

# The Guardian

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# Headlines

- [Live Tory leadership hopefuls ‘scratching each other’s eyes out’ in race to No 10, says Labour](#)
- [‘Travelling circus’ Starmer says Tory hopefuls have lost credibility](#)
- [TV debate Rivals clash over trust and ‘fairytales’ economic plans](#)
- [Explained Five key takeaways from the first leaders debate](#)

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[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

# Rishi Sunak calls for focus on inflation before tax cuts after attacking leadership rivals' 'fairytale' plans – UK politics live

The former chancellor is campaigning in Teeside following last night's Tory leadership debate

Updated 15h ago

[Tom Ambrose](#) (now) and [Hamish Mackay](#) (earlier)

Sat 16 Jul 2022 11.57 EDTFirst published on Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.01 EDT

Key events:

- [15h ago](#)  
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[Tory candidates 'scratching each other's eyes out' - Starmer](#)

'We haven't exactly covered ourselves in glory': Tory leadership debate – video highlights

[Tom Ambrose](#) (now) and [Hamish Mackay](#) (earlier)

Sat 16 Jul 2022 11.57 EDTFirst published on Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.01 EDT

Show key events only

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## Live feed

From 20h ago

[07.15](#)

### **Sunak insists inflation must be controlled before tax rises during Teesside trip**

Tory leadership contender [Rishi Sunak](#) has again insisted that inflation must be brought under control before the government can consider cutting taxes.

In the first TV leadership debate on Friday, the former chancellor attacked calls by his rivals for immediate tax cuts paid for by increased borrowing as a “fairytales”.

Speaking during a visit to Teesside, where he secured the backing of the region’s mayor, Ben Houchen, he dismissed accusations that he had been a “socialist chancellor”, PA reported.

He said:

I think the number one economic priority we face as a country is inflation. I want to get a grip of inflation because inflation is what makes everybody poorer.

If we don’t get a grip of it now it will last longer and that is not a good thing. Once we’ve done that, I will deliver tax cuts.



Rishi Sunak (centre) with Ben Houchen and supporters during a visit to Teesside Freeport. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

Sunak also said he believed he would be the best leader to take on [Labour](#) at the next general election.

He said:

I am going to continue making the positive case for my candidacy and I believe I am the best possible person to help our party defeat Keir Starmer and defeat the Labour party in a general election.



Rishi Sunak and Ben Houchen. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

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Updated at 07.30 EDT

Key events:

- [15h ago](#)  
[Summary](#)
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[Sunak insists inflation must be controlled before tax rises during Teesside trip](#)
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[Key takeaways from the leadership debate](#)
- [1d ago](#)  
[What happened in the debate?](#)
- [1d ago](#)  
[Tory candidates 'scratching each other's eyes out' - Starmer](#)

Show key events only

Please turn on JavaScript to use this feature

[15h ago](#) 11.57

## Summary

Here is a roundup of all the day's top news stories from Westminster:

- **Tory leadership contender Rishi Sunak has again insisted that inflation must be brought under control before the government can consider cutting taxes.** Speaking during a visit to Teesside, where he secured the backing of the region's mayor, Ben Houchen, he dismissed accusations that he had been a "socialist chancellor".
- **Conservative leadership hopeful Penny Mordaunt has been forced to defend her time in government as her rivals step up attacks on her ministerial record.** The bookmakers' favourite to win the race to succeed Boris Johnson as prime minister has accused other campaigns of running "black-ops" briefings against her to damage her chances of reaching the last two of the contest.
- **Cabinet Office minister Kit Malthouse has warned that transport services face "significant disruption" owing to the heatwave as he urged people to avoid travelling on Monday and Tuesday.** He said steps have been taken to ensure hospitals and ambulances that may come under pressure were prepared.
- **Tom Tugendhat, the one Tory candidate without ministerial experience, said on Saturday he was committed to delivering on Brexit, despite having been a strong Remain supporter in the 2016 referendum.** He said there were still important issues relating to the

working of the Northern Ireland Protocol which needed to be resolved with the EU.

- **Boris Johnson is threatening to set an “early test” for his successor by ensuring they have to face two early by-elections as the new Tory leader, the *Observer* has been told.** The prime minister is [planning to elevate at least two current MPs](#) to the House of Lords well before the next election, triggering two contests that will test public support for whoever replaces him in Downing Street.
- **Sir Tony Blair has issued a rallying call to western nations to come together to develop a coherent strategy to counter the rise of China as “the world’s second superpower”.** Delivering the annual Ditchley lecture the former prime minister called for a policy towards Beijing of “strength plus engagement” as he warned the era of western political and economic dominance was coming to an end.

That's it from me, Tom Ambrose, and indeed the politics live blog for today. Thanks for following along. You can keep across all the latest news from the Tory leadership race and Westminster [here](#).

Goodbye for now.

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Updated at 12.04 EDT

[16h ago](#) [11.31](#)

**Cabinet Office minister Kit Malthouse has warned that transport services face “significant disruption” owing to the heatwave as he urged people to avoid travelling on Monday and Tuesday.**

After chairing a meeting of the government's Cobra committee, Malthouse told the BBC:

Obviously the transport providers are messaging people that they should only travel if they really need to on Monday and Tuesday.

Services are going to be significantly affected. The heat will affect rails, for example, so the trains have to run slower. There may be fewer services. People need to be on their guard for disruption.

If they don't have to travel, this may be a moment to work from home.

Malthouse said steps have been taken to ensure hospitals and ambulances that may come under pressure were prepared, while schools were being issued with guidance to enable them to remain open, PA reported.

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Updated at 11.34 EDT

[16h ago 11.07](#)



Michael Savage

**Boris Johnson is threatening to set an “early test” for his successor by ensuring they have to face two early by-elections as the new Tory leader, the *Observer* has been told.**

The prime minister is planning to elevate at least two current MPs to the House of Lords well before the next election, triggering two contests that will test public support for whoever replaces him in Downing Street.

It is understood that he wants to hand peerages to Nigel Adams, a Cabinet Office minister and one of his closest allies, and culture secretary Nadine Dorries, who has emerged as one of his most loyal cabinet colleagues. Both have large majorities, but the combination of a recent Tory poll slump and its disastrous recent by-election record could make the contests a close call.

There are currently two lists of peerages planned – one is a regular list, while the second is Johnson’s resignation honours list. “You can’t announce a peerage and say they won’t kick in for two years [after the next general election],” said a source familiar with Johnson’s plans. “Elevating MPs will mean those seats will be freed up to be contested. It will be a very early test for the new leader.”

Adams, who championed Johnson long before he became Tory leader, has already announced he is stepping down at the next election. As minister without portfolio in the Cabinet Office, he was at the heart of attempts to rescue Johnson’s premiership as it was falling apart earlier this month.

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Updated at 11.15 EDT

[17h ago](#) [10.40](#)

**Economics made simple: 10 experts on where the cost of living crisis came from, and where it’s heading.**

Read the Observer piece on what the economic crisis means for Britain and how we should respond below.

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Updated at 10.54 EDT

18h ago**09.43**

**Tom Tugendhat, the one Tory candidate without ministerial experience, said on Saturday that he was committed to delivering on Brexit, despite having been a strong Remain supporter in the 2016 referendum.**

He said there were still important issues relating to the working of the Northern Ireland Protocol which needed to be resolved with the EU.

He told GB News:

One of the other things I'll be making sure is delivered is Brexit. What Boris Johnson has done is delivered most of Brexit, let's be honest there's still Northern Ireland, and that's a really big issue. Let's not kid ourselves that it's going to be easy because it's not.

Despite having seen his tally of votes fall in the second ballot of MPs, in which he finished fifth, the former Army officer said he had no intention of dropping out, PA reported.

He said:

I have never turned down a challenge because the odds were against me. I don't plan to start now.



Tom Tugendhat at last night's Channel 4 leadership debate. Photograph: Tayfun Salcı/ZUMA Press Wire/REX/Shutterstock

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[19h ago](#)08.13

**Sir Tony Blair has issued a rallying call to western nations to come together to develop a coherent strategy to counter the rise of China as “the world’s second superpower”.**

Delivering the annual Ditchley lecture the former prime minister called for a policy towards Beijing of “strength plus engagement” as he warned the era of western political and economic dominance was coming to an end, PA reported.

He said:

How did Britain ever reach a point where Nigel Farage and Jeremy Corbyn came for a short but consequential time to shape our politics? Or America to a place where whether you got vaccinated denoted political allegiance?

The craziness in our own politics has to stop. We can't afford the luxury of indulging fantasy. We need to put reason and strategy back in the saddle. And we need to do so with urgency.

On China, Blair said it had already caught up with the United States in many fields of technology, while its president, Xi Jinping, had made no secret of his ambition to return Taiwan to Beijing's rule.

At the same time, Vladimir Putin's "brutal and unjustified" invasion of Ukraine showed they could no longer automatically expect major world powers to abide by accepted international norms.

He added:

"As a result of the actions of Putin, we cannot rely on the Chinese leadership to behave in the way we would consider rational," he said.

Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying in the near term, that China would attempt to take Taiwan by force. But we can't base our policy on the certainty that it wouldn't.

And even leaving to the side Taiwan, the reality is China under Xi's leadership is competing for influence and doing so aggressively.



Former British prime minister Tony Blair. Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

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Updated at 10.41 EDT

[20h ago](#) [07.27](#)

**The Tory mayor of Tees Valley, Ben Houchen, said he was backing [Rishi Sunak](#) to be the next party leader because he was committed to levelling up.**

Houchen, speaking on a joint visit to the Teesside Freeport, said the former chancellor had brought the Treasury to Darlington and backed the area with cash for investment in transport and the freeport.

He said:

The really important thing is that in this leadership contest we need to make sure that whoever wins is committed to the levelling-up agenda.

Boris Johnson did a fantastic job with starting it off and we can't afford for that to be left behind, and with Rishi having directly engaged with me on this, and having committed fully to the levelling-up pledge that I put out to the leadership contenders, given what he's done locally as well, it feels to me like he's the right man for the job.



Rishi Sunak (left) speaks with Ben Houchen during a visit to Teesside Freeport, Teesworks, in Redcar, Teeside. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

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Updated at 07.29 EDT

[20h ago](#)[07.15](#)

## **Sunak insists inflation must be controlled before tax rises during Teesside trip**

Tory leadership contender [Rishi Sunak](#) has again insisted that inflation must be brought under control before the government can consider cutting taxes.

In the first TV leadership debate on Friday, the former chancellor attacked calls by his rivals for immediate tax cuts paid for by increased borrowing as a “fairytales”.

Speaking during a visit to Teesside, where he secured the backing of the region's mayor, Ben Houchen, he dismissed accusations that he had been a "socialist chancellor", PA reported.

He said:

I think the number one economic priority we face as a country is inflation. I want to get a grip of inflation because inflation is what makes everybody poorer.

If we don't get a grip of it now it will last longer and that is not a good thing. Once we've done that, I will deliver tax cuts.



Rishi Sunak (centre) with Ben Houchen and supporters during a visit to Teesside Freeport. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

Sunak also said he believed he would be the best leader to take on Labour at the next general election.

He said:

I am going to continue making the positive case for my candidacy and I believe I am the best possible person to help our party defeat Keir Starmer and defeat the Labour party in a general election.



Rishi Sunak and Ben Houchen. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

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Updated at 07.30 EDT

20h ago**07.00**

Tom Ambrose

**Conservative leadership hopeful Penny Mordaunt has been forced to defend her time in government as her rivals step up attacks on her ministerial record.**

The bookmakers' favourite to win the race to succeed Boris Johnson as prime minister has accused other campaigns of running “black ops” briefings against her to damage her chances of reaching the last two of the contest.

In an interview with the [Daily Telegraph](#), the trade minister insisted her achievements in government prove she can “get stuff done” and demonstrate she is ready for the top job.

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[21h ago](#)[06.10](#)

**Labour has criticised Boris Johnson after reports said he had failed to attend recent Cobra meetings.**

Angela Rayner, Labour's deputy leader, said:

Boris Johnson has gone missing in action again. He's back to his old tricks of skipping important Cobra meetings. Where's the plan for the delivery of essential services and how people will be kept safe at work, on transport, in schools, hospitals and care homes?

The public will have no confidence in this zombie Conservative government responding swiftly and decisively to this national emergency as this disgraced prime minister prepares to party while Britain boils. If he still can't take the responsibility of the job, he should leave right now.

Daytime temperatures on Saturday are predicted to be around 27C in London, 26C in Cardiff, 23C in Belfast and 21C in Edinburgh, PA reported. On Sunday, it could reach 30C in the capital, 27C in Cardiff, 24C in Belfast and 23C in Edinburgh.

Temperatures are forecast to increase by several more degrees on Tuesday - up to the mid-30s for much of England and Wales.

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Updated at 06.37 EDT

[22h ago](#)[05.24](#)

Here are some images from last night's Channel 4 debate.



Tom Tugendhat with his wife, Anissia, leave the Here East studios in Stratford, east London, after the live television debate. Photograph: Victoria Jones/PA



Kemi Badenoch is seen in the BT Studios ahead of first TV debate. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/Zuma Press Wire/Rex/Shutterstock



Liz Truss during the debate. Photograph: Tom Nicholson/Rex/Shutterstock



Penny Mordaunt during the debate. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/Zuma Press Wire/Rex/Shutterstock



Rishi Sunak arrives at the studio. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/Zuma Press Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

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Updated at 05.36 EDT

[23h ago](#)[04.32](#)

**The Cabinet Office minister Kit Malthouse will chair a meeting of the government's Cobra civil contingencies committee to discuss the impending heatwave, a government spokesman has confirmed.**

It will be the second Cobra meeting Malthouse has led on the issue, with temperatures expected to reach as high as 40C in some parts of the UK early next week.



Kit Malthouse leaves the Cabinet Office on Whitehall, in London.  
Photograph: Henry Nicholls/Reuters

- *Good morning, I'm Tom Ambrose and I'll be with you throughout the rest of the day to bring you the latest updates from Westminster and beyond. Follow me on Twitter [@tomambrose89](#).*

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Updated at 04.39 EDT

[23h ago](#) [03.51](#)

Penny Mordaunt – the current bookmakers' favourite – struggled to either impress or land any significant blows on her opponents in last night's debate.

However, [in an interview with the Telegraph](#), she has been keen to defend her record.

She told the paper:

Look at what I've done. The first job that I had in government, I managed to bring the firefighters' dispute, pensions dispute and strikes to an end. Other ministers didn't.

I managed to get real international leadership for this country and make a tangible difference to people's lives on the issue of disability, as well as changing perceptions of our government, in that respect.

In the 85 days I was at the MoD, I brought in some things which have had a radical change in terms of our command structure and the fact that men and women of our armed forces are never, ever going to be paid less than the living wage again.

I do get stuff done. Paymaster general, I rewrote our nation's resilience strategy, brought the first ever One HMG defensive cyber strategy together, gripped issues that have been kicking around Whitehall for yonks, such as getting a compensation scheme for those poor souls affected by the infected blood scandal. You know, I could go on.

- That's it from me for now, my colleague Tom Ambrose is taking over.

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Updated at 11.52 EDT

[24h ago](#)[03.24](#)



Sally Weale

Meanwhile, away from leadership debate, the former education recovery commissioner, Sir Kevan Collins, has accused the government of burying its head in the sand over the loss of learning among children in [England](#) due to Covid, warning the problem will not just “go away”.

He expressed regret about lost opportunities after the government rejected his ambitious £15bn plan for recovery, including an extended school day for all, and warned that the flagship [national tutoring programme \(NTP\)](#) was in danger of becoming little more than “a few kids in the corner doing a bit of tutoring”.

Speaking a year after Covid restrictions were finally lifted on what the government called “freedom day”, Collins voiced concern about a [tax-cutting arms race in the Conservative leadership contest](#), which he warned would result in cuts to education spending.

[Collins resigned](#) from his job as education catch-up tsar in June last year in protest at the prime minister’s decision to scale back recovery plans, warning the new offer did not come close to meeting the needs of children whose education was thrown into chaos by the pandemic. The government has so far pledged around £5bn in catch-up funding for schools and colleges.

In an interview with the Guardian, Collins said he remained convinced the country was underinvesting in education overall, and warned that the evidence emerging in recent months about the impact of lost learning suggested that the NTP, set up with great fanfare to help left-behind children catch up, was not delivering.

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1d ago 02.56

Some polling from Opinium on last night's debate:

#### □BREAKING - SNAP DEBATE POLL□

Tonight we asked over 1000 normal voters to watch the debate and we have just asked them who they thought performed best.

Results:

Tugendhat 36%

Sunak 25%

Mordaunt 12%

Badenoch 12%

Truss 6% [pic.twitter.com/0q4IliqQNM](https://pic.twitter.com/0q4IliqQNM)

— Opinium (@OpiniumResearch) [July 15, 2022](#)

Which candidate most came across as...

(First place / Second place)

A strong leader: Tugendhat/Sunak

Competent: Sunak/Tugendhat

Shares my views: Tugendhat/Badenoch

Could win an election: Sunak/Tugendhat

Charismatic: Tugendhat/Sunak

Trustworthy: Tugendhat/Badenoch [pic.twitter.com/lcNI8u5S8y](https://pic.twitter.com/lcNI8u5S8y)

— Opinium (@OpiniumResearch) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[1d ago](#)[02.31](#)

## Key takeaways from the leadership debate



Martin Belam

The five candidates still standing for the leadership of the Conservative party were in action in a [TV debate broadcast on Channel 4](#) on Friday night. Here are the five key takeaways:

### **Tom Tugendhat was the only one able to answer freely**

Given the opportunity to answer “yes” or “no” to the question “is Boris Johnson honest?”, [Tom Tugendhat](#) was the only person able to do it. He got warm applause for simply saying: “No.”

Kemi Badenoch came closest, saying “Sometimes”. Rishi Sunak, [Penny Mordaunt](#) and Liz Truss all refused to be drawn into the one word answer, and prevaricated.

Tugendhat essentially played the role of the minority party candidate in a multiparty debate, free to just speak his mind, call out the hypocrisy in everybody else, all the while safe in the knowledge there’s virtually zero chance he will end up elected.

### **Truss has a delivery mantra problem**

Truss tried to focus again and again about delivery in every department, saying that her trade deals with Australia and Japan had been considered impossible, and that she had stood up to Vladimir Putin. But it all felt heavily scripted from her.

Badenoch and Tugendhat felt more off the cuff, and Sunak was a more fluid performer here than he has been on the radio over the last 48 hours. Truss felt rigid and dogmatic.

### **Sunak’s Treasury experience is a potential asset – but not with party members**

In a crucial exchange that was mostly Sunak v Truss, the foreign secretary told the former chancellor that Covid was a once-in-a-century occurrence, and that the government should look accordingly at paying it back over a longer term. Sunak was clear, saying: “The best way for people to have money in their pocket is to get a grip of inflation.”

Again and again during the debate he demonstrated a better command of the numbers and Treasury brief, but you still ended up with the feeling that a man instinctively fiscally conservative is being pushed into a corner and portrayed as a leftist for not wanting to cut taxes

You can read more here:



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Updated at 02.55 EDT

1d ago**02.18**

Graphic showing how the next Conservative party leader will be chosen

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1d ago**02.07**

## What happened in the debate?



Peter Walker

In an often difficult night for all the candidates – former chancellor Rishi Sunak; foreign secretary Liz Truss; Penny Mordaunt, the trade minister and bookmakers' favourite; the former levelling up minister Kemi Badenoch; and the backbencher Tom Tugendhat – not a single member of the audience of floating voters raised their hands when asked if they trusted politicians.

In a long section on trust, the candidates were asked whether Johnson was honest. “Sometimes,” said Badenoch, while Mordaunt talked about “really severe issues”, and Truss spoke of “mistakes”. Tugendhat won applause by saying, simply: “No.”

In a separate show of hands after a debate on energy bills just three people said they felt politicians were doing enough to help people. When asked at the end of the debate if it had made them more likely to vote Conservative, only 10 of the audience raised their hands.

Mordaunt and Badenoch clashed with visible enmity about the former’s views on trans rights. When Truss declined to back up her version of events about policies in the government’s equalities office, Badenoch said: “Come on Liz, tell the truth.”

Mordaunt, meanwhile, asked about negative briefings about her from some of the other camps, refused to say she trusted the other candidates.

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Updated at 03.51 EDT

[1d ago](#) [02.01](#)

## **Tory candidates 'scratching each other's eyes out' - Starmer**

Good morning.

Last night, the five remaining candidates to become the next Conservative leader, and therefore prime minister, went head-to-head in a live TV debate.

The debate saw open arguments over tax and identity politics – and none of the five candidates was willing to say that Boris Johnson is honest.

Coming hours after Liz Truss sought to reinvigorate her faltering campaign with [a sudden announcement](#) of new tax cuts costing more than £20bn a year, Rishi Sunak the ex-chancellor, openly ridiculed his former colleague's plans during the Channel 4 broadcast.

You can read my colleague Peter Walker's full report of the debate [here](#).



The candidates during the debate last night Photograph: Tayfun Salci/Zuma Press Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

Meanwhile, the Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, has dismissed the acrimonious [Conservative leadership](#) race as a “travelling circus”, in which the candidates have demolished their party's economic credibility by promising billions of pounds of unfunded tax cuts.

He tells the Guardian's political editor the party “has got no sense any more of what it stands for”.

“That's why you have all these candidates scratching each other's eyes out, taking lumps out of each other,” he said.

We'll bring you all the latest UK political developments throughout the day, as they happen.

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Updated at 02.50 EDT

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## Keir Starmer

# ‘Travelling circus’: Starmer says Tory hopefuls have lost economic credibility

**Exclusive:** Labour leader, speaking after meeting German chancellor, condemns candidates’ ‘fanciful’ spending plans



Keir Starmer met with the German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, during his two day visit to Berlin. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

*[Heather Stewart](#) Political editor*

Sat 16 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT

Keir Starmer has dismissed the acrimonious [Conservative leadership](#) race as a “travelling circus”, in which the candidates have demolished their party’s economic credibility by promising billions of pounds of unfunded tax cuts.

Speaking on a visit to Berlin where he held talks with the German chancellor, [Olaf Scholz](#), the Labour leader highlighted the “fanciful”

spending pledges made by the five contenders battling it out to succeed Boris Johnson.

“They’ve just shot through their economic credibility,” he said. “And of course although he’s now dropped out, one of the individuals making these claims was the actual chancellor – and obviously the former chancellor’s in the travelling circus as well.”

Buoyed by discussions with the centre-left Scholz, from Labour’s sister party the SPD, who pulled off a surprise win in last December’s election with a campaign promising “respect”, Starmer dismissed the idea that a new Tory leader could rebuild the party’s reputation.

“It’s a party that has got no sense any more of what it stands for,” he said. “That’s why you have all these candidates scratching each other’s eyes out, taking lumps out of each other.”

Asked if the Tories could see a bounce in their poll ratings once Boris Johnson leaves Downing Street and a fresh leader takes over, Starmer insisted he was unconcerned.

“We’ll have to see what happens, but it feels like a football team that is dragged into the relegation zone, can see the drop, and is desperately trying to change the manager in the hope and belief that that’s going to make the difference. It doesn’t work in football and it’s not going to work for the Conservative party.”

He said the past few days, which have seen all the candidates apart from Rishi Sunak promise to reverse planned tax increases, with most also pledging to ramp up defence spending, had reinforced his determination to fight the next election on the economy.

“Labour has got itself into the position where we can fight an election and win an election – and we want to fight that election on the economy. We’re not going to fight it on issues such as the NHS, because we’re the custodians of the NHS and everybody understands that,” he said.



Keir Starmer walks past a section of the Berlin Wall known as the East Side Gallery on the second day of his two-day visit to the German capital. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

He highlighted weak economic growth, stagnant real wages and rocketing inflation, warning that Johnson's "zombie government" would be unable to tackle the cost of living crisis, with annual energy bills expected to hit as much as £3,000 in October.

The shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, used a speech this week to hammer home her determination to be tough on public spending. She highlighted Labour's fiscal rules, which would ensure the party only borrowed to invest, while promising to reduce national debt as a share of the economy over time.

Starmer said all the Tory leadership candidates should be challenged on how they would fund their tax and spending pledges – by slashing public services, or increasing borrowing.

"We're dealing with a very real cost of living crisis - people literally unable to pay their bills – and you've got a Conservative party leadership race that is completely divorced from reality," he said. "They're making fanciful, uncosted pledges in relation to spending commitments."

He also raised concerns about some candidates' hints that the government's net zero policies could be weakened as a result of pressure from the party's right wing. "Abandoning the net zero commitment is just utter irresponsibility," he said, highlighting the "huge opportunities" for green jobs in new technologies.

Labour believes Starmer's two-day visit to Berlin, where he met business leaders as well as Scholz and other politicians, underlines his prime ministerial credentials.

The two leaders discussed Labour's stance on [Brexit](#) in more detail, which involves a series of practical steps aimed at "making Brexit work", such as trying to negotiate mutual recognition of professional qualifications and a veterinary agreement to reduce trade frictions.

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Labour also hopes that by adopting a more conciliatory approach over the Northern Ireland protocol – instead of the government's combative stance – it could establish a more positive relationship in other areas.

"What an incoming Labour government will bring to the table is a very high level of trust and respect around the negotiating table in the discussions we need to have with the EU and other countries worldwide – and a very firm commitment that when we sign international agreements, we will abide by them," Starmer said.

Despite having championed the cause of a second Brexit referendum while on Jeremy Corbyn's frontbench, he now considers the matter closed, and has resisted pressure from some in his party to advocate a return to the customs union or the single market.

Starmer is expected to face the disgraced Johnson for a final prime minister's questions next Wednesday, with a new leader likely to be in place when the House of Commons returns from its summer recess in early September.

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## Conservative leadership

# Tory leadership rivals clash over trust and ‘fairytales’ economic plans

Head-to-head sees open arguments over tax and identity politics, with no candidate willing to say Boris Johnson is honest

- [Five key takeaways](#)
- [Who's standing and what are they promising?](#)

'We haven't exactly covered ourselves in glory': Tory leadership debate – video highlights

*Peter Walker* Political correspondent  
[@peterwalker99](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 16.27 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 03.49 EDT

The [Conservative leadership](#) race has exploded into acrimony and recrimination after the first televised debate saw open arguments over tax and identity politics with also none of the five candidates willing to say Boris Johnson is honest.

Coming hours after Liz Truss sought to reinvigorate her faltering campaign with [a sudden announcement](#) of new tax cuts costing more than £20bn a year, Rishi Sunak the ex-chancellor, openly ridiculed his former colleague's plans during the Channel 4 broadcast on Friday evening.

Condemning what he called a wider “unfunded spree of borrowing and more debt” among his competitors, Sunak condemned the Truss's proposal to put off repayments of public debt built up due to Covid.

“There is no such thing as Covid debt,” a visibly irritated Sunak told the foreign secretary. “Debt is debt. And the answer to too much borrowing

can't be yet more borrowing. It's as simple as that.”

### Graphic

When Truss argued that better monetary policy would mitigate inflation even with tax cuts, Sunak snapped: “Liz, we have to be honest. Borrowing your way out of inflation isn’t a plan, it’s a fairytale.”

In an often difficult night for all the candidates – also comprising [Penny Mordaunt](#), the trade minister and bookmakers’ favourite; the former levelling up minister Kemi Badenoch; and the backbencher Tom Tugendhat – not a single member of the audience of floating voters raised their hands when asked if they trusted politicians.

In a long section on trust, the candidates were asked whether Johnson was honest. “Sometimes,” said Badenoch, while Mordaunt talked about “really severe issues”, and Truss spoke of “mistakes”. Tugendhat won applause by saying, simply: “No.”

A separate show of hands after a debate on energy bills saw just three people say they felt politicians were doing enough to help people. When asked at the end of the debate if it had made them more likely to vote Conservative, only 10 of the audience raised their hands.

A separate spat saw Mordaunt and Badenoch clash with visible enmity about the former’s views on trans rights. When Truss declined to back up her version of events about policies in the government’s equalities office, Badenoch said, “Come on Liz, tell the truth.”

Mordaunt, meanwhile, asked about negative briefings about her from some of the other camps, refused to say she trusted the other candidates.



Tom Tugendhat won applause for saying Boris Johnson was not honest.  
Photograph: Tom Nicholson/Rex/Shutterstock

So far, two rounds of voting among Tory MPs – who are gradually reducing the field down to a final two, with a winner then decided by party members – has seen Sunak gain the most support, followed by Mordaunt, Truss, Badenoch and then Tugendhat.

The backbencher, who is expected to be ousted in the next round on Monday, used the debate to seek to set himself apart from the other candidates, all of whom had served under Johnson.

He said: “I’ve been holding a mirror to many of our actions and asking those in our party, those in our leadership positions, to ask themselves, ‘Is that what the public really expects?’”

In an earlier Zoom-based Q&A, hosted by the Conservative Home website, Truss sought to regain the initiative in the race by promising to scrap a planned rise in corporation tax and suspend green energy levies, costing more than £20bn a year overall.

The unexpected offer came on top of an existing pledge by Truss to reverse a rise in national insurance, worth another near-£11bn a year.

“We immediately need to start putting money back into people’s pockets, we know families are struggling to make ends meet at the moment,” she said.

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It has been estimated that scrapping the planned rise in corporation tax from 19% to 25% next year would cost about £15bn a year. Suspending green levies on energy bills would cost an estimated £5bn a year.

Labour has condemned [an “arms race”](#) of uncosted tax cut pledges among candidates. Sunak has said he would wait to stabilise inflation before cutting any taxes.

In a boost to Truss, shortly after the debate the attorney general, Suella Braverman, who was eliminated from the contest after finishing last in Thursday’s MPs’ vote, reiterated her call for supporters to switch to the foreign secretary.

Braverman is ideologically close to Badenoch, but in a robustly worded message to supporters, Braverman urged them to “look realistically at the numbers” and back Truss, the other candidate seen as being firmly on the right of the party.

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## Conservative leadership

# Five key takeaways from the first Conservative leadership debate

Here is what we learnt as the five challengers to be prime minister were tested for the first time on live television



Penny Mordaunt and Rishi Sunak during the live television debate for the candidates for leadership of the Conservative party, hosted by Channel 4.  
Photograph: Victoria Jones/PA



[Martin Belam](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 16.31 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.14 EDT

The five candidates still standing for the leadership of the Conservative party were in action in a [TV debate broadcast on Channel 4](#) on Friday night. Here are the five key takeaways:

## **Tom Tugendhat was the only one able to answer freely**

Given the opportunity to answer “Yes” or “No” to the question “is Boris Johnson honest?”, [Tom Tugendhat](#) was the only person able to do it. He got warm applause for simply saying: “No”.

Kemi Badenoch came closest, saying “Sometimes”. Rishi Sunak, [Penny Mordaunt](#) and Liz Truss all refused to be drawn into the one word answer, and prevaricated.

Tugendhat essentially played the role of the minority party candidate in a multiparty debate, free to just speak his mind, call out the hypocrisy in everybody else, all the while safe in the knowledge there’s virtually zero chance he will end up elected.

## **Truss has a delivery mantra problem**

Truss tried to focus again and again about delivery in every department, saying that her trade deals with Australia and Japan had been considered impossible, and that she had stood up to Vladimir Putin. But it all felt heavily scripted from her.

Badenoch and Tugendhat felt more off the cuff, and Sunak was a more fluid performer here than he has been on the radio over the last 48 hours. Truss felt rigid and dogmatic.

## **Sunak's Treasury experience is a potential asset – but not with party members**

In a crucial exchange that was mostly Sunak v Truss, the foreign secretary told the former chancellor that Covid was a once-in-a-century occurrence, and that the government should look accordingly at paying it back over a longer term. Sunak was clear, saying: “The best way for people to have money in their pocket is to get a grip of inflation.”

Again and again during the debate he demonstrated a better command of the numbers and Treasury brief, but you still ended up with the feeling that a man instinctively fiscally conservative is being pushed into a corner and portrayed as a leftist for not wanting to cut taxes

'We haven't exactly covered ourselves in glory': Tory leadership debate – video highlights

## **Trans rights questions are not going away for Mordaunt**

The culture warriors in the [Conservatives](#) have identified the question of trans rights as a wedge issue they can use against Labour, but Mordaunt's apparent different standpoints over the years have made it awkward for her too.

The trade minister claimed to be baffled that anybody found her position unclear. It may not be high up the agenda when you poll voters on what they care about, but expect to see this get asked of the women standing to be PM again and again.

## **There was little love in the room for any of the candidates**

Applause was sporadic, and mostly directed either at Tugendhat, or when Sunak was singing the praises of an NHS worker who had asked a question. At the end Krishnan Guru-Murthy asked for a show of hands of the floating voters in the audience who had been persuaded to be more likely to vote Conservative. Ten hands went up at most.

It wasn't a feral BBC Question Time audience, but at times, particularly when issues around trust and Partygate were being touched upon, the disdain for the audience with politicians was palpable. Whoever wins out of this contest in the end, they have an uphill climb.

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- ['The backlash amazes me' Reni Eddo-Lodge on the pushback against anti-racism](#)
- [The Q&A Charlotte Church: 'The worst job I've done? Being a major label artist. I felt like a commodity, a thing to be sold'](#)
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## Snoring was ruining my marriage – here's how I finally cured myself



‘My snoring is roughly the volume of traffic.’ Photograph: Lol Keegan/The Guardian

Fed up with being banished from the marital bed, I went on a desperate search for a remedy for my cacophonous snoring. Was the solution right

under my nose?



[Stuart Jeffries](#)

Sat 16 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 12.46 EDT

What can we do for you today, asks the kind nurse at the sleep unit in a north London hospital. “Save my marriage, ideally,” I reply. I’m only exaggerating a little. My snoring means that my cat is more likely to sleep in the same bed as my wife than me. Even my teenage daughter and her teddy bear are more likely to sleep with my wife than me.

I am one of [15 million snorers in the UK](#) – that’s 41.5% of the adult population. In fact, I’m one of the 25% of those 15 million who snore regularly and disturb their partners’ sleep. That is, if these snorers have partners, which seems a diminishing possibility given how much misery they cause to those on the receiving end.

Some nights in the past year or so, while wife, daughter, cat and teddy bear are upstairs in one bed giggling over something or other, I – having been banished from the master bedroom – trudge sadly downstairs to the living room where I can snore without disturbing anyone. Can I get a boo-hoo?

“There is nothing more disturbing than lying there trying to sleep and all you can do is tune into your partner snoring next to you,” says Dr Ellie Cannon, a GP and holder of my favourite job title, namely campaign ambassador for a leading anti-snoring nasal dilator.

I haven’t yet contacted all 3.75 million regular snorers to clinch this point, but it seems very unlikely that all are sleeping on sofa beds. Doubtless many don’t have that luxury. More likely, millions of non-snorers, most of them women, are suffering silently. There they lie, red-eyed and resentful, while their snoring partners register themselves on the Richter scale.

The fact that I snore is made more likely because of my sex. “Men are more likely to snore or have sleep apnoea than women,” says Pavol Surda, a consultant ENT surgeon based at London Bridge hospital. “This is because men have a larger space at the back of their throats as they tend to have larger airways. When we relax, our tongue falls back and fills this space, but the bigger the gap, the more likely it is you will snore.”

