the penny dropped and – on live radio – I said: ‘Oh my God! You think my mum’s Annie Lennox.’ And the producers behind the glass went – she throws a hand up over her mouth and opens her eyes wide. “Everyone was flapping. I thought, ‘I’m going to let you sit on this. You deserve it.’” She laughs again. Sure, both Lennoxes are from Aberdeen. But Amy’s journey – from belting out Christina Aguilera

and Whitney Houston songs in her bedroom to the West End – had nothing to do with nepotism.

There is one legacy she has to live up to, though: she is following Jessie Buckley's [Olivier-winning turn](#) as [Cabaret](#) showgirl Sally Bowles in [Rebecca Frecknall's dynamic staging](#) of the classic 1960s musical. Buckley and her Emcee, played by Eddie Redmayne, stepped aside in March for Lennox and Fra Fee, who is from Northern Ireland. Lennox wouldn't normally step into a role first cast for another actor. "I don't want to be put in a stifling position where I'm being told, 'Stand here, do it like this' – rather than originating a musical. It's not how I work. It doesn't get the best of anyone. I was always adamant about that." A breath. "And then I thought, 'Well, this does feel different.'"



Sleepwalking towards horror ... Lennox as Bowles with Fra Fee's Emcee.
Photograph: Marc Brenner

Lennox is outspoken, chatty, fond of a giggle and sharing an opinion. We're sitting in the bowels of London's Playhouse theatre, to talk about how Frecknall ("Freckles" to Lennox) managed to persuade the star to take a recasting and propel her further into the spotlight. Lennox may not yet be a big name. But for the past 14 years she's been in musicals, plays and on TV

(she bowed out of Holby City earlier this year). Her cheeky, lascivious Bowles is like a jolt of electricity, and no doubt a sign of great things to come. How daunting was it to take over from Buckley? “Do you know what? I didn’t really have much time to think about it.” Her casting was confirmed, she says, and then “we started the following week. It was so fast.”

Lennox and Fee previously shared a stage in Belfast for 2015’s [The Last Five Years](#), a two-hander musical charting the breakdown of a relationship. Cabaret was a completely different experience, given that Bowles and the Emcee barely interact. “We hardly saw each other in the rehearsal period,” she says. “It was very, very odd. I’d bump into Fra – and we were like passing ships. Bumping into him in Pret, I’d be like, ‘How was your week?’”

They’re both leads, though. It’s just that each speaks to a particular aspect of the story’s descent towards antisemitism and authoritarianism. Fra’s Emcee lulls you into a false sense of security, before slapping you across the face – look, Nazis! – and unravelling the freewheeling, booze-soaked world you’d come to understand. Lennox’s Bowles, meanwhile, blows through like a hurricane. She’s preening and cooing one moment, dressed in pink frou-frou taffeta for Don’t Tell Mama, then roaring through the title song the next, dishevelled and looking swamped in a man’s suit.

Off stage, I can see hints of Bowles’s frenetic drive in Lennox: the way she cracks herself up, gushes about her colleagues, and describes the breathlessness of her part. At the end of every performance, she says, “I just get spat out. It’s like a wipeout from flumes. Just” – she makes the sound of something shooting from a tube – “out! You’re done. I’m not having to conjure it because the show itself takes me there. It’s relentless.”

Lennox has built her stamina up over years, after falling in love with musicals at the age of 11. She remembers watching a TV documentary. “Proper stagey kids from London,” she says. They were maybe auditioning for Annie (she makes a retching sound). “And I thought, ‘Oh, what’s this?’” She wasn’t a child with pushy stage parents, though. Her mum was a solicitor, her dad the head of IT and communications for an oil firm. She had

rebelled against ballet (mum's idea) and singing (dad's) before finding her way to musicals.



Olivier nomination ... Lennox in rehearsal for *Kinky Boots* in 2015.
Photograph: Tristram Kenton/The Guardian

“You don’t get that local opportunity that kids down in the south-east of England take for granted – because they’re so close to this hub that we’re in now.” She motions to the West End above our heads. “I didn’t have any of that.” In Aberdeen, it all felt “so far away that you don’t really have links”. Envy propelled her, though. After seeing those children on TV, and then failing an audition for the school musical, she joined a local am-dram group and was soon honing her acting and singing.

“I auditioned for the National Youth Music Theatre loads of times. I got recalled. Never got in. My poor dad would fly with me down to London. And I never got in. It was always because I would get to a song and panic.” Over time, she learned to take charge of her voice, landing Liesl in *The Sound of Music* at the London Palladium right out of drama school in Guildford. She’s since received an Olivier nomination for her Lauren in 2015’s [Kinky Boots](#), plus stage credits in *9 to 5 The Musical*, [Lazarus](#), [Legally Blonde](#) and others.

A prop newspaper we use has the headline: ‘Russian invasion imminent’

When she started out, Lennox was often told she wasn’t playing roles “big enough”, as if only an exaggerated performance would resonate. But in one of her quieter moments in Cabaret, her Sally expresses an apathy about her situation – sleepwalking into horror – that strikes a brutal chord today. “Politics,” her Sally asks, “what’s that to do with me?” “It’s bonkers. I don’t think [Cabaret’s writers John Kander and Fred Ebb] ever intended for it to feel so valid now. We like to think, as human beings in this society, we’re constantly moving forward, striving for excellence and this and that. But we’re not! If anything, we’re just driving ourselves towards absolute disaster and we all know it,” Lennox says.

She alludes to everything from deluded strongmen to the war in Ukraine, from reproductive rights for women to the general acceptance of a future more bleak than the recent past. “It’s like Groundhog Day – and there are quite a few moments in the show that do that,” she says. “There was a prop newspaper we were using and it said, ‘Russian invasion imminent’. And you go: ‘Oh God. Oh God. What the hell’s going on?’ We’ve got another Hitler over there. Some man that’s ” She stops herself. “I’d be interested to know how much more of an edge this show has because of what’s going on in Ukraine and in Russia. It’s just chilling. Absolutely chilling.”



Lennox as Elly in *Lazarus* by David Bowie and Enda Walsh, directed by Ivo van Hove, in 2016. Photograph: Tristram Kenton/The Guardian

Beyond the show's depiction of fascism's creeping rise, we discuss theatre's post-lockdown stumble back into the light. Shortly before we speak, some of the cast of Andrew Lloyd Webber's high-budget Cinderella found out that their jobs were to be cut short, some via social media. "I think that's deplorable," says Lennox. "We've all been pushed to our limits [by the pandemic]. I don't know the ins and outs of what happened. But didn't someone consider, for a moment, the repercussions of the way it was dealt with?" (The Really Useful Group said it had made "every effort" to ensure cast members were notified of the closure.)

She takes a breath, emerging sunnier. "It's a crazy old thankless existence for so many people. I'm grateful. I feel like I've got the best job in the West End. Maybe even the world." She laughs again. Bowles has taken over her life for the past couple of months – so much so that, on some days, Lennox has to refrain from speaking to preserve her voice, which makes for silent commutes back to Ramsgate from London with her husband, actor Tom Andrew Hargreaves.

There's now a sign on her dressing room door, made by her colleagues after she'd been really tired at the start of her run. "You know the line when I've got my gin and I say, 'I'm just not speaking today.'" She laughs. "I've got an 'I'm just not speaking today' sign on my door. I've only done that once. I've only not spoken once." She laughs again. "It's very hard. I'm not very good at it."

Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club is booking at the Playhouse theatre, London, [until 19 November](#).

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'It is so easy to lose everything': tales of poverty, despair and dignity at a Citizens Advice centre



'Energy has affected everyone' ... money support worker Kholoud Moramazi. Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

In a single day in a south London centre, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis is starkly evident, with clients overwhelmed by debt, struggling to pay bills and lost in bureaucracy



[Sirin Kale](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 09.41 EDT

When Chris Green, CEO of [Citizens Advice Southwark](#), began his career in the 90s, his workload was mostly helping people with consumer issues – faulty appliances and so on. Once, he assisted a chef who had been sacked, and the restaurant owner refused to return his knives. Green, then a volunteer adviser at the Leeds city centre branch of the charity, went with the chef to recover the tools of his trade.

Today, people seek help for very different problems. The level of need has never been higher. Green and his team of 85 volunteers and 36 full-time staff are the last port of call for the soon-to-be-evicted and people with no food in the fridge. “These are very, very scary times,” he says. “And the worst is yet to be seen.”

We are sitting in his office at the back of the Walworth centre, opposite one of London’s few remaining pie, mash and eel shops. In a narrow corridor at

the back of the building, advisers prepare for the day's meetings in windowless cubicles; out front, two young women are queueing, waiting for the centre to open at 10am. Citizens Advice rebranded in 2015, dropping the word bureau from its name and this is one of three of the charity's centres in the south London borough.

I am here to see how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting the people of Southwark. It is one of the [most deprived local authorities in England](#): 31% of households [live in poverty](#). Most who come to the centre have problems connected with benefits, housing and debt. About a third of homes here are privately rented, and people from the large Latin American community are particularly at risk of exploitation by rogue landlords – with English as a second language, some don't understand the paperwork they are signing.



'These are very, very scary times' ... Chris Green, chief executive officer of Citizens Advice Southwark. Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

Green has the air of a man perpetually worried about where next year's funding will come from. "People are talking about having to commit crimes to get by," he says. He smiles tightly. "We're only funded for money advice services until January next year." The tight smile again. "People have negative budgets. There's no money. There's simply nothing there. That's a new thing." This time, the tightest of smiles.

Consumer price inflation [is running at 7.8%](#), the highest rate since April 1991. Energy bills are soaring, up £693 [since April](#), with a second increase of [about £800](#) forecast in October. [Wage growth](#) is stagnant, while the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports that [benefits have been cut in real terms](#) at the highest rate for 50 years.

By 10.30am, reception is full of people waiting for appointments. A man in an expensive puffer jacket sits beside a woman in a headscarf, rocking a pram. “Energy, energy, energy!” exclaims Kholoud Moramazi, a money support worker, from her office. “It has affected everyone. And it’s not even winter. So when the price increase hits in October ...” She shakes her head.

Virtually everyone coming into the centre, she says, is struggling to pay energy bills. Moramazi can issue an [emergency fuel voucher of up to £49](#) and a food bank voucher, but these are limited per person, and not a long-term solution. She says: “The question everyone is asking is, should I pay for my heating or my food?”

Moramazi is waiting for her first appointment, with a man in his 30s who has rent arrears and student loans. He doesn’t turn up. “People can be closed off about their debts,” she says. “He knows we’re here. When he’s ready, he’ll come.”

Her second client, Yvonne*, who is in her 70s, comes in. “Before, if I put £50 on my gas card, it would last for a few weeks,” she says, sounding bewildered. “Last week I put £50 on it and I couldn’t believe it finished already. It’s not so bad now because the temperature is OK, but when it goes cold, it will be very difficult.” Yvonne shuffles a stack of household bills in a plastic folder. (Clients invariably bring folders of bills.)

When I turn on the hot water, the pipe runs through my room, so I get some of the warmth. Without that I would freeze

Yvonne, client

Because she is on cancer medication that weakens her bones, it’s important that Yvonne stays warm. “What I do most of the time is stay in my room,” she says. “When I turn on the hot water, the pipe runs through my room, so I

get some of the warmth. Without that I would freeze.” Yvonne gives an abashed shrug. “You might say I am vulnerable!” she says, chuckling. Moramazi sets up a payment plan for Yvonne, so debt collectors won’t keep chasing her, and schedules a follow-up session to discuss switching energy supplier. “She did everything for me,” says Yvonne, still shuffling papers, as she makes her way to the door.

In an adjoining room, Annie Sirabidze, a senior money advice caseworker, is on a telephone appointment with Chantal*, who has mental health issues that make it difficult for her to leave her flat. “She’s in a terrible state at the moment,” Sirabidze says. Everything fell apart for her about seven months ago, when she suffered two bereavements and her ex-partner took their older child to live with him; she is fighting for custody. Chantal became too unwell to work and had to leave her job. “I hate being on universal credit because I’ve always worked,” says Chantal, flatly.



Workers at Southwark Citizens Advice. Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

She is in arrears on the rent, gas, water, electricity and phone bills, and on the high-interest loans she took out to get by from month to month. “I used to be good with my bills,” Chantal says, sadly. Her universal credit was overpaid and is being deducted at £100 a month until it has been repaid,

leaving her £400 a month to live on. “There are some days I sit in the dark and don’t put on my lights,” she says. “Because I am thinking, if I put on the light, how am I going to afford to pay?” She can’t afford fruit and vegetables, and often skips breakfast, even though she is not meant to take her medication on an empty stomach. Sirabidze has tried to persuade her to use food banks, but she refuses. “I went once and I was ashamed,” Chantal says.

All Chantal does is worry about money. She has more than £10,000 of debt. Last month, she was hospitalised because of her mental health issues, which are exacerbated by her money worries, so her younger child is living with his father at the moment, as she can’t look after him. Every time she looks around her home she thinks of her absent children. “I miss working,” says Chantal. “I miss seeing my money in my bank every month. I miss buying nice things for my children. We used to go on day trips to the seaside. But now them things can’t happen. I have to think about my priorities.” What is a priority? “Food. Bills.”

We discuss the government’s recently announced [one-off grant of £650](#) for low-income households, to put towards the rising cost of living. “I am grateful,” says Chantal. “They say every little helps. But will that be enough to get people back on their feet?” Sirabidze discusses Chantal’s options with her: they plan to apply for personal independence payment (PIP) and discuss an application for a debt relief order, which would clear her debts. Chantal is reluctant, because the conditions mean she won’t be able to apply for most loans in the future: she needs to think about it.

After the call ends, Sirabidze is visibly moved. “I am also a mother,” she says. “I imagine being in that situation. Her kids are not there and she misses them. A few months ago she was functioning – she had savings, she had a life, she could afford to take her kids on holiday. Now all of that is gone. When I spoke to her for the first time, she said: ‘What’s the point of living? I just waste oxygen.’”



‘My job makes me appreciate everything I have’ ... Annie Sirabidze, a Southwark Citizens Advice senior money advice caseworker. Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

Chantal’s situation is not uncommon. Many of the people who come to the centre are in financial crisis as a result of physical or mental health conditions. Jaye Munro, a debt adviser, says: “A lot of the time when you fall into debt, it’s because you’re dealing with an underlying health issue.” She has just finished dealing with a client in her 40s with multiple health issues: “Her children are no longer in contact with her because they don’t like the idea of having a disabled mother.”

The client is not originally from the UK and has limited English. With the help of a translation app, Munro helps her to get a council tax reduction because of her disability. “She was ashamed of her debts because of how she appeared,” says Munro. (Arriving at reception, the client was well dressed.) The woman became emotional as she told Munro how lonely she was. “Her only company is her pets.”

What becomes apparent after even a few hours in the centre is how the welfare system has been scratched thin by years of austerity. Many advisers refer to [the benefit cuts introduced](#) by the government in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the rise of insecure zero-hours or gig economy employment,

and more recent financial shocks related to Covid, Brexit and rising gas prices. Financial calamity breeds despair. Clients sometimes threaten to harm themselves in the building. It is not uncommon for people to be suicidal.

Sirabidze tells me about a client in his 40s who came in a few weeks ago. He lost his job as a security guard during the pandemic and fell behind on all his bill payments. His electricity supply has been cut off: now he can't sleep because he can't plug in the continuous positive airway pressure ventilator (Cpap) machine he needs to breathe at night. "He was sofa-surfing in order not to die." Sirabidze issued him an emergency fuel voucher and will speak to his energy provider. She says: "I've done this job for eight years – but in the last couple of years, it's as if I can't remember anyone saying, 'I'm OK.' And the last few months have been even worse."

She breaks off as her next client arrives. Kwame*, in his 60s, is accompanied by his son Isaac*, who is there to translate. Kwame speaks limited English. He works as a cleaning supervisor for 17 hours a week in an office. He used to work full-time, but had to reduce his hours. "My health is not good," Kwame says, staring into space. A plastic bag full of papers that Isaac has pulled together sits by his feet: it contains bills, medical records and rent statements. Kwame has gout, diabetes, high blood pressure and prostate issues. He receives universal credit to top up his wages, but it's not enough.

What becomes apparent from speaking to Isaac is that Kwame has been teetering on the brink of financial ruin for most of his life, incurring debts even while working, thanks to low wages. Now, the debts have caught up with him, and ill-health means he can't afford the repayments any more. "He's stressed out," says Isaac, referring to debt collection agencies. "People keep calling him every day." Kwame continues to work, although he is really not well enough. "Sometimes he calls me up and says he feels dizzy," says Isaac. "I tell him to sit down and drink something."



Many of Southwark's Citizens Advice clients are too embarrassed to visit foodbanks. Photograph: Ben Stansall/AFP/Getty Images

Sirabidze manages to get Kwame a 60-day breathing period on his debts, to stop the phone calls, and they discuss the documents he will need to apply for a PIP. Both men thank Sirabidze and depart for the GP surgery to collect yet more documentation to help with Kwame's PIP application. "He's worked most of his life," says Isaac, as they leave. "Paying taxes. And when he needs help he has to go through this whole process, and it's more stress. It's not good. Someone who has been working their whole life. He's paid his dues."

After they leave, Sirabidze and Munro decompress in an empty room. Both agree that Kwame will be OK because he has Isaac fighting his corner. The people who come into the centre, they explain, are not actually the worst off. Having the mental strength to tackle your problems head-on is often beyond people in crisis. Others lack the language skills to access the centre. A third group may not have access to their finances or documentation because of exploitation and abuse.

"My job makes me appreciate everything I have because it's so easy to lose everything," says Sirabidze. Misfortunes pile upon each other, like dominos:

it only takes one slip to set off a cataclysmic chain reaction. She turns to me with a smile. “And now,” she says, “you see what we do here.”

* Some names have been changed

Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at guardian.letters@theguardian.com

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[Best culture of 2022 so far](#)[Movies](#)

The best films of 2022 so far



From left: Tilda Swinton in *Memoria*, Adeel Akhtar and Claire Rushbrook in *Ali & Ava*, Catherine Clinch in *The Quiet Girl*. Composite: Kick the Machine Films/Altitude/Curzon

Tilda Swinton aces Apichatpong Weerasethakul's dreamy fable, director Clio Barnard's forbidden affair and Catherine Clinch in *The Quiet Girl* rank in the pick of this year's films

More of 2022's best culture so far

Guardian film

Thu 9 Jun 2022 02.03 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 02.04 EDT

Licorice Pizza

70s-set romance from Paul Thomas Anderson, starring Cooper Hoffman as a former child actor who sets his sights on 10-years-older Alana Haim as he gets into the waterbed business.

What we said: “This hypnotically gorgeous, funny, romantic movie freewheels its way around from scene to scene, from character to character, from setpiece to setpiece, with absolute mastery.” [Read the full review.](#)



‘Wonderfully acted’ ... Jason Isaacs and Martha Plimpton in Mass. Photograph: Moviestore Collection Ltd/Alamy

Mass

Jason Isaacs and Ann Dowd are among the cast of a drama about the “healing” meeting between the parents of a high-school shooting victim, and the parents of the perpetrator.

What we said: “A wonderfully acted, if claustrophobic, ordeal of emotional pain.” [Read the full review.](#)

Nightmare Alley

Glossily mounted film noir, directed by Guillermo del Toro, with Bradley Cooper as the carny who becomes a high society mind-reader/grifter, and Cate Blanchett as a psychologist who aims to expose him.

What we said: “A spectacular noir melodrama boasting gruesomely enjoyable performances and freaky twists.” [Read the full review.](#)

Cow

Documentary from American Honey director Andrea Arnold, following without comment the lives of farm cows from birth to slaughter.

What we said: “The most eerie moments come when we look directly into the cow’s eyes, as she is perhaps directly looking into ours – or at any rate, the camera lens – and mooing, repeatedly, intently or even meaningfully.” [Read the full review.](#)

Memoria

Tilda Swinton joins forces with Thai auteur Apichatpong Weerasethakul for an English-language, Colombia-set fable about a woman who can hear sounds that others don’t appear to.

What we said: “A beautiful and mysterious movie, slow cinema that decelerates your heartbeat.” [Read the full review.](#)



‘Spryly written, beautifully acted’ ... Jamie Dornan and Caitríona Balfe in Belfast. Photograph: Rob Youngson/© 2021 Focus Features, LLC.