“Moreover, males tend to have a higher proportion of fat around the neck, in soft palate and the upper part of the tongue, whereas women tend to have greater fat deposition in the lower part of the airway. This is likely dictated by the levels of testosterone. Studies showed that females with overproduction of male hormones are four times more likely to snore.” Oestrogen and progesterone also provide protection against snoring and sleep apnoea. Male hormones not so much.

So, to review: men are more likely to snore than women because of their fatter necks and bigger holes at the back of their throats in which their tongues nocturnally loll with potentially disruptive effects for bed partners. Unless I’ve misconstrued the data, heterosexual prenuptial agreements should therefore include clauses about optimal neck fatness in men.

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But it’s not just my sex that matters when it comes to snoring. My wife has noticed my snoring has got louder in recent years. Surda explains why: “As

we age, our tongue and throat muscles begin to relax and weaken, which can limit our airflow, causing us to snore.” I’m now 59; in a few years my tongue and throat muscles will, you’d think, be as helpless as a kitten up a tree. Which is grounds for divorce in my book. There is another option: “You can practise mouth and throat exercises to strengthen these muscles, which may help to reduce your snoring.” Way ahead of you, doctor: I already play the clarinet, which makes me quite the formidable kisser.

I’ve assiduously performed some throat exercises I found online. I’ve said each vowel out loud for three minutes a few times a day as if in obeisance to some invisible Henry Higgins. I’ve placed the tip of my tongue behind my top front teeth and, for three minutes a day, slid the tongue backwards. I’ve closed my mouth and pursed my lips, holding the pose for 30 seconds.

I’ve even opened my mouth and moved my lower jaw to the right and held the pose for 30 seconds, and repeated the exercise on the left. I recommend you don’t do this on public transport. Again, with my mouth open, I’ve contracted the muscle at the back of my throat, all the while looking in a mirror to see my uvula bobbing up and down. Who needs Netflix? All very entertaining. But despite these exercises, I still snored. Could anything cure me?

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My dad was a big snorer. This may not mean that my snoring is inherited. Once, he told me, he awoke on a train to find all the other passengers cowering at the other end of the compartment because of the incredible racket he was making. This, you may say, sounds fanciful, but you never heard him snore. One night, while he snored in an armchair, my mother – furious at the noise – crept behind him with a pair of scissors. She cut off his Bobby Charlton comb-over, a long thread of hair that measured more than 12 inches and, until it was (rightly) nipped, had been known to flap unbecomingly in the Midlands breeze. He was furious, like Black Country version of Samson to my mother’s Delilah. But, to be fair to my mother, you snooze, you lose. What’s more, when my dad snored in bed, it was my mother who would get up in the night and crash in the spare room. She self-banished, which seems unfair.

Both my parents are dead, so I will never know if my dad's snoring was accompanied by twitching, but mine certainly is. It has lacerated sheets, creeped out my wife and makes me feel ashamed when in the morning I learn what I've been doing. What is going on? "Snoring and sleep apnoea can cause periodic limb movement during sleep (PLMS), which is involuntary twitching of the lower legs or ankles while you're asleep," Surda says. "This is because snoring can cause these movements as part of the arousal process, which is when there is a change in brainwave activity as we shift from a deep to light sleep stage." How sad: I remember when a night-time arousal process meant something different.



'There is nothing more disturbing than lying there trying to sleep and all you can do is tune into your partner snoring next to you.' Photograph: Lol Keegan/The Guardian

Why, my wife wonders, don't snorers wake themselves up? Why do they wake everybody else up nearby but not themselves? Is it because they're selfish? It is, isn't it? "When we sleep, we can still hear, but our decision-making processes are different from when we are awake and our brain filters out sounds that aren't important, letting us sleep through background noise," Surda explains. "People do wake up from particularly loud snores, but this will only be for a brief moment before going back to a deep sleep." Put that way, I sound quite the selfish clod.

The number of snoring victims – most, I suspect, women – has risen considerably since 1975 because, Surda points out, since that year the worldwide level of obesity has nearly tripled. “Generally speaking, it might be said that our stressful, busy lifestyles, which can have a negative on the quality of sleep, have made snoring more and more common. Stressed people often rely on unhealthy lifestyles to cope, such as overeating. Obesity can mean that we hold an increased level of fat in our neck, which restricts our airways and can lead to snoring.”

For a long time, I’ve struggled to sort out my snoring problem. Like millions of others, I’m not sure what to do. I’m not especially overweight, not unusually stressed and I have no problem sleeping – I’m not sure what’s wrong with me but I really want to overcome the problem. That said, I’ve balked at some remedies. My brother-in-law wears a continuous positive airway pressure (Cpap) machine at night to reduce the impact of his sleep apnoea. But I am not at all convinced I have sleep apnoea (a disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts at night and whose symptoms include feeling tired after a good night’s sleep). Moreover, the Cpap machine costs nearly £500 and the acronym worries me. It’s one diagonal line from being a Crap machine, and nobody wants that. Plus, even though it supplies much-needed nocturnal oxygen, it looks ridiculous.

I sleep blissfully through my snoring, unaware the racket is giving my wife the nocturnal pip

Instead, I’ve experimented with lots of other remedies. The first involved sleeping on my side. “Sleeping on your back can cause you to snore, and so laying on your side is always advised for a better night’s sleep,” counsels Surda. “Laying a pillow or wedge behind you can be a good prompt for your body to remain in that position, if you tend to move or roll over a lot in your sleep.” Easier said than done: I would start sleeping on my side, but within a few hours be on my back again, pillows notwithstanding, snoring loudly until my wife shook me awake. Also, the sleeping-on-the-side remedy became untenable when I had another problem associated with getting older: last year, I had an eye operation for a detached retina that required I sleep face down. As a result I spent several nights snoring loudly into the mattress.

Not a good look. Or indeed a good sound. On the plus side, my eyesight recovered even if my snoring, if anything, got worse.

On YouTube, there is a channel called Asian Zen Lullabies that promises not just to solve sleep problems but also to stop those who fall asleep to its soothing sounds from snoring. It didn't work for me. But then again, I have no trouble falling asleep, be it to a soundtrack of Napalm Death or Radio 3's Night Tracks. I've even recorded myself snoring and played that back at bedtime. It put me right to sleep, but did it stop me snoring? Have a guess.

I also tried menthol strips that you place on the roof of your mouth before you fall asleep. The idea is they dissolve as you doze, open up the air passageways and stop one snoring. But for the minty fresh breath, I might just as well have poured the money down the toilet.

I tried £18.50 plastic nostril inserts, carefully adjusting them in my nose last thing at night, and washing the mucus from them each morning. These nasal dilators are hailed by Cannon for reducing the incidence of snoring by 75%. Sadly, I'm in the incorrigible 25% and my wife is very much not among the 73% of users' partners who reported a reduction in snoring severity. Nor did the £19.95 Rhynil anti-snoring throat spray work for me, despite boasting astringent properties from some rare leaves that purportedly help reduce palatal flutter.



‘The hospital’s sleep clinic promised to do what they could to save my marriage.’ Photograph: Lol Keegan/The Guardian

I even filled in a questionnaire by the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association. No, I don’t smoke. Yes, my BMI is higher post-lockdown, but whose isn’t? I scarcely drink alcohol. I exercise regularly. Yes, I do have a beard. Hold on. What has a beard got to do with it? The only answer I’ve been able to find is that some snoring men grow beards to conceal weak or double chins. Both of these anatomical variants increases the odds of having sleep apnoea. My beard, more like George Michael stubble than Darwin’s, was not grown to hide these shortcomings.

The findings of this questionnaire? I don’t have nasal abnormalities, I don’t grind my teeth and I sometimes sleep with my mouth slightly open. I should lose a little weight. Plus, finally, a diagnosis. “Your snoring is most likely caused by a vibration at the base of the tongue and mouth breathing during sleep.” The solution? Purchasing a Tomed SomnoGuard 3 for £47.99. “This new version of the simple one-piece boil and bite Mandibular Advancement Device (MAD) . . . ” goes the blurb. What now?

And yet I bought one, put it in boiled water like a sachet of cod and parsley sauce from the 1970s, then placed it in my mouth, like a boxer before the bell rings. Then I moved my lower jaw 5mm forwards as instructed, bit

down hard and pressed the plastic firmly against my teeth to create a custom-moulded fit. The aim? To move the jaw forward to open up partially closed airways and stop me snoring. The result? In the mirror, I looked more neanderthal than ever. Oh yes, and I still snore.

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By this point I was imagining that I would spend the rest of my life alone on the sofa bed when, after a nearly two-year wait, I was finally given an appointment at the hospital's sleep clinic where they promised to do what they could to save my marriage. To that end, a nurse gave me a monitoring device rather like a wrist-based fitness tracker to sleep with overnight. While I slept it measured brainwaves, as well as muscle and breathing activity.

Twelve weeks after wearing this device for one night and returning it to hospital, a letter arrived. It informed me that: my AHI was 0.6 per hour, ODI 0.9 per hour, RDI 5.7 per hour, snore index 1.7%, mean SpO<sub>2</sub> 97% and my Epworth score 9/24. I obviously had no idea what any of this meant and so went online to find out.

AHI, which stands for apnoea-hypopnoea index, shows how often my breathing stops and starts while asleep for 10 seconds or longer (apnoeas); a hypopnoea is a partial loss of breath for 10 seconds or longer). RDI stands for respiratory disturbance index, which, like the AHI, measures apnoeas and hypopnoea, but in addition, measures lower-level breathing disruptions in sleep called respiratory-effort related arousals, which aren't as sexy as they sound. ODI means oxygen desaturation index and measures how many times an hour oxygen levels fall below a baseline, while SpO<sub>2</sub> also measures how much oxygen there is in your blood. Oxygen levels fall during sleep because of interrupted breathing. The snore index is the number of snore events per hour. At 1.7% that doesn't sound as though I snore very often, but, of course, as I sleep blissfully through these snore events and am completely unaware of how the racket is giving my wife and anyone else in earshot the nocturnal pip, I'm not fit to judge on the intensity of those events. One paper I read tells me the snoring can reach 100 decibels and prolonged exposure can damage hearing.

When I finally get an appointment with a respiratory consultant to explain all this data, Dr Nikesh Devani says that the snore index measures volume

rather than intensity of snoring, adding that it wouldn't surprise him if it were 45 decibels, which is roughly the volume of traffic. "That's very loud and very disturbing for anybody nearby," he says. He tells me I do not suffer from sleep apnoea, nor was there evidence of sleep-disordered breathing. The Epworth score, he explains, is based on a questionnaire I filled in asking in which situations I might nod off (watching telly, reading, at the wheel of a car stuck in traffic, etc). The ranking of 9 suggests I have an average amount of sleepiness. If it were above 16, I should seek medical attention (though, you'd think, I should probably get someone else to drive me to hospital).

This is all good news but what would you recommend I do to remedy the problem, I ask Dr Devani. "A mandibular splint," he replies. And what's that? "It's a bit like a gum shield that you attach to your teeth after boiling it." I tell him I've tried it and it didn't work. "Well, it's really worth persevering for more than one or two nights," he says. "They really do work because they push your lower jaw forward and stop your windpipe collapsing and causing obstructed breathing. Wearing something at night to achieve that is really key."

There's also a new device on the market that intrigues Devani and his colleagues. The eXciteOSA is unusual in that it's a device you wear during the day to stop snoring at night. It electronically stimulates your lolling tongue and collapsing windpipe, ostensibly to retrain you physiologically not to snore at night. Test data done by the manufacturers looks promising, Devani says, but so far there's not enough for the NHS to warrant recommending it.

I check out eXciteOSA's website, already predisposed against it because of the otiose capitalised X. It looks rather like an electronic version of those throat exercises that had me pronouncing vowels like a latter-day Eliza Doolittle. "Tired of sleeping alone?" asks the website. You'd better believe I am. There's a picture of a distinguished grey-haired man reading *Wallpaper\** magazine while a gizmo that looks like a cat's extended tongue dangles goofily from his mouth. Behind him in a living room devoted to what looks like minimalist Danish design is a glamorous woman, presumably his life partner. She is smiling, presumably not just because she's married to a silver

fox but for the first time in years is getting eight hours' uninterrupted sleep a night.

This, Wallpaper\* notwithstanding, is very much the image of domestic felicity I'm looking forward to enjoying. I am tempted into ordering an eXciteOSA – until I discover it retails at £540.

Instead, I dust off the SomnoGuard 3 for another try. After five nights of wearing it, I wake myself up snoring. Clearly it doesn't work for me.

In despair, I order another device from a website Devani mentioned. I opt for another mandibular splint; the Stop Snoring Mouthpiece, at £44.99, costs less than a 10th of the price of the eXciteORA. Perhaps it was the series of Zzzzs spiralling from the company logo that tempted me. More likely it was the 30-day money back guarantee if the device doesn't stop my snoring.

When this mouthguard arrives, it looks and feels in the mouth exactly the same as the SomnoGuard 3, but instead of boiling it to fit my mouth, I just pop it in at night. I've absolutely no idea why it works better than the SomnoGuard 3, but, for two weeks now, it has. I'm back sleeping with my wife in the proper bed, and no longer disrupting her sleeping with my snoring, though the device hardly makes me look like love's young dream. It makes all but rudimentary kissing tricky. While my wife slept the other night, I lay awake wondering if this is how it is going to be for the rest of our marriage. Perhaps. The prospect is not so appalling.

And it sure beats the sofa bed.

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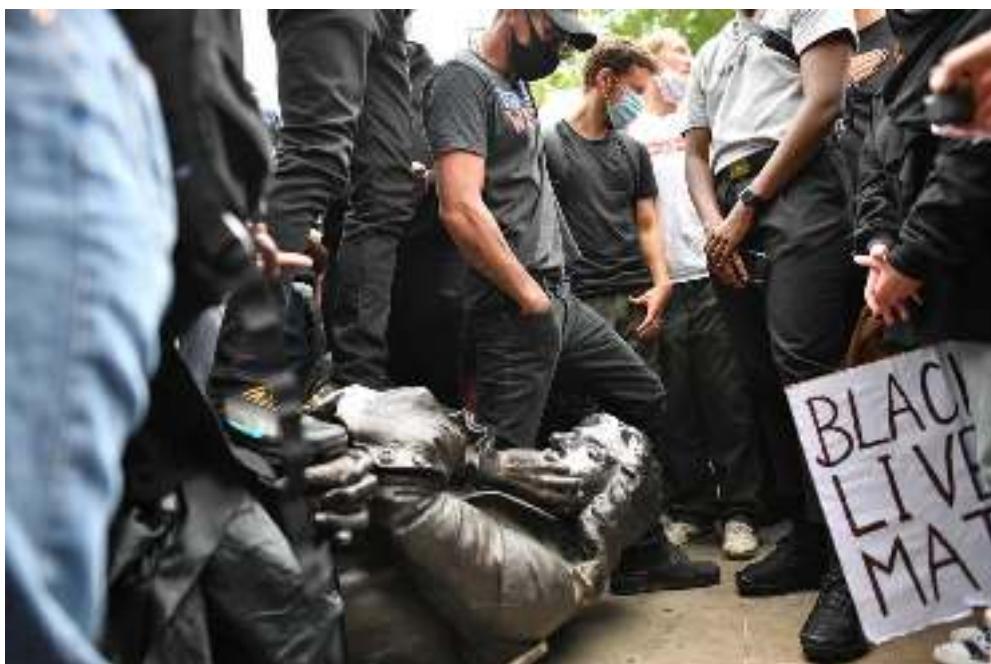
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## Reni Eddo-Lodge on anti-racism: ‘The backlash amazes me’



Black Lives Matter protesters topple statue of Bristol slave trader Edward Colston. Photograph: Ben Birchall/PA

Two years after the Black Lives Matter demonstrations that sent Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race to the top of the bestseller

lists, its author assesses how far we've come, in an edited extract from an updated edition of the book



[Reni Eddo-Lodge](#)

Sat 16 Jul 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 05.52 EDT

25 May 2020. Minneapolis, Minnesota. [George Floyd](#) is leaving a shop after paying for a packet of cigarettes with a fake \$20 bill. In line with the workplace's policy, a member of staff has called the police. George is arrested, handcuffed, and led to the police car. It's at this point that he begins to display severe distress. Police officers restrain him, and one of them takes up a position on top of him, placing his knee on top of George's neck. George protests and says he can't breathe, but he receives no reprieve from the officer killing him. Then, he seems to accept his fate. "Mom, love you," he says. "Tell my kids I love them." Soon after, he stops talking. It is only when paramedics arrive that the knee is lifted. George's body is put on to a stretcher, his limbs loose and floppy. An hour later, he is declared dead at a hospital nearby.

On 26 May, video footage of the murder, filmed by a teenage bystander, is uploaded to social media. Protesters gather in Louisville, Minneapolis and Glynn County, united by the same cry: [Black Lives Matter](#). The protests quickly spread across the United States.

In Britain, we were in the midst of the first Covid lockdown. News of the Black Lives Matter protests was the only thing that cut through three months of almost non-stop coronavirus coverage, and with it came an undeniable sense of urgency. People were sharing resources – books, podcasts, films, documentaries – to help understand the moment they found themselves in. Some people had curated anti-racist reading lists, and were distributing them online. My social media accounts were tagged and mentioned repeatedly by readers recommending my book [Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race](#).

By mid-June, it had rocketed up the bestseller charts, not just in Britain, but in the United States too. At any other time, the bestseller charts simply reflect the publishing industry's commercial successes. But this time, they seemed to signal a fundamental change in wider society.



Protesters march near the scene of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, 26 May 2020. Photograph: Craig Lassig/EPA

The mainstream understanding of racism was shifting beneath our feet, and it felt transformative. In the patch of London I'd lived in for five years, I saw Black Lives Matter signs plastered in my neighbours' windows. On the streets, crowds of people put Covid regulations aside as they gathered in city centres to mourn the dead and fight for the living. I had been going to

protests since I was 19, and I knew something was different about this moment. The general public – the very same people that activists had laboured to reach, bickered and fought among ourselves to persuade – were already on side. And in Bristol, a port city in south-west England, an action was about to take place that would reverberate across the world.

Rhian Graham woke up on the morning of Sunday 7 June with a strong desire to make it to Bristol's Black Lives Matter march. Prior to the pandemic, Rhian had worked in events and stage management, rigging lights with ropes on stages and sets. She hadn't attended many protests before and did not consider herself an activist. But in the days after footage of George Floyd's murder had captured the world's attention, she began to have conversations about racism with the people around her. Rhian downloaded the audiobook of Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race, and started listening. "I just really felt like I had to go to that protest and show solidarity, and this idea of possibly being able to pull the statue down had arisen. I'm one of those people that's eager to help." She references the skills she developed in her pre-pandemic job, setting up lighting. "I'm a rigger, I've got rope, I can tie knots ... maybe we should try that."

We are in Bristol, more than a year and a half later. Rhian and her partner are helping me retread the route of the march. When she arrived at the rally, 10,000 people had gathered on College Green. "There was so much passion and sort of a furious need to be in the streets that day," she tells me.

From College Green the crowd proceeded through the streets of the city centre. Following the route together, we pass a statue of Queen Victoria. "If it was mindless vandalism, that statue would have probably been the first one to get," Rhian's partner quips. We walk down St Augustine's Parade, passing another statue in the pedestrianised city centre. Neptune, god of the sea, wields his sceptre authoritatively. In just a few steps we reach the plinth that once held a statue of slave trader Edward Colston.

And so, on Sunday 7 June 2020, as the march moved through the city centre, Rhian made a beeline for the statue. She was accompanied by two friends, Sage Willoughby and Milo Ponsford. "I didn't know Milo was going to have a rope," she tells me when we meet. "Milo didn't know I was gonna have a rope." The night before, she had visited Milo's workshop. "We chatted about

it, about the concept of laying down the statue, but there wasn't, like, a set plan; I didn't know how much he'd committed to the idea."

Rhian, Milo and Sage positioned themselves in front of the statue, which two people had already climbed up, and pulled ropes out of their bags. "Simultaneously, I think we all knew what was gonna happen," Rhian says. Video footage of the day shows Rhian and Milo in a small crowd, tugging at the ropes tied around the statue. The base of the statue yielded, and the figure of Colston leaned forwards before toppling to the ground. "It all happened within about two and a half minutes," she says. She gestures to the dent in the pavement where the statue initially struck the ground. "That impact on the floor, just, like, reverberated out from the city."



Reni Eddo-Lodge, photographed in June 2022. Photograph: Laura McCluskey/The Guardian

On this particular Black Lives Matter march, prompted by the brutal murder of George Floyd, the link between the viral video footage of his death and a centuries-old British slave trader was clear. As an African American man, Floyd was likely descended from slaves. It is certain that, like all African Americans, he lived a life, and died a death, that was shaped harshly by the structural racism endemic in US society. His present was the result of

hundreds of years of discrimination, with a legacy rooted squarely in the slave trade.

“The feeling of pulling down that statue was really a lesson in my own agency in the world, and realising that I can have an effect on my surroundings and can have a say and use my voice,” Rhian says. Protesters immediately set upon it, jumping up and down on the statue, beating it and kneeling on its neck. Rhian peeled away from the crowd again and headed towards Castle Park, where the main march was planned to end, while the protesters rolled the statue towards the Floating Harbour. It was there that it was launched into the docks.

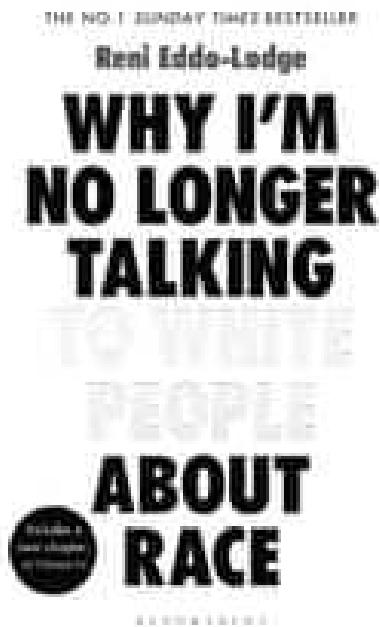
Bristol’s statue-toppling existed not in isolation, but in the midst of a global uprising against racism

That afternoon made headlines around the world. Condemnation from Britain’s political leaders arrived quickly. A statement by Boris Johnson’s spokesperson called the toppling a “criminal act”, but also said that he understood “the strength of feeling”. Home secretary Priti Patel was much less measured, calling the act “disgraceful”, and referring to Rhian and those around her as a “mob”. Labour leader Keir Starmer said pulling down the statue was “completely wrong”.

But the moment could not easily be argued away or dismissed. Bristol’s statue-toppling existed not in isolation, but in the midst of a global uprising against racism. Across Britain, over the course of a week, protests and rallies in favour of the inherent worth of Black lives fundamentally challenged the existing consensus. The response was not just political: it shook the foundations of workplaces, corporate offices, schools, local authorities and family dinner tables. It changed how friends and acquaintances related to one another. It intensified a social pressure to care, to know, and to understand.

I used to believe that making the case for a just society would be met with enthusiasm, not vitriol. But anywhere the cause of anti-racism has convinced enough of the general populace, a cruel defence of the status quo has quickly followed. What exactly needs to be preserved evades me. I am still unsure of

what might be lost if some Black authors are added to a curriculum, or if a city adds some of the uglier parts of its history to a plaque celebrating the pretty bits. The backlash to the incredible groundswell of young people searching for more British history – history that just happens to look at areas we don't examine too closely in school – amazes me. I've watched aghast as conservatives deride them for their inclination towards critical thinking and curiosity, their searching for context to ground today's social issues. The accusations of censoriousness don't make sense to me. They are seeking to add more context, not to erase what is already known.



What has become clear is that there are sections of Britain that fear the upending of the social order. In the last five years, it feels like so much has shifted. While the old guard still occupy much of the space, who gets to influence the public sphere has changed fundamentally. Seven years ago I was working part-time in a pub for £60 a week. When I signed the deal for my book, I was not the product of a private school, or someone who had been bred for power. I wondered if the pushback against people like me was because I should not have been influencing public debate.

In December 2021, Rhian Graham stood up in Bristol crown court and told the jury that reading Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race had been a turning point for her. She was giving evidence in her

defence after entering a plea of not guilty at Bristol magistrates' court. She was cleared of all charges by a jury on 5 January 2022.

Rhian's defence barristers put forward a convincing argument: they said that the statue's continued presence, despite decades of opposition from residents, was tantamount to public indecency. They used the wording of the plaque – “erected by the citizens of Bristol” – to argue that the defendants truly believed that the statue belonged to the city's residents, and that years of opposition to the statue implored them, as citizens of Bristol, to bring it down.

There is no such thing as a lone genius – I came to hate being regarded in this way

When I got home from my trip to see Rhian, I picked up a copy of my book, flicking through the pages to remind myself of the final lines. I had written: “If you are disgusted by what you see, and if you feel the fire coursing through your veins, then it's up to you. You don't have to be the leader of a global movement or a household name.” I thought about the long stretch of time that had passed since I wrote those lines hunched over a cold kitchen table, chilblains on my fingers from trying to save money on bills. I thought about all the people I'd met over the last five years, how many had reached out, in writing or in person, to tell me how they were trying to change their corner of the world.

I thought about the movement that this book came from, the movement it helped fuel, the people it connected. There is no such thing as a lone genius, despite our society's proclivity to train its laser focus on a single successful person. Over the years, I came to hate being regarded in this way. The success of this book is still not something I'm willing to claim in my personal life. I see it as something separate from me, something that belongs to its readers. I ended the original foreword with the words “I hope you use it as a tool”, and I am glad that has come true. It was an extension of my years of reading theory, engaging in the feminist internet, waving placards at marches and going to activist meetings. It was a culmination of conversations, of challenging and being challenged. It was often in community conflict that my understanding of the world was honed and

expanded. I thought about the piece of writing that spawned the book: “I’m no longer engaging with white people on the topic of race. Not all white people, just the vast majority who refuse to accept the legitimacy of structural racism and its symptoms.” In making my personal decision public, that piece of writing had not only served its initial purpose as a way to work out my thoughts and feelings, it had also functioned as an invitation, drawing more people into the conversation. It’s in community that you find yourself, and I couldn’t have completed that piece of writing without it.

I could not allow myself to be happy when Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race topped the UK book charts. The conditions that milestone came from were simply too dire. The streets were full of mourning, grief and rage. With distance, I can see that despite this achievement emerging from a time of crisis, it was still an achievement – not just for me, but for a movement that has long been marginalised and maligned. There is a bad-faith characterisation of anti-racism, one that tries to position anti-racist thinking and thinkers as a new “establishment”, even though the opposite is true. It edits no national newspapers, write no laws, and polices no streets.

“The bottom line is this,” James Baldwin told the New York Times in 1979. “You write in order to change the world, knowing perfectly well that you probably can’t, but also knowing that literature is indispensable to the world. In some way, your aspirations and concern for a single man in fact do begin to change the world. The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimetre, the way a person looks or people look at reality, then you can change it.”

This is an edited extract from a new and updated edition of Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge, published by Bloomsbury in paperback (£9.99). To support the Guardian and Observer order your copy at [guardianbookshop.com](https://guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply.

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Interview

**Charlotte Church: ‘The worst job I’ve done? Being a major label artist. I felt like a commodity, a thing to be sold’**

[Rosanna Greenstreet](#)



Charlotte Church: ‘Magic is real.’ Photograph: Gem Harris

The singer-songwriter on picking her nose, trusting the wrong men and why she loved the first Covid lockdown

Sat 16 Jul 2022 04.30 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 08.31 EDT

Born in Cardiff, [Charlotte Church](#), 36, found fame in 1997, at 11, after she sang Andrew Lloyd Webber's Pie Jesu over the phone on ITV's This Morning. The following year, she became the youngest artist to top the classical chart with her debut album, Voice of an Angel. In 2005, she released her first pop album, Tissues and Issues. On 23 July, her Late Night Pop Dungeon is at Kaleidoscope festival at Alexandra Palace in London. She is married with three children and lives in south Wales.

**When were you happiest?**

In the first lockdown. Obviously, there was terrible grief and sadness and fear around, but there was also this reclaiming for nature. I was constantly at my allotment with the big kids and my husband.

**What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?**

Procrastination.

**What is the trait you most deplore in others?**

Weakness – not to be confused with sensitivity, which is a superpower.

**What was your most embarrassing moment?**

Probably one of the numerous times that the Sun tried to shame me for something I didn't do.

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**Aside from a property, what's the most expensive thing you've bought?**

When I was 18, I bought a boat for a million pounds and sold it a year later for just over half the price.

**Describe yourself in three words**

Full of wonder.

**What is the worst thing anyone's said to you?**

"Don't worry, love, I can't dance either," said a guy in a club.

**Which words or phrases do you most overuse?**

Fuck and lush.

**Who would play you in the film of your life?**

Elizabeth Taylor in her prime.

**What is your most unappealing habit?**

I pick my nose, I bite my nails. I do them with great glee.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

A barrister, a vet or a singer.

**Would you choose fame or anonymity?**

Fame.

**What do you owe your parents?**

I don't believe we owe our parents anything.

**What does love feel like?**

A shimmering bioluminescence that lights up each cell.

**What is the worst job you've done?**

It was a double-edged sword, but being a major-label artist, I felt like a commodity, a thing to be sold.

**What has been your biggest disappointment?**

The outcome of the [Leveson inquiry](#).

**If you could edit your past, what would you change?**

Trusting some men.

**If not yourself, who would you most like to be?**

A revered oak tree.

**How often do you have sex?**

I can't possibly answer that.

**What is the closest you've come to death?**

Birth.

**What single thing would improve the quality of your life?**

Discipline.

**Would you rather have more sex, money or fame?**

Sex.

**What is the most important lesson life has taught you?**

Be gentle.

**Tell us a secret**

Magic is real.

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## Blind date: ‘I’d once had a memorable encounter with his flatmate’



Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

Albie, 25, documentary development producer, meets David, 29, actor

Sat 16 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT

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## **Albie on David**



### **What were you hoping for?**

The love of my life! And someone to shoot the shit with over some posh pub grub.

### **First impressions?**

Very dapper, and welcoming. There was a glass of prosecco for me on arrival and we had a chat about “hun” culture, so that made me feel very comfortable.

### **What did you talk about?**

Our lines of work. Literature. Scottish independence. His long-lost grandad. Queerness. The borough of Hackney. Chatroulette. And poppers.

### **Any awkward moments?**

Not awkward, more wonderful! Discovering he'd slept with my housemate halfway through the meal made my day.

### **Good table manners?**

The best! And we shared everything, from starter to dessert, which was cute.

**Best thing about David?**

His impressions and storytelling skills.

**Would you introduce David to your friends?**

In a heartbeat.

**Describe David in three words.**

Charismatic, cheeky, wise.

**What do you think David made of you?**

A name-dropper.

**Did you go on somewhere?**

Yes, for an overpriced Aperol spritz.

## Q&A

**Want to be in Blind date?**

Show

Blind date is Saturday's dating column: every week, two strangers are paired up for dinner and drinks, and then spill the beans to us, answering a set of questions. This runs, with a photograph we take of each dater before the date, in Saturday magazine (in the UK) and online at [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) every Saturday. It's been running since 2009 – you can [read all about how we put it together here](#).

**What questions will I be asked?**

We ask about age, location, occupation, hobbies, interests and the type of person you are looking to meet. If you do not think these questions cover everything you would like to know, tell us what's on your mind.

**Can I choose who I match with?**

No, it's a blind date! But we do ask you a bit about your interests, preferences, etc – the more you tell us, the better the match is likely to be.

**Can I pick the photograph?**

No, but don't worry: we'll choose the nicest ones.

**What personal details will appear?**

Your first name, job and age.

**How should I answer?**

Honestly but respectfully. Be mindful of how it will read to your date, and that Blind date reaches a large audience, in print and online.

**Will I see the other person's answers?**

No. We may edit yours and theirs for a range of reasons, including length, and we may ask you for more details.

**Will you find me The One?**

We'll try! Marriage! Babies!

**Can I do it in my home town?**

Only if it's in the UK. Many of our applicants live in London, but we would love to hear from people living elsewhere.

**How to apply**

Email [blind.date@theguardian.com](mailto:blind.date@theguardian.com)

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

**And ... did you kiss?**

That would be telling ...

**If you could change one thing about the evening, what would it be?**

I'd have sat alfresco – it was too stunning an eve to be inside.

**Marks out of 10?**

9.

**Would you meet again?**

As friends, absolutely.



David (left) and Albie on their date.

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### **David on Albie**



#### **What were you hoping for?**

Someone I could have a laugh with and a nice dinner.

**First impressions?**

Handsome, stylish and laughed easily.

**What did you talk about?**

New York. Scottish novels. Harold Wilson's cabinet – doesn't everyone? Clapham being confused for a personality rather than a place. The role of Chat-Avenue in our closeted youths. And death.

**Any awkward moments?**

No. He was very easy company.

**Good table manners?**

Impeccable. We split everything and no one dribbled.

**Best thing about Albie?**

He was full of interesting things to say, and passionate about life. I liked how open he was about how hard it can be to decide what you want to do with the time you've got.

**Would you introduce Albie to your friends?**

Happily. Actually, it seems that his flatmate and I have already had a brief but memorable encounter at the Edinburgh fringe in 2019.

**Describe Albie in three words.**

Insightful. Attractive. Engaging.

**What do you think Albie made of you?**

Nice enough, with an overly familiar relationship with the sound of my own voice.

**Did you go on somewhere?**

We went to Pop Brixton for one.

**And ... did you kiss?**

Who, dear? Me, dear? Gay, dear? No, dear.

**If you could change one thing about the evening what would it be?**

The desperate journey from Finsbury Park to West Dulwich for dinner.

## Marks out of 10?

9.

### Would you meet again?

We've swapped numbers and agreed we'll make good friends.

*Albie and David ate at [Walter's](#), London SE21. Fancy a blind date? Email [blind.date@theguardian.com](mailto:blind.date@theguardian.com)*

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## 2022.07.16 - Opinion

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[\*\*OpinionCoronavirus\*\*](#)

# Covid killed so many of us – now the UK government fears our tears and rage

[Michael Rosen](#)



With deaths from the virus passing 200,000, Britain is a country struggling to process the trauma of so much fear and loss



‘I readily admit that I look at the comments by Johnson and those scientists in March 2020 and feel aggrieved.’ Boris Johnson at a PPE manufacturing facility in Northumberland, February 2021. Photograph: Getty Images

Sat 16 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 10.03 EDT

Covid [changed my life](#), so anything I say about it is coloured by what has happened. To my mind, we are chewing over several levels of trauma at the same time: personal, social, national and possibly global. This can feel as if we have been bombarded.

Even though I have the date clear in my mind when I started getting ill, I don’t know which of the things I was doing in the days prior was “the moment”. I ask myself, did the virus get into my lungs at home? Or at the Emirates Stadium watching Arsenal? On a school visit, surrounded by teenagers asking for a selfie? Or in the BBC Today programme studio talking about why I thought an unpleasant attitude was emerging that suggested that if old people got Covid and died it mattered less than if young people got it?

These questions place the virus in the midst of our social life. We live and work in groups. It reminds me that the virus doesn’t “spread”. We spread it. We cough, sneeze and breathe on each other. Whatever we do about the

viruses that may harm us will affect and change our social existence. When millions of us have been harmed or killed, we feel it as a social trauma in ways that I don't think we've thought through yet.