Belfast

Kenneth Branagh’s memoir of a kid growing up in 1970s Northern Ireland as the Troubles mount, with Caitríona Balfe and Jamie Dornan as the married couple who have to decide whether to emigrate.

What we said: “Spryly written, beautifully acted and shot in a lustrous monochrome, with set pieces, madeleines and epiphanies that feel like a more emollient version of Terence Davies.” [Read the full review.](#)



‘*A folie de grandeur* of staggering proportions’ ... Taming the Garden.

Taming the Garden

Documentary following the bizarre but revealing story of Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili’s plan to dig up and transport hundreds of trees from across the country to his own private garden.

What we said: “Transporting these trees is a Fitzcarraldo-type operation: a *folie de grandeur* of staggering proportions.” [Read the full review.](#)

Parallel Mothers

Penélope Cruz and Pedro Almodóvar collaborate once again to tremendous effect; this time Cruz plays a woman sharing the same maternity ward as a much younger, troubled mother to be (played by Milena Smit).

What we said: “Almodóvar’s new movie has the warmth and the grandiloquent flair of a picture from Hollywood’s golden age, and the whiplash twists and addictive sugar rush bumps of daytime soap.” [Read the full review.](#)



‘Like Tammy Wynette with a bit of Nancy Reagan and Eva Perón’ ... Jessica Chastain in *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*. Photograph: Searchlight Pictures/Allstar

The Eyes of Tammy Faye

Biopic of Tammy Faye Bakker, wife of televangelist Jim Bakker and latter-day supporter of the US’s LGBT community; Jessica Chastain won the best actress Oscar for her makeup-caked performance in the title role.

What we said: “Chastain gives a hilarious turn as Tammy Faye: like Tammy Wynette with a bit of Nancy Reagan and Eva Perón.” [Read the full review.](#)

Lingui, the Sacred Bonds

Chadian auteur Mahamat-Saleh Haroun’s quiet fable, about a woman torn between social proprieties and respecting her daughter’s decision to get an abortion.

What we said: “The intense, focused performances from the two central women keep this drama in a hyper-alert state: we are intensely aware of all that is at stake and how mother and daughter are battling for survival.” [Read the full review.](#)

The Souvenir Part II

Second half of Joanna Hogg's autobiographical drama, with Honor Swinton Byrne as film student Julie as she abandons her social issue documentary in favour of making her own autobiographical memoir.

What we said: "An amazingly luminous self-portrait of the film-maker as a young woman: metatextual, confessional and autobiographical." [Read the full review.](#)



'Fantastically pointless and immature bad taste' ... Jackass Forever.
Photograph: Paramount/Sean Cliver/Allstar

Jackass Forever

The fourth feature-film instalment of the dumb stunt TV show that first aired in 2000, with many of the same gang led by Johnny Knoxville, but now augmented by a younger generation.

What we said: "The Jackass crew is back with yet another festival of fantastically pointless and immature bad taste." [Read the full review.](#)

Flee

Distinctive fusion of documentary and animation from Danish film-maker Jonas Poher Rasmussen, outlining the journey and heartache of a gay Afghan man living in Copenhagen, having left his home country as a 10-year-old.

What we said: “An irresistibly moving and engrossing story, whose emotional implications we can see being absorbed into the minds of the director and his subject, almost in real time.” [Read the full review.](#)

Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy

Japanese film-maker Ryusuke Hamaguchi, who subsequently made Drive My Car, directs this three-part film, in which different stories are played out with thematic echoes.

What we said: “This trio of stories is elegant and amusing, with a delicacy of touch and real imaginative warmth.” [Read the full review.](#)

The Real Charlie Chaplin

Documentary telling the life story of the “Little Tramp” – the silent film comic who achieved global celebrity before turning to sound and hitting even greater heights – before legal troubles took their toll.

What we said: “Chaplin’s amazing story is something that would have electrified Charles Dickens, that other poverty survivor who conquered the US.” [Read the full review.](#)



Top of the pops ... The Beatles: Get Back – The Rooftop Concert.
Photograph: PR

The Beatles: Get Back – The Rooftop Concert

Sixty-minute feature carved out of Peter Jackson's mammoth series chronicling the making of the Let It Be album; this repurposes the original footage shot by Michael Lindsay Hogg of the famous Apple building gig, restored at full length.

What we said: “This engrossing film is a time capsule of London itself – the faces not so very different from those you would see in the 40s or 50s.” [Read the full review.](#)

The Duke

Jim Broadbent stars as Kempton Bunton, the Newcastle taxi driver who was tried for one of the 1960s most celebrated crimes: the theft of a Goya painting from the National Gallery.

What we said: “For what has become his final feature film, director Roger Michell made this sweet-natured and genial comedy in the spirit of Ealing, which bobs up like a ping pong ball on a water-fountain.” [Read the full review.](#)



Era defining ... Don Letts, *Rebel Dread*. Photograph: Paul Crowther

Rebel Dread

Manifesto-cum-profile of Don Letts, the film-maker and DJ who was a key figure in the original punk movement and played a significant role in overcoming the era's race hostility.

What we said: "Letts is a brilliant entrepreneur, an inter-disciplinary artist and eloquent speaker about what life was like in the punk era." [Read the full review.](#)

Ali & Ava

Gentle romance between a British Asian from Bradford (played by Adeel Akhtar), whose relationship with his wife has broken down, and classroom assistant Claire Rushbrook; their relationship sparks disapproval among their respective families.

What we said: "It's a drama of autumnal love conquering the divisions of race, the disillusionments of middle age, the discomfort of parenthood and grandparenthood, and the tensions of class." [Read the full review.](#)

A Banquet

Social-comment body horror from debut feature director Ruth Paxton, with Sienna Guillory as the apparently perfect single mother with two daughters, one of whom develops a mysterious eating disorder.

What we said: “Paxton’s movie sketches out the sinister dread just under the happy-family surface; she is in expert control of her film, achieving her effects with economy and force. It is really unnerving.” [Read the full review.](#)

Great Freedom

Interesting German drama about a former concentration camp inmate imprisoned after the war for gay sex acts, and who develops a complex relationship with his straight cellmate.

What we said: “A formidably intelligent and well-acted prison movie and also a love story – or perhaps a paradoxically platonic bromance.” [Read the full review.](#)



‘A connoisseur date movie’ ... Paris, 13th District. Photograph: Shanna Besson

Paris, 13th District

The latest film from Rust and Bone director Jacques Audiard, here putting together a short story collection of sexual encounters and relationships in

Paris' 13th arrondissement, shot in tough black-and-white.

What we said: "Audiard achieves something very watchable and entertaining in anthologising [the characters]. This is a connoisseur date movie." [Read the full review.](#)

Hive

Kosovan-set memorial-to-loss drama about a war widow who sets up a business selling honey and other local delicacies, but who then clashes with villagers when she starts getting successful.

What we said: "This is a richly intelligent drama, in which every word and every shot counts." [Read the full review.](#)

RRR

Epic Indian blockbuster set in the 1920s, following a pair of real-life revolutionaries as they take on the might of the British Raj.

What we said: "Wave after wave of lush, beautifully crafted bombast is gleefully dished out to a bedazzled audience." [Read the full article.](#)

The Worst Person in the World

Thelma director Joachim Trier comes up with an unexpectedly moving drama about a twentysomething woman (played by Renate Reinsve in a star-making performance) as she navigates relationships and jobs at a tricky period in life.

What we said: "Trier has taken on one of the most difficult genres imaginable, the romantic drama, and combined it with another very tricky style – the coming-of-ager – to craft something gloriously sweet and beguiling." [Read the full review.](#)



Space odyssey ... Apollo 10 1/2. Photograph: Netflix

Apollo 10 1/2

Another exercise in nostalgia from Boyhood director Richard Linklater, here using rotoscope animation to tell the story of a kid growing up in thrall to the Apollo space programme.

What we said: “It’s a nonstop madeleine-fest, a revival of memories curated with passionate connoisseurship.” [Read the full review.](#)

Small Body

Mysterious fable from Italian director Laura Samani, about a woman desperate to revive her stillborn baby who heads off on a quest to find the church that may be able to accomplish it.

What we said: “Samani’s film-making language has consistency and urgency, and there is an interesting streak of atheism that goes alongside this movie’s spiritual aura.” [Read the full review.](#)



Strangers on a train ... Compartment No 6. Photograph: Sami Kuokkanen
Aamu Film Company

Compartment No 6

Finnish director Juho Kuosmanen directs this answer to Before Sunrise, about an archaeology student who shares a train compartment with a boorish Russian; the pair connect despite their differences.

What we said: “[There is] a wonderful human warmth and humour in this offbeat story of strangers on a train and of national characteristics starting to melt.” [Read the full review.](#)

All the Old Knives

Chris Pine and Thandiwe Newton star in a clever and complex spy yarn about a CIA officer ordered to interrogate his former lover over dinner as part of an investigation into a mole.

What we said: “A very watchable and classily upscale espionage drama-thriller in the spirit of John le Carré.” [Read the full review.](#)

Prayers for the Stolen

From director Tatiana Huezo, a study of the traumatising life experience of a Mexican woman trying to ensure her daughter escapes the attentions of rapists and narcos who can apparently operate with impunity.

What we said: “A complex, subtle, tender and heart-rending story of a young girl’s upbringing in a village menaced by the drug cartels and people traffickers.” [Read the full review.](#)



‘Horribly violent, nihilistic and chaotic’ ... Alexander Skarsgård in *The Northman*. Photograph: Focus Features/Aidan Monaghan/Allstar

The Northman

Brutal Viking saga, based on the same legend as Shakespeare’s Hamlet, with Alexander Skarsgård as the chieftain’s son out for vengeance on the man who murdered his father and took his throne.

What we said: “A horribly violent, nihilistic and chaotic story about the endless cycle of violence ... It’s entirely outrageous, with some epic visions of the flaring cosmos. I couldn’t look away.” [Read the full review.](#)

Onoda: 10,000 Nights in the Jungle

Drama based on the bizarre real-life story of Hiroo Onoda, a second world war Japanese soldier who held out in the jungle in the Philippines until 1974.

What we said: “A really well-made, old-fashioned anti-war epic in a forthright and robustly enjoyable style.” [Read the full review.](#)

Happening

Golden Lion-winning abortion drama, more relevant than ever, from director Audrey Diwan; a study of a woman (played by Anamaria Vartolomei) who becomes pregnant in early 60s, pre-legalisation France.

What we said: “A brutal Handmaid’s Tale from our recent European past – a situation that still exists in many parts of the world, longed for by reactionary nostalgists elsewhere.” [Read the full review.](#)

Playground

Seven-year-old Maya Vanderbeque is brilliant in this Belgian schoolyard drama, as a girl called Nora who tries to confront classroom bullies in this short, intense film.

What we said: “A kid’s-eye-view nightmare of playground bullying impossible to watch without a sick, jittery feeling of rage and dread.” [Read the full review.](#)

We’re All Going to the World’s Fair

Creepy account of a teenager becoming immersed in an online horror role-play game, from trans director Jane Schoenbrun.

What we said: “Strangeness is a quality valued and yearned for in so many sorts of movies, but rarely found – yet this really is strange, an experiment in horror form.” [Read the full review.](#)

The Quiet Girl

Irish rural drama set in the early 80s, with Catherine Clinch as the silent child of the title who goes to stay with relatives over the summer.

What we said: “This beautiful and compassionate film from first-time feature director [Colm Bairéad](#) is a child’s-eye look at our fallen world; already it feels like a classic.” [Read the full review.](#)

Vortex

Split-screen dementia drama from Argentinian provocateur Gaspar Noé, starring Dario Argento and Françoise Lebrun as an elderly couple whose lives are dogged by the latter's cognitive decline.

What we said: "Noé brings his cauterisingly fierce gaze to the spectacle of old age: the world of those about to enter the void." [Read the full review.](#)

The Innocents

Creepy-kid horror from Norwegian director Eskil Vogt (co-writer of [The Worst Person in the World](#)), about two young sisters who make friends with other children who apparently possess supernatural powers.

What we said: "It greased my palms with anxiety and incidentally has some of the best child acting I have ever seen." [Read the full review.](#)

Benediction

Terence Davies' account of the life of Siegfried Sassoon (played by Jack Lowden and Peter Capaldi in younger/older versions), tracing his career from lionised war poet to unhappy later life.

What we said: "It is a film which is piercingly and almost unbearably about failure: the catastrophic moral and spiritual failure of war which is aligned to Sassoon's own terrible sense of personal shortcomings." [Read the full review.](#)

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US Capitol attack

Congress's January 6 hearings aim to be TV spectacular that 'blows the roof off'

House select committee members have drafted in a former top TV executive to choreograph the six public hearings

[January 6 hearings – follow live](#)



Television crews prepare the Cannon Caucus Room for Thursday night's hearing by the House select committee investigating the attack at the US Capitol. Photograph: J Scott Applewhite/AP

[Ed Pilkington](#) in New York and [Lauren Gambino](#) in Washington

Thu 9 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 19.44 EDT

The directors are hoping that the storyline will have all the elements of a TV smash hit: a King Lear figure ranting and raving as his power slips away from him, a glamorous couple struggling to rise above the fray, shady

characters scheming sedition in hotel bedrooms, hordes of thugs in paramilitary gear chanting “hang him” as they march on the nation’s capitol.

When the US House select committee investigating the January 6 insurrection opens its hearings on Thursday evening, it will do so in prime time and with primetime production values. The seven Democrats and two Republicans – shunned by their own party – who sit on the panel are pulling out all the stops in an attempt to seize the public’s attention.

They have [brought onboard](#) a former president of ABC News, James Goldston, a veteran of Good Morning America and other mass-market TV programmes, to tightly choreograph the six public hearings into [movie-length episodes](#) ranging from 90 minutes to two and a half hours. His task: to fulfill the prediction of one of the Democratic committee members, Jamie Raskin, that the hearings “will tell a story that will really blow the roof off the House”.

To amplify the event, activists are hosting dozens of public watch parties in living rooms and union halls across the country. A “flagship event” will take place at the Robert Taft Memorial and Carillon in Washington, where attendees can watch the hearing on a jumbotron while enjoying free Ben & Jerry’s ice-cream.

Reports suggest that one ratings-boosting tactic under consideration would be to show clips from the committee’s interviews with Donald Trump’s daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner. They were witness to many of Donald Trump’s rantings in the buildup to January 6, and highlights of their quizzing could command a large audience.

As a counterpoint to the glamorous couple, the committee is also likely to focus during the opening session on the activities of far-right groups including the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers. This week, [the justice department charged](#) the national chairman of the Proud Boys, Enrique Tarrio, and four of the group’s other leaders with seditious conspiracy.



Members of the House committee – Bennie Thompson, Liz Cheney and Jamie Raskin – in March. Photograph: Michael Reynolds/EPA

The indictments will act as backdrop to two of the committee's main ambitions for the hearings. First, to show in dramatic and previously unseen footage – edited for maximum effect on TV and social media alike – the harrowing violence and brutal destruction that was unleashed during the storming of the Capitol, in which the vice-president was forced to flee rioters shouting: "Hang Mike Pence."

The second ambition is to convey to the American people that the maelstrom of rage was not random and unprompted, but rather the opposite – instigated, organised, meticulously planned and conceived by an array of conscious actors.

To tease out the violent drama and the calculated premeditation of the insurrection, the panel is expected to call Nick Quested to testify. The British film-maker attached himself to far-right groups in the days leading up to January 6, and on the day itself joined a group of Proud Boys as they entered the Capitol compound.

The Republican leadership, which is planning a slew of [counter-programming](#) measures to undermine the hearings, is counting on the

American people being so bored by January 6 and distracted by Ukraine, inflation and other worries that millions will avoid tuning in. But opinion poll research suggests they should not be too confident.

Celinda Lake, a veteran Democratic pollster, told a press event staged by the Defend Democracy Project that she had been “frankly quite surprised” to find a high level of public interest in the hearings. “I did not think with everything else on their plates and how fleeting the public’s attention is that this would be such a major issue, but it’s really penetrated their consciousness,” she said.

The elephant in the room is Trump. How to play the former president and his role behind January 6 is one of the most sensitive issues facing the hearings’ orchestrators.

Doug Jones, the former Democratic senator from Alabama and a former federal prosecutor, urged colleagues to avoid giving the impression they were out to get him.

“They should not give the American public the perception that this is an attack on Donald Trump – this is truly an attack on democracy. Right now for primetime, they need to lay the facts and let the American public see this for what it is.”

The committee is thought to be intending to tackle Trump head on in the final of the six public hearings which, like the first, will be held in primetime later this month. Unnamed sources have been predicting that presentation will contain several “bombshells” which, if true, are certain to be deployed to full dramatic effect.

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[The US politics sketch](#)[Joe Biden](#)

No easy ride for Biden as Kimmel tells him to ‘start yelling at people’

Serious questions on gun violence mean there are few laughs as US president meets late-night TV host



Joe Biden and Jimmy Kimmel. ‘Can’t you issue an executive order? Trump passed those out like Halloween candy.’ Photograph: Evan Vucci/AP



[David Smith](#) in Washington

[@smithinamerica](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 03.46 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 05.52 EDT

“Our very special guest tonight is to aviato sunglasses what Tom Cruise is to aviato sunglasses,” quipped the late-night TV host [Jimmy Kimmel](#). “I’m proud to say I voted for him dozens of times. He is the reason we all got a cavity search tonight.”

This was how Kimmel introduced [Joe Biden](#) for his first in-person interview with a late-night host since taking office as US president.

But any hopes that Biden, whose poll ratings are plunging, might have had that the comedian would invite him to show a lighter side to his personality were soon dashed. It was a night when there were not many laughs.

Once the president had sat down, Kimmel asked: “Do you mind if I ask you some serious questions?” He then dived straight in to demand why, after a flurry of mass shootings across America, nothing had been done since Biden entered the White House.

“Well, I think a lot of it’s intimidation by the NRA [National Rifle Association],” the president replied. “Look, this is not your father’s

Republican party. This is a Maga party,” – a reference to the former president Donald Trump’s “Make America great again” slogan, which Biden is increasingly using an insult.

“It’s a very different Republican party and so you find people who are worried, I believe, that if they vote for a rational gun policy they’re going to be primaried and they’re going to lose in a hard-right Republican primary.”

Biden said he had always had a “straight relationship” with Mitch McConnell, the Republican minority leader in the Senate. “You know, he’s a guy that when he says something, he means it. I disagree with a lot of what he says, but he means it.”

But Kimmel, seemingly determined to blunt rightwing criticism that he would give the president an easy ride, showed greater willingness to interrupt Biden than many political interviewers. He objected that McConnell had contradicted himself on confirming supreme court justices in a president’s final year.

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Biden added: “Look, he’s the leader of a party that’s moved very hard right and so, in order to get anything done, he has a different problem than he did early on before Trump became president.”

Kimmel observed that although the Republican party had moved to the hard right, the American people had not because an overwhelming majority supported expanded background checks on gun buyers. His voice quivering with emotion, the host suggested that every senator should sit with the grieving families of 19 schoolchildren [killed last month in Uvalde, Texas](#).

He interrupted Biden again to ask impatiently: “Can’t you issue an executive order? Trump passed those out like Halloween candy.”

The president noted he had issued some executive orders but said to applause: “I don’t want to emulate Trump’s abuse of the constitution and constitutional authority.”

He said he knew some people felt like “Republicans don’t play it square, why do you play it square? Well, guess what? If we do the same thing they do, our democracy will literally be in jeopardy. Not a joke.”

Kimmel replied: “It’s like you’re playing Monopoly with somebody who won’t pass go or won’t follow any of the rules, and how do you ever make any progress if they’re not following the rules?”

Biden smiled and joked, “You’ve got to send them to jail”, a reference to a punishment in the board game.

Biden is facing concerns about high fuel prices, baby formula shortages, and a lack of progress on several legislative fronts such as gun safety and voting rights. A Morning Consult poll published on Wednesday found that 58% of those surveyed disapproved of Biden’s performance as president, while 39% of respondents approved.

Biden has also been criticised for giving fewer media interviews than his predecessors: Wednesday’s was his first since 10 February. While Trump gave late-night TV a wide berth as president, Barack Obama was a regular presence on the shows during his time in office. Biden did a virtual interview with Jimmy Fallon last December.

Kimmel’s show on the ABC network was recorded in Los Angeles, where Biden is visiting for this week’s Summit of the Americas, bringing together countries from across the hemisphere. The first lady, Jill Biden, was in the audience along with Biden’s granddaughter Naomi and her fiance.