There were moments when we turned on each other, sneering and insulting each other for wearing or [not wearing masks](#), for caring or not caring whether 80-year-olds died, for believing or not believing that [long Covid existed](#). As I came out of my 48 days in intensive care, 40 of which were in an induced coma, I harked back to that conversation I had had in the Today studio and wondered whether in March 2020, when I got ill, the government really did [want to protect me](#).

I started researching the timeline: what had the people in power said just at the moment I got ill? On 3 February 2020, Boris Johnson [gave a speech](#) in Greenwich, south London, where he said: “We are starting to hear some bizarre autarkic rhetoric, when barriers are going up, and when there is a risk that new diseases such as coronavirus will trigger a panic and a desire for market segregation that go beyond what is medically rational.” Instead, he suggested, “humanity needs some government somewhere” to be the “supercharged champion of the right of the populations of the Earth to buy and sell freely among each other”.

This takes a bit of translating: the “autarkic rhetoric” was in fact people calling for a public health response to a new virus. “[S]ome government somewhere” was him appointing himself in that role as the “supercharged champion” of the free market – the free market that would defeat the virus rather than a public health policy.

This, then, was Johnson’s first reflex in the face of the pandemic. Every time I hear the phrase “he got the big calls right”, this speech echoes in my head.

By 3 March, he was boasting: “I was at a hospital the other night where I think a few there were actually coronavirus patients and I [shook hands with everybody](#), you’ll be pleased to know, and I continue to shake hands.”

As late as 13 March, three scientists advising the government all talked to the media on the same day of “[herd immunity](#)” being the way to “stop” the

virus. This newspaper has shown many times that this was both misguided and bad science, probably confusing the resistant response we build up in our bodies in the present with the kinds of “vertical” immunity that living forms build up through evolution; that is, through the elimination of breeding individuals unable to resist a virus or bacterium.

I came out of my dose of Covid and my time in intensive care not being able to stand up or walk, with one eye hardly seeing and one ear hardly hearing. Micro-bleeds in my brain have permanently knocked out the respective optic and auditory nerves. I readily admit that I look at the comments by Johnson and those scientists and feel aggrieved. And I’m not even the loved one of someone who died in that time. I’m not a health worker who lost a colleague at the very moment the PPE was insufficient or poor. On one occasion the PPE that came into my ward was secondhand and one piece had blood on it (as testified by the consultant).

I have been in meetings with people in this situation and many feel desolate, betrayed and abandoned. All the more so, when they hear people telling us that it was a “scamdemic” or that we had underlying health problems or that we were so old we were going to cop it soon anyway. One famous journalist reassured me that she knew I had been ill, “but,” she added, “you are 74”. That “but” is doing a lot of work. What’s “but” about being 74? Are my days less valid than her days, I asked myself. What kind of social contract do we have with each other in which I can be dispensable because I’m 74?

Meanwhile, this great invention, the NHS, saved my life, taught me how to walk, helped me help myself get fit, through the gloriously cooperative labours, skills, knowledge and experience of hundreds of people, many from (or with origins in) many different parts of the world. When I meet any of the nurses, doctors, physios or occupational therapists who looked after me, I am moved to tears.

To my mind, they represent the best of us; togetherness in the face of danger and loss. And, take it from me, they have suffered and are still suffering. Some have been unable to go back to the wards. When I signed permission for me to be put into induced sleep, I was told I had a 50:50 chance of waking up. It turned out to be a slightly better ratio: 58% of us survived; 42% died. That’s a lot of death for young health workers to cope with.

Actually, 200,000 is a lot of death for all of us to cope with. I wait – and keep waiting – for that national moment, that service in St Paul’s, that official gathering where we can all reflect at the same time on what has happened to us. Because the deaths have happened to us as individuals – and not in a public shared way, in some horrific act of war or genocide – it has become easier to tidy it away. The burden of the national and social trauma is being carried by us in our families and personal relationships. It’s almost as if this government that went into the pandemic mocking the public health response is afraid of our tears and our rage.

- Michael Rosen is a writer and broadcaster, and a former children’s laureate. He is the author of Many Different Kinds of Love, a story of life, death and the NHS
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## OpinionNursing

# How a teenager in crisis made me question my job in Britain's broken health system

[Anonymous](#)

A harrowing weekend for the patient and nurses involved could have been avoided had a specialist inpatient bed been free

- The writer is a paediatric nurse at a hospital in south-east England



'It's not only patients who are suffering. I am seriously concerned about the wellbeing of my colleagues.' (Picture posed by model.) Photograph: Alan Rubio/Getty Images

Sat 16 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 06.16 EDT

I am a nurse; my job is to help people. But I'm helpless.

I work on a children's ward in the south-east of England. I have been raising serious and significant concerns since the middle of last year, and I recently witnessed one of the most distressing situations in my 25-year career. I don't say this lightly. There will be hours of security camera footage that will make for harrowing viewing: yes, everything is documented.

It is standard procedure for security to deploy bodycam recording in situations when they are involved in restraint of a young person, and when they are assisting with a young person who is attempting to self-harm and abscond from the ward, all in an effort to keep that young person safe.

This footage is then reviewed by the head of security and any other relevant professionals within the trust, along with safety incident reporting for each event. This is done for all untoward incidents, and especially when there is a compromise of patient safety, so there is a clear record of events.

Although this is about one patient, it's not really. These failures will be mirrored across hospitals in every city and across every region. But at the heart of this is a teenager who, through no fault of their own, is experiencing a terrible mental health crisis. This young person is awaiting inpatient treatment in a unit that can meet their complex and specialist needs, but a chronic lack of beds means there is no end in sight for them, or their family.

This case is not an anomaly. One in five children in need of mental health care in England had to wait more than 12 weeks to be seen in the previous year, a [freedom of information request](#) made by the BBC recently showed. Many are being admitted to general wards because there is no specialist inpatient facility available.

Over the course of a weekend, my colleagues and I, along with security staff, were involved in caring for this young person. Throughout this time, the patient required varying degrees of restraint to maintain their safety, something we as paediatric nurses are not trained to do, but what choice did we have? It started with head-banging against a wall. Then the patient repeated a distressing monologue of anguish and self-hate, as well as expressing suicidal wishes.

Imagine being this person – in so much mental anguish that those words are coming out of your mouth. Imagine being one of only three nurses supporting this patient. These words echoed through our ears, our minds and our hearts. All we could do, as a team, was attempt to engage and distract them. Attempt to calm them, and reassure them, repeatedly and gently, that they were safe. But it was fruitless. We were forced to turn to chemical sedation because there was simply no other solution.

According to the Royal College of Nursing's [latest safe staffing survey](#), 23% of respondents across the UK said that clinical care took place in an inappropriate environment, rising to 27% for respondents working in a hospital. This is a 2% increase from 2020. How is this local and national infrastructure so underfunded, so broken, that we are experiencing this?

And it's not only patients who are suffering. I am seriously concerned about the wellbeing of my colleagues. Many of them have admitted they are struggling with increased anxiety, and physical and mental exhaustion. Every single member of staff without fail will be able to recount their own similar, traumatic experience.

Everyone knows the situation is about as bad as it can get and everyone I speak to feels just as frustrated – they are all doing their jobs to the best of their ability. The system is just so very broken.

- The writer is a paediatric nurse at a hospital in south-east England
- *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](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)*

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## The first Tory leadership debate could significantly reshape the contest

[Martin Kettle](#)



Sunak performed well, with Mordaunt failing to justify her billing and Truss struggling to appeal beyond the party's right



Penny Mordaunt and Rishi Sunak during Britain's Next PM: The Conservative Leadership Debate. Photograph: Tom Nicholson/Rex/Shutterstock

Fri 15 Jul 2022 17.43 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 18.10 EDT

Ever since the first televised presidential debates in the US more than 60 years ago the received wisdom has been that TV debates are important hurdles, but that they do not shift a lot of votes. However, the first [Conservative leadership](#) debate on Friday evening felt as though it could significantly reshape the contest to succeed Boris Johnson.

In reality, [the Channel 4 debate](#) was an insight into two different arguments. The big one is the race to be Britain's next prime minister. That battle is mainly between the three frontrunners in the first two rounds of voting this week: Rishi Sunak; Penny Mordaunt; and Liz Truss. In that respect, Sunak clearly had the best of the evening, with Mordaunt failing to justify her strong showing in the early rounds, and Truss struggling to appeal beyond the right wing of the party.

Sunak performed well. He showed no nerves, was better informed, more reasoned and more practical than his rivals. He conveyed the seniority of the position he held in government until last week. But he pitched to the general

population, not to the Tory party. His attacks on wishful thinking and easy promises, and his refusal to disavow his tax and spending increases will not have gone down well with many of those whose votes will decide the outcome.

Mordaunt came into the debate on a roll. She is ahead in the polls among members and she has surged into second place in the first two rounds of voting among MPs. But she failed to justify her billing. She sounded vague and broad brush. She made few memorable points. She looked nervous. If this debate is remembered for anything it could be as the moment when the Mordaunt candidacy hit rough water. She will have to do very much better in the two other debates.

The evening was important for Truss. She needed to consolidate her position as the candidate of the right, and to wrest the initiative away from Mordaunt. She did the first – partly by wearing a pussy cat bow blouse of the kind favoured by Margaret Thatcher. But it was Sunak, not Truss, who did the second. Truss gave an insistent performance, repeating herself a lot, but she may benefit from Mordaunt's failure to seize her moment. If Truss gets into the final two, she may yet be the winner.

The other large issue of the evening was what it told us more generally about what the post-Johnson Conservative party is going to look like. Here, all five candidates had things to contribute. The best showings, though, belonged to Sunak and to the two outsiders, Kemi Badenoch and [Tom Tugendhat](#). Sunak's insistence that governments have to make difficult choices was a repudiation of Johnson's cakeism. Badenoch and Tugendhat were able to speak more freely and were able to sound more authentic as a result. Both of them did their prospects of senior jobs in the next Conservative government no harm at all. The debate was a useful reminder that there is more to the Tory party than Johnson.

It is important to remember who this weekend's three televised debates are aimed at. The audience that matters is not the general one or those in the studio. It is the audience watching at home with votes – the MPs who will reduce the field to the final two over three rounds of voting at Westminster

in the week to come, and the up to 200,000 Tory members who will decide which of the final two will succeed Johnson in early September. On the evidence of the first debate, that person will be Sunak. But there is still a long way to go.

*Martin Kettle is a Guardian columnist*

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## **The Tory leadership debate: desperate as a sales pitch, worse as entertainment**

[John Crace](#)



The Fatuous Five lined up like The Weakest Link contestants for a dismal 90 minutes



'I've delivered the impossible,' said Truss, blinking rapidly and sounding like a superannuated 1980s Amstrad computer. Photograph: Tom Nicholson/REX/Shutterstock

Fri 15 Jul 2022 16.58 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.14 EDT

Hard to believe but it's only just over a week since the latest Tory psychodrama began. It feels longer. So much longer. Time bends and stalls when you're in the parallel universe of a [Liz Truss](#) speech. She leaves audiences begging for a lethal injection. The other leadership contenders are little better, registering mostly as absences on the space-time continuum. Negative energy.

But we are where we are and we have moved on to [the first of the televised debates](#), a weird gameshow where the only audience that counts are the 360 or so Tory MPs who may or may not be watching. The rest of us are merely voyeurs, having no say in which two clowns will still be standing by next Wednesday evening. This is apparently how the UK likes to choose its prime minister these days. Very on brand for a country that has become a laughing stock.

First, though, there was a warm-up Zoom hustings on the Conservative Home website. Think a weekly meeting of junior sales reps. Only infinitely

more boring. It's almost as if no one really wants the job. Which would actually suit the rest of us.

The only highlights were the flatlining Truss forgetting to unmute herself – she's at her most articulate when you can't hear her – and Ready4Rish! suggesting that his biggest fault is his perfectionism. I'd say a far greater fault was being in charge of an economy that is predicted to have the second lowest growth in the G20. If he was a real perfectionist he'd have made sure we were bottom. The other three – [Penny Mordaunt](#), Tom Tugendhat and Kemi Badenoch – said nothing memorable at all. Which meant they easily came out on top.

Come 7.30pm, the Fatuous Five were lined up like The Weakest Link in the Channel 4 studios with Krishnan Guru-Murthy as guest presenter. And what a dismal 90 minutes it was. Desperate as a political sales pitch. Worse as entertainment. On this showing, the gene pool of talent in the Tory party isn't even a puddle. A great night for the Labour party, if no one else.

The first question was one of trust. "I've delivered the impossible," said Truss, blinking rapidly and sounding like a superannuated 1980s Amstrad computer. As AI goes, Liz makes the Maybot look human. At least Theresa May was vaguely aware there was a reality from which she was detached. Truss is just some free floating atoms in search of a personality and ideas. Virtually nothing she said made any sense. And if it did, it was entirely accidental. She is everyone's preferred comedy candidate.

Not that Rish!, Mordaunt or Badenoch could come up with any better reasons why they should be trusted. Resigning from the government months – if not years – after the rest of the country has concluded that Boris Johnson is a lying, narcissistic sociopath isn't going to win anyone any brownie points. Tugendhat won the first applause of the evening by shaking his head and saying The Convict was dishonest. Tugendhat went on to quote Harry Potter and thereafter chose to play the part of the outsider. The wise younger man who was outside the system and who could afford to tell the truth. Not that it mattered much as he is going to be out of the contest on Monday.

Nor did anyone pay much attention to Badenoch after she had had her five minutes kicking lumps out of Mordaunt over the culture wars as she too isn't a bona fide contender. So most of the rest of the debate consisted of Liz fantasising about uncosted tax cuts and trying to sound human – next time out, someone should restore her to her factory default settings – and Mordaunt sounding surprisingly wooden and clueless. Someone should teach her to smile and not talk in banalities. She even forgot her own promises to cut tax. Just trying not to screw up on live TV is setting the bar a little low for a wannabe prime minister.

All of which left the hopeless Rish! sounding like the voice of experience and the only person you might conceivably trust with running the country. But only because the rest were no hopers or out of their heads on Mogadon. Terrifying really. Still, we can only hope that Tory MPs are stupid enough to coalesce around Liz. After all, we're fucked regardless. So we may as well go down with a laugh.

***Guardian Newsroom: who will succeed Boris Johnson?***

*Join John Crace and Salma Shah as they discuss the Conservative leadership contest and who could be the next prime minister. On Tuesday 27 July at 8pm BST/9pm CEST/noon PDT/3pm EDT. [Book tickets here](#)*

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[Donald Trump](#)

## **Trump, battered by January 6 testimony, mulls 2024 run – and not all Republicans are happy**



Trump at a campaign rally in Des Moines, Iowa in October 2020. Have the January 6 hearings managed to launch a torpedo sufficiently explosive to sink USS Trump? Photograph: Carlos Barría/Reuters

Republicans are odds-on to take back the House and Senate in November, and the last thing the party needs, experts say, is a Trump distraction



[Ed Pilkington](#)

[@edpilkington](#)

Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.01 EDT

On Thursday the Trump campaign sent out a begging-bowl email to hundreds of thousands of supporters, previewing the former president's rally in Arizona this weekend and teasing the recipients with a portent of momentous things to come.

Donald Trump “wants to make sure it’s one of his best rallies yet”, his loyal followers were told. “He is preparing the speech that he will give in front of the American people.”

“The speech he will give” was a nudge-nudge wink-wink suggestion that the one-term president is poised to announce another run on the White House in 2024. The tantalizing hint was the latest in an intensifying stream of similar baits – most recently in remarks to Olivia Nuzzi of [New York magazine](#) this week – that are driving Republican party leaders to distraction.

With inflation running at [40-year highs](#), and with Joe Biden suffering [record lows](#) in his approval ratings, the Republican script for winning back the US House and Senate in November's midterm elections writes itself. The last thing the party needs, many top Republicans believe, is Trump muddying the message by talking about himself and 2024.

"Trump never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity," said Frank Luntz, the pollster who has a long track record of advising Republican campaigns. "He has the chance to participate in an amazing, historic Republican resurgence, and instead he's making everything all about him. That could cost [Republicans](#) the majorities."

Luntz said that Republican leaders have told Trump "in no uncertain terms that anything that takes attention away from inflation and Biden's failures could hand the election to the Democrats. But they know there is nothing they can do to influence him, and that he doesn't really care."

The incentive to announce early is self-evident: Trump is a past master at deflecting public attention from inconvenient truths. It is no coincidence that his dalliance with a third presidential bid comes just when he is taking a battering at the hands of the congressional hearings into the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol.

Millions of Americans have watched live as the January 6 committee has exposed the lengths to which the then-sitting president was prepared to go to hold onto power having lost the 2020 election. He tried [to grab the steering wheel](#) of his armored vehicle to turn it towards the Capitol and join the insurrectionists; he [splattered White House walls](#) with ketchup in a fit of rage; and when his vice-president faced a mob of violent white supremacists chanting "Hang Mike Pence!" [he told aides](#) that "Mike deserves it".

"It's the cumulative weight of the evidence that's piling up," said Charlie Sykes, a prominent conservative commentator who edits the Trump-critical news site the Bulwark. "The most damaging evidence is coming from people within Trump's orbit. That's potentially the greatest danger for Donald Trump: it's the people closest to him, people who were inside the Oval Office, who are saying it was a big lie."

People like Trump's then-attorney general Bill Barr who testified that he [told the president](#) to his face that his claims that the election was stolen were "crazy stuff" and "bullshit". Or Pat Cipollone, the White House counsel, [who declared](#) in a heated Oval Office meeting a month after the election that seizing voting machines was a "terrible idea" and "not how we do things in the United States".

It is not yet clear whether the hearings have managed to launch a torpedo sufficiently explosive to sink USS Trump. But the vessel is clearly taking on water, as is demonstrated by the polls.



Trump supporters storm the Capitol on January 6. Photograph: Jim Urquhart/Reuters

A [revealing survey](#) from the New York Times / Siena College this week showed that more than half of Republican primary voters want to move on from Trump. Though the former president remains dominant in the field of possible candidates, there is one obvious and growing threat: Ron DeSantis, the governor of Florida, who is quietly but steadily gaining strength.

"Trump is dropping," Luntz said. "Six months ago he was at 60%, and no one else was in double digits. Now he's in the upper 40s and DeSantis has

climbed into the 20s. You see poll after poll suggesting a majority of Republicans not wanting him to run again.”

That explains the baby steps that some Republican leaders have begun to take to detach themselves from Trump ahead of a possible 2024 head-to-head. Last month DeSantis, who initially adopted the mantle of Trumpism but is now forging his own iteration of it, pointedly let it be known that he was not interested in Trump’s endorsement in his gubernatorial re-election race.

Pence, in May, campaigned with the governor of Georgia, Brian Kemp, in his primary re-election contest in which Trump had backed a rival candidate (Kemp went on to win).

Such activity, tentative though it may yet be, is matched by moves among those who are arguably the real powerbrokers in the Republican party: the major donors. “Donors are increasingly flocking to and chatting about Ron DeSantis – he is increasingly sucking up all the oxygen,” said Dan Eberhart, a Denver, Colorado-based businessman who is himself a longtime Republican donor.

“They are tired of rehashing the 2020 election. They like Trump’s policies, but not the drama. If he runs they will vote for him, but their preference would be to have someone else like Trump on the top of the ticket,” Eberhart said.

One of those critical battleground states is Arizona which Biden won in 2020 by just 10,000 votes. A fascinating insight into the sea-change that is happening in the Grand Canyon state is given by Rusty Bowers, Republican speaker of the Arizona House.

In the fourth day of the January 6 hearings last month, Bowers related in searing detail how he had refused to play along with Trump’s plot to overturn Biden’s victory in his state. Asked at the hearing what he thought of a Trump-backed scheme to send fake electors to Washington countering Biden’s win, he called it a “tragic parody”, citing the words he wrote in his journal at the time: “I do not want to be a winner by cheating”.

This week Bowers elucidated his thinking on the future of Trump and the Republican party in Arizona to the *Guardian*. In response to *Guardian* questions about Trump's possibly imminent announcement of another presidential run, he talked about the growing exhaustion that he and many other Republicans are feeling.

"I know I am no-one in the great scheme of things, and Mr Trump still has a lot of sway here with the extreme part of the Republican party," Bowers began. "I personally am more upset that we have inflation robbing us of our financial security and many of our seniors are very worried."

He went on to say that "many Republicans are tired of the friction between the poles of the parties and would like us to focus on getting water supplies increased for our arid state, getting common sense solutions to the border which has gone crazy and which causes much of the angst that the extremists take advantage of. I am in that camp and know there are many with me."

He ended with this reflection: "While the fringes focus on the past, we want to tackle the present and future progress we need."

If those are the expressed views of one of the most powerful Republicans in a key swing state, it is a fair assumption that similar ennui is setting in across the country. The question is, will any of the leaders of the party have the guts to act on it?

"This is an ideal off-ramp for Republicans to take from Trump, but they've had so many other off-ramps they've refused to take," Sykes said. "The one thing we've learned is that the Republican party is ultimately invertebrate – it just cannot stand up to someone like Donald Trump, even in these circumstances."

Luntz's assessment was more bullish about the prospects of Trump being ousted. "No one attacks Republicans more viciously than Donald Trump, not even top Democrats like Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer," he said.

"Eventually that will come back to bite him."

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## Books

# New book claims Steve Bannon admitted Trump ‘would lie about anything’

Bannon, according to sources in Jonathan Lemire’s Big Lie, said Trump lies ‘to win whatever exchange he [is] having at that moment’



Bannon managed Trump’s winning campaign in 2016 then spent less than a year in the White House before being fired. Photograph: Martin Divíšek/EPA

[Martin Pengelly](#) in New York  
[@MartinPengelly](#)

Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 16.06 EDT

The former White House strategist Steve Bannon has [publicly claimed](#) Donald Trump does not lie. But according to sources quoted in a new book, Bannon told aides: “Trump would say anything, he would lie about anything.”

The former president lies “to win whatever exchange he [is] having at that moment”, Bannon said.

Bannon is quoted in [The Big Lie](#): Election Chaos, Political Opportunism, and the State of American Politics After 2020, by Jonathan Lemire, White House bureau chief for Politico and a host for MSNBC. The book will be published on 26 July. The Guardian obtained a copy.

A Bannon spokesperson on Saturday disputed the sources in Lemire’s book, saying they were inaccurate.

Lemire’s title refers to Trump’s lie, supported by Bannon, that his 2020 election defeat by Joe Biden was the result of electoral fraud. That lie fueled the attempt to overturn the election that culminated in the deadly Capitol attack of 6 January 2021.

A far-right gadfly and provocateur, Bannon managed Trump’s winning campaign in 2016 then spent less than a year in the White House before being fired.

A [source](#) for numerous books about Trump – even [saying](#) he believed Trump had early stage dementia – he returned to the 45th president’s inner circle to play a central role in his [attempt to stay in power](#).

This week, Mother Jones [published](#) audio recorded three days before polling day in which Bannon told associates Trump planned to “just declare victory” on election night.

Trump did not do so but Bannon continued to work to keep the president in power.

Lemire reports that Bannon promised January 6, the day when congress certifies electoral college results and therefore “an obscure date, known only by a few political junkies … would [come to] be ‘known the world over’”.

On January 6, Trump told supporters to “fight like hell” and to march on the Capitol. Authorities have linked [nine deaths](#) to the riot that followed. [More than 870](#) people have been charged, some with seditious conspiracy.

Bannon's role in Trump's attempt to stay in power, including links to far-right groups including the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, is of central interest to the House January 6 committee.

Bannon refused to comply with a subpoena. He has since [offered to testify](#) but jury selection in his [trial for contempt of Congress](#) – a charge which can carry jail time – is scheduled for Monday.

Bannon escaped another brush with the law at the very end of Trump's presidency, when Trump [pardoned](#) his former adviser in a case of alleged fraud.

As president, Trump was famously happy to lie. One count from the Washington Post found he did so [30,573 times](#) in his time in power.

Regardless, in 2018, Bannon made headlines by [telling ABC News](#) Trump did not lie.

Told Trump "has not always told the truth", Bannon said: "I don't know that" and also said claims Trump lied were "another thing to demonise him".

His host, Jonathan Karl, asked: "The president's never lied?"

Bannon said: "Not to my knowledge, no."

But Lemire writes that "even for Bannon, Trump was something new. The chief strategist told me that Trump 'was not looking to win a news cycle, he was looking to win a news moment, a news second.'

Lemire, citing sources, added: "An at-times shell-shocked Bannon would relay to aides that 'Trump would say anything, he would lie about anything to win that moment, to win whatever exchange he was having at that moment.'

"Entire campaign proposals had to be written on the fly, policy plans reverse engineered, teams of aides immediately mobilised to meet whatever floated through Trump's head in that moment to defend his record, put down a reporter, or change a chyron on CNN."

*Note: This post was updated after receiving a statement from a Bannon spokesperson.*

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[Joe Biden](#)

## Fist bumps as Joe Biden arrives to reset ties with ‘pariah’ Saudi Arabia

Oil markets top of the agenda for US president who receives subdued welcome three years after Jamal Khashoggi comments

Joe Biden fist bumps Mohammed bin Salman during visit to Saudi Arabia – video

*[Bethan McKernan](#)* in Jerusalem

Fri 15 Jul 2022 19.00 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 13.43 EDT

Three years after Joe Biden vowed to make [Saudi Arabia](#) a pariah state over the assassination of a prominent dissident, the US president greeted Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with a fist bump as his administration attempts to reset relations and stabilise global oil markets.

Donald Trump was personally welcomed to the conservative Gulf kingdom on his first presidential visit by King Salman. Biden, however, was met on the tarmac on Friday evening by the governor of Mecca and the Saudi ambassador to the US in a subdued ceremony. He then travelled to the city’s al-Salam palace, where he held talks with the 86-year-old king and his powerful heir, Prince Mohammed, before a working meeting.

فيديو | #ولي\_العهد الأمير محمد بن سلمان لحظة استقباله للرئيس الأميركي بايدن في قصر القمة السعودية الأمريكية#SaudiUSSummit#السلام#الإخبارية  
[pic.twitter.com/bx4YqceoIG](https://pic.twitter.com/bx4YqceoIG)

— قناة الإخبارية (@alekhbariyatv) [July 15, 2022](#)

Oil, human rights, Iran, Israel and the war in Yemen are all on the agenda for what is likely to be a thorny 24-hour trip. Saudi Arabia has been a key

strategic ally for the US for decades, both selling oil and buying weaponry, but when he was running for president, Biden vowed to turn the kingdom into a “global pariah” over the [2018 murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi](#).

After he took office in early 2021, Biden’s administration released US intelligence findings that concluded Prince Mohammed approved the operation targeting Khashoggi, a member of the Saudi elite who broke ranks and began writing articles for the Washington Post critical of the crown prince’s sweeping domestic reforms.

Biden has since made a point of only speaking directly with the Saudi king, rather than the crown prince, but has been forced to re-evaluate the US’s relationship with the world’s largest oil producer in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which contributed to a 14-year high of \$139.13 a barrel of Brent crude earlier this year.

Washington is eager for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which hold the bulk of spare capacity within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), [to pump more oil](#) to help bring down petrol costs. The US’s worst inflation crisis in four decades looms over the US midterm elections in November, harming the Democratic party’s prospects.

The choreography of Biden’s visit is being closely watched for evidence of a genuine detente with Prince Mohammed. Prior to Biden’s trip, the White House said due to Covid concerns he would be opting for fist bumps rather than handshakes and avoiding other physical contact, which has widely been interpreted as a way to avoid being photographed shaking the crown prince’s hand.

Fred Ryan, the publisher of the Washington Post, for which Khashoggi wrote, said in a statement the fist bump was “shameful”, for “project[ing] a level of intimacy and comfort that delivers to [the prince] the unwarranted redemption he has been desperately seeking”.

Hatice Cengiz, who was Khashoggi’s fiancée, tweeted: “Is this the accountability you promised for [Khashoggi’s] murder? The blood of MBS’s next victim is on your hands.”

In a short session with reporters in Riyadh, Biden was asked: “What do you say to Mrs Khashoggi?”

Biden said: “I’m sorry she feels that way. I was straightforward back then. I was straightforward today. I didn’t come here to meet with the crown prince. I came here to meet with the GCC.”

On Saturday, Biden will attend a summit meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council, joined by representatives from Iraq, Egypt and Jordan, and hold bilateral meetings with the leaders of the UAE, Iraq and Egypt before returning to Washington.

But despite the Biden team’s efforts, US officials have briefed that no major announcements will be made on increasing global oil supply during the trip.

Jake Sullivan, Biden’s national security adviser, told journalists aboard Air Force One shortly before landing in Jeddah: “I don’t think you should expect a particular announcement here bilaterally because we believe any further action taken to ensure that there is sufficient energy to protect the health of the global economy will be done in the context of Opec+.” A summit of the oil producing nations is due to be held on 3 August.

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The president’s four-day Middle East tour, during which he also stopped in [Israel](#) and the occupied Palestinian territories, is also calibrated to show that the US is still committed to the security of its allies in the region in the face of a growing military threat from [Iran](#), amid the competing influence of Russia and China.

Israel has grown closer to Arab countries in recent years over their shared enemy in Tehran, with the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan agreeing to normalise relations with the majority Jewish state despite the ongoing occupation of the [Palestinian territories](#).

Saudi Arabia, the Sunni Muslim world’s geopolitical lynchpin, has so far held out on formalising relations with Israel until the conflict with the

Palestinians is resolved. Early on Friday, however, before Biden's visit, the kingdom announced it was opening its airspace to "all air carriers", signalling an end to a ban on Israeli flights over its territory.

Another proposed agreement is believed to codify Israeli approval of a longstanding plan to transfer Egypt's control of two strategic Red Sea islands back to Riyadh.

During his time in Jeddah, Biden is expected to lobby for fully integrating Israel into an emerging regional defence alliance against Iran's increasing drone and missile capabilities.

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## Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira

# Brazil's weak response to Phillips–Pereira murders threatens Indigenous people, lawyer says

Rescue mission coordinator condemns failure to arrest masterminds behind murders of Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira



A demonstration in Rio de Janeiro last month seeking justice for Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira. Photograph: Luciola Villela/AFP/Getty Images

*Nina Lakhani in New York*

Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 02.02 EDT

The failure by Brazilian authorities to arrest the criminal masterminds behind the murders of the [British journalist Dom Phillips and Indigenous advocate Bruno Pereira](#) poses a grave threat to communities in the remote Amazon region where the pair were killed in early June, according to a prominent rights lawyer.

Eliesio Marubo, who helped coordinate a grassroots search-and-rescue mission in the Javari Valley, where Phillips and Pereira were attacked, is urging the international community to pressure the Brazilian government to find those who ordered the killings while safeguarding the Indigenous communities still under attack by economic interests and criminal gangs operating with impunity in the Amazon.

“In the Javari Valley, we are all Bruno and we are all Dom – we need protection because every day the threats against us are increasing,” Marubo, a lawyer for the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (Univaja), said in an interview with the Guardian. “The murder of our friends was not an isolated incident. We know there are many interests in the region who had something to gain from their deaths – and the deaths of all environmental and Indigenous rights defenders, including ourselves.”

Marubo, who this week met with US lawmakers and rights organizations in Washington about the lawlessness in the region, added: “The three men arrested were not acting alone. We need a thorough independent investigation without interference from the government.”

Pereira, 41, and Phillips, 57, were ambushed and shot dead on 5 June while traveling by boat on the River Itaquai in the Javari Valley – an increasingly dangerous part [of the Amazon rainforest](#) that is home to one of the largest concentrations of uncontacted Indigenous communities in the world.

Phillips, a regular contributor to the Guardian, was working on a book about sustainable development called How to Save the Amazon, helped by Pereira, a former senior official at Funai, Brazil’s Indigenous protection agency, who had close relationships with local communities.

The threat to the Amazon and its Indigenous communities goes back decades, but violence, drug trafficking, illegal fishing, hunting, mining and logging have proliferated under Brazil’s far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, who has dismantled safeguarding agencies like Funai [while encouraging the extraction of natural resources](#).

“The problems in our region are not new but the violence has escalated to unprecedented levels because under Bolsonaro, illegal operations have gone unpunished,” Marubo said.



Eliesio Marubo in Washington this month. Photograph: Tim Aubry/Greenpeace

After Phillips and Pereira went missing on 5 June, Marubo helped organise a search team of local Indigenous groups who knew the men and the remote terrain, while the Bolsonaro government dithered and made excuses.

“These men were not strangers. Bruno was a brother to all Indigenous people in the region and Dom played such an important role in telling our stories and sharing our struggle with the world,” he added. “The authorities did not do due diligence, but we were committed to returning the bodies to their families as a sign of respect.”

Amid intense international pressure and media attention, three men were arrested last month for their purported involvement in the killings, with one confessing to the crime and leading police to the buried bodies, according to authorities. Witnesses have said Pereira had previously been threatened by the suspects, who were allegedly involved in illegal fishing.

Indigenous leaders and security experts say the murders were the latest in a long line of grisly crimes directly linked to organized crime and illicit extractive projects in the area. But Bolsonaro and local investigators have said the killings occurred due to a personal dispute involving Pereira.

National police are reportedly [investigating](#) whether the detainees were hired hitmen, but officials have yet to reveal a motive or identify other suspects.

Marubo said: “The federal police have the technical and logistical capabilities – and the constitutional responsibility – to find out who ordered the killings, why and what interests were at stake. We have provided them with all the information we have about drug trafficking and other illicit trades in the region.”

Marubo has stressed the existential threat Indigenous people face under Bolsonaro during his talks with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Organization of American States’ secretary general, Luis Almagro, and numerous Democratic US lawmakers, including Senators Ed Markey and Jeff Merkley.

“Our right to life is being violated,” Marubo said. “We want the international community to remind the Bolsonaro government of its obligations and responsibilities to respect the rule of law and our right to live.”

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## 2022.07.08 - Opinion and analysis

- Covid How will Boris Johnson's handling of the crisis be remembered?
- Boris Johnson has made life miserable for poor families – our suffering is his legacy
- Prime ministers Was Boris Johnson the worst of recent times?
- Johnson may be finished but the damage he did lives on

## [Coronavirus](#)

# How will Boris Johnson's handling of the Covid crisis be remembered?

Analysis: there were mixed messages, mistakes, but also successes, before Partygate helped bring down PM



Boris Johnson on a visit to a Covid vaccination centre in Northampton in January this year. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

[Ian Sample](#) Science editor

[@iansample](#)

Fri 8 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.02 EDT

Boris Johnson had been in power for six months when Covid hit Britain and sparked the greatest peacetime crisis in a century. His departure, with the worst of the pandemic surely behind us, means his tenure will be framed by his handling of the virus. To some he got “[the big decisions right](#)”. To others he oversaw one of the UK’s worst ever public health failures. Here we look back at the prime minister’s Covid battle and assess how he fared.

## **Costly confusion**

Clear communication is crucial in a crisis, but confusion undermined public health messaging from the start. In February 2020, days after the UK confirmed its first cases, the government urged everyone to wash their hands regularly. On 3 March, Sage's behavioural science experts said ministers should advise people to avoid hugging and shaking hands too. If the PM got the memo, he didn't act on it.