At one point Kimmel, who in past years has spoken out passionately about healthcare and gun violence, pondered political gridlock and the spread of false information and advised: “I think you need to start yelling at people.”

Biden demurred, saying the US was still suffering from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, but insisted he had “never been more optimistic in my life”.

Kimmel again cut in: “Why are you so optimistic? It makes no sense.”

Biden said he was pinning his hopes on young people, the “best educated, least prejudiced, most giving generation in American history. This generation is going to change everything. We just have to make sure we don’t give up.”

Later Kimmel sympathised with Biden’s endlessly multiplying crises, including an imminent supreme court decision on abortion rights. “What a terrible job you have,” he said. “I’m glad you’re doing it. But, boy oh boy, does this seem like a bad gig.”

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OpinionConservatives

A smart cabinet would be plotting to get rid of Johnson. This one is neither smart nor brave

[Martin Kettle](#)



The PM has picked ministers who owe him everything and do his bidding. They have a duty to the country but are shirking it



Illustration: Sébastien Thibault.

Thu 9 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 11.15 EDT

This ought to be the cabinet's moment. A prime minister who exults in his own uniqueness is dragging his party down in the polls. Byelection reverses loom, and perhaps even a general election defeat. An unexpectedly large number of MPs have just voted no confidence. If ever there was a moment for his most senior colleagues to speak and act on behalf of the Tory party, this is it.

Instead, what do we get from Boris Johnson's cabinet team? We get parroted rhetoric about massive agendas, his capacity to "deliver", lines in the sand, and moving on. We get a [video of the cabinet](#) compliantly listening as Johnson delivers a five-minute Putin-style ramble in which he pointedly ignores Monday's revolt entirely. And now we get windy, wishful waffle about how it will all be solved by tax cuts.

Where's the beef in all this? Where is the honest sense of the actual moment that the government is facing? I'm not naive. It's obvious that when the prime minister decides to bring the TV cameras into cabinet, other ministers have to zip it for the duration and be supportive. It even makes sense that

ministers need to decide whether a cabinet meeting likely to be full of leakers is the ideal place to criticise a leader or a policy.

But cabinet ministers do not have to be doormats. These ministers are very senior politicians. They run departments that spend millions of pounds. They have experience, opinions and even in some cases judgment. Above all, though, they have a responsibility to their party and their country. And this cabinet is shirking it.

The main evidence for this is the evasive conceit on the Tory right that policies provide the answer to the government's problems. Yesterday's papers were full of stories that Johnson is being pressed to bring in tax cuts as a means of restoring his and the government's popularity. The business secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, always an inveterate state-shrinker, was an early proponent. He was followed by the health secretary, Sajid Javid, another small-government Tory.

This is lazy thinking and ideological nostalgia. Taxes are high because public needs are great and the global economy has been disrupted, not because the government desires high taxes or has failed to follow the gospel of Margaret Thatcher. Cutting taxes in current circumstances would put some money in the pockets of millions of citizens but would result in cuts to spending and services and greater borrowing costs for future generations, and could feed inflation.



Margaret Thatcher in 1979: Ken Clarke in his memoirs revealed how her cabinet pushed her out in 1990. Photograph: PA

The focus on tax cuts is also a wilful misreading of Monday's vote. The issue on the ballot paper was not tax cuts or any other policy. It was about whether MPs had confidence in Johnson as party leader. The outcome was that [211 said yes and 148 said no](#). Since there are, indefensibly, about 160 Conservative MPs on the so-called payroll vote, with government jobs of some kind, it is likely that most of these voted for Johnson (though a few did not). This in turn suggests that around three-quarters of backbenchers voted against him.

That's a devastating verdict. Yet detailed analyses agree on one thing: that those who voted no confidence in Johnson came from very different wings, generations and areas of the country. They included remainers such as Caroline Nokes and leavers such as Steve Baker, one-nation Tories such as Damian Green and rightwingers such as Andrew Bridgen, veterans such as Andrew Mitchell and tyros such as Angela Richardson, southern MPs facing a Lib-Dem challenge (Steve Brine), northerners facing Labour (Dehenna Davison) and Scots fighting the SNP (Douglas Ross).

They were not brought together by a desire to cut or raise taxes; on policy, they have differing views. They came together to vote against Johnson's

leadership of their party. Sensing the strong tide of opinion against his lockdown parties, many will have agreed with Jeremy Hunt's powerful comment that Monday was a "lose or change" moment for the party. That was true on Monday and it is still true now.

"Lose or change" was also the ultimate issue back in 1990, when Thatcher lost power. But look at the stark difference between the way the cabinet acted then and the way its successors are acting now. In 1990, the entire cabinet backed Thatcher initially. But when the scale of defection became clear, ministers stepped up to the plate and pushed her out.

Ken Clarke provides a [vivid account](#) in his memoirs. He describes how the cabinet saw what was happening and acted. They did not do this around the cabinet table. They did it by caballing in corners and corridors and by talking to backbenchers. Above all, they took charge of the situation. Fourteen out of 19 cabinet ministers told Thatcher she must go. She went. And the cabinet majority was right. "We had acted as candid friends, and had ... given her the frank and truthful advice which she had lacked," says Clarke.

This is exactly what the cabinet of 2022 should also be doing. Perhaps, in secret, some of them are. Knowing what he has said about Johnson before, it is hard to believe Michael Gove has been reduced to an obsequious code of silence. Would a smart, sensible minister such as Steve Barclay really think all this is for the best for the Tories? Do the Scottish secretary, Alister Jack or the Northern Ireland secretary, Brandon Lewis, really not believe that their jobs would be immeasurably easier if Johnson was replaced? And why would the potential successors not be quietly prowling the corridors too?

The bleaker conclusion is that this is not happening because the current cabinet is hand-picked for its readiness to do Johnson's bidding. Besides Ken Clarke, Thatcher's 1990 cabinet still included big figures such as Douglas Hurd, John Major, Cecil Parkinson and Chris Patten, all experienced and confident operators. Their departmental equivalents today are Liz Truss, Rishi Sunak, Grant Shapps and George Eustice.

In his letter explaining why he would vote against Johnson this week, the former minister Jesse Norman put the government's mediocrity in searing context. Johnson lacked a mission, preferred campaigning to governing, rhetoric to planning, and was attempting to import elements of a presidential system, Norman wrote. "All these things are at odds with a decent, proper conservatism: with effective teamwork, careful reform, a sense of integrity, respect for the rule of law and a long term focus on the public good."

The problem, in short, is Johnson. That was the problem that Norman and the other 147 MPs faced up to this week. It is the problem that the 211, and the cabinet in particular, are still avoiding. Offered a choice between changing and losing, the Tory party has chosen to lose.

Martin Kettle is a Guardian columnist

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OpinionWork & careers

Can workers cram five days worth of work into four days? Mothers already do

[Chitra Ramaswamy](#)



A four-day week is being trialled – but if you want to know how to squeeze maximum activity into minimum time, just ask busy mums



'I have never got so much done in my life.' Photograph: Maiwolf/Getty Images/Image Source

Thu 9 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 09.42 EDT

Now that the world's biggest [trial of a four-day week](#) is under way, it occurs to me that if you *really* want to examine the effect of squeezing the greatest amount of productivity into the smallest amount of time, there's a pilot that has been going on for donkey's years. It's called being a mum.

In order to examine the test case more closely, head to your nearest school gate, supermarket or play park. You will probably spot her doing something apparently humdrum but on closer inspection logically impossible. Such as pushing a buggy, unpeeling a banana, singing The Wheels on the Bus with spontaneously inserted lyrics to counter the patriarchy, and listening to someone else's problems on a mobile lodged between ear and shoulder, *all at the same time*. Go on. Approach her. But be gentle because she is not used to being seen, and might take fright. Tap her on the shoulder – no, not the phone-propping one, the other one that's carrying a scooter. Ask her how she is.

My children are four, eight and 11, if you count the dog, which I do because she falls into the bottomless category of Things That Cannot Take Care Of

Themselves. I work from 9am to 1.47pm (we 100% productivity types are specific about time), which is when I charge to nursery to pick up the four-year-old, and I have never got so much done in my life. Since having children, my preferred working hours are 5am to 7am, not because of the peace, sunrise over the sycamores and all that crap, but because, to earn a living, I need everyone in the house to be unconscious.

The trial – the official one, not the maternal trial of life – will see more than 3,300 workers at 70 companies working a four-day week with no loss of pay. It is based on the 100:80:100 model: 100% of pay for 80% of the time in exchange for a commitment to maintain 100% productivity. Ah, so there's the rub. We're more accustomed to the 0:100:100 model. And, frankly, you work it out because I haven't got the bloody time.

- Chitra Ramaswamy is a Guardian columnist
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OpinionRace

Since George Floyd's death sport, not politics, has led the fight against racism

[Mihir Bose](#)

Athletes are speaking out in a way that elected officials are not. Sport once caused the worst problems, but now seems our brightest hope



'It shouldn't have taken the murder of a black American by a white policeman for British sport to come clean on racism.' People taking the knee in front of a mural of Manchester United player Marcus Rashford in Withington, Manchester, July 2021. Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

Thu 9 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 07.39 EDT

Here it comes again: what they used to call the English problem. In Munich, England football fans are arrested for making Nazi salutes and damaging a hotel room before Tuesday's [Nations League](#) tie with Germany. Before the match, manager Gareth Southgate reveals his task of preparing his players to

take penalties is now complicated by the racist abuse they received after spot-kicks were missed in the European championship final.

Against that backdrop, the idea that sport could play a leading role in dragging a reluctant world into a truly non-racial future may seem a ridiculous fantasy. And yet, that is happening. In the two years since the [murder of George Floyd](#), sport has taken more meaningful steps on this long and tortuous journey than any other sector of society.

Look closely and you'll see that reactions from the sporting world to Floyd's murder have been among the most dramatic in society. Ebony Rainford-Brent, England's first black female cricketer turned Sky commentator, told me: "I felt absolutely sick for two to three weeks. I was fed up that racism is a huge elephant in the room."

Before Floyd's killing she had not felt bold enough to talk about racism – and who could blame her? Her full name is Ebony-Jewel Cora-Lee Camellia Rosamond Rainford-Brent, and at one of her first cricket trials a white triallist said: "Oh, you are from Brixton, aren't you? Bet your mum doesn't know who your dad is, so she's just giving you a name for everyone."

But following Floyd's murder, Rainford-Brent went on three Black Lives Matter marches. Later, she broke down during a Sky meeting, telling her white colleagues about how she never expected to work with a black director or a black producer, "because I know how the world operates". The company was so shocked that she and her fellow commentator, Michael Holding, who had also never spoken about racism, were asked to produce a [documentary on race](#).



‘Initially taking the knee was met with opposition but it has now become an essential part of the game.’ Liverpool FC Women before the FA Women’s Continental Tyres League Cup, October 2021.

The result was an important film that argued racism could only be eradicated if society was told about the achievements of people of colour airbrushed from history by white writers. For British broadcasting, which had traditionally been reluctant to discuss racism in sport, this was sensational, and it emboldened Nasser Hussain, the former England cricket captain, whose father is of Indian origin, to confess that he, too, had concealed the racism he had suffered. “We’ve all been looking away too long.”

Three weeks earlier, footballers in the Premier League made waves when they began to [take the knee](#). Initially the antiracism gesture was met with opposition but it has now become an essential part of the game and one that is supported by white players. This is in stark contrast to previous generations who stood by as their black teammates were racially abused, even at times joining in. As John Barnes, who played for England in the 1980s, told me: “When I first started playing, your own teammates would call you ‘nigger’.”

And the changes are happening at all levels. Mark Bullingham, the chief executive of the FA, who was also shaken by watching footage of Floyd

crying out, “I can’t breathe”, speedily introduced a football diversity code aimed at making the game more inclusive. When I asked Bullingham about white privilege, he admitted, with remarkable candour: “I think every white person has benefited from white privilege.”

Some sports have even gone as far as accepting their error in denying racism. In November 2009, Pat Cash, the Australian winner of the Wimbledon men’s singles in 1987, told me that tennis in England is a “white, middle-class sport”. When the interview appeared, the Lawn Tennis Association immediately contacted the paper, rebutting this. Now, Scott Lloyd, the chief executive of the LTA, tells me he agreed with Cash, and within days of Floyd’s murder issued an [open letter](#), admitting: “Racism, and wider discrimination, is structurally ingrained in our society, and so the effect of racism is still very much evident and pervasive within our sport.” Rugby has never apologised for its shameful support of apartheid, but Sue Day, its chief operating and financial officer, told me: “Every institution that we are part of in this country has been built on racist structures.”

The above examples show sport’s unique power. It has always had many almost spiritual advantages compared with other popular pastimes. It has echoes of religious observance in its theatre, ritual and beauty. A visit with fellow supporters to an important fixture away from home, especially overseas, is reminiscent of a medieval pilgrimage. In certain respects, belief in a team or an athlete is a “safer” investment than religious faith. And it is easier to sack the England football manager than the archbishop of Canterbury.

In today’s post-truth world, sport results are a rare source of trusted news. Not even Donald Trump could claim a sports score was fake. Sport is also simultaneously a global language, and a marker of personal and local identity. You do not have to know Portuguese to appreciate Brazilian football. Sport has the ability to galvanise the collective and spark societal change in a truly unique way.

This public reckoning with historical racism could not be more different to the smug conclusion reached by the government-endorsed Sewell report on [race](#), which minimised the truth of institutional racism: a conclusion that so delighted government ministers.

It shouldn't have taken the murder of a black American by a white policeman for British sport to come clean on racism. And there is a long way to go. But seeing people at all levels in sport – from the players to the chief executives – asking themselves hard questions does indicate a desire to change, something not so evident in the rest of society.

- Mihir Bose is the author of [Dreaming The Impossible](#): The Battle to Create a Non-Racial Sports World
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[Opinion](#)[Metropolitan police](#)

Isn't it frightening that a lone woman seeing a policeman now feels afraid, not reassured?

Zoe Williams

While the Met wastes time pursuing the Sarah Everard protesters through the courts, it destroys what little trust is left



Protesters outside Scotland Yard on 12 March, 2022, mark a year since the Clapham Common vigil for Sarah Everard. Photograph: Guy Smallman/Getty Images

Thu 9 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.34 EDT

The Metropolitan police continues to press its case against six people who attended the vigil for Sarah Everard in March last year – despite the fact that the high court has already ruled that the force [breached the rights](#) of the

event organisers, Reclaim These Streets (RTS), and told the Met, when it tried to appeal that ruling this month, that its case was “[hopeless](#)”.

At every turn, the force’s behaviour has been the exact opposite of what it should have been. At the vigil itself, as one of RTS’s founders, Jamie Klingler, describes: “They should have handed out tissues. They should have facilitated a safe space for us to grieve.” Instead, they used Covid restrictions self-servingly to try to block the protest, in what would later turn out to be a chilling echo of the murderer’s own violence. When it went ahead anyway, the policing was heavy-handed and disproportionate, and the force has hammered the legal avenues to have the high court ruling reversed since without dignity or humility.

When you read the witness statements of individual officers, they don’t belong in a court of law at all, but on a therapist’s couch. They had to make arrests because they feared that it was turning into an “anti-police protest”. PC Darryl Mayne wrote: “From my own recollection I recall the crowd screaming what I believed to be the following: ‘Go away’, ‘Murderers’, ‘Arrest your own.’” He continued by noting that the crowd shouted: “‘It should be you’ to officers, which caused me to feel distress upon hearing this.” It sounds less like a safety issue than an ego wound.

When anyone is killed by the police, it changes policing for ever, and changes the experience of being a police officer. Whether it was an operational mistake rooted in institutional failure, often racism, or a brutal crime committed by a bad seed, violence corrodes the trust that must be vested in the uniform if it is to have any meaning. It must be profoundly distressing, when your principle is policing by consent, to see that consent undermined. But the police cannot arrest their way out of the distress they’re feeling.

It’s impossible to overstate how damaging it is that a woman on her own, seeing a policeman, would be more likely to feel afraid than reassured. It was catastrophic, in the aftermath of Jean Charles de Menezes’ killing in 2005, that any man of colour carrying a newspaper could justifiably consider himself in danger. It is still hard to fathom the remarks made in the direct aftermath of Everard’s death: advice from the Met to “flag down a bus” if

you're concerned about a lone officer; the police commissioner for North Yorkshire saying that women "first of all need to be streetwise about when they can be arrested and when they can't". A breach had occurred in the fabric of a civilised society – we could no longer assume that those empowered to enforce the law could be trusted by law-abiding people. And the nation's assembled forces' best answers were to use your noggin and trust bus drivers instead.

There is no alternative emergency service while the police adapt to their new lives in no man's land, where to trust them is naive, but to obey them is still necessary. This relationship has to be repaired.

It isn't enough for the Met to [announce](#) a "zero-tolerance policy" on bigotry and hatred, after another batch of leaked WhatsApp messages in which officers exchange rape jokes and casually admit their own domestic violence. The force needs to demonstrate that it takes misogyny and racism seriously, in its own ranks and in general. It cannot be brittle and defensive in court, and progressive by press release. It cannot get its own house in order while it continues to wage war on grassroots civic organisers.

The Met's approach was too often similar to that of the Vatican when allegations of sex offences were first made against priests: circle the wagons, protect the insiders, wait for it to pass. It didn't just not work: every passing day of it not-working made the grievances keener, until the Catholic church found a way to hear them. The next commissioner must build a better relationship with the public. If a women's citizen army spontaneously masses (like the Irish Citizen Army of 1913, to "learn the police some manners"), the Met needs to hear it, even if it's shouting, especially when it's shouting. How can you show that you're listening if you won't acknowledge people's anger?

- Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist
 - *Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at guardian.letters@theguardian.com*
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Fears for Honduran children as poverty worsens pneumonia's toll

The death of one baby boy in a remote village in the south of the country is a tragedy being repeated all over the region



Children dozing near El Progreso. Pneumonia, already a main cause of child deaths in Honduras, is claiming more lives as hunger now affects 2.6m people. Photograph: Orlando Sierra/AFP/Getty

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[Sarah Johnson in Vado Ancho, El Paraíso](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 01.30 EDT Last modified on Thu 9 Jun 2022 01.31 EDT

The last time Guadalupe Castellano, a health volunteer, saw Michael Padilla alive was in February, when he was two months old. His mother had brought him to her house in the village of Apausupo, in southern [Honduras](#), to be weighed.

Castellano looked at the baby and saw immediately that something was wrong. “He was underweight and pale. He wasn’t moving or even crying,” she says. “I asked what was wrong and [the mother] said he wasn’t breastfeeding, and he was ill.

“I told her to take him to the health centre to see the doctor. I knew the mother wasn’t eating enough. They are very poor.”

Four days later, mother and baby left the village to visit family. The boy was not seen by the doctor, and he died in March of pneumonia in hospital in the city of Choluteca.



Dr Jorge Medina says: ‘I’m scared that, as a result of the drought, the situation will get worse and there will be more pneumonia, especially in children.’ Photograph: Sarah Johnson/Guardian

There are fears that the threat posed by pneumonia – already one of [the leading causes of child death in Honduras](#) – is growing. Child deaths caused by the disease are strongly linked to malnutrition, lack of safe water and sanitation, and inadequate access to healthcare.

In the south of Honduras, damage to crops from unpredictable weather, the Covid pandemic, and now the war in Ukraine have created a worsening

poverty crisis that provides a perfect setting for the disease to thrive.

Honduras was already vulnerable. According to the World Bank, the Central American country is one of the [poorest and most unequal countries](#) in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Data for the latest available year (2019) – before the double impact of Covid and [hurricanes Eta and Iota](#) – shows that 4.8 million people, almost half the population, live on less than \$5.50 (£4.40) a day, the second-highest poverty rate in the region after Haiti.

Quick Guide

A common condition

Show

The human toll of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is huge and rising. These illnesses end the lives of approximately 41 million of the 56 million people who die every year – and three quarters of them are in the developing world.

NCDs are simply that; unlike, say, a virus, you can't catch them. Instead, they are caused by a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors. The main types are cancers, chronic respiratory illnesses, diabetes and cardiovascular disease – heart attacks and stroke. Approximately 80% are preventable, and all are on the rise, spreading inexorably around the world as ageing populations and lifestyles pushed by economic growth and urbanisation make being unhealthy a global phenomenon.