At a press briefing the same evening, he said: "I'm shaking hands continuously. I was at a hospital the other night where I think there were actually a few coronavirus patients and I shook hands with everybody ... I continue to shake hands." Downing Street said Johnson may not have seen the advice. But he was at it again days later, shaking hands with the TV presenter Phillip Schofield on 5 March and the boxer Anthony Joshua on 9 March.

## **Herd immunity**

On 12 March, the country switched tactics from containing Covid to delaying its spread. Rather than trying to stop all new infections, the aim was to "flatten the curve" and avoid everyone getting Covid at once. This would protect the NHS and, in the words of Sir Patrick Vallance, the government's chief scientific adviser, lead to the build up of "some kind of herd immunity". An inquiry by MPs in October 2021 was scathing about this strategy. The "fatalistic approach" was a serious error, the MPs said, and they accused the government and its advisers of "groupthink" for not considering firmer tactics such as those adopted in parts of Asia.

## **Hospitals**

NHS staff needed personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect themselves, reduce the spread of the virus and prevent mass absences. In December 2019, ministers were warned of a PPE shortage but failed to address the problem. When demand for PPE rocketed, the government established a fast-track VIP lane that awarded lucrative PPE contracts to

[firms with political connections](#). Jason Coppel QC told the high court that “enormous quantities of equipment were purchased without proper technical checks, at inflated prices,” that were “useless to the NHS”. Johnson declared himself “very proud” of the PPE procurement process, but the high court ruled the VIP lane [unlawful](#).

In anticipation of a huge wave of infections, the government ramped up hospital capacity with the [Nightingale field hospitals](#). But while the number of beds could be expanded at speed, healthcare workers could not – thanks to the NHS having entered the pandemic in a staffing crisis. The lack of staff meant patients bound for the Nightingales were sometimes [turned away](#). As [the Kings Fund put it](#): “The Nightingales have shown that … there is no magic NHS staffing tree to shake.”

## First national lockdown

In mid-March 2020, people were advised to work from home and avoid unnecessary travel. Schools and indoor hospitality closed soon after. On 19 March, Johnson declared “we can turn the tide within the next 12 weeks”, adding: “I’m absolutely confident that we can send coronavirus packing in this country.” The nation went into lockdown four days later. The [MPS’ inquiry](#) criticised the government and its scientific advisers for the “gradual and incremental approach” of the first few months, calling it “one of the most important public health failures the United Kingdom has ever experienced”.

## Johnson hospitalised

Covid was rife in Westminster at the time of the first lockdown. On 27 March 2020, the prime minister and Matt Hancock, then health secretary, both tested positive. Johnson was admitted to hospital on 6 April and spent time in intensive care. “The [NHS](#) has saved my life, no question,” he said on being discharged. “It’s hard to find the words to express my debt.”

## Care homes

Despite claims that the government had thrown a “[protective ring](#)” around care homes, there was a devastating death toll among residents. Johnson blamed this on a failure to follow proper procedures, drawing a [furious backlash](#) from care providers. Nadra Ahmed, the chair of the National Care Association, called Johnson’s response “a huge slap in the face” for a sector that looked after a million vulnerable people. The [MPs’ inquiry](#) found that insufficient tests on Covid patients being discharged into care homes, and untested staff spreading the virus, led to “many thousands” of avoidable deaths.

## Test and trace

The UK was one of the first countries to develop a Covid test, but daily infections topped 2,000 before test and trace was operational. Johnson celebrated the “[world-beating](#)” feat, but MPs lamented the “[slow, uncertain and often chaotic](#)” rollout of a system that consistently failed to capture more than half of the infected, in part because many could not afford to self-isolate. The system [failed in its main objective](#) of preventing future lockdowns despite what the public accounts committee called an [unimaginable](#) £37bn bill.

## The winter lockdowns

After a quiet summer in 2020, Covid picked up again. On 21 September, Sage warned that without urgent action the country faced an epidemic with “catastrophic consequences”. The group’s call for an [immediate circuit breaker](#) and other measures to slow transmission was brushed aside. Instead, Johnson waited three weeks and then announced the [three-tier Covid alert system](#), which failed to curb soaring cases. Johnson later faced allegations that he resisted a second lockdown by claiming the disease [only killed 80-year-olds](#) and [reportedly shouted](#): “No more fucking lockdowns. Let the bodies pile high in their thousands.”

From the first days of the pandemic, Johnson and his ministers routinely claimed they were [following, or being guided by, the science](#). Their failure to act quickly in the autumn and winter of 2020 is the most glaring example of that not being the case. Sir Jeremy Farrar, a member of Sage and director

of the Wellcome Trust, said the government's lack of action set the scene for the "[carnage](#)" of January 2021.

## Drugs and vaccines

Johnson can, and does, point to some major successes in the crisis. The UK led the world in identifying drugs for Covid patients and developing vaccines to transform the course of the pandemic. The groundbreaking Recovery trial at Oxford University showed that dexamethasone reduced deaths among hospitalised Covid patients by a third. By March 2021, the cheap and widely available drug was estimated to have saved [a million lives](#) globally. Importantly, Recovery also showed when drugs did not work, as with the much-hyped antimalarial hydroxychloroquine.

But it is the vaccination programme that Johnson can claim as his most important success. Early decisions to set up the vaccine taskforce outside the Department of Health and install Kate Bingham at the helm were crucial in securing a fast and resilient supply. Separately, Oxford University was funded to develop its adenovirus Covid shot. In record-breaking time – less than a year – the vaccine was approved and ready for awaiting arms. The most important detail is often skipped over: while other vaccine firms such as Pfizer and Moderna sought profit from their vaccines, the Oxford/AstraZeneca jab was distributed globally at cost. Johnson told Tory MPs it was all down to "capitalism" and "greed", prompting criticism that he had learned the [wrong economic lessons](#) from the crisis.

## Omicron

Despite a spike in cases driven by Euro 2020, people's behaviour and building immunity in summer 2021 largely kept the Delta variant in check. But if Covid appeared to be under control, the illusion was swiftly shattered when scientists in South Africa spotted another new variant, ushering in [the era of Omicron](#).

Omicron reached the UK fast. Its astonishing transmissibility, aided by its ability to dodge Covid antibodies, led the UK Health Security Agency to anticipate a million infections a day by the end of December. But as

Omicron gained ground, Johnson urged people not to cancel Christmas parties, leaving Prof Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer, to step in. He told people not to mix with others unnecessarily and to "prioritise social interactions".

Johnson moved England to "plan B", mandating face masks and Covid passes and encouraging more working from home. He declared an "Omicron emergency" and pulled in the military to help ramp up the vaccination programme. Other parts of the UK brought in fresh restrictions, but Johnson held off in England. Amid a narrative that the NHS coped with the wave, some doctors made clear it had not.

## Public trust

Johnson and his team squandered public trust. When Dominic Cummings took his family to Durham, and then drove to Barnard Castle on his wife's birthday "to test his eyesight", Johnson argued he had "acted responsibly, legally and with integrity". Public health experts and behavioural scientists said it smacked of one rule for them, another for us. Next came the Matt Hancock incident. The former health secretary was caught in a socially undistanced, rule-breaking tryst with a work colleague. Johnson accepted Hancock's apology and declared the matter closed, but when criticism rumbled on he accepted Hancock's resignation and tried to take credit for his departure.

With Partygate, the spotlight turned on Johnson himself. He was forced to apologise to the Queen after lockdown parties were thrown on the eve of Prince Philip's funeral. Then he was fined by the Met, making Johnson the first sitting prime minister found to have broken the law. After weathering a vote of confidence, Johnson clung on, but it was only a matter of time before the curtain would close.

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[Opinion](#)[Boris Johnson](#)

## Boris Johnson has made life miserable for poor families – our suffering is his legacy

[Joanne Barker-Marsh](#)

He'll get to walk away from Downing Street, while the most vulnerable people in society will pay for his many failures



‘I can no longer listen to Johnson’s grating, braying voice knowing how he betrayed his duty to me.’ Photograph: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images

Fri 8 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 07.18 EDT

I watched [Boris Johnson](#) on the news, his mouth flapping, regurgitating those three-word slogans telling us to stay at home – and I believed him. He was locking down the country for our safety, he was looking after the nation, this was his job. What a huge liar our prime minister turned out to be. Even in the country’s highest office, he just couldn’t help himself. He disgusts me.

Now, when I see that mop of unbrushed hair on the news, I switch the channel. I can no longer listen to his grating, braying voice knowing how he betrayed his duty to me as a citizen of this country.

As the summer arrives, I will live Johnson's legacy. I'm a full-time unpaid carer to my 13-year-old son. We live on universal credit, and have only got poorer under Johnson's levelling up agenda. There'll be no summer holiday for us; the idea is almost laughable. There'll be no nice new clothes for my boy, or treats to while away a summer afternoon. As I carry out the mental gymnastics of making our paltry universal credit payment stretch, any extras like food vouchers or donations get sucked into bills that I have been unable to save for, just so we can live. I am moved to tears as I write this, knowing Johnson will never be forced to face up to the damage that he has done to millions of families like mine.

He has patronised us incessantly, telling us soaring energy prices are an unavoidable result of war – that doesn't help me when our gas and energy prices have already doubled. He has boasted how he "got Brexit done". Brexit might have been pushed through, but to whose benefit? What he cobbled together has only made life harder for those living on a fixed income at the most frightening time of our lives. The extra £20 "uplift" in universal credit payments we received during the pandemic, just about the only good thing he oversaw, was snatched away when we needed it most.

And while Boris was partying in May 2020, my sister died, alone, in agony. I spoke to her for the last time the day before, but there were no goodbyes, no last hugs. The morally corrupt man leading the country didn't even have enough self-respect to come clean about his lies. I will never be able to reconcile that in my heart.

Of all the things Johnson has done, it is the way he speaks about us – the people he is supposed to serve – that disgusts me most. How he brushes away the death of people like my sister as if it was inevitable. It wasn't. How he vilifies those in working poverty, as if we should work harder or just learn to live on what we are given. That we are the problem, while billions in taxpayers' money was squandered on [shady deals](#).

My son and I, and millions like us, will pay the price for his game of failures, but who will make him pay?

I am afraid of what he has done that we are yet to see. As he steps away from public view, Johnson's legacy will continue to be unmasked – and I cannot help but feel the worst is yet to come.

- Joanne Barker-Marsh is a participant in Changing Realities, an Abrdn Financial Fairness Trust funded project documenting life on a low-income during the cost of living crisis. She was also involved in its predecessor [Covid Realities](#)

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## Boris Johnson

# Was Boris Johnson the worst prime minister of recent times?

Analysis: after Johnson's resignation, how does he compare with his four predecessors as PM?



Boris Johnson, Theresa May, Gordon Brown, David Cameron, and Tony Blair. Composite: Peter Nicholls/WPA Pool/Oli Scarff/Jack Taylor/Stephen Hird



Dan Sabbagh

Thu 7 Jul 2022 11.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 00.33 EDT

Was Boris Johnson the worst prime minister of recent times? He squandered one of the strongest political positions held by an occupant of No 10 in record time. The authority gained after [winning an 80-seat majority in December 2019](#) dissipated at extraordinary speed as he dealt with a series of scandals with a ham-fisted mixture of denial, disorganisation and even outright lying.

The high point was the election victory, secured on the back of the “get Brexit done” pledge. After securing an exit from the European Union, Johnson struggled with the coronavirus pandemic, was late imposing the first lockdown in March 2020 and was forced to cancel at the last minute a plan to loosen restrictions the following Christmas.

But Johnson was ultimately undone not by policy disagreements but by character failings. He presided over a lax culture at Downing Street during the pandemic, in which [he, advisers and officials attended a string of booze-fuelled parties](#) while people up and down the country were locked down at home.

The initial response was to say the rules were followed at all times. In the end 83 people were fined for breaking the rules across eight different events, including the prime minister himself. “The British people rightly expect integrity from their government,” [said Sajid Javid](#), the first of dozens of ministers to quit in the final hours before Johnson’s resignation.

From Thatcher to Johnson: what former PMs said when forced to resign – video

## **Theresa May – three years, 11 days**

Like Johnson, [May](#) had a vertiginous fall. She became prime minister in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum and briefly enjoyed double-digit leads in opinion polls, but she was [found wanting during the 2017 general election campaign](#), in which she struggled to connect with the electorate and forfeited the Conservatives’ overall majority.

The Brexit vote did not leave a clear plan to implement the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, leaving May battling to chart a blueprint. Yet she had no parliamentary majority and lacked support from her own party, a large portion of which pressed for an ever harder Brexit to the point where May ran out of options.

Such was the dominance of Brexit that May failed to achieve much of significance in other areas of domestic policy. And such was the resistance of her party that she could not complete Brexit either, forced to quit without getting any kind of exit deal agreed with the EU.

## **David Cameron – six years, 63 days**

A longer tenure at the top does not necessarily mean a better prime ministership. [Cameron](#) won two elections, but his strategy – born out of overconfidence – to fight referendums ultimately finished his premiership and left a legacy of conflict that continues to this day. Although Cameron called and won the Scottish referendum in 2014, it failed to settle the independence question as he had hoped.

But it was the unexpected defeat in the Brexit referendum that forced Cameron to resign as prime minister, requiring the UK to leave the EU, although doing so took several years and two prime ministers to achieve. Leaving the EU ended more than 40 years of British membership of the single market and, while many wanted to see the end of free movement, reignited long-term questions about the future of Northern Ireland.

## **Gordon Brown – two years, 318 days**

A few months after becoming prime minister in June 2007, [Brown](#) took the decision – or rather non-decision – from which his premiership never recovered. Ahead in the polls, aides had begun to brief that he would call an early election, but in October of that year he wobbled and changed his mind. By then the speculation had got out of hand, and a reputation for decisiveness was lost.

A row followed over the abolition of the 10p tax rate, eventually forcing a rethink for those who had lost out. The financial crisis, which should have played into the former chancellor's hands, instead eroded the credibility of the party in government, which was successfully labelled by the [Conservatives](#) as profligate.

Questions also lingered over Brown's character – accusations surfaced that in private an angry prime minister would throw mobile phones, staplers and even, on one occasion, a printer. Yet, for all the problems, the Conservatives failed to win an overall majority at the ensuing 2010 election, forcing Cameron into coalition with the Lib Dems. But [Labour](#) has been out of power for more than a decade since.

## **Tony Blair – 10 years, 56 days**

[Blair](#) won a landslide in 1997 and scored a similar victory in 2001, a period of electoral dominance achieved previously only by Margaret Thatcher in recent memory. There were many achievements during his long premiership, including the introduction of the minimum wage and heavy investment in schools and hospitals during a period of economic growth.

But the legacy of success in the early years was tarnished by the invasion of Iraq in 2003, where Blair insisted on acting side by side with George W Bush in attacking a country that was not obviously allied with Islamist terrorism and did not possess the weapons of mass destruction that were the justification for the invasion.

Iraq was not turned into a stable western democracy as hoped, and two long periods of insurgency followed, which partly helped fuel the terrorism in the years thereafter. It was not until the final territorial defeat of Islamic State in 2019 that the jihadist threat failed, while the strategy of western liberal intervention was fundamentally undermined.

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[\*\*Opinion\*\*](#)[\*\*Boris Johnson\*\*](#)

## **Johnson may be finished but the damage he did lives on**

[\*\*Guy Verhofstadt\*\*](#)

A new UK premier must start forming partnerships within Europe and ditch the destructive populism that led to Brexit



Boris Johnson with Donald Trump. The populist politics both men adopted is now exposed as discredited and exhausted. Photograph: Evan Vucci/AP

Fri 8 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 06.06 EDT

For all the talk by nationalists about how much they value unity, democracy and tradition, nationalism always turns out to be the most divisive, undemocratic and disrespectful political principle imaginable.

The Brexit variety is no different. It was entirely predictable that it would not so much liberate a sovereign nation from its supposed European shackles as unleash a political elite from any constraints whatsoever.

Now that Boris Johnson's premiership has ended in disgrace and he has been exposed for what he is and what everyone knew he was, there is a sense of relief in Brussels. And sure, there is some schadenfreude on the continent that he has finally got his comeuppance.

But no one is under any illusion that Johnson's departure from Downing Street solves any of the underlying problems in the UK/EU relationship. Because the damage done by the outgoing prime minister, through the project that he instrumentalised to achieve power, lives on.

On the economy, it lives on to the point where even Labour finds it impossible to distance itself from the core problem now harming the UK: Brexit itself.

Trying to “make Brexit work” the slogan that Labour leader Keir Starmer uses when he rules out a future return to British membership, might be a political imperative for at least another generation. But it is still economic and illogical nonsense.

No amount of tinkering with the practical details of Brexit can remedy the fundamental incoherence it creates. Self-imposed isolation from your nearest and biggest trading partner harms small businesses as they try to trade with customers in neighbouring countries, prompts big companies to seek to invest elsewhere and dismembers labour markets to the detriment of both employers and job-seekers.

On the UK’s political relationship with the EU, I believe – although am more than happy to be corrected if wrong – that none of those being discussed as Conservative hopefuls for the premiership has taken a significantly more constructive attitude than Johnson.

On the geopolitical unity of the democratic west, make no mistake, there may not be a translation of the word *Schadenfreude* in English but autocrats from Moscow to Beijing know all about it. They are loving every minute of the spectacle, not this time of the prime minister’s removal from office, but of one of the world’s most prominent democracies self-imploding and the impact that has on democratic partnerships.

Last week the Chinese embassy in Ireland [trolled Johnson](#) after he tweeted that the UK had upheld its obligations to Hong Kong. “We made a promise to the people of Hong Kong 25 years ago. We intend to keep it,” Johnson had boasted. The Chinese government sarcastically parroted his claim with the taunt: “Two years ago we made a promise to the Northern Ireland Protocol. We are determined to break it.”

All politics is global. The discredited, exhausted and fractured populist politics that Johnson and the man he so admired, [Donald Trump](#), leave will haunt us all for years to come.

If anything good can come out of the impending leadership contest, it would be a commitment from the next UK prime minister that he or she will solve outstanding issues within the framework of the Northern Ireland protocol and drop the destructive bluster and the undermining of international law.

The people of continental Europe can only hope the UK Conservative party makes a clean break not just with the man but with his method. It is time for democracies to rise to the occasion.

- Guy Verhofstadt is an MEP who served as the European parliament’s Brexit coordinator from 2016 to 2020. He is a former prime minister of Belgium
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# Headlines

- [Shinzo Abe Japan's former prime minister dies after being shot](#)
- [Latest updates Former Japan prime minister confirmed dead after being shot in city of Nara](#)
- [Gun violence Why incidents are so rare in zero-tolerance Japan](#)
- [Shinzo Abe shooting What we know so far about killing of former Japanese PM](#)

## [Shinzo Abe](#)

# **Shinzo Abe death: shock in Japan at killing of former PM during election campaign**

Police believe attacker bore grudge against Abe as some critics question level of security surrounding Japan's longest-serving PM

- [Shinzo Abe – a life in pictures](#)

Remembering Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister – video obituary

*[Justin McCurry](#) in Nara*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 20.42 EDTFirst published on Fri 8 Jul 2022 04.53 EDT

Sorrow and disbelief descended on Japan after [Shinzo Abe](#) – the former prime minister and a towering political figure – was shot dead while giving a campaign speech on Friday morning.

Abe, 67, was pronounced dead early in the evening, prompting a flood of tributes from current and former world leaders, and anger that a politician could be gunned down in broad daylight in one of the world's safest societies two days before an election.

Abe, the country's longest-serving prime minister, who resigned in 2020, was flown to hospital by helicopter after the attack outside Yamato Saidaiji railway station in Nara, an ancient capital in the country's west known for its Buddhist temples and free-roaming deer.

As the light faded on Friday, supporters and local residents visited the scene of the attack – a pedestrian crossing next to a white guardrail – where Abe

had been calling on voters to re-elect his Liberal Democratic party (LDP) colleague Kei Sato in this Sunday's upper house elections when he was shot.

### Map of where Shinzo Abe was shot

Alone and in pairs, they stepped forward to lay flowers, bottles of sports drink, slices of watermelon wrapped in cellophane, and bags of sweets. They bowed and clasped their hands in prayer; some shed tears and lowered their heads again as they turned towards banks of TV cameras.

"I was having a cigarette break near the station when I heard a huge bang," a local traffic control employee who declined to give his name told the Guardian. "There was white smoke everywhere. I wouldn't say people were panicking ... like me, they initially had no idea what was going on."

Abe was only minutes into his speech and had just raised his fist to make a point when he stumbled and fell after two shots were fired from behind him at close range. Seconds later, men thought to be members of Japan's secret service tackled a suspect to the ground in a dramatic intervention caught on video.



The man suspected of shooting Shinzo Abe is tackled to the ground by police at Yamato Saidaiji station in Nara. Photograph: Yomiuri Shimbun/AFP/Getty Images

The suspect was named as Tetsuya Yamagami, a 41-year-old resident of Nara who spent three years in the maritime self-defence forces until 2005. Police believe he had crafted a homemade gun. The weapon appeared from TV footage to comprise two cylindrical metallic parts heavily bound in black tape.

Police said they were investigating whether he had acted alone. He reportedly said he had wanted to kill Abe because he was “dissatisfied” with him over issues unrelated to politics. The suspect said he bore a grudge against a “specific organisation” and believed Abe was part of it, police said, adding that it was not clear if the unnamed organisation actually existed.

Several similar homemade weapons to the one used in the attack were confiscated during a search of the suspect’s house.

Makoto Ichikawa, a local businessman who had been near the train station waiting for his wife, said Yamagami “came out of nowhere on to the middle of the road holding a gun”. He said he was struck by the assailant’s “normal” expression.

Ken Namikawa, the mayor of a nearby town, used a microphone to call for people with medical experience to help Abe. A photograph taken at about the same time showed Abe lying face up, blood on his white shirt and surrounded by several people, at least one of whom was administering heart massage.

Abe was airlifted to a hospital for emergency treatment but was not breathing and his heart had stopped. He was pronounced dead after emergency treatment that included massive blood transfusions, hospital officials said.

Hidetada Fukushima, the head of the emergency department at Nara Medical University, said the attack inflicted major damage to Abe’s heart, in addition to two neck wounds that damaged an artery, causing extensive bleeding. Abe was in a state of cardiopulmonary arrest when he arrived at the hospital and never regained his vital signs, Fukushima said.

The psychological fallout from an assassination by a gunman in a country where gun crime is almost unheard of is hard to gauge at this early stage. But Abe's death, coming at the end of an election campaign, will almost certainly prompt a rethink of the tradition of bringing politicians into close contact with voters.

Some parties announced that their senior members would halt campaigning for Sunday's election, but the ruling LDP and its junior coalition partner Komeito said canvassing would resume on Saturday.

An official of the Nara prefectural police department said the department would look into whether security at the event was sufficient and take appropriate action. Several commentators said security around Abe should have been stronger.



Shinzo Abe delivering a speech shortly before he was shot on Friday.  
Photograph: The Asahi Shimbun/Getty Images

Several Japanese prime ministers were assassinated in the prewar era, but Abe is the first sitting or former premier to have been killed since the days of militarism.

There have been other politically motivated killings in more recent times, however. In 1960 the leader of the Japan Socialist party, Inejiro Asanuma,

was assassinated during a speech in by a rightwing youth armed with a samurai short sword. In 2007 the mayor of Nagasaki, Iccho Ito, was shot dead by a member of a yakuza crime syndicate.

Japan's current prime minister, Fumio Kishida, said Abe had demonstrated "great leadership" during his time in office, adding that he was "lost for words".

"I have great respect for the legacy Shinzo Abe left behind and I offer my deepest condolences," a visibly upset Kishida said after abandoning a campaign stop and returning to Tokyo. "This attack is an act of brutality that happened during the elections – the very foundation of our democracy – and is absolutely unforgivable."

Joe Biden, who is dealing with a summer of mass shootings in the US, said: "Gun violence always leaves a deep scar on the communities that are affected by it." He added in a Twitter post that he was "stunned, outraged, and deeply saddened by the news that my friend Abe Shinzo, former prime minister of Japan, was shot and killed. He was a champion of the friendship between our people. The United States stands with Japan in this moment of grief".

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Abe was a divisive leader, adored by conservatives who had tired of decades of official soul-searching over Japan's wartime conduct, but loathed by progressives who watched on with horror as he used his party's comfortable majority in parliament to loosen some of the legal shackles on the country's military, known as the self-defence forces.

Among his admirers were Rami Miyamoto, a 23-year-old company employee who had stopped to watch Abe's speech on the way to a work meeting. "I'm in a state of shock," she said. "I followed Abe's career as prime minister and admired what he was trying to do for Japan. I'll remember him as someone who faced huge challenges but always came back and carried on. I will never forgive the person who did this."

Yuji Izawa was working from home when he heard helicopters overhead. Moments later he received a news alert saying Abe had been shot. “My home isn’t that far away, so I came to find out what was happening,” said Izawa, who works in telecoms. “I was praying that he was going to be OK, but ...” he trailed off. “How could something this terrible have happened in Japan?”

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[Shinzo Abe](#)

# Shinzo Abe: police say multiple handmade guns found at suspect's house after former Japan prime minister shot and killed – as it happened

This blog has now closed.

- [Shinzo Abe, Japan's former prime minister, dies after being shot](#)
- [A loss for the world': leaders unite in condemning assassination](#)

Updated 8 Jul 2022

[Martin Belam](#) and [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#)

Fri 8 Jul 2022 10.54 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 23.50 EDT

Key events:

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Remembering Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister – video obituary

[Martin Belam and Rebecca Ratcliffe](#)

Fri 8 Jul 2022 10.54 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 23.50 EDT

Show key events only

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## Live feed

From 8 Jul 2022

[10.34](#)

**Summary: former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe shot dead in Nara**

- World leaders have paid tribute after former Japanese prime minister [Shinzo Abe](#) died, aged 67, after being shot while making a speech in the western city of Nara.
- [Footage and accounts broadcast by Japanese media](#) showed Abe's speech interrupted by two loud bangs and smoke, with Abe stumbling to the ground after the second shot.
- Abe, the country's longest-serving prime minister [until he resigned in 2020](#), was flown to hospital by helicopter after the attack.
- At a news conference at Nara Medical University hospital, medics said Abe had no vital signs when he arrived at the hospital but that they conducted resuscitation. "It was extremely serious, it was very grave," the medic said of his condition on arrival. Abe had two wounds in the neck and subcutaneous haemorrhage. He was confirmed dead at 5.03pm.
- Police arrested a 41-year-old man at the scene. He has been named as unemployed Tetsuya Yamagami, from Nara. He is a former member of the maritime self-defence force, according to Fuji TV. He reportedly left the force in 2005.

### [A map showing the location of the shooting](#)

- Police told the media that that a 90-person taskforce has been established to investigate the crime, and that the suspect had admitted to shooting the former prime minister with a homemade weapon.

- The suspect told police that he believed Abe was part of a “specific organisation” Yamagami had a grudge against. The police would not reveal the name of the organisation.
- The police claim to have confiscated several similar homemade weapons to that used in the attack from a search at the suspect’s house.
- Mourners have been leaving flowers and offerings at a makeshift memorial at the site of the shooting.



People pray at a site outside of Yamato-Saidaiji station where Japan's former prime minister Shinzo Abe was shot. Photograph: Yuichi Yamazaki/Getty Images

- It was the first assassination of a sitting or former Japanese premier since the days of prewar militarism in the 1930s.

- In an emotional speech, Japan's current prime minister, **Fumio Kishida**, said Abe had led the country “with great leadership”, and he was “lost for words”.
- US president **Joe Biden** has said he is “stunned, outraged and deeply saddened”, describing Abe’s death as a “tragedy for Japan and for all who knew him.”

Remembering Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister – video obituary

*Thank you for following our coverage, we will shortly be closing this blog. You can keep up-to-date with the latest reports and developments [here](#).*

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Updated at 10.53 EDT

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## Remembering Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister – video obituary

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### 8 Jul 2022 10.06

Here is a video clip of Japan's prime minister, **Fumio Kishida**, a protege of Shinzo Abe, struggling to keep his emotions in check as he spoke to the nation after the former prime minister was shot. Kishida said “The free and fair election, which is the root of democracy, needs to be protected no matter what. We will not be defeated by violence.”

'Unforgivable': Japan's prime minister condemns Shinzo Abe's shooting – video

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### 8 Jul 2022 09.56

This picture has been released which shows the police investigating the death of former prime minister Shinzo Abe in Japan arriving at the residence

of an unemployed 41-year-old man. The man was apprehended after the shooting, and police say he admitted using a homemade weapon to attack Abe.



Police investigators arrive at the residence of the suspect who is believed to have shot former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe. Photograph: KYODO/Reuters

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Updated at 10.54 EDT

[8 Jul 2022 09.37](#)

**Biden: 'stunned, outraged and deeply saddened' by 'tragedy for Japan'**

**US president Joe Biden has said he is “stunned, outraged and deeply saddened” by the death of [Shinzo Abe](#), describing his death as a “tragedy for Japan and for all who knew him.”**

In a [statement](#) from the White House, Biden said:

I had the privilege to work closely with prime minister Abe. As vice president, I visited him in Tokyo and welcomed him to Washington. He was a champion of the alliance between our nations and the friendship between our people.

The longest serving Japanese Prime Minister, his vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific will endure. Above all, he cared deeply about the Japanese people and dedicated his life to their service. Even at the moment he was attacked, he was engaged in the work of democracy.

While there are many details that we do not yet know, we know that violent attacks are never acceptable and that gun violence always leaves a deep scar on the communities that are affected by it. The United States stands with Japan in this moment of grief. I send my deepest condolences to his family.



Joe Biden gestures as he speaks during a joint press conference with Shinzo Abe in 2013, when Biden was vice president of the US. Photograph: Toru Yamanaka/AFP/Getty Images

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8 Jul 202209.31



Justin McCurry

*Justin McCurry writes for us from Tokyo:*

**The people of Japan are in a state of shock after the violent death of the former prime minister Shinzo Abe, the country's most influential politician of recent decades, who was shot while making a campaign speech in the western city of Nara on Friday.**

Japan's longest-serving leader will be remembered primarily for his political staying power, having returned to office in 2012, six years after being forced out by scandal and poor health.

His signature “Abenomics” policy, which sought to lift the world's third-biggest economy out of decades of stagnation, attracted more international attention than is usually reserved for Japanese leaders. On the foreign policy front, his support for a more prominent role for Japan's military to counter growing threats from North Korea and a more assertive China won praise in Washington but engendered suspicion in Beijing.

A conservative from a family with a strong political pedigree, Abe believed Japan should end decades of “masochistic” reflection over its role in the second world war – a revisionist approach that led to a dramatic deterioration in ties between Japan and South Korea.

**Read more of Justin McCurry's profile: [Shinzo Abe – from young symbol of change to Japan's longest-serving PM](#)**

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[8 Jul 2022 09.04](#)

## **Police name suspected attacker and say they have found multiple handmade weapons at his house**

Police in Nara, the Japanese city where former prime minister [Shinzo Abe](#) was shot dead earlier today, have said at a media briefing that they have confiscated several similar homemade weapons to those used in the attack from a search at the suspect's house.

They told the media that a 90-person taskforce has been established to investigate the crime, and that Shinzo Abe was confirmed dead at 5.03pm local time.

The suspect, unemployed 41-year-old Tetsuya Yamagami, was apprehended at the site, and the police stated that he has admitted to shooting the former prime minister with a homemade weapon.

The suspect told police that he believed Abe was part of a “specific organisation” which Yamagami had a grudge against. The police would not reveal the name of the organisation.

The police claim to have confiscated several similar homemade weapons to that used in the attack from a search at the suspect's house. They described

the weapon as being 40cm long and 20cm high, but also implied they were treating it with caution due to “the possibility of a detonation”.

Police would not say whether any bullets were found at the scene.

The police say they believe the suspect travelled to the event by train, but they would not specify how long Yamagami had waited for Abe. They also said their investigation will include the level of security at the event.

The Nara police stalled several questions by saying that because of the implications to ongoing investigations, they were unwilling to disclose further information.

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Updated at 09.07 EDT

[8 Jul 2022 08.50](#)

The UN secretary general has also just responded to the death of Shinzo Abe. António Guterres [writes on Twitter](#):

I'm deeply saddened by the horrific killing of Shinzo Abe, former prime minister of Japan. I had the privilege of knowing him for years and will always remember his collegiality and commitment to multilateralism. My condolences to his family, and the people and government of Japan.

I'm deeply saddened by the horrific killing of Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan.

I had the privilege of knowing him for years & will always remember his collegiality & commitment to multilateralism.

My condolences to his family, and the people & Government of Japan.

— António Guterres (@antonioguterres) [July 8, 2022](#)

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Updated at 08.53 EDT

[8 Jul 2022 08.48](#)

Former US president **Barack Obama** has issued a statement on the death of [Shinzo Abe](#). He says:

I am shocked and saddened by the assassination of my friend and longtime partner Shinzo Abe in Japan. Former prime minister Abe was devoted to both the country he served and the extraordinary alliance between the United States and Japan.

I will always remember the work we did to strengthen our alliance, the moving experience of traveling to Hiroshima and Pearl Harbor together, and the grace he and his wife Akie Abe showed to me and Michelle.

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Updated at 08.53 EDT

[8 Jul 2022 08.43](#)

Police say they believe the suspect used a train to get to the location. They could not say how long the suspect had been in the area before the attack took place.

Journalists questioned police about the security arrangements for Abe's visit, and they defended their arrangements.

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## 8 Jul 2022 08.42

The police in Nara have claimed that a search of the suspect's house in Nara has led them to discover several handmade weapons. They say they are similar to the one used in the attacks.

Earlier, local media [reported](#) that explosives had been found in the house.

The police have stalled on answering a couple of questions, saying: "There could be implications on the investigation" and they are therefore withholding their response.

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Updated at 09.04 EDT

## 8 Jul 2022 08.38

The police have given some details on the dimensions of the gun used in the attack. They have said it is 40cm long and 20cm in height, but as for its weight the police said "we will not be able to respond because of the possibility of its detonation."

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## 8 Jul 2022 08.36

Police have been asked to clarify the type of weapon used, and confirmed it was a homemade gun. The officer said "I think he has a licence for hunting" but that they are currently investigating that.

They were asked to explain why they are saying the gun is homemade, and they say that is what the suspect said, and that it is apparent from appearance that it is homemade.

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[8 Jul 2022 08.35](#)

The police in Nara have been asked in the press conference whether the suspect said he had an intention to kill. Police say he admitted he had shot at the former prime minister. The police say the suspect has not said he is affiliated to any organisation.

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[8 Jul 2022 08.34](#)

## **Police briefing on Abe murder begins in Nara**

The police in Nara are giving a live press briefing. They say the suspect, after he was apprehended, said he believed that Abe was connected to an organisation against which he had a grudge, but the police say they wish to refrain from making any more detailed comments on this issue.

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## [Shinzo Abe](#)

# Abe shooting: why gun violence is so rare in zero-tolerance Japan

Attack on former PM has sent shockwaves through country with one of world's lowest rates of gun violence

- [Shinzo Abe shooting: latest updates](#)
- [Shinzo Abe – a life in pictures](#)



A man looks at a screen broadcasting the news of the shooting of Shinzo Abe in Nara on Friday. The number of gun deaths in Japan rarely exceeds 10, in a country of 126 million people. Photograph: Christopher Jue/Getty Images

[Cait Kelly and Justin McCurry in Nara](#)

Fri 8 Jul 2022 03.26 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 22.26 EDT

Japan has close to zero tolerance of gun ownership and one of the lowest rates of gun violence in the world, making the [attack on Shinzo Abe](#) a particularly extraordinary act of violence.

A 1958 postwar law on the possession of swords and firearms states: “No one shall possess a firearm or firearms or a sword or swords.”

The pathway to gun ownership in [Japan](#) takes 13 steps. First, potential gun owners need to join a hunting or shooting club, they then have to take a firearm class and pass a written exam, before getting a doctor to state they are mentally fit and have no history of drug dependency.

They then have to apply to take a full-day course in how to fire a gun and store it safely.

The police then interview potential gun owners about why they want a firearm and conduct a thorough background check that involves interviewing members of the person’s family, their relationship with their neighbours, employment history and their financial status.

If they pass, they can then apply for a gunpowder permit and get a certificate from a dealer about what sort of gun they want. They then need to buy an ammunition locker and gun safe, which is inspected by police, who then do another background check.

Among the few exceptions are shotguns for hunting and sport. Even then, prospective owners must attend classes and pass written and practical exams. They must then undergo psychological assessments to determine they are fit to own a firearm. Police background checks are exhaustive and even involve questioning the gun owners’ relatives.

Civilian ownership of handguns is banned. The few violations reported in the media usually involve members of the country’s yakuza crime syndicates. According to police, there were 21 arrests for the use of firearms in 2020, with 12 of them gang-related, Nikkei Asia reported.

There were six reported gun deaths in [Japan](#) in 2014, according to the National Police Agency, and the number rarely exceeds 10, in a country of

126 million people. In 2006, just two people were killed in gun attacks.

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A 2022 report from the University of Washington revealed that, while the US had more than four firearm homicides per 100,000 people in 2019, Japan had almost zero. Comparing high-income countries in the World Bank with the rate of firearm homicide per 100,000 people, the US had 4.2, Australia had 0.18 and Japan 0.02, the report found.

In 2013, the country hit a record high for gun crime, with 40 criminal cases of guns being fired, but it has followed a downward trend since.

There are also strict laws about how many gun shops are allowed to open – in most of the countries' 47 prefectures, a total of three gun shops can operate in each prefecture.

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## [Japan](#)

# Shinzo Abe: what we know so far about killing of former Japanese PM

Sixty-seven-year-old died following shooting in Nara in western Japan, and a suspect has been detained

- [Shinzo Abe – a life in pictures](#)



Former prime minister of Japan Shinzo Abe is taken on a stretcher to a helicopter after being shot in Nara. Photograph: The Asahi Shimbun/Getty Images

*[Martin Farrer](#) and [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#)*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 08.17 EDTFirst published on Fri 8 Jul 2022 02.03 EDT

- Japan's former prime minister [Shinzo Abe](#) has died after being shot while giving a speech in the western city of Nara on Friday.

- Abe appeared to be in a state of cardiac arrest when he was airlifted to hospital after the shooting. Emergency services said he had been wounded on the right side of his neck and left clavicle.
- Police arrested a 42-year-old man at the scene. He has been named as Tetsuya Yamagami, from Nara. He is a former member of the maritime self-defence force, according to Fuji TV. He reportedly left the force in 2005.

Shinzo Abe shot: TV cameras capture attack on former PM and suspect's arrest – video

- Media reports quoted police as saying that **the weapon thought to have been used in the attack was homemade**. Japan's gun-ownership restrictions do not allow private citizens to have handguns, and licensed hunters may own only rifles.
- Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, **had been in Nara giving a campaign speech ahead of this Sunday's upper house elections** when he was shot. All parties suspended campaigning after the shooting.

### [Map of where Shinzo Abe was shot](#)

- Japanese politicians **reacted with extreme shock to the shooting**. The current prime minister, Fumio Kishida, said Abe had led the country “with great leadership” and he was “lost for words”. Kishida added: “I have great respect for the legacy Shinzo Abe left behind and I pay the deepest condolences to him.”
- **The US secretary of state Antony Blinken called the assassination “shocking” and “profoundly disturbing”**, describing Abe as a leader of great vision and an extraordinary partner for the United States.
- **Attacks on politicians in Japan are unusual**. There have been only a handful in the last half century, most notably in 2007 when the mayor

of Nagasaki was shot and killed by a gangster - an incident that resulted in still further tightening of gun regulations.

- **The last time a former prime minister was killed was in 1936** during Japan's radical prewar militarism.
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## 2022.07.08 - Spotlight

- ['I'm just weird!' Meet Steve Lacy, the bisexual heir to Stevie Wonder and Prince](#)
- [Experience I rescued a camel from quicksand](#)
- ['Sisters, you're flowing through me!' The director whose horror film channels centuries of female rage](#)
- ['I need justice' Mother of boy stabbed to death calls for change in UK law](#)

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Interview

## ‘I’m just weird!’ Meet Steve Lacy, the sexed-up heir to Stevie Wonder and Prince

[Ben Beaumont-Thomas](#)



‘I try to go to spaces that will support me. I don’t put myself in harm’s way’  
... Steve Lacy. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian; grooming by  
Francesca Daniella using Nars

At just 24, the Compton-raised artist is incredibly well connected, working with stars like Kendrick Lamar and making wondrous solo tracks. He reveals the breakups, freakouts and sexuality struggles he’s faced so far



[@ben\\_bt](#)

Fri 8 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Wed 13 Jul 2022 09.40 EDT

Once, fame meant being universally recognised – but these days even well-connected musicians can get confused. “Instagram celebrities who have 100 million followers: who the fuck is this person?” says Steve Lacy. In 2022, he says, “fame is super-subjective – you’re only famous to people who think you’re famous. To the other 80% of the world, you’re a nobody. Me, I won’t be famous until you can feel my fame. You know: when motherfuckers walk in the room and you’re like, oh, I can *feel* that fame. But I’m just a dude, bro.”

Be that as it may, this London photostudio felt more famous when Lacy walked in. At just 24 years old, the US singer, songwriter, guitarist and producer is a star in a boringly quantifiable way: hundreds of millions of

streams for his psychedelic pop songs, topped up with more from his funk supergroup the Internet, plus tracks he's made with Solange, Vampire Weekend and a host of rappers including [Kendrick Lamar](#) and YG. But he is also a star in that room-changing way where barometric pressure seems to shift around him.

Flared trousers and a Balenciaga jacket announce his fashion credentials but it's the eyewear that sets him apart. A giant pair of Bottega Veneta ski goggles – presumably worn to keep north London's notorious risk of June snowblindness at bay – are removed to reveal another pair of entirely ornamental specs underneath, an eye mask in heavy transparent plastic: a deeply flawed superhero disguise, or the garb of an evil dentist.

Kissing a boy was just so out of the way of anything I could obtain as a kid

Lacy is also very pretty – at a London gig in 2019, the audience screamed at seagull frequencies – and has blown up on [TikTok](#) of late, but the main source of his star power is his music: breezy but fraught, sensual but never slick, he's one of the most exciting and singular songwriters of his abundantly talented generation. Comparisons to early 70s Stevie Wonder or early 80s Prince are valid: not only is Lacy just as startlingly young and already a decade into his career, but there is also the sense of an artist painting with colours he has mixed himself.

His second album, Gemini Rights, is out next week, and like his [2019 debut Apollo XXI](#), Wonder-ing R&B romance is told through endlessly replayable slacker indie, leaving you in a genre-free pool of sunshine. "Something big for me as a kid, and to this day, is owning my narrative. I didn't want to do things if it would put a title on me," he says. "As a kid there was so much homophobia. I love dance but I was like, I don't want people to assume I'm gay, so I didn't discover dancing. A lot of people didn't know I could sing until I put some music out because I didn't want my family to be, 'Oh yeah, Steve's a singer – Steve, sing us something!' I just didn't want anyone to assume something. I'm just weird!"

Watch the video for Steve Lacy's new single, Bad Habit.

He started his career in childhood, picking up a guitar at the age of 10 and playing in school bands in Compton, Los Angeles. “The band made me feel like a person. When I look back at my childhood, I think of being out of place. I never felt like a normal girl,” he laughs.

He was also attracted to other boys. “As a kid, I just thought it would be a fantasy. I kiss a boy? That’s like” – he bursts into a Sade rendition – “sweeeetest taboo! It was just so out of the way of anything I could obtain; it sounds crazy, electrifying, that that could ever happen to me. But in the climate [he was in], it was like: absolutely not. I didn’t even think about doing anything about it. School, my friends, my sisters, it was like” – he makes a non-committal “ehhh”.

“And I think the examples of boys who kiss boys that I had around me didn’t carry themselves like me. For instance, you see see flamboyance – I was like, OK, that’s really beautiful, but I don’t feel like that’s me. And I also might like girls. It was confusing.” He’s now proudly bisexual, and sees homophobia as having lessened “a little bit – not that much” in the interim. “Maybe it has on the internet! But you’ve got to step outside, it’s not that. I try to go to spaces that will support me – I don’t put myself in harm’s way.”

Aged 15, he saw a friend at school, Jameel Bruner, making a beat on a laptop – “I was so intrigued: what? There’s technology for you to elaborate ideas if you play instruments?” – and Bruner invited him to start playing with his group the Internet, part of the loose [Odd Future](#) collective that spawned Frank Ocean, Tyler, the Creator, Syd, et al. Alongside the band, Lacy started making his own beats, cold-pitching them via email or DM to rappers he admired: Isaiah Rashad, GoldLink, Denzel Curry.



Lacy at Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival 2017 in Los Angeles. Photograph: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

Another collaborator, [Ezra Koenig](#) of Vampire Weekend, put him in touch with producer DJ Dahi, who became a mentor – Lacy wasn't even 18 at the time. "He was like: we got to get you on this new Kendrick," meaning [Lamar's fourth album Damn.](#) "I came with a laptop on my back, guitar in my hand, ready for whatever. First thing Kendrick says to me in this room full of guys: 'Yeah, I seen your face in some music videos'. I said, 'Hey, yours too man!' I did it, broke the ice. We start jamming on new ideas, he's playing me stuff he's working on for [Damn.](#) I'm handling myself really cool, calm and collected, but I was freaking the fuck out, you know? There was a moment when it was quiet, Kendrick was on his phone, and I was like: let me play you some beats. Really scary – I jumped off the cliff."



‘The thing I hated as a kid was being perceived, you saying what I am’ ... Lacy in London last month. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian; grooming by Francesca Daniella using Nars

Lacy played him a demo he had made on his laptop, featuring vocals recorded ad hoc on his iPhone – Lamar used it to back his track Pride. “I was in London the first time it came out. I walked to the Starbucks down the street and I’m listening to the album, and by the time I get back to the hotel, Pride is playing, I’m crying, the Damn electronic billboard is right there – I’m like, what the hell is my life?”

His upward trajectory continued – Apollo XXI was Grammy-nominated – but he had a wobble. “The thing I hated as a kid was being perceived, you saying what I am – and fame would only make that worse. Success was very scary, because I thought I would lose control of myself, my ideas.” Therapy helped him “be more open in creating, moving the things out of the way that will keep me from being my best self. I was getting rid of that pedestal: an Artist. No – we’re all people contributing to a collective consciousness.”

His self-confidence has grown, too. “The archetype of confidence that we see is: you’ve got to be a dick about it. No, you don’t, you can enjoy what you’re doing and still be a cool, good person. I didn’t know that! I used to be overly modest, really quiet, I’d even diss myself to seem more humble.”

I know I'm good at making people feel comfortable – safer than anyone else

More life lessons arrived in the form of a breakup with his boyfriend of seven months, an event that has informed much of Gemini Rights. "I just felt like I tried, I kept trying, I kept wanting to try, and nothing was working," he says of their split. "[I wanted to] just communicate openly, but it was just hard. But I made a great record, and I love him, it's all good." Are they back together? "We tried, but no." What does his ex make of an album that's all about him? "He liked it – there were certain lines where he was like, hmm?"

I ask him what he discovered about himself through the relationship and breakup. "I know I'm good at making people feel comfortable – safer than anyone else. I think one thing I do need is space – I love my freedom." Does monogamy work for you? "I think there are great things about it. I think there's a time and place for everything." He laughs loud and long.



'I love my freedom' ... Lacy at Angel Space studios, London, last month. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian; grooming by Francesca Daniella using Nars

Lacy says he's seen memes about how much he writes about sex, and if there's a point where the Stevie Wonder comparisons collapse – and the Prince ones stay standing – it's when he sings on his stunning [new single Bad Habit](#), "Let's fuck in the back of the mall, lose control", or on the thrillingly vicious album track Cody Freestyle, "You had a heavy dick, a cannon ... I could use your deep throat". How does sex inspire him creatively? "What did Kanye say: 'None of us'd be here without cum'? That's my answer!" Another long laugh. He concedes that sex is "inspiring – it makes you feel pretty. Cuddles after, conversations after, the romance – yeah, the romance more than anything."

Single again, Lacy says: "It's about me right now. We can connect, but I'm like: can you just connect to someone deeply without making them your person?" I put it to him that it might be hard for the other person to deal with this lack of commitment. "It is very difficult – you have to find other people who ..." He switches tack. "If you love me more than anything else in your life, I don't like that shit. Find something to love. It don't have to be anything crazy – you can love putting your shoelaces in your shoes a certain way, and I'm like: that is so amazing."

It's an answer that's beguiling, much like his music. For all that he bares his teeth on Cody Freestyle – "We don't gotta be together forever / cos I could do better" – his songs are mostly generous and vulnerable, and there's no trace of nastiness in his gentle, amused demeanour. One of Gemini Rights's universally excellent tracks is Helmet, where he sings: "Loving you was a hazard, so I got my heart a helmet". But having survived his trials in love and selfhood, he says he's taken the helmet off again. "My heart is open. I just have a better radar on when to show it."

*Gemini Rights* is released on 15 July on RCA.

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## ExperienceLife and style

# Experience: I rescued a camel from quicksand

She was running out of energy and howling like a banshee



‘I approached slowly, camels can be vicious’: Ian Murphy with his dog Rocket in Dubai. Photograph: Siddharth Siva/The Guardian

*Ian Murphy*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 09.42 EDT

I’m from the fishing town of Kinsale, in Ireland. Life is pretty good there, but Dubai caught my attention when I was 18. My aunt has lived there since the 80s and I would often visit her before moving there myself 10 years ago as a 30-year-old [film-maker](#). It’s been a wild ride, full of chaos and wonder.

My partner, Christine, lives here with me; when her sister Angela came to visit in April this year, the three of us set off in my pickup truck with our

rescue dog, Rocket. It was a cloudless day, touching 40C. The heat and humidity were brutal, so we were happy to sightsee from the car.

We took the scenic route between Dubai and Ras al-Khaimah, a charming city in the north. A year earlier, while off-roading with a friend, I got stuck at a water crossing there, at the only inlet on the coast, where the sea flows into a swampy lagoon. I had to be rescued, and learned how quickly the tide could come in.

Christine spotted what looked like the Loch Ness monster stuck in the sand. We decided to investigate and drove up to where the sand met the lagoon. It was a camel, not moving.

Since relocating here, I have always kept a shovel, rope, torches and knives in my car – getting stuck in the desert can be debilitating.

The more she struggled to get free, the more stuck she became

I got out my shovel and approached the camel. It was a female; we nicknamed her Stucky. Stucky appeared traumatised, and it looked as if she had been trapped for hours – she was in quite deep. I've been around camels a lot in Dubai; they are massive. They can be friendly, but they can also be vicious, and have the strength to crush your skull. I approached Stucky slowly and started to gently dig away the sand around her. I kept patting her. I knew if she swung her head around quickly, she could injure herself, or me. Rocket stayed in the truck, so he wouldn't distress her.

Christine [filmed](#) my rescue attempt, and Angela gave Stucky water. I focused on digging out her back legs. When I tried to wipe the sweat from my eyes, I would get sand in them.

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An hour later, we still weren't making much progress – whenever we nearly freed a leg, which took about 20 minutes, she would get sucked back into the

sand. And the more she struggled to get free, the more stuck she became.

We were worried it would get dark and the tide would come in. Luckily, at that point, two older Emiratis in a Land Cruiser appeared over the dunes. They gave me advice, called for reinforcements and posted photos of the camel rescue on social media.

Their nephew soon arrived, having seen the photos online. Word then quickly spread to the small farms a few kilometres away. I had been digging for an hour and a half when a pickup arrived carrying 14 guys with shovels, pipes and all sorts of apparatus for a major excavation. They joined in and worked super-hard. They had been fasting since sun-up for Ramadan – they didn't even have water.

Everyone was working on all four of the camel's legs at the same time, using different techniques. It was working. But Stucky was running out of energy – she was shaking and howling like a banshee. When we finally got her out, after three hours, Stucky's legs were effectively dead. We rolled her three times on to harder ground, then the guys massaged her legs to get the blood flowing. It took about 20 minutes for her to stand. She allowed us to give her a pat on the head – that was pretty special. Then she turned, stretched and gave us a wink goodbye. If we hadn't dug her out, I doubt she'd have survived. It would have been too dark and no one would have seen her.

The guys in the pickup truck drove us to their farm afterwards to wash. We were covered in sand, dirt and sweat. They were so generous, and offered us a camel and a goat to take home as thanks. We briefly indulged the idea of taking home a baby goat, but decided against it. We were also offered some birds, but Rocket is a bird-chaser.

Back in Kinsale, Mam is now stopped in the street and asked: "Is that your young fella out saving camels in the desert?" She says: "Yes, that's what he's known for now." She's very proud.

As told to Anna Derrig

Do you have an experience to share? Email [experience@theguardian.com](mailto:experience@theguardian.com)

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Interview

## **‘Sisters, you’re flowing through me!’ The director whose horror film channels centuries of female rage**

[Cath Clarke](#)



Charlotte Colbert ... 'It's a strange time to be a human.' Photograph: Victor Bastidas

Charlotte Colbert reflects on her debut film *She Will*, which sees a veteran actor channel the energy of women burned as witches against an ageing predator who groomed her decades earlier

Fri 8 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 08.41 EDT

It is not the usual way of things, a first-time director being granted an audience with Hollywood royalty. But that is what happened to Charlotte Colbert when a producer sent the screenplay of her psychological horror *She Will* (co-written with Kitty Percy) to [Sigourney Weaver](#).

"It was crazy!" Colbert leans over the table, eyes popping. "I was flown over to New York to have lunch with Sigourney, who is this extraordinary force of nature. Incredibly tall, brilliant, et cetera." Weaver loved the script, but the timing didn't work. "We sort of had the choice of waiting for Sigourney to finish an enormous amount of Avatars – or finding somebody who would have more availability." She tells the story with the timing of a standup comedian.

We meet at a restaurant in east London. Colbert arrives a few minutes early in a whirlwind of questions – "Am I late?" "Where have you come from?" "Do you want to eat something?" Her long blond hair is tucked under a black baseball cap embroidered with graffiti skulls. Dressed in black T-shirt and black denim flares, fingers weighed down by gothic rings, her look is half teenage skateboarder, half insanely chic fashion editor. She downs Diet Cokes and talks 19 to the dozen.

Colbert has popped up to London on the train from East Sussex, where she lives with her husband, the artist Philip Colbert, and their two children. Since moving to Lewes four years ago, she has become fascinated with the mythology and folklore of that part of the world. She even added a credit at the end of *She Will*, thanking "the spirits of Sussex".

Is she a bit of a hippy? “I was always probably too angry to be hippy. Hopefully, I’ll age into a nice peaceful hippy.” She adds more seriously: “I think in some ways the film was probably quite cathartic. There’s things that are quite personal in it. You end up seeking answers and resolving issues in some weird way, then move on to the next one. Like a massive therapy session.” She throws herself back in the chair with a guffaw.

*She Will* is an angry film. It is a blazing and brilliant #MeToo revenge fable, although Colbert is reluctant to be drawn too deeply on that subject. A week after we meet, she emails me this in response to a couple of follow-up questions: “Time’s Up and #MeToo are important and serious issues, and this is just a small film. We focused on one woman’s story.” What she does say is that the film came from a “personal angle” – and she wasn’t alone. “It’s crazy how one in three women have been the victim of some kind of abuse. I think a lot of the people in front and behind the camera on the film had a sensitivity to the issues.”

*She Will* is the story of Veronica Ghent, who is a movie star of the old school – cheekbones, fur coat, the reddest lipstick possible, withering disdain. It is the role Weaver had her eye on, which in the end went to the wonderful South African actor Alice Krige, who deserves all the awards for her powerful and deliciously funny performance. Days after a double mastectomy, Ghent arrives at what she thinks is a solitary retreat in the Scottish Highlands accompanied by a young female nurse, Desi (Kota Eberhardt), only to find the place full of ghastly guests straight out of an Agatha Christie story.



Charlotte Colbert at work on *She Will*.

The film's plot from here sounds bonkers. The retreat is on the site of 17th-century witch-burnings. When Ghent wanders outside barefoot at night, she summons centuries of female rage that seems to be stored in the earth like energy in a battery. She directs that anger at the man who groomed her for stardom at 13. He is the legendary director Eric Hathbourne, played with odious charm by [Malcolm McDowell](#).

I tell Colbert that I love the idea of women being able to tap into collective female rage whenever they need to take down a bad guy. “I know! The idea you’ve got a massive sisterhood in the earth that you can rely on; just take shoes off and put your feet in the mud and ...” She flings her arms out. “‘Sisters, you’re flowing thorough me!’” In her excitement, Colbert’s ring goes flying from her finger and pings on to the floor. We recover it from under her tote bag.

*She Will* is as mysterious and unearthly as a fairytale. But its portrait of misogyny and predatory behaviour is uncomfortably realistic. There is a scene in which Hathbourne, interviewed on a chatshow, is grilled about his relationship with his then 13-year-old child star Ghent. He reaches for the well-worn predator’s excuse: “It was a completely different era then.” (This defence was trotted out by friends of Roman Polanski and was the first line

in [Harvey Weinstein's statement](#) issued immediately after the New York Times exposé: “I came of age in the 60s and 70s ...”)

What drives Colbert nuts is how often women like Ghent are doubted when they go public years later: “When you get comments like: ‘Why now?’” She shakes her head. “People questioning why this person is coming forward 20 years later.” She sits up straight, getting into her stride. “Because it takes a lifetime to get over it! It’s not rocket science. It’s really fucking hard to confront something that’s broken you.”

*She Will* is a film with a complicated, chewy role for a woman in her 60s. I watched it last month, a couple of weeks after the Acting Your Age Campaign [published an open letter](#) calling for better visibility of female actors over 45. Colbert spent part of her childhood in France (her accent is now mostly London, with the occasional breathily accented vowel). “I don’t know why, but I think women come into their own a bit later in France. Look at Kristin Scott Thomas; all these amazing, gorgeous women. They’re not suddenly relegated to playing the grandmother.” That said, she finds the level of misogyny in France “bewildering”.

I want to ask Colbert more about her childhood. She is one of the eight children of James Goldsmith, the Tory-supporting billionaire businessman and Referendum party founder, who died in 1997. Her mother is the French journalist Laure Boulay de la Meurthe, with whom Goldsmith openly had a long-term relationship while married to Annabel Goldsmith – making Colbert a half-sibling of Zac Goldsmith and Jemima Khan.

There is no mention of her early life on Colbert’s Wikipedia page. Instead, it lists her short films and work as a screenwriter and multimedia artist – one of her video installations reinterprets Lucian Freud’s famous portrait of Sue Tilley. When I bring up her family, the fun and chattiness disappear.



Malcom McDowell in She Will.

“Oh no,” she says. Colbert is twitchy and chews her lip. Silence.

I wonder whether she uses her married name – Colbert – as a way of being her own person. “Mmm. Definitely.”

How did her childhood shape her? “All one’s experiences probably shape you in your relationship with the work.”

But is it difficult to find your own place in such a high-profile family? “Um. I dunno.”

Would she prefer not to talk about it? “Yeah. I’d rather not.” She leans forward, looking pained, fixing me with pale-blue eyes.

We chat for a few more minutes more, a bit half-heartedly: about the difficulties directing as a mother with young children; on her next moves.

But the mood is broken. As Colbert leaves, I feel slightly bad it has ended like this. A few days later, she emails to talk about, among other things, the computer scientist and philosopher Jaron Lanier.

“It’s a strange time to be a human,” Colbert writes. “On the verge of the sixth mass extinction we are all grappling for meaning as we dance the last waltz on the Titanic. But!! There must be a but. We must all dance and dream and hope and try because there is no other choice!”

I’m not sure if it is Lanier’s idea or hers. Either way, “but” feels like a very Charlotte Colbert way to finish: ideas pinging around like rings in a restaurant.

She Will is in UK cinemas on 22 July

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## Law

# ‘I need justice’: mother of boy stabbed to death calls for change in UK law

The 15-year-old who killed Dea-John Reid was convicted of manslaughter and could serve just over two years in prison



Jean Morris: ‘I know that I buried him, I know that Dea-John died but I’m still waiting for him to come home.’ Photograph: John Robertson/The Guardian

*[Emily Dugan](#)  
[@emilydugan](#)*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 07.42 EDT

Jean Morris still watches her front door every afternoon expecting to see “the little cheeky face” of her youngest son, Dea-John Reid, walk through it.

It is more than a year since 14-year-old Dea-John was chased by a group of white men and boys shouting racial slurs and stabbed to death near a park in

Birmingham. But her hope that he will open that door again has continued.

“He never came home and up until now I’m still looking for Dea-John to come,” Morris said. “I know that I buried him, I know that Dea-John died but I’m still waiting for him to come home.”

The 15-year-old who stabbed him in the chest was cleared of murder but found [guilty of manslaughter](#) in May. All the remaining men and boys in the group – George Khan, 39, Michael Shields, 36, a 16-year-old and a 15-year-old – were acquitted.

For Morris, the verdict has only made it harder to come to terms with his death. “I need justice for my son,” she said. “If that is a manslaughter, what is a murder?”

She believes that the ethnic makeup of the jury led to murder acquittals and the consequent lenient sentence for the killer and is calling for a change in the law to ensure juries better reflect the community they serve.

Despite the fact that only 57% of people in Birmingham are white, 11 of the jurors were white and one was south Asian.

Morris had to watch CCTV of the last 90 minutes of Dea-John’s life at the trial in Birmingham crown court in May. Three white teenagers could be seen getting out of a car and chasing Dea-John in his final moments, before he ran out of breath and stopped, enabling a 15-year-old to plunge a knife into his chest.



Jean Morris with a photo of her son Dea-John Reid. Photograph: John Robertson/The Guardian

She feels outraged at the jury's response to it. "I don't know what the jury were looking at," she said, "I just can't understand it.

"For that jury to sit there and say this is manslaughter. They showed me racism right there."

A national march for racial justice will begin this Saturday at 1pm in Kingstanding, where he was killed.

Morris says that if the circumstances were reversed – if the boy stabbed to death was white and the attacker black – the verdict "would be different". If Dea-John had been the one holding the knife, she said, "he would go down for murder".

Prosecutor Richard Wormald QC told the jury that the group of five had behaved "like a pack chasing down their prey" on the evening of 31 May last year.

Dea-John was chased in a "revenge attack" for an incident earlier in the day. The group he was with was accused of trying to rob an Armani bag from a friend of the killer.

Morris knows that her only chance of appealing against the not-guilty verdict on all those accused of chasing Dea-John is if someone comes forward with fresh evidence.

She wants the public to come forward if they have any more information. She said: “Don’t keep it a secret, say something and don’t let something happen to the next mum like me.”

Throughout the trial, Morris was convinced that all five would be convicted. “I thought they were going down,” she said.

The shock at the verdict was physical. “I felt I would just put my hands on top of my head and keep running, running, running, with no idea where I was going,” she said.

The 15-year-old who killed Dea-John, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison, which means he is likely to be released in just over two years.

As he sentenced him, Mr Justice Johnson said: “If an adult did what you did it would almost certainly be murder and they would be sentenced to life imprisonment.”

The case is in stark contrast to the convictions of four black teenagers from north Manchester earlier this month for conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm. The young men were each jailed for eight years for taking part in a group chat a few days after the murder of one of their friends.

Commenting on the two verdicts, Bishop Desmond Jaddoo, a community activist representing Dea-John’s family, said: “In the Manchester case, no one lost their life, no one was physically chasing anyone, no one was calling anyone an N-word, black bastard, bang him out. But they all got found guilty. This happened in broad daylight.”



Jean Morris with Bishop Desmond Jaddoo (left) and Kirk Bryan, brother of Dea-John. Photograph: John Robertson/The Guardian

The last time Morris saw her son on the day he died, she promised to comb his hair for him that evening but he never returned home.

His killer's sentence has only added to her grief. "When I sit down and think about Dea-John, this guy got six-and-a-half years and he's only going to do two-and-a-half years and come back out.

"[His mother] can see him grow up and even give her grandkids, but when I want to see Dea-John I have to go to the cemetery. This breaks my heart."

On Saturday, Morris will march for justice for her son wearing purple – his favourite colour. She wants a change to the system in his name.

She said: "I know that justice cannot bring back Dea-John, but at least his name would live on."

This article was amended on 8 July 2022 to correct the ages of defendants George Khan and Michael Shields from 38 and 35, to 39 and 36.

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## 2022.07.08 - Opinion

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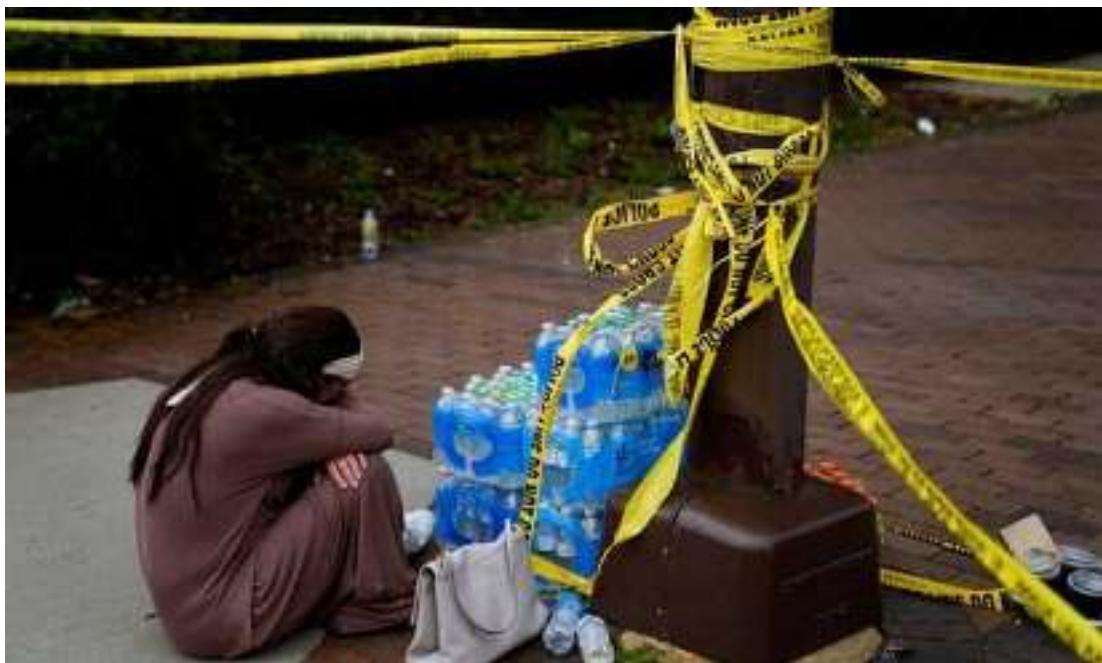
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[Opinion](#)[Gun crime](#)

## We hear Americans support gun control, but I know the truth is more complicated

[Devika Bhat](#)

It was only when I moved to the US that I understood that this issue, more than any other, encapsulates our differences



A Highland Park resident at the boundary of the crime scene after the mass shooting in the Chicago suburb. Photograph: Cheney Orr/Reuters

Fri 8 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.51 EDT

The last of Uvalde's slaughtered children had been [laid to rest](#) for barely three weeks before the [latest mass shooting](#) to terrorise America unfolded. This time it was a suburb of Chicago, its Independence Day celebrations shattered by a hail of bullets from a gunman with an assault rifle on a rooftop, killing seven and injuring dozens more.

The month before, it was [Philadelphia and Tennessee](#); before that, [Oklahoma](#) and [Michigan](#), alongside a string of other incidents that hardly registered on a national, let alone global level. Such is the bar for international outrage on American shooting deaths, rising with every Columbine, Virginia Tech and Las Vegas. The horrific killings at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde were another reminder that 10 years after Sandy Hook, even the smallest children are not safe from the violence wrought by a young man wielding an assault rifle – which he was able to easily and legally obtain, thanks to the anachronisms of the hallowed constitution.

Uvalde, at least, spurred what no previous shootings have managed: to get some gun reforms actually signed into law, even if US president Joe Biden admitted the measures [fell short](#) of what he had hoped for. It is a step beyond what usually happens: an insistence from Democrats that it will be this particular tragedy, finally, that will lead to gun control laws having their day, followed by despair as barriers built into the legislative system prevent even modest changes passing Congress.

It was a narrative that was already set in Washington when I moved there from the UK, just a few weeks after Sandy Hook in 2012. At the time it really felt as if change might – amazingly – be afoot. There was a sense of grim momentum: Barack Obama, recently re-elected to his second term, pledged at a memorial service to the young victims to “use all the power of his office” to prevent another tragedy, his tears and faltering voice on the day of the shootings still a fresh memory. Within weeks though, it became clear that there was [no hope](#).

I have never felt more alien – as non-Americans are charmingly termed under the visa system – than when I saw those fraught weeks play out and realised that the mass murder of tiny children just a few years out of nappies was not to be, after all, the eureka moment that forced US lawmakers to rethink. It was the first in a series of wake-up calls for me about the problematic side of American exceptionalism: one tied in with a particular worldview born of [the country's unique history](#), which values a perceived notion of individual freedom against the tyranny of the state above all else.

It is a mindset not just limited to intransigent Republicans in the Senate. A common frustration voiced recently is that congressional inaction has been particularly egregious, given that most Americans favour gun controls. But though polling shows a clear majority in favour of background checks, [the gap narrows](#) when people are asked to consider other measures like banning specific guns or accessories. This is hardly surprising when [40% of Americans](#) live in a household with a gun. What's more, national polls may themselves overstate the reality of support for gun control, [recent analysis](#) by the New York Times suggests.

Other nations may shake their collective heads and mutter “only in America”, quietly thankful their own children do not have to endure [traumatic shooting drills](#) and bulletproof rucksacks as routine necessities for an education. But this is a price many are willing to pay to uphold what they see as rights ordained by their forefathers.

American civilians are estimated to hold a staggering [40% of the world's firearms](#), despite accounting for only 4% of its population. As unpalatable as it might be to the rest of the world, not all these gun owners will be virulent NRA superfans, and many have complex, possibly contradictory views on gun ownership and regulation. Moreover, according to a [Pew survey](#) from 2017, while most gun owners could not entertain the thought of never owning a gun, the opposite did not appear to hold true: 52% of non-gun owners said they could see themselves owning a gun in the future.