NCDs, once seen as illnesses of the wealthy, now have a grip on the poor. Disease, disability and death are perfectly designed to create and widen inequality – and being poor makes it less likely you will be diagnosed accurately or treated.

Investment in tackling these common and chronic conditions that kill 71% of us is incredibly low, while the cost to families, economies and communities is staggeringly high.

In low-income countries NCDs – typically slow and debilitating illnesses – are seeing a fraction of the money needed being invested or donated. Attention remains focused on the threats from communicable diseases, yet cancer death rates have long sped past the death toll from malaria, TB and HIV/Aids combined.

'A common condition' is a new Guardian series reporting on NCDs in the developing world: their prevalence, the solutions, the causes and consequences, telling the stories of people living with these illnesses.

Tracy McVeigh, editor

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Levels of hunger are [rapidly getting worse](#). According to the Central American Integration System (SICA), a regional intergovernmental body, 2.6 million Hondurans will experience crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity between now and August, up from 2.2 million at the beginning of the year. In the south, which lies within the “dry corridor” of Central America – through parts of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica – experts predict famine within months.

Ramón Turcios, southern regional director for the Honduran agriculture ministry, says: “Hunger is definitely going to get worse. We can’t give a good prognosis.

“In the south, there is a good chance there will be a famine, possibly in September,” he says. “I am very worried.”



‘I want everyone to have enough, but that’s not how it is,’ says Guadalupe Castellano, a health volunteer. Photograph: Sarah Johnson/The Guardian

Turcios blames the [change in government](#), which has temporarily halted any progress being made, as well as the climate crisis for the worsening drought and inconsistent rains that are wreaking havoc on the region and people’s lives.

The south of Honduras is a mountainous area where many communities have no safe drinking water or opportunities for work. People here grow maize and beans to survive. Due to the weather, crops have been ruined year after year.

Apausupo, where Padilla was born, has no water supply and lies five miles away from the nearest health service, in the town of Vado Ancho – a three-hour walk on an unpaved track in poor condition.

According to Nahun García, mayor of Vado Ancho, which counts Apausupo within its borders, the number of families living in extreme poverty has tripled in the last five years. “We have 300 families who can’t afford to feed themselves. They are living on less than one dollar a day,” he says. “We need food. This is primordial.”

In Vado Ancho, the World Food Programme is providing supplementary nutrition for children under two. Dr Jorge Medina, who works at the local health centre, says this has helped, but the outlook remains bleak.

“I’m scared that, as a result of the drought, the situation will get worse and there will be more cases of pneumonia, especially in children under five,” he says. “We have a lot of problems with nutrition in some areas.”

In Apausupo, Omar García, the uncle of baby Michael, who died at three months old, stands outside his house. His brother, who lives next door, has left the village to join his wife. “Neither me nor my brother has anything,” says Garcia. “We don’t have land to grow food, and work has dried up because there’s been no rain. This house is all I have. No one has anything round here. There are people dying of hunger.”

The health volunteer, Castellano, who lives nearby, says: “If I could go back, I would follow up and make sure the mother took the baby to see a doctor. It pains me to see a child in this situation but I had nothing to offer.

“I can’t see a way out of this poverty. I want everyone to have enough, but that’s not how it is.”

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US school shootings

Uvalde survivor, 11, tells House hearing she smeared herself with friend's blood

Miah Cerrillo speaks before House passes gun control bill that is all but doomed in Senate

Uvalde: 11-year-old survivor tells hearing she smeared herself with friend's blood – video

[Joan E Greve](#) in Washington

[@joanegreve](#)

Wed 8 Jun 2022 20.25 EDTFirst published on Wed 8 Jun 2022 13.50 EDT

An 11-year-old survivor of the elementary school massacre [in Uvalde, Texas](#), testified before the House oversight committee on Wednesday, as lawmakers continued to try to reach a compromise on gun control legislation after a series of devastating mass shootings.

The House hearing came two weeks after an 18-year-old opened fire at Robb elementary school, killing 19 children and two teachers, and three weeks after 10 people were killed at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York.

Miah Cerrillo, a fourth-grader at the Uvalde school, recounted how she watched as her teacher and friends were shot and acted quickly to save herself. Miah covered herself in a friend's blood and played dead until she was able to reach her teacher's phone and call police.

In her recorded testimony, Miah said she no longer felt safe at school.

“Because I don’t want it to happen again,” she said.

The slow police response to the Uvalde shooting has been the focus of intense [scrutiny and criticism](#).

Miah was joined by other families affected by gun violence, including Felix and Kimberly Rubio, [whose daughter Lexi](#) died in Uvalde, and Zeneta Everhart, whose son Zaire Goodman was injured in Buffalo. Ten people were killed there, by another gunman with an AR-15-style rifle.

“We don’t want you to think of Lexi as just a number,” Rubio told the committee. “She was intelligent, compassionate and athletic. So today we stand for Lexi, and as her voice we demand action.”

The wrenching hearing took place as pressure mounts on Congress to act. Members of the House passed a wide-ranging gun control bill on Wednesday just hours after victims testified. It would raise the age limit for buying a semi-automatic rifle and prohibit the sale of ammunition magazines with a capacity of more than 15 rounds.

The legislation is all but doomed to fail in the evenly matched Senate, where 60 votes are needed to pass most legislation. A bipartisan group of senators has been negotiating over a possible compromise on gun control, but any legislation that can make it through the Senate will probably be far narrower than proposals approved by the House.

Thom Tillis, a Republican from North Carolina, indicated on Tuesday that Democrats’ proposal to raise the age requirement for buying semi-automatic weapons was unlikely to be included in the Senate bill.

“That can be in the discussion, but right now we’re trying to work on things where we have agreement,” Tillis told CNN. “We’ve got a lot of people in the discussion. We’ve got to get 60 votes.”



House speaker Nancy Pelosi at a gun violence prevention rally outside the US Capitol on Wednesday. Photograph: Evelyn Hockstein/Reuters

But the House bill does allow Democratic lawmakers a chance to frame for voters in November where they stand on policies that polls show are widely supported.

“We can’t save every life, but my God, shouldn’t we try? America, we hear you and today in the House we are taking the action you are demanding,” said Veronica Escobar, a congresswoman from Texas. “Take note of who is with you and who is not.”

Gun control experts and New York mayor Eric Adams also testified at the hearing on the need to restrict access to firearms and, by extension, reduce violent crime.

“It is high noon in America, time for every one of us to decide where we stand on the issue of gun violence,” Adams said. “I am here today to ask every one of you, and everyone in this Congress, to stand with me to end gun violence and protect the lives of all Americans.”

But the emotional and searing testimony did not stop Republicans on the committee rehashing talking points about why they oppose gun restrictions.

“Knee jerk reactions to impose gun control policies that seek to curtail our constitutional right to bear arms are not the answer,” said James Comer, the Republican ranking member.

The Democratic chair of the committee, Carolyn Maloney, criticized Republican efforts to deflect attention from the need to reform gun laws.

“They have blamed violent video games. They have blamed family values. They have even blamed open doors. They have blamed everything but guns,” Maloney said. “But we know the United States does not have a monopoly on mental illness, video games or any other excuse. What America does have is widespread access to guns.”

Despite such disputes, senators have voiced confidence that they can craft a compromise bill. Members of the group met again Wednesday, and John Cornyn, a Republican of Texas, expressed hope that they would soon strike an agreement.

“I think it’s reasonable to expect in the next couple weeks, maybe this work period, that that would be – I’m just speaking for myself – an aspirational goal,” Cornyn said. “But obviously, we have 100 senators who are free agents, and they can do anything they want on whatever timetable.”

'Hear me clearly': mother of Buffalo shooting survivor testifies before Congress – video

The families whose lives have been forever altered by gun violence came to the House on Wednesday with specific demands.

Everhart asked for more schools to teach Black history so children would understand the violent history of white supremacy, given that the Buffalo shooter voiced support for racist conspiracy theories.

Rubio also called on lawmakers to ban assault rifles, raise the age requirement to buy semi-automatic weapons and enact a national “red flag” law.

“We understand that for some reason, to some people – to people with money, to people who fund political campaigns – that guns are more

important than children. So at this moment, we ask for progress,” Rubio said.

“Somewhere out there, there’s a mom listening to our testimony thinking, ‘I can’t even imagine their pain’ – not knowing that our reality will one day be hers unless we act now.”

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Uyghurs

Fury at UN human rights chief over ‘whitewash’ of Uyghur repression

Open letter signed by academics in wake of Michelle Bachelet’s China visit demands release of UN report on human rights abuses



Perimeter fence of a so-called vocational skills education centre in Dabancheng, Xinjiang, China. Photograph: Thomas Peter/Reuters

Helen Davidson in Taipei and agencies

@heldavidson

Thu 9 Jun 2022 01.24 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 11.42 EDT

Dozens of scholars have accused the UN human rights chief of having ignored or contradicted academic findings on abuses in [Xinjiang](#) with her statements on the region.

In an [open letter](#) published this week, 39 academics from across Europe, the US and Australia called on Michelle Bachelet to release a long-awaited UN

report on human rights abuses in China.

The letter, published online, included some academics with whom Bachelet had consulted prior to [her visit to Xinjiang](#). The letter's signatories expressed gratitude for this, but said they were "deeply disturbed" by her [official statement](#), delivered at a press conference in Guangzhou at the end of her six-day tour.

They said her statement "ignored and even contradicted the academic findings that our colleagues, including two signatories to this letter, provided".

"It is rare that an academic field arrives at the level of consensus that specialists in the study of Xinjiang have reached," the letter said. "While we disagree on some questions of why Beijing is enacting its atrocities in Xinjiang, we are unanimous in our understanding of what it is that the Chinese state is doing on the ground."

Xinjiang is the site of a years-long crackdown by Chinese authorities on [Uyghurs](#) and other Muslim minorities, with sweeping hardline policies of religious, cultural, linguistic and physical oppression.

An estimated one million people have been incarcerated in a vast network of detention and reeducation camps, which Beijing terms "vocational education and training centres". Document leaks have revealed countless others have been arrested or jailed for alleged crimes including studying scripture, [growing a beard](#), or travelling overseas, and that authorities have [established "shoot to kill" policies](#) in response to attempted escapes.

Rights organisations and several [governments](#) have labelled the campaign [a genocide](#) or [crime against humanity](#). Beijing denies all allegations of mistreatment and says its policies are to counter terrorism and religious extremism.