It was after Sandy Hook that the NRA's president, Wayne LaPierre infamously declared that “the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun”. As ludicrous as such talk sounds, it is not limited to the most aggressive of the pro-gun lobby. Similar language is found in the very laws of US states: legislation in Colorado enabling gun owners to shoot an intruder in self-defence is known as the [Make My Day](#) law. A similar appeal to an idealised history of uniquely American heroes versus villains was [invoked](#) in May by a judge in California, who ruled that the state's ban on the purchase of semi-automatic firearms by under 21-year-olds was unconstitutional, on the basis that “America would not exist without the heroism of the young adults who fought and died in our revolutionary army”.

Though we are familiar with this outlook, visible as it is in films, television, books and other behemoths of American soft power, it was only when I was living in the country that I was able to appreciate its reach. Guns may be at the extreme end of this particular brand of American exceptionalism, but it goes some way to explaining other matters too. There were echoes of something similar in the fraught debate over Obama's other policy priority: the Affordable Care Act (2010), his signature healthcare reforms.

The proposals were eviscerated by critics who held up the NHS as a warning of the ghastly horrors awaiting the US under Obamacare, never mind that the plan came nowhere close to being a fully nationalised health service. As if, scoffed those same critics, any other country could possibly have anything worthwhile to teach America.

It was a dismaying wake-up call for a Brit who has deep ties to and a great admiration for the US, with its seductive promises of possibility and optimism. It is a promise that Obama himself has insisted he continues to believe in, even after the advent of Donald Trump's presidency, and even after admitting that his failure to enact gun reforms were the greatest regret of his term in office. Others are less convinced: friends with the option to do so admit discussing whether to leave the country, as it rolls from one crisis to another. Each is a fresh reminder that its once-lauded system of government, with its supposedly unassailable checks and balances, may perhaps be failing the very democracy it was designed to protect.

- Devika Bhat is joint deputy head of International News at the Guardian
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[Opinion](#)[Boris Johnson](#)

## Why did the Daily Mail support Johnson long after other press allies turned their backs?

[Jane Martinson](#)



A newspaper that styles itself as a bastion of middle England morality should have been the first to ask hard questions of a doomed leader



Jacob Rees-Mogg carries a copy of the Sun newspaper with the headline ‘You can't have your birthday cake... and eat it, Boris’, after a cabinet meeting in January. Photograph: Daniel Leal/AFP/Getty Images

Thu 7 Jul 2022 10.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 12.49 EDT

After Boris Johnson was elected to “get Brexit done” with a huge 80-seat majority, the rightwing press backed their man through scandals over Covid, NHS contracts, sleaze, Partygate and more, rebuking the naysayers in the party and beyond. The Daily Mail was particularly defensive, turning its fury on “a narcissistic rabble of Tory MPs trying to topple a PM who’s leading us out of Covid” when the first rumblings over Downing Street parties prompted an outburst in parliament from [David Davis in January](#).

By the time of the humiliating collapse of Johnson’s leadership this week, the support of the other papers had dried up. As far back as February, the Telegraph reported [the scathing attack on Johnson by John Major](#), who accused the prime minister of eroding public trust in British democracy, showing contempt for ministerial standards, damaging the UK’s international reputation and attacking civil rights.

The Murdoch-owned Sun remained largely loyal, particularly over a party that involved senior members of [its own staff](#), but it could not ignore a cost

of living crisis that was hurting constituents in many newly Conservative “red wall” seats. Last week, it was a Sun political reporter – Noa Hoffman – who broke the story that prompted Tory deputy whip Chris Pincher to resign, triggering Johnson’s downfall.

The Murdoch papers have always backed political winners – and turned savagely on losers. And two weeks into the latest sleaze scandal, Johnson was no longer looking quite so unassailable. But far more surprising has been the continued support, even into this week, of the Mail.

Yes, as the Pincher scandal started to engulf him last weekend, the Mail on Sunday splashed with the story that the PM knew about the Pincher’s proclivities two years ago and promoted him nonetheless. But by Monday, the daily paper seemed slightly horrified by its Sunday sister’s act of self sabotage and [declared](#): “Boris Johnson is still the best man to lead Britain.”

The lead comment seemed so out of keeping with the view not only from inside his own party but also public opinion that journalist [Tim Walker tweeted](#): “Not since its ‘hurrah for the Blackshirts’ headline has the DM misjudged things so badly.”

The change of tone between weekend and weekday editions was so marked that it was reminiscent of the internecine strife at the Mail group before Paul Dacre finally removed Geordie Greig, who had tried to “detoxify” the Mail brand. [Greig left the group](#) last November to make way for an acolyte of Dacre’s, Ted Verity.

And the support, however watered down, only continued. Rather than the sort of splash headlines calling for heads to roll that are typical when the Mail’s enemies in the judiciary or Labour party do something wrong, Wednesday’s edition compared “Boris” to a baby pig and asked if he could “wriggle” his way out of a situation in which he’d been accused of lying to his parliamentary colleagues and the people.

Readers had to get past a double-page advert for the Mail’s own app, a spread of Wimbledon coverage and story about the “buccaneering” new chancellor Nadhim Zahawi before discovering any detail about the momentous resignations of [Sajid Javid and Rishi Sunak](#).

Even this morning, as the Mail landed on doormats only hours before a new slew of resignations finally forced Johnson's hand, the paper ran a statesman-like picture of him on the front page with the [headline](#) "Boris stares down the mutiny", with further prominent mention of his "mandate from 14m voters".

Even Mail insiders have questioned why the paper continued to support a man who goes against what it promotes as its great traditions. Yes, Johnson has delivered a tick list of causes dear to Dacre's heart. Get Brexit done? Tick. Bash the BBC? Tick. Cut the civil service down to size? Tick. Immigration? Not only tick but send the problem to Rwanda.

But the gulf between Johnson's behaviour and the sort of morality that the paper likes to say it has, in speaking for middle England, is stark. At a 125th birthday party for 800 people in May, the Mail's owner, Lord Rothermere, lauded its tradition of exposing "[incompetent and immoral](#)" politicians. All newspapers, he said, "must not be afraid to call out the charlatans".

Standing up for decency and family values as well as a prime minister who does neither is a bad look for a newspaper that likes to think of itself as the minister for morality.

To find an explanation, all roads, as ever, lead back to Dacre himself. For all his moralising, he is defined more than anything by an instinct to double down when people call him out for losing the plot. He did it in 2016 when he described the three judges who he deemed were wrecking Brexit as "enemies of the people" – a notorious front page headline that he has repeatedly defended.

There is a culture of stubbornness and superiority around Dacre that says, if we keep shouting loud enough we can never be wrong and don't need to listen to critics – we're doing it our own way. In that respect he is not unlike a certain outgoing prime minister.

Which leads us to the elephant perhaps soon to enter the room. Johnson has made no secret of his desire to promote Paul Dacre personally, first with a botched attempt to make him the [head of Ofcom](#). He is also rumoured to

want to give Dacre a peerage. As it turns out, even the mighty Mail was unable to prevent such an elevation being part of another controversial tradition in British politics: the prime minister's resignation honours.

- Jane Martinson is a Guardian columnist
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# The brutal US abortion ruling is a potential death sentence for all pregnant women

[Emma Brockes](#)



Doctors in many states are now barred from intervening unless they're sure someone is about to die. Inevitably, some will



Demonstration against the supreme court decision on abortion, New York City, 4 July 2022. Photograph: John Lamparski/Getty Images

Fri 8 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 08.16 EDT

To mitigate the shock, perhaps, or because people believed it, one thing said in the immediate wake of the [overturning of Roe v Wade](#) was that for much of the US, not a great deal would change. Symbolically, of course, it was horrific, potentially prefiguring a larger swing by the supreme court against civil rights. Practically, however, abortion limits across large swaths of the country were already so severe, and the availability of clinics so reduced, that it raised the question of how much difference would this make anyway.

In the two weeks since the justices made their decision, the answer to that question has been rising to the surface. Doctor by doctor, activist by activist, the implications of a total abortion ban in the eight states in which it was instantly triggered, and the further nine expected to follow suit within weeks, have begun to be outlined. The threat posed to women's health is so staggering, so nonsensical, as to seem barely possible.

The danger of illegal abortions; the mental and financial disaster of forcing women to have babies they don't want; the outrage of the state controlling what you do with your body, and the implications of forced pregnancy when

it's a result of rape – all these arguments have been staples of anti-abortion politics for decades. Now that the worst has happened, however, they are joined by a bunch of considerations that are so wildly beyond reason, so fanatically punitive, that they represent a potential death sentence for any pregnant woman.

The most startling of these is the failure in those states implementing a total abortion ban to make an exception for women who discover their foetus won't live. The vast majority of abortions in the US happen inside the first 12 weeks. So called "late stage" abortions, occurring later than 16 weeks and, in even fewer cases, after 21 weeks, represent less than 5% of the total and, according to doctors, are in most cases a response to the discovery of catastrophic foetal abnormalities. In these instances, the baby will die within hours or days of birth. What an extraordinary decision by those pious members of the supreme court to force a woman to carry a baby to term so she can watch it die.

It's not rusty coat-hangers or gin and bath tubs this time. It's doctors, on pain of prosecution, being barred from intervening when a woman is miscarrying. When the only abortion loophole exists around a threat to the mother's life, you'd better be sure she's about to die before you jump in to help. These are margin calls that won't always go the woman's way and that make every miscarriage a potentially fatal event.

The same goes for every ectopic pregnancy. A [deranged piece](#) in the New York Times this week argued that ectopic pregnancies – a bunch of cells attaching to the wall of the fallopian tubes which, if not excised, will rupture and kill the woman – might be viewed in the same way as a premature baby, and the ending of the pregnancy referred to as "delivering" that baby. You can't incubate a baby in your fallopian tube, nor can you "deliver" a baby from an ectopic pregnancy, which can be detected at five or six weeks. Misinterpreting this lethal malfunction is mad.

There has been a flippant, self-soothing reflex for those of us in liberal states to say, awful as this is, they can't do anything to women in New York or California. This may be true, although abortion providers across the country will come under much greater pressure once women are travelling farther to use them. What it has taken a moment to understand is that pregnant women

in the US, irrespective of home state, may have to consider avoiding large areas of their own country in case they are denied emergency treatment while there.

This puts the US on a footing with Malta, where an American woman on holiday recently suffered a partial miscarriage and had to be airlifted to Spain for her D&C (dilation and curettage). Abortion is banned in Malta. A woman who has miscarried and needs foetal tissue removed to forestall infection will be monitored but not treated. For that to happen in Malta, as in larger and larger areas of the US in the coming weeks, doctors must stand back and wait for women to start dying.

- Emma Brockes 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](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)*

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[Culture in peril](#)[Arts policy](#)

## **Cronies on boards, BBC vandalism and relentless culture wars – what Boris Johnson did for the arts**

[Charlotte Higgins](#)



Defending statues, attacking ‘wokeness’, trying to destroy Channel 4 ... the disgraced ex-PM’s impact on the arts has been disruptive, cynical and inept – but what comes next could be even worse



Rock bottom ... the Prime Minister at the Prado in Madrid. Photograph: Getty Images

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Legacy is an interesting word. It suggests something at least halfway coherent: objects and real estate carefully safeguarded and willed on to the next generation. “Careful”, “safeguarded” and “coherent”, though, are not words to be associated with [Boris Johnson](#). Even so, those who depart the stage of life or politics chaotically still leave their traces. What will Johnson’s tenure as PM have left the worlds of arts and culture in England and the wider UK?

The best, perhaps, that can be said for Johnson is that arts infrastructure in Britain did not entirely collapse during the closures of the Covid-19 pandemic – though it seems clear that the cultural recovery fund, support for the self-employed and furlough schemes were much more the terrain of the ex-chancellor, Rishi Sunak, than of the PM. So ends the faint praise.

Repeated efforts have been made to lever in candidates who were palpably unqualified

In policy terms, Johnson's government appeared to be reaching for two broad goals, albeit sporadically and inconsistently. These were "levelling up", and even more inchoately, loosening the influence of a perceived "wokeness" on British cultural institutions.

Weaponising debates over public memorials and contested heritage, especially during the Black Lives Matter protests of the summer of 2020, is one way in which perceived "wokeness" was tackled. In attempting this, Johnson and his ministers pushed very close to breaking the arm's-length principle. This is the idea, established after the second world war for very [good historical reasons](#), that British governments should not make direct decisions about the arts and cultural institutions.



Veiled threats ... Oliver Dowden speaks to Sunday Morning. Photograph: Tayfun Salci/ZUMA Press Wire/REX/Shutterstock

Johnson's ex-culture secretary Oliver Dowden [issued veiled threats](#) to heritage bodies that their funding could be dependent on precisely toeing the government's line on contested heritage – a move that risked endangering [their independence](#) and freedom to pursue intellectual goals as they saw fit. Was this kind of rupturing of the old-established boundaries of decency a legacy or a blip? Was Johnson an aberration or an exemplar when he stated

that removing statues from public places “[would be to lie about our history](#)”? Clearly, it depends on what flavour of Conservatism comes next.

Another means of tackling perceived “wokeness” was with appointments to non-executive positions for cultural bodies, from the BBC to national museums. Before the resignation of [Munira Mirza](#) as head of the No 10 policy unit earlier this year, there was clearly a concerted effort to purge boards of those deemed ideologically unsuitable, and to fill posts with those regarded as friendly to the government. This is, in a sense, normal – despite such posts being officially neutral and independent, there has always been a certain political tilt to these appointments (and under the last Labour government, plenty of “friendlies” were given jobs).

The difference under Johnson has been one of degree. Well-qualified trustees have been booted out for fairly mild views on the nature of British imperialism, as in the case of [Aminul Hoque](#) at the Royal Museums Greenwich, a move that led to the resignation of the museums’ chair. The independence of appointment committees has been called into question. Concerted, repeated efforts have been made to lever in candidates palpably unqualified for jobs, such as the happily unsuccessful drive to make Paul Dacre the [chair of Ofcom](#). Clearly, in certain roles – Tory donor [Richard Sharp at the BBC](#), notably – Johnson’s government has inserted its favoured people into key institutions.

Overall, though, its success has been limited. This government’s legacy will not in fact be a wholesale change in the character of those ultimately responsible for large cultural organisations. What may linger for the moment is a caution and self-censorship among some arts institutions, especially in England, who seem wary of openly tackling matters such as decolonisation in politically unfriendly weather.



Like a cosmic joke ... Nadine Dorries, Johnson's culture secretary.  
Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

“Levelling up” has been a phrase much used and its aspirations are, in their essentials, perfectly reasonable: to focus attention and resources on areas of the country (not coincidentally often “red wall” constituencies), that have been hit by deindustrialisation and austerity. Culture is part of this agenda. But nothing that has been done under its banner has amounted to very much. This is no New Deal. Rather, according to the public accounts committee, it’s “[gambling taxpayers’ money on policies and programmes that are little more than a slogan](#)”.

In practical terms, levelling up has meant pressure to move public funding at speed out of London – a reasonable aim in its way, but one that overlooks the nuanced picture in the English southeast, including pockets of real deprivation. This move risks conflict, too, with the Arts Council’s own stated strategy – another threat to the arm’s-length principle.

There has also been an ambition to privatisate Channel 4, which was established under Thatcher as a publicly owned, but privately funded, body. The BBC has also been a target of malign attention. Nadine Dorries, the blunder-making culture secretary appointed (as if in a cosmic joke) by

Johnson for her unwavering loyalty rather than for any suggestion of suitability for the role, has said that the BBC licence fee, frozen until 2024, [will be abolished in 2027](#). Johnson's possible legacy is of a serious weakening of Britain's public broadcasting system, which would have devastating consequences for the wider arts infrastructure, given that the broadcasters commission, employ and nurture so much British talent. There again, perhaps not: everything depends on the next flavour of Tory leader, and the next government.

What can be said in the end? Johnson has been a prime minister who advanced a set of incoherent, muddled, frequently cynical aims with the potential to be greatly detrimental to the UK's (and especially England's) arts and cultural landscape. Such as they were, though, they have been ineptly fulfilled. His departure may be a cause of relief. Be wary, though: the barrel we seem to be scraping, politically, may be deeper than we think.

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## Trump lawyers feel heat as legal net tightens on plot to overturn election



An image of John Eastman and Rudy Giuliani is displayed on a screen during the third January 6 hearing on 16 June. Photograph: Getty Images

Jeffrey Clark, Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman face escalating legal threats amid expanding DoJ investigation and explosive testimony

*Peter Stone* in Washington

Fri 8 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 9 Jul 2022 09.43 EDT

An accelerating justice department investigation into a “fake electors” scheme to help Donald Trump overturn the 2020 election, plus explosive testimony from [January 6 hearings](#), have created intense legal heat for the lawyers Jeffrey Clark, Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman, who were key players in the abortive effort, say ex-prosecutors.

While Giuliani and Eastman were key lawyers for Trump and his campaign, respectively, and Clark was a senior justice department official, the trio played big roles in a brazen multi-front drive not to certify some Biden electors but bogus ones for Trump. That could fuel charges against Trump, who they collaborated with, for obstruction of an official proceeding, or defrauding the US.

Recent justice department actions, including seizing electronic devices of Eastman and Clark, coupled with more evidence at committee hearings, are increasingly likely to spur charges against the three lawyers related to the drive to replace electors Biden won in seven states with fake ones for Trump, say legal experts.

The justice’s expanding criminal inquiry became palpable on 22 June when FBI agents raided Clark’s home, and separately seized Eastman’s cellphone, as grand jury subpoenas involving the scheme were served on top Republican figures and Trump allies in Georgia and Arizona.

In another stark sign of the legal jeopardy Giuliani and Eastman face, recent House committee hearings into the attack on the Capitol offered evidence that both lawyers sought pardons from Trump, presumably tied to plotting strategies to block Biden’s certification by Congress on 6 January, and fiery speeches they gave along with Trump at a rally on the Ellipse before a mob of his allies attacked the Capitol.

The legal threats facing Clark were underscored at a 23 June panel hearing by scathing testimony from former top justice officials about Trump’s plotting with Clark to elevate him to acting attorney general to push the fake

electors scheme by falsely claiming in a proposed letter to Georgia officials that the department had “significant concern” about election fraud there and in other states.

The former acting deputy attorney general Richard Donoghue was scalding as he detailed Trump’s efforts to replace the acting attorney general, Jeffrey Rosen, with Clark in late December 2020, and to pressure state legislators to reject Biden electors by promoting baseless charges of widespread fraud.

Donoghue recounted how he warned Trump at a bizarre 3 January White House meeting – that was attended by Rosen, Trump counsel Pat Cipollone and other top lawyers – that elevating Clark to be acting AG would spark mass resignations, and Clark would be “left leading a graveyard”, at the department. Cipollone, who was recently subpoenaed by the House panel, also threatened to resign if Clark replaced Rosen.

Further, according to shocking testimony on 28 June by Cassidy Hutchinson, a top aide to the ex-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, Cipollone warned her early on 6 January of potential criminal liability for Trump and others if Trump went to the Capitol as he had discussed doing, and asked Hutchinson to “please make sure we don’t go up to the Capitol”.

All of it adds up to potentially grave consequences for the three lawyers.

Michael Zeldin, an ex-DoJ prosecutor, said: “The strong evidence presented about the fake electors scheme at recent House committee hearings, including testimony by senior justice department officials, laid the foundation for charging Trump’s legal advisers, Eastman and Giuliani, and possibly Clark, with multiple state and federal crimes including obstruction of an official proceeding, conspiracy to defraud the United States, false statements in connection with the fake electors scheme, and election fraud.”

He added: “The cumulative evidence presented over the course of the hearings paint a picture of a president who was told explicitly by multiple people that he lost the election and that once he exhausted his judicial remedies (losing nearly 60 cases) his continuing pressure campaign to prevent the orderly transfer of power was illegal.

“Yet Trump and his attorneys persisted.”

Other ex-prosecutors stress that the FBI raids to obtain Clark and Eastman’s phones indicate the investigations of the two lawyers have escalated.

“Search warrants of Clark and Eastman’s phones means that a judge found probable cause to believe that evidence of a crime would be found on each of those devices,” Barbara McQuade, a former US attorney for eastern Michigan, told the Guardian.

Eastman’s exposure to criminal charges has been palpable and growing for months. In March, a federal judge, David Carter, in a crucial court ruling involving Trump’s legal adviser Eastman, stated that Trump “more likely than not” broke the law in his weeks-long drive to stop Biden from taking office.

“Dr Eastman and President Trump launched a campaign to overturn a democratic election, an action unprecedented in American history,” Carter wrote in a civil case which resulted in an order for Eastman to release more than 100 emails he had withheld from the House panel.

Other revelations damaging to Trump and Eastman emerged at a mid-June House panel hearing when Greg Jacob, the ex-counsel to former vice-president Mike Pence, provided detailed testimony about how Eastman and Trump launched a high-pressure effort to persuade Pence to unlawfully block Biden’s certification by Congress on 6 January.

The Eastman pressure included the scheme to substitute pro-Trump fake electors from states that Biden won for electors rightfully pledged to Biden. Jacob testified that Eastman acknowledged to him that he knew his push to get Pence on 6 January to reject Biden’s winning electoral college count would violate the Electoral Count Act, and that Trump, too, was informed it would be illegal for Pence to block Biden’s certification.

In mid-December 2020, at least 59 Republicans from states Trump lost falsely asserted and signed legal documents that they were “duly” chosen electors for Trump in the electoral college.

Former prosecutors say potential charges against Trump and his top lawyers have increased in part due to the powerful details that ex DoJ leaders testified about on 23 June involving how “Trump pushed to weaponize the justice department to facilitate the [fake electors] scheme,” McQuade said.

McQuade noted too that the deputy attorney general, Lisa Monaco, months ago confirmed “DoJ had received evidence from state AGs about alternate slates of electors and was investigating. It appears that DoJ is now issuing subpoenas regarding this episode … One could imagine each link leading to the next and possibly all the way to [Donald Trump](#). ”

On top of Trump’s involvement in the fake electors ploy, ex-deputy attorney general Donald Ayer, who served in the George HW Bush administration, told the Guardian that overall “the evidence is increasingly showing Trump’s culpability. Trump had extensive involvement in long conversations where he was personally working intently to overturn the election.”

Ayer’s point was bolstered by Hutchinson’s eye-popping testimony about Trump’s knowledge of, and indifference to, the large cache of dangerous weapons that were being carried by his supporters.

Paul Pelletier, a former acting chief of DoJ’s fraud section, said that for prosecutors the powerful testimony of Hutchinson “might be the final nail in the legal jeopardy coffin of Trump’s coterie of lawyers and enablers”.

“Hutchinson’s testimony has lifted the curtain on the false narrative that the violent Capitol confrontation was spontaneous,” he added.

The Democratic senator Sheldon Whitehouse sees a need for coordination of criminal investigations between the DoJ and others into the multiple efforts by Trump and key allies to block Biden’s win in Georgia, including Trump’s call to Georgia’s secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, which is under scrutiny by the Fulton county district attorney and a special grand jury.

“Phoney electors, the Clark memo, and Trump’s phone calls all converge on Georgia,” Whitehouse told the Guardian. “I hope and expect that the investigations are coordinated. The raid on Clark shows how serious this is, and false electors could make great witnesses.”

Looking ahead, former federal prosecutor Dennis Aftergut told the Guardian prosecutors appear to be amassing growing evidence to pursue charges against the three lawyers who were central actors in various parts of the fake electors scheme.

“Giuliani and Eastman seeking pardons is powerful evidence of ‘consciousness of guilt’,” Aftergut said.

In a potential legal twist, Aftergut pointed out that if charges are filed against one of the three, prosecutors will seek their help in going after the others. “The earliest cooperators generally get the best deals from prosecutors … any of them could potentially provide damaging evidence against the other two and Trump.”

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## Seascape: the state of our oceansDeep-sea mining

# One deep sea mine could send noise 500km across the ocean – report

Many deep-sea species – about which very little is known – are believed to use sound to navigate and communicate, as scientists call for limits on mining



A family of humpback whales in the National Marine Sanctuary off the coast of Maui, Hawaii. Cetaceans are highly sensitive to noise. Photograph: NOAA/Alamy

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Fri 8 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 07.52 EDT

Noise pollution from proposed deep-sea mining could radiate through the ocean for hundreds of kilometres, scientists predict, creating a “cylinder of sound” from the surface to the sea bed.

An analysis by scientists from Oceans Initiative in the US, the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) in Japan, Curtin University in Australia and the University of Hawaii, [published in the journal Science](#), has found that noise from one mine alone could travel 500km (more than 300 miles) in gentle weather conditions.

Seventeen contractors with exploration licences are looking at the possibility of mining the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), an area spanning 4.5m sq km between Mexico and Hawaii, which has abundant mineral-rich lumps known as [polymetallic nodules](#).

Scientists estimated the noise impact if each of these mining companies launched one mine in the CCZ. They found that noise levels in a radius of 4-

6km from each mine could exceed thresholds set by the US National Marine Fisheries Service, above which there are risks of behavioural impacts on marine mammals.

Marine mammal species, known to be sensitive to noise, are found throughout the CCZ, including endangered migratory baleen whales and deep-diving toothed whales. Many deep-sea species – about which very little is known – are believed to use sound and vibrations to navigate, communicate and detect predators in the absence of sunlight. Underwater noise is likely to “disrupt ecosystems”, said the authors of the paper, which was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

“The deep sea houses potentially millions of species that have yet to be identified, and processes there allow life on Earth to exist,” said Travis Washburn, a deep-sea ecologist at AIST. While much work remained to be done on the impact of noise, he said, there was still an opportunity to understand and mitigate them before they occurred.

The impact of noise pollution from deep-sea mining is “understudied and overlooked”, according to the report, whose findings have implications for mining regulations, drawn up by the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

The Pacific island of Nauru has said it plans to start deep-sea mining and invoked a UN rule two years ago that could force the ISA to complete the regulations enabling deep-sea mining by next July. The Science study follows widespread concerns from governments, corporations and environmental organisations that the science and governance of deep-sea mining remains inadequate for prospecting to go ahead.

Moving ahead without rigorous and transparent standards in place “would represent the start of a large-scale, uncontrolled experiment”, said the report. The authors urged the ISA to use the “precautionary principle” and, in the event of exploitation of the deep ocean, ensure only one or two mines are operating at a time until the impact of noise pollution is fully understood.



A beached whale on Mexico's Pacific coast. Many marine mammals, known to be sensitive to noise, are found throughout the main mining zone.  
Photograph: Guillermo Arias/AFP/Getty

Their analysis used noise levels produced by existing industrial processes, such as dredging, oil and gas exploration, as proxies for deep-sea mining. The findings suggest that if all 17 contractors were to operate one mine each, it would cause elevated noise levels over an area spanning 5.5m sq km – far larger than the European Union.

Craig Smith, co-author and professor emeritus of oceanography at the University of Hawaii, said: “If our modelling is correct, it could require rethinking of environmental regulations, including the number of mining operations allowed within the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.”

Companies are currently required to study the areas where mining is proposed and compare them with control areas within their sites where no mining will take place. These are known as “preservation reference areas”. Each contractor has up to 75,000 sq km.

“Our models suggest that nowhere in ... the whole 75,000 km sq is free from noise impact,” said Smith. “It might require changing the regulations, so that the control areas are further away.

“We have not been able to do the studies, but if mining operations went on simultaneously, it might have a big impact on a whole bunch of organisms.”

The authors, who were unable to find peer-reviewed data on the noise levels of the few deep-sea machines that have been tested, also called for transparency. “We urge contractors to release in a timely manner information on sound-source characteristics of all seabed-mining components,” they wrote in the report.

Their findings are likely to underestimate noise levels, the scientists suggest, because the machines they modelled operate in shallower water. They were also likely to have missed acoustic energy generated by heavier deep-sea machines, as well as support vessels’ pumps and other sound sources.

The ISA is tasked with protecting the marine environment from “serious harm” from sea-bed mining. While it has [recommendations](#) for assessing noise impacts, it has yet to define what constitutes serious harm, including unacceptable noise levels, according to the report.

In a statement, the ISA said: “The effective protection of the marine environment is guaranteed through requirements for environmental baseline studies and environmental impact assessments and monitoring, as set out in exploration and future exploitation regulations.”

Test mining and testing of mining components require an environmental impact assessment, of which noise measurement is included, it said, adding that testing will provide a “better understanding of the potential impact of noise” on the deep sea bed and deep sea biodiversity.

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## Ghislaine Maxwell

# Ghislaine Maxwell appeals against sex trafficking conviction

The British socialite was sentenced to 20 years in prison last month



Ghislaine Maxwell has officially appealed against her conviction and sentence for sex trafficking. Photograph: Jane Rosenberg/Reuters

*Press Association*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 13.57 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 14.17 EDT

The British socialite [Ghislaine Maxwell](#) has officially appealed against her conviction and sentence in the United States for sex trafficking.

The 60-year-old was found guilty by a jury of luring young girls to massage rooms for the disgraced financier [Jeffrey Epstein](#) to molest between 1994 and 2004.

She was sentenced to 20 years in prison at the federal court in the southern district of [New York](#) last month.

Court documents show Maxwell has paid \$505 (£420) to appeal against both her conviction and sentence.

Jurors heard prosecutors describe her as “dangerous” during her three-week trial last year, and were told details of how she helped entice vulnerable teenagers to Epstein’s various properties for him to sexually abuse.

The court docket shows her appeal has now been sent to the US court of appeals.

The crimes of Epstein, whose associates once included Bill Clinton and Prince Andrew, were first reported in 2005. He served prison time in Florida in 2008 on a state charge of procuring a minor for prostitution. After several lawsuits, he was arrested again in 2019 in a federal case in New York.

Epstein was found dead in his cell while awaiting similar charges to Maxwell in August 2019. Maxwell has been detained since she was arrested in July 2020.

During Maxwell’s trial, four women spoke in court to describe the traumatizing effects of Epstein’s and Maxwell’s abuse. Prosecutors said the pair conspired to set up a scheme to entice young individuals into sexual relationships with Epstein from 1994 to 2004 in New York, Florida, New Mexico and the US Virgin Islands.

In addition to sex trafficking, Maxwell was convicted of transporting a minor with the intent to engage in criminal sexual activity, and three related counts of conspiracy.

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## **‘Children were hunted by armed men’: Malians seek safety in Mauritania**



Refugees from Mali wait to be registered by the UNHCR at M’bera camp, Bassikounou, Mauritania

Thousands have exchanged fighting between government forces, jihadists and mercenaries linked to Russia, for the meagre security of border camps

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*Nick Roll in M'bera, Mauritania. Photographs by Guy Peterson/The Guardian*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 02.15 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 02.17 EDT

Leaving the village had become dangerous. Children sent on chores around Timbuktu, to collect firewood or lead animals to pasture, “were being hunted down by armed men”.

“When they attack a child who goes to look for wood … we women were afraid the men will come [into town] to attack us,” says a woman from M’bera refugee camp, who spoke anonymously for fear of reprisals.



A woman who fled violence in the Timbuktu region in the M'bera camp

Three months ago, she joined a wave of people leaving Mali after a rise in violence in the country's long-running war against jihadist groups aligned with al-Qaida and [Islamic State](#).

The woman isn't sure which armed group turned up in her village, but the men who appeared at the market were threatening. Afraid of both staying and leaving, the woman and her family took the first car they could out of the country.

At least 8,000 people and 800,000 head of livestock [have arrived](#) in M'bera camp, in the south-east of Mauritania, since December. About 7,000 new arrivals were registered in March and April alone – three times more than during the same period last year. More Malians live in villages outside the camp.

The camp has been taking in refugees since fighting broke out between the government and armed groups in 2012. It was home to more than 75,000 people in [2013](#). While that number declined to a [low of 41,000 in 2016](#), the population has steadily been increasing since 2018 and now stands at more than 78,000.



Malian refugees wait by a food distribution point in M'bera camp

“It’s not finished,” Mohamed Fall, a Mauritanian government camp registration official says of M’bera’s growing population. “If there’s instability, they come here.”

Mohamed Abdellahil Dah, an officer overseeing distribution of cash and food earlier this month, says camp staff are still working 4am to 6pm shifts to get aid to the growing population.

The rise in new arrivals is due in part to increased instability after the [deployment in Mali of mercenaries](#) from the Wagner Group, a private military company linked to Russia. The mercenaries allegedly [arrived last year](#) to support the Malian military as relations soured between Mali and France, which had deployed troops to assist the government since 2013. Paris is in the process of drawing down its troops in Mali.



The weekly sheep market in M'bera. Thousands of sheep and cattle were brought by refugees from Mali who tend them outside the camp, bringing them in to sell each week

After a decade of failures to quell the violence – and amid accusations of human [rights violations](#) against Malian military leaders and France – some Malians have welcomed the support from Russia. However, some refugees at M'bera say they fled because the security situation had deteriorated since Wagner's arrival.

“Before, the Malian army was afraid to go too far [into the countryside],” says one man from the Timbuktu region, who arrived in the camp a month ago. “But since Wagner has started coming with them, they have the courage to go further – reaching our villages.” He fled the country after a series of raids and attacks on markets in nearby towns, which he said were carried out by the Malian military and Wagner mercenaries.

Other new arrivals spoke of increased violence and extrajudicial killings since Wagner arrived. Rights researchers and conflict analysts say this tallies with the scale of brutality they have documented as being meted out by the military and mercenaries.



The weekly market at M'bera camp

Malian authorities have denied the presence of Wagner in the country, as well as any potential war crimes committed by the group and the army. Russian authorities have denied the existence of Wagner.

The woman from Timbuktu said she has found peace at the camp, but at the cost of leaving her homeland, perhaps for ever.

“I don’t have any intention of returning,” she says. In M’bera, she has found security, and for the first time in a long time has had a peaceful night’s sleep. “I don’t have Mali in my head.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jul/08/mali-refugee-camps-mauritania-wagner-conflict-drives-thousands-across-border>

## Highland Park shooting

# Highland Park suspect's father to be investigated for signing gun application

Robert Crimo Jr denies any responsibility for the attack, saying 'I had no – not an inkling, warning – that this was going to happen'



Mourners visit a memorial site after a mass shooting at a Fourth of July parade in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park, Illinois, on Wednesday.  
Photograph: Cheney Orr/Reuters

*Gloria Oladipo  
@gaoladipo*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 13.04 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 15.18 EDT

The father of the Highland Park gunman will be criminally investigated in connection with the Independence Day attack for signing an affidavit supporting his son's application for a gun license, police said.

Robert Crimo Jr, the father of Robert Crimo III – who is suspected of killing seven people at a Fourth of July parade in a suburb of [Chicago](#) – sponsored his son’s firearm owner application in 2019.

Speaking to media before the announcement of the investigation into him, Crimo Jr denied any responsibility for the attack. “I had no – not an inkling, warning – that this was going to happen,” [Crimo told ABC News](#).

In Illinois, individuals [must be at least 21 to independently obtain](#) a Firearm Owners Identification (FOID), which is generally needed to legally own a gun.

Anyone under 21 can apply for a FOID with the written consent of a parent or legal guardian who is not prohibited from having a FOID card themselves.