At the end of her visit Bachelet said she had urged the Chinese government to review its counter-terrorism policies in Xinjiang and appealed for

information about missing Uyghurs. She was quickly criticised by some rights groups for giving few details or condemnation of China while readily giving long unrelated statements about US issues in response to questions from Chinese state media.

The academics' letter is among growing criticism of Bachelet for not speaking out more forcefully against Chinese abuses after her visit, as well as a continued failure to release the UN report, which is believed to have been completed in late 2021. On Wednesday dozens of rights groups, predominately national and local chapters of organisations associated with Uyghur and Tibetan campaigns, demanded her resignation.

The 230 organisations accused Bachelet of having "whitewashed the Chinese government's human rights atrocities" and having "legitimised Beijing's attempt to cover up its crimes by using the Chinese government's false 'counter-terrorism' framing".

"The failed visit by the high commissioner has not only worsened the human rights crisis of those living under the Chinese government's rule, but also severely compromised the integrity of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in promoting and protecting human rights globally," the statement said.

They also decried that she had repeatedly referred to the detention camps in Xinjiang by the Chinese government's preferred term: "vocational education and training centres".

The signatories said Bachelet had been "entirely silent on the human rights crisis enveloping Tibet" during her four years in office, and had "grossly underplayed the crackdown" in Hong Kong.

It also called for the urgent release of the UN report.

"The repeated, open-ended, and unexplained delays call into serious question the credibility of her office to fulfil its mandate," the statement said.

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New Zealand

New Zealand sets up helpline for adults sexually attracted to children

Government-backed pilot project will provide confidential self-referral service that aims to prevent child sexual abuse



New Zealand will launch a pilot programme that allows adults to self-refer to a therapy service if they feel sexual attracted to children. Photograph: Sakkawokkie/Getty Images/iStockphoto

[Eva Corlett](#) in Wellington

[@evacorlett](#)

Thu 9 Jun 2022 02.11 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 00.25 EDT

Adults in [New Zealand](#) who are sexually attracted to children will be able refer themselves to a specialist therapeutic service as part of a government-funded research project designed to prevent abuse.

Stand Strong, Walk Tall is a pilot programme set up by two clinical psychologists with expertise in sexual abuse prevention – Dr Sarah Christofferson at the University of Canterbury and Dr Gwenda Willis from the University of Auckland.

Roughly one in six young people in New Zealand experience sexual abuse before they turn 18, Christofferson said.

“It’s a massive problem and that’s why we want to be looking at adding to the puzzle and, collectively, how we can work to bring this down.”

But there is an important distinction between attraction and action, she said.

“What research tells us more and more, is that this [attraction] is not something that has been chosen – it’s something that they’ve learned about themselves. So there shouldn’t be any judgment or any stigma.”

Christofferson said a conservative estimate would be around 3% – 5% of the adult male population in New Zealand would have experienced feelings of sexual attraction to a minor.

The service aims to help prevent child sexual abuse and to enable participants lead safe and fulfilling lives.

The programme, which begins this month, will ask participants to self-refer via website or text. Participant details will remain confidential.

Until now, there have been limited avenues for someone to seek help if they are feeling distressed by their attractions, Christofferson said. “That’s why part of our goal is really trying to promote that we are a safe place, that we understand, we’re specialists and we know that attraction is different from action.”

New Zealand is not the first to offer a preventative service to paedophiles and, more broadly, adults attracted to under-18s – the most famous example being the [Dunkelfeld Project in Germany](#).

The clinicians found that 84% of child sexual abuse convictions in New Zealand each year were of individuals not previously known to have committed sexual offences.

Yet most prevention work has focused on stopping repeat offending, by targeting those already convicted of sexual offence, Christofferson said.

“This is important work, however, there is an opportunity to broaden these prevention efforts to reach a wider group who may be unknown to the justice system.”

- In New Zealand, contact [Victim Support](#) on 0800 842 846: [Youthline](#): 0800 376 633 (24/7) or free text 234 (8am-12am), or email talk@youthline.co.nz; What's Up: [online chat](#) (3pm-10pm) or 0800 WHATSUP / 0800 9428 787 helpline (12pm-10pm weekdays, 3pm-11pm weekends)
-

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[Arizona](#)

Arizona's emergency services brace for temperatures above 110F as deaths mount

The temperature in Phoenix is forecast to top 110F this week for the first time this summer, posing a danger for the unhoused



Extreme heat, America's leading weather-related killer, is coming to Phoenix, Arizona, bringing triple-digit temperatures. Photograph: Bridget Bennet/Reuters

[Nina Lakhani](#) in Phoenix

Thu 9 Jun 2022 05.45 EDT Last modified on Fri 10 Jun 2022 00.15 EDT

A dangerous heatwave is due to scorch large swaths of [Arizona](#) for the rest of the week, triggering the first extreme heat warning of the year as temperatures in Phoenix are forecast to top 113F (45C) on three consecutive days.

Day and nighttime temperatures are expected to reach 7F to 10F (4C to 6C) above normal for this time of the year, which could drive a surge in medical emergencies and deaths as people struggle to stay cool amid soaring energy prices and rising homelessness.

Extreme heat is America's leading weather-related killer, and Phoenix, in Maricopa county, is the deadliest city.

[Bar chart of heat-related deaths in Maricopa county since 2001, sharply increasing from 199 deaths in 2019 to 339 deaths in 2021.](#)

The temperature in Phoenix hit 110F (43C) for the first time this year on Wednesday, and the National Weather Service (NWS) has warned that a band of high pressure moving across the south-west may result in record breaking – or at least record equalling – daily highs in the state capital on Friday through Sunday.

Nighttime temperatures are unlikely to fall below 80F (27C) until at least the middle of next week, posing a danger for people without access to adequate shelter or air conditioning.

So far this year, the Maricopa county medical examiner is investigating [30 possible heat-related deaths](#) dating back to April.



High nighttime temperatures pose a danger as the body only begins to recover from heat exposure when temperatures drop below 80F. Photograph: Caitlin O'Hara/Getty Images

Energy prices are soaring across the country, but Phoenix has the highest inflation rate among big cities at 11%, according to the latest [Bureau of Labor statistics](#).

“We’re going to see very hot temperatures even by Phoenix’s standards and could see daily records broken,” said Paul Iñiguez, a meteorologist with the NWS in Phoenix.

“The heat risk is very high which means we’re likely to see deaths and illness increase, as well as costs associated with cooling ... people should do everything they can to mitigate the impacts and check on folks who don’t have regular social contacts.”

Phoenix is America’s fifth largest city, a sprawling urban heat island without adequate shade, water, affordable housing or addiction services to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population.

[Scatterplot graph representing the average daytime and nighttime temperatures for June in Phoenix since 1900, both trending upwards. In](#)

2021, the highest average daytime temperature is 108.2F (42C) and the highest average nighttime temperature is 82.5F (28C).

As a result, rising temperatures and extreme heat events linked to the climate crisis have become increasingly deadly. Over the past decade, the heat death toll has more than tripled with 662 people dying in Maricopa county, which includes Phoenix, in the past two years.

The highest-ever temperature recorded in Phoenix was 122F (50C) in June 1996. Such extreme highs remain rare, but the heat season has expanded – starting earlier and finishing later – and the average number of hot (higher than 100F) and very hot days (higher than 110F) are increasingly common and predicted to rise significantly over the next 30 years, according to climate change models.



Phoenix's highest-ever recorded temperature was 122F in June 1996. Such extremes are rare, but it did meet that record in June 2017. Photograph: Ralph Freso/Getty Images

Nighttime temperatures have risen twice as fast as daytime highs over the past three decades, according to NWS data. The impact of heat is cumulative and the body only begins to recover when temperatures drop below 80F.

For economically stable residents, such scorching temperatures are little more than an inconvenience or manageable problem, but for some extreme heat is a catastrophe, according to [heat researcher Melissa Guardaro](#) at Arizona State University.

It's a matter of life and death for the city's growing unsheltered population, who have accounted for almost half the county's extreme heat deaths in recent years. Fentanyl addiction is rising and substance use contributed to three out of every five heat deaths in 2021.

Zechariah Stevenson, 29, is facing a tenth summer on the streets – where five people he knew died from heat related emergencies over the past two summers. "There's no shade, no trees, and not enough water but I have to find a way to keep cool. I've got used to the heat but still sometimes I worry about dying from dehydration," said Stevenson, who uses his food stamps to buy giant cold sodas at the nearby convenience store.



Zechariah Stevenson is facing his tenth summer on the streets of Phoenix. The city has improved access to shelters and water, but it's not enough.
Photograph: Nina Lakhani/The Guardian

In the sprawling downtown homeless encampment, tents are squished together on the sidewalks, where the ground temperature can be 40F (22C)

higher. While the city has recently improved access to shelters, water and restroom facilities, it's nowhere near enough.

"There is so much unmet need, and it's getting worse, but the wheels of bureaucracy are running very, very slowly and there's a lack of leadership in the state. This year could be even more deadly," said Stacey Champion, a longtime heat activist.

Heat related deaths and emergency room visits start in April, but rise during very hot spells, [official figures show](#).

With hotter temperatures expected into the weekend, the HeatRisk will be on the high/very high side. This means that most if not all of the general population is at risk for heat-related illness if proper heat precautions are not taken. Please protect yourself! [#azwx](#) [#cawx](#) pic.twitter.com/AyZPhSD47u

— NWS Phoenix (@NWSPhoenix) [June 8, 2022](#)

Heat related illnesses range from an uncomfortable skin rash and cramps to heat exhaustion and deadly heat stroke. Dehydration exacerbates the risks, and health experts recommend drinking at least two litres of water an hour for those who must spend time outdoors in such sweltering temperatures. Those who can should stay indoors with the air conditioning on, and avoid foods high in protein that increase metabolic heat.

The current high pressure system is causing multiple problems.

An air quality alert is in effect for Phoenix as stagnant hot air increases the formation of ozone, a toxic chemical compound that exacerbates respiratory conditions, and could further increase pressure on emergency rooms.

Dry thunderstorms are forecast for mountainous parts of south-east Arizona on Thursday, and lightning could spark wildfires in areas parched by drought. Fire officials have warned that [Arizona's wildfire season](#), which got off to an early start this year, could be even more devastating than in previous years.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/09/arizona-phoenix-triple-digit-heatwave-deaths>

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