In doing so, they agree to be held liable for “any damages resulting from the minor applicant’s use of firearms or firearm ammunition”.

Illinois state police confirmed on Wednesday that Crimo signed off on his son’s application in December 2019 despite his son having two previous encounters with local police, including one in September 2019 where he allegedly threatened to “kill everybody” in his family.

During that visit, police confiscated a number of weapons in the alleged gunman’s possession, including 16 knives, a dagger and a sword.

The weapons were later returned to the family, however, after Crimo Jr claimed they were his, not his son’s, and were just being stored in his son’s room for safekeeping.

On Monday, Robert Crimo III [killed seven people and injured more than 40](#) during a Fourth of July parade in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park, Illinois. [Currently held on seven counts of first-degree murder](#), if convicted, the gunman faces a maximum penalty of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Police said on Thursday that he also [considered attacking another parade](#) in Madison, Wisconsin, but drove back to Illinois instead, where he was later arrested at the wheel of his mother's car.

Crino Jr has acknowledged that he signed off on the gun application for his son noting that his son was approved after going through background checks.

"They do background checks. Whatever that entails, I'm not exactly sure. And either you're approved or denied, and he was approved," Crino told ABC.

He said he did not regret sponsoring the firearm application, saying his son later obtained various firearms before the Independence Day attack himself.

"Do I regret that? No, not three years ago – signing a consent form to go through the process ... that's all it was," Crino said. "Had I purchased guns throughout the years and given them to him in my name, that's a different story. But he went through that whole process himself."

He added he was not worried about the legal consequences of signing off on his son's application, saying his son "has good morals" and was not raised in an abusive environment.

He also said he spoke to his son just a few hours before the massacre about a different mass shooting at a mall in Copenhagen, Denmark. Crino Jr said his son called the Copenhagen shooter "an idiot".

"He goes, 'Yeah, that guy is an idiot.' That's what he said," Crino Jr [told the New York Post](#).

The investigation into Crino Jr follows a recent case in Michigan in which the parents of a 15-year-old Michigan boy who killed four classmates and injured seven people in November 2021 [were charged with involuntary manslaughter](#) in connection to the massacre.

Jennifer and James Crumbley are accused of gross neglect for gifting the gun used in the mass shooting to their son, and for failing to intervene after their son exhibited signs of mental distress at school and at home.

The Highland Park massacre was just one of [13 mass shootings](#) (defined as events in which four or more people died) across the US over the Fourth of July weekend.

On Thursday, police in Virginia claimed to have [foiled yet another planned mass shooting](#) on Independence Day, after receiving an anonymous tip from a caller who said he overhead two men planning a shooting spree at the Dogwood Dell Amphitheater, a local entertainment venue in Richmond. The men have been detained with multiple assault rifles and more than 200 rounds of ammunition in their possession.

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## Headlines monday 4 july 2022

- [Chris Pincher Nobody believes Johnson did not know about claims, says Labour peer](#)
- [Live Starmer to say rejoining single market would ‘be recipe for more division’](#)
- [Labour Party says it would not unpick Brexit](#)
- [Copenhagen shooting Police say no indication of terrorism motive](#)

## Conservatives

# Nobody believes Johnson did not know about Pincher claims, says Labour peer

Jenny Chapman says PM must answer questions over what he knew when he appointed Tory deputy chief whip



Jenny Chapman: 'We want to know who knew what and when.' Photograph: Martin Godwin/The Guardian

*[Peter Walker](#) Political correspondent*

*[@peterwalker99](#)*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.10 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 09.31 EDT

Boris Johnson still has questions to answer over the appointment of Chris Pincher as Conservative deputy chief whip, Labour has said, as a minister said it was possible the prime minister knew of general concerns about the MP's behaviour.

Johnson [faces a backlash](#) for promoting Pincher despite what staffers say were warnings about sexual misconduct by him.

Pincher [resigned](#) from his whips role following allegations he groped two men in a London club, and he has also been [suspended as a Tory MP](#).

Jenny Chapman, a [Labour](#) peer and shadow Brexit minister, said it remained unclear what Johnson knew when he appointed Pincher, a party ally, to his role in February.

“We want to know who knew what and when and why those decisions were made the way they were,” she told BBC One’s Breakfast. “I don’t think anybody in Westminster believes that Boris Johnson did not know about the allegations about Mr Pincher.”

Speaking later to the same programme on behalf of the government, the children and families minister, Will Quince, said he was not going to “comment on speculation, gossip or rumour”.

He said: “But I will say is this: I anticipated this question and I spoke to No 10 both yesterday and this morning, and I asked firmly and clearly for an explanation as to what had happened, and I have been given a categorical assurance that the prime minister was not aware of any specific allegation or complaint made against the deputy chief whip, Chris Pincher.”

Questioned on his use of “specific”, a formulation used by other ministers, and whether this meant Johnson might have known about broader claims of Pincher’s alleged misdeeds, Quince said he could not rule this out.

“The answer to that is, I don’t know, and I haven’t asked those questions,” he said.

Asked why he had not done so, Quince said: “You’re talking about gossip and rumour. You have to have a specific allegation in order to take action.

“No professional organisation in the country takes action against someone based on generality or indeed rumour. That’s why it’s so important we create

an environment where people feel that they are able to come forward and make complaints of this nature.”

Dissatisfaction among Tory MPs with Johnson over yet another scandal comes at a perilous time for the PM, as his backbenchers prepare to [vote for a new executive for the party’s 1922 Committee](#).

Among other things, this sets the rules for challenges against Tory leaders, and an anti-Johnson contingent hopes to change this so he can face a challenge sooner. Under current rules, he is safe for a year from the last confidence vote, at the start of June.

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In an earlier interview with Sky News, Quince denied he had been sent out on to the morning broadcast round as more senior ministers had declined to defend Johnson over Pincher.

“I’m certainly not going to defend the former deputy chief whip. The allegations are incredibly serious and I’m appalled by them,” he said.

“But that isn’t the case today, because I was booked in four days ago, in fact five days ago I think it was, to talk about a very important childcare announcement.”

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[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

# Boris Johnson fails to give MPs commitment defence spending will rise to 2.5% of GDP by end of decade – as it happened

This live blog is now closed.

- [Summary of Keir Starmer's Brexit speech](#)
- [Summary of Anas Sarwar's speech on Scotland and devolution](#)

Updated 4 Jul 2022

[Andrew Sparrow](#)

Mon 4 Jul 2022 13.03 EDTFirst published on Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.20 EDT

Key events:

- [4 Jul 2022](#)  
[Afternoon summary](#)
- [4 Jul 2022](#)  
[Summary of Boris Johnson's statement to MPs about G7, Nato and Commonwealth summits](#)
- [4 Jul 2022](#)  
[Johnson claims 'not a single person' told him at summits that NI protocol bill in breach of international law](#)
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[Johnson fails to give MPs firm commitment that defence spending will rise to 2.5% of GDP by end of decade](#)
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[No 10 refuses to deny PM referred to disgraced MP as 'Pincher by name, pincher by nature' before making him deputy chief whip](#)
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[No 10 admits Johnson was aware of some allegations about Pincher before he was made deputy chief whip](#)
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[Nobody believes Johnson did not know about Pincher claims, says Labour peer](#)
- [4 Jul 2022](#)  
[Starmer to set out Labour's Brexit policy, saying rejoining single market would 'be recipe for more division'](#)



Boris Johnson leaves 10 Downing Street to make a statement in the House of Commons on the recent Nato, G7 and the Commonwealth meetings.  
Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

[Andrew Sparrow](#)

Mon 4 Jul 2022 13.03 EDTFirst published on Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.20 EDT

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## Live feed

From 4 Jul 2022

[11.12](#)

**Johnson fails to give MPs firm commitment that defence spending will rise to 2.5% of GDP by end of decade**

**Mark Harper**, the former Tory chief whip, asks Boris Johnson about the strength of his commitment to getting defence spending up to 2.5% of GDP

by the end of his decade. He points out that Johnson's comment on this topic this afternoon (see [3.41pm](#)) was more equivocal than [what he said last week](#).

Harper is right. This is what **Johnson** said a few minutes ago:

If you follow the trajectory of our programmes to modernise our armed forces, you will draw the logical conclusion that the UK will likely be spending 2.5% of GDP on defence by the end of this decade.

In response, **Johnson** said he was giving "a straightforward prediction based on what we are currently committed to spending". But he goes on to say that "much depends" on the size of GDP at the end of the decade.

This seems to back up Harper's suggestion that the commitment is not an absolute one.

*UPDATE:* **Harper** said:

When the prime minister's remarks at the Nato summit were reported last week, the 2.5% commitment to spend on defence appeared to be really quite solid. His remarks today are less so. So assuming it is a commitment, can I just ask him, is it a commitment? And secondly, how are we going to pay for it?

**Johnson** replied:

This is a straightforward protraction - prediction - based on what we are currently committed to spending under the Aukus programme and under the FCAS [Future Combat Air System] programme as well.

These are gigantic commitments. I think they're the right thing for the UK. They will take us up to that threshold. Of course much depends on the size of our GDP at the time. Much depends on the growth in the economy.

I think we're going to pay for it out of steady and sustained economic growth.

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Updated at 12.11 EDT

Key events:

- [4 Jul 2022](#)  
[Afternoon summary](#)
- [4 Jul 2022](#)  
[Summary of Boris Johnson's statement to MPs about G7, Nato and Commonwealth summits](#)
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[Johnson claims 'not a single person' told him at summits that NI protocol bill in breach of international law](#)
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[Starmer to set out Labour's Brexit policy, saying rejoining single market would 'be recipe for more division'](#)

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[4 Jul 2022](#)[13.00](#)

## Afternoon summary

- Boris Johnson was aware of some allegations relating to Chris Pincher when the MP for Tamworth was appointed deputy chief whip in February, Downing Street has admitted.
- Keir Starmer is to set out his vision for Brexit, promising to remove a series of trade and travel barriers while insisting that the debate on any UK return to the single market or customs union is definitively closed. For a full summary of Starmer's speech, see 11.20am. And for full details of Starmer's five-point plan for Brexit, see 11.34am. **Robert Peston**, ITV's political editor, has been interviewing Starmer about his plan and, in a blog, he says he came away unimpressed by the answers Starmer gave him. Here is an excerpt.

On whether it makes economic sense, I pointed out that many economists would say that the economic price to the UK of being outside the EU stems mainly from the increased costs of trading with the EU that were imposed when the UK left the EU's single market and customs union.

The heart of Starmer's plan, however, is that the UK must not rejoin the customs union and single market - largely because it would reopen all those emotional arguments about whether the UK should subordinate its product standards and service standards to those of the EU.

And when I asked Starmer whether a single distinguished economist had backed his plan, he deflected and did not answer ...

In a nutshell, Labour's new Brexit policy is at its heart similar to Johnson's. It's Starmer's recognition that the hard Brexiteers have definitively won the argument.

It is only more credible than Johnson's approach to Brexit if you believe the EU is more likely to give the UK what it wants and needs in the coming years of negotiations if Johnson's nuclear option of breaching the Brexit treaty and international law is neither wielded or held in reserve.

- A Labour government would scrap the House of Lords and create a “senate of the nations and regions” in its place, Anas Sarwar, the Scottish Labour leader, has announced. For a full summary of Sarwar's speech, see [1.25pm](#).
- The government should impose strict price controls on fuel and basic food items to help families struggling with soaring living costs, the former Labour shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, has said.
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Updated at 13.03 EDT

[4 Jul 2022 12.47](#)

**Keir Starmer** told Sky News that the appointment of Chris Pincher as deputy chief whip was yet another example of bad judgment by Boris Johnson. He said:

I have got no sympathy with a prime minister who repeatedly makes bad judgment calls.

We have been living with a version of this story for month after month after month. Bad judgment by a man who puts himself above everything. I don't have any sympathy for him.

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#### 4 Jul 2022 12.38

The Green party has claimed that millions of Britons are being let down because Labour's Brexit policy is now "indistinguishable" from the [Conservatives](#). In a statement on Keir Starmer's Brexit speech, **Adrian Ramsay**, the Green party's co-leader, said:

At a time when the economic devastation caused by Brexit is becoming increasingly clear, and as public opinion is turning against the decision to leave the European Union, it is quite perverse of Keir Starmer to stick his head in the sand and insist he will make Brexit work.

This is an idea driven only by Labour's self-interest rather than the best interests of the country.

While businesses are suffering and the permanent fall in the value of sterling means we are importing inflation, making the cost of living crisis worse, the fact that the two main parties are indistinguishable from one another on Brexit is a major failing of our political system and is letting millions of people down.

The Green party has already called for rejoining the customs union, which would ease the tensions in Northern Ireland caused by Johnson's hard Brexit, and for maintaining alignment with EU law and we utterly oppose government attempts to undermine environmental and social protections offered by EU legislation.

Starmer insists that, although Labour would not join the single market or the customs union, his approach to Brexit would be very different from Boris Johnson's. (See [11.20am.](#))

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#### 4 Jul 2022 12.25

# **Summary of Boris Johnson's statement to MPs about G7, Nato and Commonwealth summits**

**Boris Johnson's** Commons statement was a relatively low-key affair. The Chris Pincher scandal did not come up at all (MPs are only allowed to ask questions relevant to the subject of the statement), and most of the questions related to Ukraine, on which there is broad cross-party agreement. Here are the main points.

- **Johnson signalled that what he said last week about defence spending rising to 2.5% of GDP by the end of the decade does not amount to a firm commitment.** He said he expected defence spending to increase by that amount, but that growth figures could skew the calculations. (See [4.12pm](#).)
- **He claimed that “not a single person” at the summits he attended told him that the UK was in breach of international law because of the Northern Ireland protocol bill.** (See [4.24pm](#).)
- **He said the international community was looking at “alternative routes” to get grain out of Ukraine if the sea route continues to be blocked by Russia.** This could involve using the Danube river, he said. He told MPs:

What we are also looking at is the possibility of using the rivers, using the Danube in particular, to try to get ... using the railways to try to get the grain out in smaller quantities than we would be able to do with a giant maritime convoy through the Black Sea. So we are looking at all the possible options, including smaller packets of grain coming out that way.

- **He said Saudi Arabia needed to produce more oil.** He said:

There may be some question about how much more the Saudis could pump out at this particular moment, but there's no doubt we're going to need a lot more Opec Plus oil.

The UK has strong and productive relations with Saudi Arabia, we need to make sure the whole of the west does as well, and we make that point to the Saudis. But that is the way forward, they need to produce more oil, no question.

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Updated at 12.28 EDT

[4 Jul 2022 11.53](#)

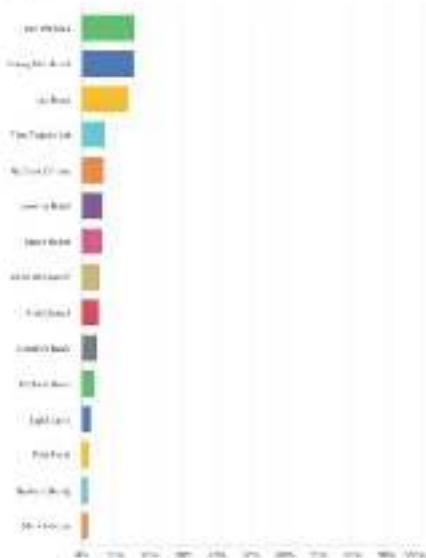
At the Institute for Government event earlier **Jeremy Hunt**, the Tory former foreign secretary, refused to say whether he would stand as a candidate in a future leadership contest. (See [1.55pm.](#)) At Westminster it is widely assumed that he will be a candidate, and that he is already planning his campaign.

But, according to a detailed survey of Conservative party members by the ConservativeHome website, Hunt is likely to lose if he does stand.

Yesterday the website published the results of [a survey of members on who should be the next party leader.](#) There was no clear winner. Ben Wallace, the defence secretary, was in first place, only very narrowly ahead of Penny Mordaunt, the Cabinet Office minister. Both were on 16%.

'Who should be the next leader of the Conservative Party after Boris Johnson?

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Survey of Tory members on who should be next party leader. Photograph: ConservativeHome

Today the website has been publishing the results of surveys looking at how members would vote given a choice of just two candidates. That is because, under Tory leadership election rules, MPs eliminate candidates until just two are left on the shortlist put to members.

The results suggest [Hunt would lose against all likely candidates](#).

Wallace is the candidate who emerges as strongest from this exercise. But, as the ConservativeHome editor Paul Goodman writes [in his summary](#), a surprisingly high number of respondents answered don't know to the various questions, suggesting a future contest is wide open.

However, the exercise does show that one nation candidates are unlikely to go far - and that there is potential for a candidate with a relatively low profile to cause an upset (eg Kemi Badenoch, the equalities minister, who ties with Rishi Sunak, the chancellor, [in this exercise](#).)

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Updated at 12.31 EDT

4 Jul 2022 11.24

## **Johnson claims 'not a single person' told him at summits that NI protocol bill in breach of international law**

In response to a question from the SNP's **Joanna Cherry** about the Northern Ireland protocol, **Johnson** said that "not a single person" at the summits told him that the UK was in breach of international law.

Labour's **Liam Byrne** says this is hard to believe.

Extraordinary that [@BorisJohnson](#) tells the [@HouseofCommons](#) that's noone raised his law breaking Trade War (NI Protocol) Bill with him.

Last week in Brussels we heard it non-stop from our neighbours & allies.

Here's the readout:<https://t.co/tMLB29cye9>

— Liam Byrne (@liambyrnemp) [July 4, 2022](#)

*UPDATE:* **Cherry** said:

I note [Johnson] indicated to the leader of the opposition that some of his interlocutors last week at least had raised these issues with him.

And all of us who have travelled abroad on parliamentary business recently will have had these issues raised with us.

So can he tell us exactly what concerns were raised with him over the last week about his government's disrespect for the international rule of law and human rights, and what he's going to do about it?

In reply, **Johnson** said:

I can tell the honourable lady ... not a single person said that the UK was in breach of international law. On the contrary, what they did say was that we were helping the world to stand up against breaches of international law.

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Updated at 12.06 EDT

[4 Jul 2022 11.12](#)

## **Johnson fails to give MPs firm commitment that defence spending will rise to 2.5% of GDP by end of decade**

**Mark Harper**, the former Tory chief whip, asks Boris Johnson about the strength of his commitment to getting defence spending up to 2.5% of GDP by the end of his decade. He points out that Johnson's comment on this topic this afternoon (see [3.41pm](#)) was more equivocal than [what he said last week](#).

Harper is right. This is what **Johnson** said a few minutes ago:

If you follow the trajectory of our programmes to modernise our armed forces, you will draw the logical conclusion that the UK will likely be spending 2.5% of GDP on defence by the end of this decade.

In response, **Johnson** said he was giving “a straightforward prediction based on what we are currently committed to spending”. But he goes on to say that “much depends” on the size of GDP at the end of the decade.

This seems to back up Harper's suggestion that the commitment is not an absolute one.

**UPDATE: Harper** said:

When the prime minister's remarks at the Nato summit were reported last week, the 2.5% commitment to spend on defence appeared to be really quite solid. His remarks today are less so. So assuming it is a commitment, can I just ask him, is it a commitment? And secondly, how are we going to pay for it?

**Johnson** replied:

This is a straightforward protraction - prediction - based on what we are currently committed to spending under the Aukus programme and under the FCAS [Future Combat Air System] programme as well.

These are gigantic commitments. I think they're the right thing for the UK. They will take us up to that threshold. Of course much depends on the size of our GDP at the time. Much depends on the growth in the economy.

I think we're going to pay for it out of steady and sustained economic growth.

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Updated at 12.11 EDT

[4 Jul 2022 10.57](#)

**Ian Blackford**, the SNP leader at Westminster, accuses Johnson of failing to develop a coherent plan to bring down energy prices.

He asks what the PM will do to allow grain exports from Ukraine.

And he asks why the PM thinks it will help for the UK to break international law over the Northern Ireland protocol.

**Johnson** says Blackford should look carefully at the [G7](#) communique. There were proposals covering items like a cap on energy prices, he says. And he

says more grain is being exported from Ukraine.

On the NI protocol, he says this was not generally an issue raised with him at the summits.

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#### 4 Jul 2022 10.53

**Tobias Ellwood** (Con), chair of the Commons defence committee, urges the PM to get a UN security council resolution to create a UN safe haven around Odesa, so that grain exports can resume.

**Johnson** says it may be necessary to seek a solution that does not depend on Russian consent.

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#### 4 Jul 2022 10.49

**Starmer** welcomes the expansion of Nato.

He asks if the UK can continue to meet its obligations to Nato in the light of the defence cuts.

Turning to the Commonwealth, he says he was worried by the lack of unity on display at the summit.

There have been serious signs of strain, he says. Many Commonwealth countries abstained from a vote on a United Nations resolution over the invasion of Ukraine. The summit should have been an opportunity to create unity, he says. But he says instead the PM engineered a row over the post of secretary general. And Johnson's failure to get the outcome he wanted showed his "embarrassing lack of influence".

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Updated at 11.06 EDT

4 Jul 2022 10.45

**Keir Starmer** is responding to Johnson. He starts with a joke, welcoming the PM back to the UK and adding:

They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder. So I wish you the best of luck in seeing if that works as a party management strategy.

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4 Jul 2022 10.44

**Johnson** says not every member of the Commonwealth takes the same view of the invasion of Ukraine as the UK does.

He goes on:

It was vital to have the opportunity to counter the myth and to point out that food prices are rising because Putin has blockaded one of the world's biggest food producers. And if large countries are free to destroy their neighbours, then no Commonwealth member, [whatever their] distance from Ukraine, would be genuinely secure.

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Updated at 11.03 EDT

4 Jul 2022 10.41

**Johnson** starts by talking about Ukraine.

He says the decision of Sweden and Finland to join Nato after the invasion of Ukraine has shown the folly of Vladimir Putin's strategy. Having Finland in the alliance doubles the length of the Nato border with Russia, he says.

He says the value of military, economic and humanitarian aid to Ukraine from Nato has been almost £4bn.

And he says if you follow the trajectory of UK military spending, it is set to rise to 2.5% of GDP by the end of this decade.

*UPDATE:* Johnson said:

If you follow the trajectory of our programmes to modernise our armed forces, you will draw the logical conclusion that the UK will likely be spending 2.5% of GDP on defence by the end of this decade.

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Updated at 11.13 EDT

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## Labour

# Labour to rule out Brexit reversal and unveil plan to resolve NI protocol issues

Keir Starmer to insist on no return to single market, saying it would be recipe for further division

- [Politics latest – live](#)



Keir Starmer: ‘The question on the ballot paper – leaving or remaining in the EU – is now in the past.’ Photograph: Peter Byrne/PA

*Peter Walker* Political correspondent  
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Keir Starmer is to set out his vision for Brexit, promising to remove a series of trade and travel barriers while insisting that the debate on any UK return to the single market or customs union is definitively closed.

In a speech on Monday evening, the [Labour](#) leader will argue that the big questions over EU membership are “in the past”, completing his own policy journey on the subject, having previously pushed for a second referendum and then the return of free movement.

The speech to the Centre for European Reform thinktank will argue that revisiting any [Brexit](#) fundamentals would simply cause new division, but that a series of smaller changes could be made, notably to ease trade between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

While the SNP said the plan meant Labour was now a party of “hard Brexit”, the Liberal Democrats said there was a need for a pragmatic approach to the subject, while pro-Europe Labour MPs praised Starmer’s approach.

In a further sign of the party’s new willingness to engage on a subject it has largely avoided under Starmer, the leader will set out a plan to try to reduce red tape over trade, professional qualifications and other issues, while ruling out any attempt to return to the single market or customs union.

“In 2016 the British people voted for change. The very narrow question that was on the ballot paper – leaving or remaining in the EU – is now in the past,” he is due to say, according to extracts released in advance by Labour. “But the hope that underpinned that vote, the desire for a better, fairer, more equitable future for our country, is no closer to being delivered.”

To argue about whether the UK should rejoin the EU would be to “look back over our shoulder” and would jeopardise public faith in politics, Starmer is to say. “So let me be very clear: with Labour, Britain will not go back into the EU. We will not be joining the single market. We will not be joining a customs union.”

Detailing a plan first [outlined by David Lammy](#), the shadow foreign secretary, Starmer said a key priority would be to improve trade between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, with a new veterinary agreement for agri-product trade, and a system for low-risk goods to enter Northern Ireland without checks.

Other proposals include a scheme for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications with the EU and a new policing and security arrangement with Brussels.

While stressing Labour did not want a return to freedom of movement, the plan also includes “flexible labour mobility arrangements” for people making short-term business trips between the UK and EU, and for musicians and artists embarking on tours.

In 2020 while campaigning to be Labour leader, [Starmer called for](#) the return of free movement, but a year later he [reversed his position](#).

Ben Bradshaw, the Exeter MP and former minister and a leading pro-EU voice in the Labour party, said Starmer’s approach was “absolutely right”.

He said: “There is no prospect of us rejoining the EU, single market or customs union any time soon, not least because [Boris] Johnson has so completely destroyed trust with our European neighbours that any such move would be on far worse terms than those we had before we left.

“There is, however, plenty that we can do to reduce the enormous damage being done to our economy and our relationship with our allies, by fixing the many problems with Johnson’s botched Brexit deal.”

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Sarah Olney, the Lib Dems’ trade spokesperson, said Johnson’s deal, which Labour voted for, had done significant damage, and there was a need for “a pragmatic approach that works for the UK”.

Ian Blackford, the SNP’s Westminster leader, said: “Keir Starmer has strengthened the case for independence by embracing the Tories’ hard Brexit.”

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## Denmark

# Copenhagen shooting: police say no indication of terrorism motive

Gunman acted alone and appears to have selected his victims at random, officials in Denmark say



The Field's shopping centre in the Danish capital remained closed on Monday after Sunday's shooting. Photograph: Mads Claus Rasmussen/AP

*[Kate Connolly](#)*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 07.44 EDTFirst published on Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.23 EDT

A [shooting at a Copenhagen shopping centre](#) in which three people were killed and four others seriously wounded was not terror-related, Danish police have said.

Søren Thomassen, Copenhagen's chief police inspector, said the gunman, a 22-year-old Danish man who confessed to the shooting on Sunday night, had

apparently picked his victims at random when he opened fire at the Field's shopping centre on Sunday afternoon.

The dead included a boy and a girl, both aged 17, and a 47-year-old Russian man who lived in [Denmark](#).

At least four people were injured in the attack, including a 19-year-old and a 40-year-old from Denmark, as well as a 50-year-old and a 16-year-old, from Sweden.

Another 20 people were reportedly injured as they tried to flee the scene.

The head doctor of Copenhagen's university clinic Rigshospitalet, Casper Claudius, said on Monday that three of the injured were out of danger but remained in a critical condition.

On Monday, the gunman was remanded in custody initially for 24 days. A judge ordered his committal to a psychiatric unit for medical examination.

Thomassen said the criminal investigation into the shootings had so far produced "no evidence" that the gunman, who has yet to be identified but was described by police as an "ethnic Dane", had been motivated by terrorism.

Thomassen would not be drawn on reports suggesting there may have been a racist motive. Witness accounts and film shot by an onlooker indicated he had fired randomly on his victims and had been acting alone. "But until we're absolutely certain that this hypothesis is correct we will carry out extensive investigations and maintain a massive operative presence in Copenhagen until we can be certain that he was acting alone," the police chief added.

The man was arrested by police in the shopping centre, and was found to be in possession of a rifle and a knife. He had also had access to a pistol, but had no legal right to possess the weapon, Thomassen said.

[Map](#)

He is known to have had treatment for a psychiatric condition and was known to police but “not very well known”, Thomassen added.

Scenes from the shooting, in the district of Ørestad in the south of Copenhagen, which is located between the city centre and the airport, showed people in panic as they tried to flee the shooting. Police were called to the scene at about 5.35pm local time and managed to overpower the gunman about 13 minutes later.

Pictures in Danish media showed the man, dressed in a sleeveless black vest, his head bowed, being led away by police.

Thomassen said investigators had worked through the night. During questioning, the man had confessed to the shooting, and was expected to be brought before a judge on Monday and charged with murder.

There were unconfirmed reports in the Danish daily newspaper Ekstra Bladet that the man was a member of a rifle club, which had enabled him to access weapons and ammunition. Police refused to comment on the reports.

The paper also reported that the man had posted several videos on YouTube showing him posing with a weapon, sometimes holding it to his head. The last clips carried the titles “Feeling sad”, “Killer music”, “Last Thing to Listen to”, and “The Meme”. He also made reference to an upcoming video entitled “Quetiapine doesn’t work” – Quetiapine is a strong antipsychotic medication used to treat depressive disorders. Thomassen would not comment on the videos but confirmed they were part of the police investigation.

Mahdi al-Wazni, who filmed the attacks on his mobile phone, told the Danish daily Jyllands-Posten, that he had spotted the gunman after he had gone searching for his two-year-old daughter. The film shows the man shooting in front of shops.

Wazni said: “He was wearing hunting gear: three-quarter length trousers and a black vest. He was wearing a reversed cap. He could see that I was filming him.” He said the man had laughed and said the shots were not real. “Perhaps he wanted to trick me to go a bit closer to him,” Wazni added. “He

was shooting and smashing panes of glass. I think he shot about five to six times, but I didn't see him hitting anyone."

Emilie Jeppesen, 20, another witness, told Jyllands-Posten how she and a friend in a restaurant had heard gunshots. "We had no idea what had happened. Suddenly chaos broke out everywhere," she said.

Her friend, Astrid Kofoed Jørgensen, said: "Everyone in the restaurant was sent into the kitchen, and from there we could hear three or four shots."

One witness told the Danish broadcaster DR, that he had been with his family in a clothes shop when he heard "three, four bangs ... really loud bangs. It sounded like the shots had been fired right next to the shop."

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A female witness told the channel, TV 2: "I was standing with my girlfriend on the uppermost floor and could see how people were suddenly going towards the exit. Then we heard a bang and we also ran out."

The shooting took place days after an [attack on a gay bar in Oslo, Norway](#), in which two people were killed and 21 others were injured that Norway's secret service identified as an Islamist terror attack.

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## 2022.07.04 - Spotlight

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- A new start after 60 ‘I lost my ability to speak – and became a film-maker’
- ‘Eventually it will just be a barcode, won’t it?’ Why Britain’s new stamps are causing outrage and upset
- The Pride I’ll never forget Surrounded by Black queer people dancing and kissing, I felt 100% myself
- The Pride I’ll never forget ‘It felt as though an orgy could erupt at any moment’

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Interview

## **‘I will never be against the second amendment’: Run the Jewels’ Killer Mike on rap, racism and gun control**

[Ammar Kalia](#)



Killer Mike (Michael Render) in Atlanta, Georgia. Photograph: Rita Harper/The Guardian

After almost a decade of working alongside El-P, the rapper is releasing a solo single. He talks about the chaos and loss that inspired it, his friendship with Bernie Sanders and the ‘racist’ twisting of lyrics



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‘I definitely lead a non-politician life; I smoke weed and I go to strip clubs with my wife,’ the rapper Killer Mike says with a laugh. ‘But I care about people and I have a duty to my community. I am not an angry old man – I am a participator.’ As if to demonstrate at least some of that, he lights a blunt.

As a musician and an activist, Killer Mike has long balanced pleasure and responsibility. Now 47, he first came to the world’s attention in the early 2000s, when he featured on several tracks with the Atlanta hip-hop duo [Outkast](#) before launching a solo career.

Since 2013, he has been half of [Run the Jewels](#) alongside the New York rapper El-P. Their music meanders between hedonism and social exposition,

while their live shows are as notorious for their ecstatic mosh pits as they are for their lyrical reflections on police brutality, racism and social injustice.

Michael Render, as he is legally known, is now releasing his first solo material in a decade, with the track Run testing the waters for a possible larger solo project. Over a fanfare of horns and a clattering mid-tempo beat, he entreats his Black listeners to persist amid the chaos. “All I know is keep going / you gotta run,” he raps, playing with the meanings of running from danger, running for office or simply moving forwards.

“I say that ‘the race for freedom ain’t won / you gotta run,’” he tells me, “because as Black people in America we have to be resilient. We have overcome and we shall continue to do so.”



Killer Mike during Run the Jewels' set at Coachella earlier this year.  
Photograph: Amy Harris/Invision/AP

On a video call from his home in Atlanta, Georgia, Render is by turns eloquent and mischievous as he talks about his history of political activism. He has been close to the leftwing senator Bernie Sanders ever since they shared a meal at the Atlanta soul food restaurant Busy Bee Cafe in 2015, and he backed Sanders’ presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020. Their unlikely friendship has spawned [hundreds of memes](#), with Sanders, for example,

shaping his hands into the Run the Jewels symbol of a gun pointed at a closed fist, or asking Render if he should call him “Mike or Killer Mike?”. “It was just a conversation between two angry radical guys, one 74 and white, one 40 and Black, finding common ground,” [Render has said](#) of that first encounter.

His emotive speeches at Sanders rallies are almost as famous as his music. Addressing the roaring crowd in North Carolina in 2019, he said: “When you go to that [voting] booth next year, I need you to carry the memory of this room. Black, white, straight, gay, male, female, we are together. We are united. We will not wait four more years.”

His impassioned words in the wake of police killings in the US have also gone viral. In 2015, during a show in Ferguson, Missouri, [a fan-filmed video](#) showed Render raging at the grand jury who had acquitted the officer who had killed 18-year-old Michael Brown, then pleading for the safety of his four children, who range in age from 15 to 27. In the riots that followed George Floyd’s murder in 2020, [he told the public](#) to fortify their homes and to “plot, plan, strategise, mobilise and organise” to dismantle the systemic structures of racism. “It is time to beat up prosecutors you don’t like at the voting booth,” he said. “It is time to hold mayoral offices accountable, and chiefs and deputy chiefs.”

It must be exhausting having to publicly advocate for basic rights year after year, I tell him. “It’s a continuation of the work,” he says calmly. “My grandmother did the work of taking care of our neighbours without publicity, and my grandfather did, too – he would go fishing and always give half of his catch to other people, for instance. I don’t see it as making me better. I don’t see it as being driven by celebrity guilt either. I was told by my elders to make sure that the people who are suffering in my community are relieved by me. These are the principles that I operate with.”

He believes that Sanders shares his desire for social justice. “I will always speak to him because I believe he gives a fuck beyond his own personal chequebook. I honestly believe he is a continuation of great thinkers like [former slave and abolitionist] Frederick Douglass and [trade unionist] Eugene V Debs – a continuation of people who fought their ass off for the betterment of the salt-of-the-earth, everyday American.

“Part of my responsibility is to make sure that people who are doing the work on a weekly and daily basis have a platform to push an agenda that’s helpful. No matter if you’re a Black person working a blue-collar job, or if you’re one of the educated elite bourgeoisie, you have a responsibility to push the line.”



Killer Mike speaking to a crowd in South Carolina in 2020 at a Bernie Sanders rally. Photograph: Matt Rourke/AP

Sometimes, however, he pushes the line in a direction that many will find objectionable. In 2018, during nationwide protests after the deadliest high school shooting in US history, he gave an interview to the National Rifle Association supporting the second amendment right to bear arms. “You’re a lackey of the progressive movement,” he told leftwingers in favour of gun control, “because you’ve never disagreed with the people who tell you what to do.” [He later apologised](#) for the interview’s timing, but his stance on gun ownership remains unchanged. “I will never be against the second amendment,” he says. “There’s no way that someone who represents a community that are only 60-odd years out of an apartheid should be willing to give a weapon back to the government, as the police choke you to death in the street and people just watch and film.”

The son of a policeman and a florist, Render is not without sympathy for the police. He has said [his father told him and his five sisters not to follow in his footsteps](#) because the job was “too dangerous”. Still, Render believes police reform is necessary and possible. “I have not seen a will to get rid of police as much as I’ve seen a want for police to be from the communities they’re policing and to be fair, rather than abusers of power,” he says. “We should be supporting the Police Athletic Leagues that deal with our young boys in particular before any trouble happens, more than we should be giving the police more rifles and bulletproof vests. The connection with the community is key.”

These leagues are local organisations founded by precincts to mentor young people and hopefully keep them off the streets. Render wasn’t a member as he grew up in the majority-Black Adamsville neighbourhood of Atlanta, but he managed to find his own community connections. “All my heroes and villains were based on character, not colour, as everyone looked like me in my home town,” he says. “I grew up with a real sense of confidence that I could do well, that even if there’s a few more speed bumps for me, I cannot and will not be denied what’s due to me.”

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Render studied at the prestigious, historically Black Morehouse college before he was spotted rapping by the Outkast member Big Boi. He offered Render a collaboration on their 2000 track Snappin’ & Trappin’, launching his career and leading him to drop out of college after just one year. “Even though I won a Grammy, my grandma still complained that I didn’t bring her a degree,” Render says. “Dropping out is one of my biggest regrets, but I’ve been given everything I’ve ever wanted in terms of being able to have a rap career, so I need to make it better for the people around me and the people that come after me.”

“Making things better” includes fighting [the use of rap in criminal trials](#), as US prosecutors have used lyrics by artists such as 6ix9ine, Drakeo the Ruler and Tay-K to try to show that defendants had violent interests or gang affiliations. Alongside Jay-Z and Kelly Rowland, Render recently supported the New York Senate [rap music on trial bill](#), which aims to ban the practice.

Having written [an op-ed for the Vox](#) website in 2015 about the police’s “well-documented history of antagonism towards rappers”, Render is now watching one of the artists featured on Run, Young Thug, fight racketeering charges alongside 27 others. Prosecutors claim that Young Thug’s rap collective, YSL, is a criminal gang with ties to the national Bloods organisation, and [are attempting to use Thug’s lyrics and social media posts against him](#). “I can’t comment on the charges,” Render says, “but Thug is a victim of a policy being used in a racist way and all of our first amendment rights could be endangered if they attempt to use his words against him. Let Black art live, otherwise we’re going to see a proliferation of rappers no matter what sex, age or ethnicity dragged into the court.”



Killer Mike introducing Bernie Sanders at the annual Oyster Roast and Fish Fry in Orangeburg, South Carolina, in 2016. Photograph: Brian Snyder/Reuters

As well as Young Thug, the extended version of Run contains an opening monologue from the comic Dave Chappelle. In his introduction, he compares the Black experience to the Normandy landings. “Ain’t no rhyme or reason why it’s not you on the ground, but as long as it’s not, you have to keep moving,” Chappelle says. “You’re just as heroic as those people who stormed the beach.”

“Chaos abounds around you; the people that you know and love are often taken from you or left forever scarred,” Render agrees. “It creates bonds and camaraderie that last your entire life.” He seems untroubled by the furore over Chappelle’s jokes about transgender people, which led to Netflix employees [walking out in protest](#) at the company hosting his standup specials. For Render, freedom of expression trumps everything. “If comedians are not allowed to talk shit about everybody, freedom of speech is in trouble,” he says. “When they cannot express themselves, there’s going to be a real problem with everyone else being able to do so as well.”

The last time Render spoke to the Guardian, just after the killing of George Floyd, [he declared that Black people might feel that “nobody gives a shit”](#) about them. Two years on, after the global protests for Black Lives Matter, does he feel more optimistic? “Not much has changed for Black people since 1619,” he says – the year that the first enslaved Africans arrived in North America. What progress there is has come “only because we push to get the rights and freedoms we deserve, or that have already been promised to us in the Bill of Rights or the United States constitution. If I work hard in making sure fairness and equity are given to my community and the communities that are like mine, only then can things get better. But the work doesn’t stop.”

Might he one day go into politics full-time, instead of just supporting others? He [briefly ran](#) as an independent candidate in the 2015 elections for Georgia’s 55th district and says Chappelle recently tried to convince him to run for state governor.

“I politely declined,” he adds. Later, maybe? “I will run for office the day that I’m unbribable. When I get rich for real, when no amount of money can corrupt me, maybe.”

*Killer Mike’s new solo single and video, Run, is out on 4 July*

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[A new start after 60](#)[Life and style](#)

## A new start after 60: ‘I lost my ability to speak – and became a film-maker’



‘Now I’m thinking: what can I do next?’ ... Jonathan Hirons, in Seaton, Devon. Photograph: Jim Wileman/The Guardian

After bleeding in his brain left him struggling with words and numbers, Jonathan Hirons had to give up his job in project management. As he

recovered, he decided the world needed to know more about aphasia



[Emine Saner](#)

[@eminesaner](#)

Mon 4 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT

It was over lunch with a colleague that Jonathan Hirons began to feel a bit strange. “I couldn’t quite catch what was going on,” he says, “and my words started to go.” Back in the office where he was having meetings, another colleague showed him a document Hirons had worked on and asked him to change something in it. “And I couldn’t.”

He doesn’t remember much of the rest of that day in London in January 2019. “I was just confused; I didn’t know what was going on,” he says. An ambulance was called and he was taken to University College hospital, where doctors suspected a stroke. A CT scan that afternoon, and an MRI the following day, confirmed a blood vessel had burst in his brain. “The bleed was quite short, which was lucky,” says Hirons. He wasn’t left with any physical problems, but he did have aphasia – a loss of language.

The experience has inspired the 72-year-old to make a documentary about the condition, sparking a new direction as a film-maker after years of

working in business and project management. [On the Tip of My Tongue](#) is almost complete, with a rough cut about to be produced, and Hirons has found the process surprisingly satisfying. “Even the boring bits are enjoyable. So now I’m thinking: what can I do next?”

Hirons’ language has returned, with help. When we speak over Zoom, he doesn’t have any noticeable speech problems, except when he occasionally forgets a word, smiles and says he’ll remember it tomorrow. In hospital, though, he couldn’t speak at all beyond answering simply “yes” or “no” to doctors, and to his wife, who had come up from their home near Lyme Regis in Dorset. His speech started to recover within a few days – but while he could read in his head, he discovered he could not read aloud, the words getting jumbled as he tried to speak them. Numbers were, and still are, a problem. “I couldn’t work my phone,” he says.

Was it frightening? He ponders the question as if it has never occurred to him. Not frightening, exactly, he says, but “I was wondering: what’s going to happen?” He worried about the project he knew he wouldn’t be able to finish, then had the realisation that he would probably never return to work.

I have to think about what’s being said, or what I have to say, and sometimes it doesn’t come out

Back home after five days in hospital, while waiting for an appointment with a speech therapist, he began to practise reading and speaking with the help of children’s flash cards his wife had bought. “She helped me get going,” he says. Once the formal therapy started, with exercises to recognise and read words, his language improved. It wasn’t like learning to read again; it was more that it started to come back gradually. “Certain things, I would say: ‘Oh yeah, I remember that.’”

After about five months, he was able to have a decent conversation, though “it probably took about a year to get really sorted out”. Now, he says: “I’m OK one to one, but in a crowd I still can’t keep up like before. I have to think about what’s being said, or what I have to say, and sometimes it doesn’t come out.” Some days his speech fails. “When I’m tired, that is the

worst time and I get jumbled up, or I forget words.” On other days, it’s not a problem. “So it’s not even consistent.”

He can write fairly easily again, but reading aloud is still a struggle, as is giving a talk or presentation – something he used to enjoy. “It’s strange because in my head, I know what’s going on; it’s when it comes out that it goes wrong.”

He knows, though, that his aphasia could have been so much worse. For his film, he has interviewed two young people – one had a stroke, the other a head injury – who need support and struggle with language far more than he has done. At the support group in Exeter that he started going to, he met people who couldn’t speak, and those who were isolated by their condition. “I’m lucky that my wife’s very supportive, as are people around me, but some people go to this group, which is once a week, and the rest of the time they are on their own.” Unsurprisingly, he knows people who have suffered depression because of aphasia.

The idea for the film came out of the group. The woman who organised it, he says, “was telling me about how hard it is to get people to understand what the problem is, and therefore there’s no help. I thought: this is ridiculous – there are about 350,000 people who have this in [the UK], more than have Parkinson’s, yet there seems to be no kind of national association. I felt as if maybe the only thing I could do was to bring this to the forefront.”

His project management skills from his old job came in useful, but asked if he misses it, he says he isn’t someone who dwells on the past. “I tend to live in the moment. My take on it is that you get things thrown at you and you find how to do them better, do them differently.” He repeats that compared with some people who have aphasia, he hasn’t hugely suffered. “There is a grief phase, I suppose. That loss does stick with you for a while, and then I guess I got over it, and you live with what you’ve got.”

- [Tell us: has your life taken a new direction after the age of 60?](#)
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## **‘Eventually it will just be a barcode, won’t it?’ Why Britain’s new stamps are causing outrage and upset**



A fake perforation provides ‘a dignity screen between code and Queen’ ... A second class letter with the new barcode stamp, introduced in February. Photograph: Thomas Faull/Alamy

Royal Mail's stamps are finally entering the digital world, with printed codes that can be used to track letters or linked to videos. Collectors, traditionalists and royalists are not amused

[Simon Usborne](#)

Mon 4 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 03.39 EDT

Dinah Johnson sounds a little anxious when I suggest that she try to subvert the will of Royal Mail. As the founder of the [Handwritten Letter Appreciation Society](#), Johnson is a huge fan of the postal service. Since the society's launch in 2017, its members – now more than 700 of them – have romanticised the rituals of stamp sticking and envelope sealing. But all is not well in this postal paradise and Johnson fears that the British stamp, a symbol as potent as any national flag, is under threat.

In February, [Royal Mail](#) introduced a new design for its standard stamps, which have changed so little since the launch of the Penny Black in 1840 that they are officially known as “definitives”. The new stamps – “plum purple” for first class, “holly green” for second – still feature the same regal profile introduced more than 50 years ago. But what is most bothering purists – and leading Johnson to the brink of direct action – is the addition next to the Queen of a digital barcode.

The rectangular codes – which look like QR codes but are apparently not QR codes, which are a particular, and trademarked, kind of code – are designed to stop counterfeiting and to enable the tracking of all letters to improve efficiency. Correspondents will soon be able to share photo or video messages by linking digital content to their coded stamps. Recipients will view it via the Royal Mail app (currently the codes link to a short film featuring Shaun the Sheep and a plasticine postwoman).



The first adhesive postage stamp ... the Penny Black, launched in 1840.  
Photograph: PA

From 1 February 2023, only the new stamps will be accepted. Any old stamps must be used before then or traded in. Christmas and other themed special stamps will remain valid indefinitely. Swapping definitives, which can still be done after the deadline, is free but will involve downloading and printing a form, or requesting one by phone or letter, and posting it to Royal Mail along with the old stamps.

Royal Mail describes the change as a postal “reinvention” that connects stamps to the digital world for a new generation. “But the whole point of my society was to give us a break from having to be engaged with digital content,” says Johnson, 49, from her home in Swanage in Dorset. She is also reminded of the way the Prince of Wales once described a National Gallery extension as “[a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend](#)” – except this time the “elegant friend” is the Queen.

When letters started arriving bearing the carbuncle codes, Johnson asked a printer friend to make her some stickers to cover them so that only the section of stamp featuring the Queen’s head could be seen. She now adds the stickers, which bear an image of a red postbox, to the code before she files letters away in their envelopes. “This is my mini private protest,” she says.

But, until I suggest it, Johnson has not yet dared deface an outgoing coded stamp. “It would be quite an act of defiance, wouldn’t it?” she says. I promise to visit her in prison. “He made me do it!” she says, practising her defence. Eventually she agrees. In perhaps the lowest-stakes act of sedition ever committed, Johnson writes me a letter, covers the code with one of her protest stickers and pops it into her local postbox. “I hope it finds you!” she says in a text.

I can’t remember the last time I needed a stamp. I’m still working through the leftovers from the wedding invitations I sent out seven years ago. I don’t do Christmas cards, kidding myself that my preference for digital communication is about saving trees rather than rank indolence. Yet I’m aware that stamps inspire strong feelings.

Since the launch of the Penny Black as the world’s first adhesive postage stamp, the sticky squares have become more than a simple proof of purchase: they are collectibles, artists’ canvases, tools of propaganda and cultural icons.



Arnold Machin, who designed the Queen’s head that adorns current British stamps, pictured in 1997. Photograph: Neil Munns/PA

Before 1840, postage was typically charged to the recipient, who could refuse to pay. Costs were high and complicated, and fraud was rife. For example, MPs and peers could post items for nothing. It was a widely abused privilege – in the 1830s, politicians were writing an improbable 7m letters a year.

Rowland Hill, a schoolmaster turned social reformer, had no official standing. But he took it upon himself to propose radical change. In a research paper he posted to the government, he proposed a pre-paid stamp with the flat cost of a penny.

In the first year of the Penny Black, the number of letters sent more than doubled – then doubled again by 1850. Letter writing stopped being an elite pursuit and the postal service became profitable. Dozens of countries swiftly copied Hill's example. [Stamps](#) were as significant an innovation in communication as telephones or web-connected home computers would be.

The first stamp was also a triumph of design. There was no need to include a country name – there were no stamps anywhere else, after all. Instead, a portrait of Queen Victoria in profile was added. Monarchs and colours have come and gone, and perforations and self-adhesion arrived. But the definitives have changed little in 180 years. The current stamps, originally designed by the artist Arnold Machin, have used the same sculpted profile of Queen Elizabeth II for the past 55 years.

Yet I am not alone in barely using them; the pandemic has only hastened a postal freefall, from a peak of just over 20bn letters sent via Royal Mail in 2005 (in the same year, the proportion of UK households with the internet [tipped](#) over 50%), to fewer than 8bn in 2020-21. These figures include commercial post; the smaller number of cards and letters bearing sticky stamps is likely to be in steeper decline.



Sir Rowland Hill, the schoolmaster who proposed the idea of the pre-paid stamp, was commemorated with a special set of stamps in 1995. Photograph: Kay Roxby/Alamy

“They’re trying to attract the younger generation by throwing in a QR code and a video of Shaun the Sheep,” says Andrew Jackson, 58, a collector and trader who runs Tagula Blue Stamps. Like Jackson, Johnson wonders if the change signals the beginning of the end for stamps. “Eventually it will just be the barcode, won’t it?” she says.

David Gold, the head of public affairs and policy at Royal Mail Group, knew the coded stamps would create a stir. “Collectors, traditionalists and royalists feel a sense of ownership over stamps,” he says. It’s why the new stamps, the designs for which had to be approved by Buckingham Palace, include a fake perforation as a kind of dignity screen between code and Queen (who is also, notably, facing the other way).

Gold says the codes mean Royal Mail can track all letters, allowing it to better monitor, predict and respond to regional changes in demand, for example. He is also confident the unique codes will stop the fraudulent washing of postmark ink and resale of used stamps – a crime that he claims costs Royal Mail “tens of millions” of pounds a year.

Royal Mail says the codes contain only the identity of that stamp, and cannot include personal data. Gold also rejects the notion that the stamp is endangered. "Clearly the direction of travel is a reduction in the number of letters, but I think people are still fascinated and motivated by stamps," he says.

Gold points to the popularity of commemorative or special stamps. Such stamps were rare before the early 1960s. The government invited artists to submit designs for stamps to mark National Productivity Year in 1962, a scheme endorsed by employers' federations and trade unions. Three designs by David Gentleman made it into circulation. In 1964, the renowned artist suggested in a letter to Tony Benn, the new postmaster general, that stamps could continue to benefit from more interesting designs.

Benn, who was a keen republican, shared this view, but in a push for more space to play with on such a tiny canvas, the men soon learned the perils of messing about with stamp design. "I suggested that the Queen's head could be done without, which naturally never came about," says Gentleman, who is now 92.



The new first and second class stamps. Photograph: Arch White/Alamy Live News.

Ultimately it was the Queen who forbade the removal of her own head, which infuriated Benn. Gentleman came up with a compromise: a simpler portrait of an even younger, uncrowned Queen by the artist Mary Gillick would be used. The much smaller silhouette, which is still seen on special stamps, left more space for new designs.

Over almost 40 years, Gentleman, who was also renowned for his watercolours and engravings, designed more than 100 stamps. In February 2022, Royal Mail reissued six of them to commemorate its most prolific designer. They included an image of an oak tree, and a tribute to Thomas Hepburn, a 19th-century coal miner and social reformer.

Royal Mail now produces more than a dozen sets of special stamps a year in an attempt to create demand among collectors. This year they include pictures of cats, birds, the Rolling Stones and heroes of the Covid pandemic drawn by children.

Many state-owned postal services are much bolder. In Ukraine in April, queues formed outside post offices when Ukrposhta issued 1m stamps to commemorate the defiance of the soldier who refused to surrender an island soon after the Russian invasion. In the image, the solider is flipping the bird at the Moskva warship, which was later sunk, in a visual representation of the message he had radioed to the ship: “Russian warship, go fuck yourself.”



Scanning the barcode on new stamps connects to an app with a video of Shaun the Sheep. Photograph: The Post Office

But the potential for stamps to punch above their weight is doing little to boost demand. Gentleman says he rarely uses more than a pack or two at Christmas, preferring email for everyday correspondence. He's not sure about the aesthetic appeal of the coded stamps. "I find it difficult to enthuse over them," he says.

Some critics have been blunter. "Arnold Machin's profile of the Queen is one of the simplest, purest compositions in the world," tweeted Samuel West, actor and stamp collector, in March, addressing his next sentence to Royal Mail: "You took one of the great iconic stamp designs, and you fucked it up." The writer and broadcaster Victoria Coren Mitchell simply said: "THIS IS AWFUL!"

The implications were more practical for some. Many canny letter writers buy stamps in bulk to avoid being hit by future price rises. Royal Mail's swap scheme is designed so that nobody loses out, but I gather many collectors find themselves in a bind. Old definitives might have a higher value because they are rare. But some of that value comes also because the stamps could theoretically be used. Swap them and you'd throw away all of that value. Keep them and you'd lose much of it anyway. "A lot of value is

just going to be lost overnight," says Gerard McCulloch, an Australian collector better known as [the Punk Philatelist](#).

Meanwhile groups representing older people say that, as well as creating inconvenience, the change risks marginalising those who still rely on "snail mail". These users are also affected most by price rises (first-class stamps went up by 10p to 95p in April). "It will be chicken and egg," says Dennis Reed from the campaign group Silver Voices. "Less people will send letters so Royal Mail will say, 'We won't have as many collections or post boxes' – and even fewer people will send letters."

Royal Mail, which [announced plans to lay off 700 managers in January](#), insists it remains committed to serving everyone, and making stamp swapping as easy as possible. "I have sympathy with all our customers who feel this is something they don't understand or see a need for, but I genuinely believe that the improvements in efficiency and security will benefit all our users," Gold says.



The letter Dinah Johnson sent to Simon Usborne, with the barcode covered.  
Photograph: Simon Usborne

A couple of days after Johnson's text, an envelope lands on my mat. I get that novel thrill that now greets the arrival of any handwritten

correspondence. The stamp is postmarked as normal – we have succeeded. “I feel very led astray by you,” Johnson writes, adding a hand-drawn smiley face.

Gold is amused to hear about our plot, and says that, while he had not considered such a scenario, he can see no issue with code concealment before the 2023 deadline. “But going forwards the barcode will be an essential part of the stamp,” he adds.

A few days earlier, Johnson, who is well aware that there are bigger things to worry about these days, wrote a letter to Simon Thompson, the CEO of Royal Mail. She shared an image of it via the Handwritten Letter Appreciation Society’s [Twitter account](#) (she is no luddite). “Please, please write a letter [and] use a pure and simple, beautiful stamp … with no QR code,” she wrote. “Write to your wife/partner/children … and tell me if you think it can be bettered with a bit of gimmicky tech. For me it’s a definitive ‘no.’” At the time of writing, Johnson had not received a reply.

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## The Pride I'll never forgetPride

# ‘Surrounded by Black queer people dancing and kissing, I felt 100% myself’ – the Pride I’ll never forget

Hungover and lacking sleep, still covered in the previous day’s glitter, I almost didn’t go to Black Pride. I would have missed so much ...



‘I got to see how big and beautiful the Black queer community is’ ... UK Black Pride in London, 2019. Photograph: Quintina Valero/Getty Images

*Abi McIntosh*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Wed 6 Jul 2022 05.33 EDT

I went to Black Pride in 2017 on a whim. It was the morning after a very messy London Pride and I was trying to ignore flashbacks of the previous night’s behaviour. (Tequila shots had facilitated some very, very public displays of affection.) I’d only had a few hours sleep when my alarm shook me awake, but I had arranged to meet my friend Adam, and I was getting a

nasty reputation for always bailing on him so I knew, impending hangover or not, I had to go. I dragged myself out of bed and hopped around my room trying to locate the essentials such as my phone and dignity.

I was 23 and, until this point, Pride to me was an event, not a feeling. It was about what I was going to wear (anything covered in rainbows) and how many women I was going to kiss (often in the double digits, unfortunately). Pride was about which kind of alcohol would get me the drunkest and which one of my exes I was avoiding. It meant hanging out in London's Soho with people I loved in a space where we all felt comfortable enough to hold hands.



Abi McIntosh with Diane Abbott at UK Black Pride. Photograph: Supplied image

I arrived at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens before Adam and hung out, sheepishly, near the gate. I had beer fear and I was still covered in yesterday's glitter. When Adam arrived, we followed the crowd as the queue snaked round the gate and deep into the park. I was hit with the familiar sound of dancehall. I felt a sense of calm. For the first time I began to consider what exactly it was that I was celebrating.

I had never seen so many Black queer people in the same space; it felt as if every queer person of colour in England was there. We bumped into Tasha, who was one of the very few Black queer woman I met at university in Hull. As we exchanged stories about our antics the night before, she said: “Yesterday was a party, but today feels like Pride.” As we walked past stalls and workshops run by various charities, kids running away from their parents and queer people from so many different backgrounds, I understood what she meant.



‘I really understood what it means to have pride’ ... Abi McIntosh.  
Photograph: Supplied image

When I came out I felt as if I was constantly picking between my sexuality and my race. I was trying to pull myself between two worlds I didn’t think fitted together. I was wrong. I met so many incredible Black women, such as Diane Abbott and LGBTQ+ activist Lady Phyll, who I’d been following online for a while. Meeting Lady Phyll was so special because it was amazing to see a Black lesbian who was out and proud.

I still managed to find time to kiss people – some things don’t change – but that day I really understood what it means to have pride, to be part of a community. I got to see how big and beautiful the Black queer community is.

Going to Black Pride at 23 was the first time I felt as if I was 100% myself. Seeing a Jamaican flag being flown next to a Pride flag, holding a plate full of curry goat, rice and peas and coleslaw, surrounded by Black queer people dancing and kissing, screaming along to Wayne Wonder: it was something I'd never thought possible when I realised I was a lesbian at 15, and something that makes me feel proud.

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## The Pride I'll never forgetPride

# ‘It felt as though an orgy could erupt at any moment’ – the Pride I’ll never forget

Torrential rain almost killed the buzz when I marched through London in 1982. Then I found myself stripping with a bunch of strangers ...



A couple kiss at Pride in London. Photograph: Rob Stothard/Getty Images

*Jonathan Blake*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Wed 6 Jul 2022 05.32 EDT

The Gay Pride march in 1982 started much as it had every year at Speaker’s Corner in Hyde Park, with about 10,000 of us ready to walk the route along Park Lane to Piccadilly. The plan was to finish at the University of London Union (ULU) on Mallet Street, where people could have a few drinks and a dance at the student union before dispersing to the gay bars scattered across London in Earl’s Court, Kings Road, Notting Hill Gate, Camden Town. We

set off in high spirits – even the ranks of police (an enemy to us back then) lining the street did little to put us off. But as we started down Park Lane the heavens opened. It wasn't long before everyone was completely drenched.

I was 32 and had been going to Pride marches for many years. Previous marches had drawn crowds of bemused onlookers. To me, Pride was not just to party but an opportunity to make our demands for equality heard (chief among them an equal age of consent, which was 21 for gay people then). It was a demonstration and we wanted an audience. We wanted the public to see and hear us. The rain took that away.



'Pride in the 80s was a demonstration.' Photograph: Justin Kase z12z/Alamy

Nevertheless, we arrived, sodden and somewhat dispirited at our destination, the ULU. As we entered the building, the most glorious thing presented itself: a small room with washing machines and, more importantly, two very large dryers. Without any hesitation or need for encouragement a posse of gay men crammed in, stripped all but naked and threw their sodden outfits into the vast tumble dryers. Being the proverbial “clone” I was wearing Levi 501 jeans (but definitely *not* the check shirt); I stripped down to my underwear and threw them in the dryer.



‘It was extraordinary and electrifying’ ... Jonathan Blake in the early 80s.  
Photograph: Courtesy of Jonathan Blake

We shivered with cold, until the heat from the machines and from the mass of bodies thronging the room relaxed us. Then the party took off. There was no need for music – the hubbub of chat and the screeches of delight as people slipped back into their now warm clothes was enough. It was a little too public for an orgy, though it felt as though it could erupt at any moment. It felt transgressive; our inhibitions peeled away. It was extraordinary and electrifying.

It didn’t last long. Once people dried off they dispersed into the night. The promise of a great dance party faded away into anticlimax. But I’ll always remember that brief moment of respite. It’s not often that I have been in such a situation where I have felt the spirit of Gay Pride – that proud sense of self – settle on all of us. When you’re in a minority there’s a sense that you constantly have to look over your shoulder, but that afternoon we felt relaxed and safe. The rain may have robbed us of a crowd, but it reminded us of the impromptu joy that came with being among our own kind.

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## 2022.07.04 - Opinion

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- I just moved to a four-day week, without losing any pay. It's changed everything
- This Fourth of July, it's worth pondering the true meaning of patriotism
- Where did all those US sweet shops come from? The problem is, we don't know

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[Opinion](#)[Boris Johnson](#)

## **It doesn't matter if Boris Johnson is a dead man walking as PM. The damage is done**

[Nesrine Malik](#)

We think he will go one day soon and we'll avoid disaster. But that's false comfort: the meltdown is already happening



‘Boris Johnson’s dysfunctional government seems the stuff of farce but it retains the ability to make decisions that have real effects on real people.’  
Photograph: Reuters

Mon 4 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 07.10 EDT

A little under four months ago, when this column went on hiatus, and I was on sabbatical, Boris Johnson’s demise was universally considered to be imminent. So imminent, in fact, that I was anxiously minded to delay the leave so that I would not miss the Moment. So imminent that [my own](#)

[predictions](#) at the time that Partygate would probably amount to little in the short or medium term seemed to wobble under what looked like an irresistible weight. The pundits were certain, the Johnson supporting press was running out of justification road, and voters were too mad to stand for it.

A lot has happened since then: resignations, police fines, a damning Sue Gray report, byelection losses, a confidence vote. But in terms of the big thing, the only big thing that really matters, nothing has happened. Johnson's resignation or ejection – and the associated restoration of some semblance of standards and values in British politics – is still, well, imminent.

It may not feel that way, but I am here, a [Sleeper of Ephesus](#), to tell you that after a long slumber I have found things to be more or less as they were earlier in the year. But with an extra dash of jeopardy.

For while we wait, taking some comfort in the fact that Johnson is a dead man walking, two things are happening. In the first, political norms are being sanded away. The expectation of consequences for dishonesty and malpractice in high office begins to dissolve. The standards to which we hold our politicians begin to matter less than the standards by which politicians hold themselves. New norms start to replace the old ones, and then become very hard to reverse overnight.

Look at No 10's indulgence of the former deputy chief whip Chris Pincher, who was suspended from the party only after a complaint had been made to parliament's behaviour watchdog, and against whom [new allegations](#) of sexual misconduct still continue to emerge. Pincher, perhaps taking a cue from a prime minister slow to mete out discipline, or adhere to it himself, refuses to resign as an MP.

That's the thing with norms: they coalesce over time. They are not objective standards of behaviour; they are shaped by what the government and the people become accustomed to over a period – in this case a period in which lying, corruption and cronyism go unpunished. To restore those standards, it will take more than a new leader installed by “good” Tories, whatever that means. And it will take more than a Labour party passively waiting in the wings for the Johnson show to come to a (very slow) stop. The earth shifts,

tilts and rolls with every passing day in a direction where the only thing standing between successful mendacity in office and accountability is not the electorate or other politicians: it is the extent to which each miscreant has the gumption and shamelessness to go for it, and brazen out objection.

When there is such a lag between crime and punishment – seven months and counting now since the first reports of Partygate – you can't really fully come back from it. The [January 6 committee hearings](#) and the [Roe v Wade judgment](#) are a good example of the poisonous half-life. Donald Trump lost, but he left a door wide open for his allies and impersonators to sow mischief and run for office, mining a grievance culture that resulted in actual insurrection, for which no politicians, only citizens, have been punished. A country rent asunder by one man, which no god can bring back together.

This is the second thing that happens as we wait for the demise of Johnson and his particular version of the Tory party – laws are passed and events occur that have a potent effect long after their champions have moved on. Johnson's dysfunctional government seems the stuff of farce, but it retains the executive ability to make decisions that have real effects on real people. Those decisions become calamitous as they pitch crueler and more reckless policies in a crude, patronising attempt to throw red meat to the so-called red wall, reprising those heady first days of love before all the levelling-up promises turned to nothing. And so a migrant offshoring plan is cobbled together, like a bunch of apology roses couriered to a betrayed lover who, in truth, prefers lilies.

It's tempting to see this as drama, but the script has terrible tangible effects. It sees desperate humans dragged from desperate detention on to planes as an act of public policy. It sees a [trade war](#) loom into view over reckless government plans to override the Northern Ireland protocol; risks that shape the future of the country – markers of this, the most dangerous of times.

Discussing this stasis, this awful complacency, with a friend, he said: "It's as if we are all on a plane being reassured that we are going to land soon once conditions improve, without realising that we are also running out of fuel." As per Hemingway's description of insolvency, British politics goes bankrupt in two ways: gradually, then all at once.

Today, as was the case four months ago and indeed seven months ago, I am reassured, sometimes with kindly patronage, that it's only a matter of time before Johnson goes and the reset begins. But in a matter of time – or, as Keynes had it, in the long run – we are all dead. Change does takes time, of course it does, but as James Baldwin pointed out on being told by white people to be patient with the slow pace of change in US race relations: “It’s taken my father’s time. My mother’s time. My uncle’s time. My brothers’ and sisters’ time. How much time do you need, for your progress?”

- Nesrine Malik is a Guardian columnist
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## OpinionWork-life balance

# I just moved to a four-day week, without losing any pay. It's changed everything

[Jill Tichborne](#)

I've found time for family and volunteering during my company's pilot – and productivity for all of us has increased



'Of course, the move to a four-day week has been a big change, and it took some getting used to.' Photograph: No-Mad/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Mon 4 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 12.17 EDT

I have a full-time job, but last week I spent Wednesday volunteering at a local homelessness charity.

How? Luckily for me, my organisation is one of the 70 companies that began piloting a [four-day working week](#) with no reduction in pay earlier this month. It's already looking like one of the best decisions we ever made.

I work for Helping Hands, which installs equipment such as grab rails and key safes for adults at risk across Greater Manchester. All staff got to decide which day they would like to take off – excluding Mondays, which is the day when everyone has to be in to give us all a chance to catch up.

When we were deciding whether to participate in the pilot, an important factor was making sure our standards of service remained high – so we were instantly attracted to the principle of the 100:80:100 model that the pilot is being run on: 100% of the pay for 80% of the time, in exchange for a commitment to maintain at least 100% productivity.

On a personal level, the pilot has been brilliant. All the household chores I used to do at the weekend can now be done on my day off, leaving me more time to spend with my family. As a single mum I have always had to juggle work, school and being a chauffeur for my children, but this new system means that I can be there for my children and enjoy our time together.

Furthermore, my performance at work has not been affected at all. I find that I am much more focused on the days I am working.

Of course, the move to a four-day week has been a big change, and it took some getting used to. Those most affected were our office staff, who are responsible for booking clients' appointments. Appointments are generally booked a few weeks ahead so there was a period of reallocating work at the start, but as a result of the hard work put in by staff the transition was very smooth.

Across the team as a whole, people seem much happier and less stressed. There has been a reduction in sick days, and the change has had no impact on our standards of operation. We measure productivity through the number of jobs completed so we can see this on a daily basis through our systems. Since moving to a four-day week, remarkably we're seeing more jobs completed on a daily basis. This has been achieved because staff are better rested. Through customer satisfaction surveys we can also see that clients are happy with our work and haven't noticed any change.

It's still early days for the pilot, but it seems very unlikely we will ever go back to a five-day working week.

- Jill Tichborne is training and quality assurance manager at Helping Hands
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## OpinionUS politics

# This Fourth of July, it's worth pondering the true meaning of patriotism

[Robert Reich](#)



True patriots don't fuel racist, religious or ethnic divisions. Patriots seek to confirm and strengthen and celebrate the 'we' in 'we the people of the United States'



‘True patriots don’t put loyalty to their political party above their love of America.’ Photograph: Zac Goodwin/PA

Mon 4 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.13 EDT

On this Fourth of July, it’s worth pondering the true meaning of patriotism.

It is not the meaning propounded by the “America first” crowd, who see the patriotic challenge as securing our borders.

For most of its existence America has been open to people from the rest of the world fleeing tyranny and violence.

Nor is the meaning of patriotism found in the ravings of those who want America to be a white Christian nation.

America’s moral mission has been greater inclusion – equal citizenship for Native Americans, Black people, women and LGBTQ+ people.

True patriots don’t fuel racist, religious or ethnic divisions. Patriots aren’t homophobic or sexist. Patriots seek to confirm and strengthen and celebrate the “we” in “we the people of the United States”.

Patriots are not blind to social injustices. They don't ban books or prevent teaching about the sins of our past.

They combine a loving devotion to America with a demand for justice.

*This land is your land, this land is my land*, Woody Guthrie sang.

Langston Hughes pleaded:

*Let America be America again,*

*The land that never has been yet –*

*And yet must be – the land where every man is free.*

*The land that's mine – the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME –.*

Nor is the meaning of patriotism found in symbolic displays of loyalty like standing for the national anthem and waving the American flag.

Its true meaning is in taking a fair share of the burdens of keeping the nation going – sacrificing for the common good. Paying taxes in full rather than lobbying for lower taxes, seeking tax loopholes or squirreling away money abroad.

It means refraining from political contributions that corrupt our politics, and blowing the whistle on abuses of power even at the risk of losing one's job.

It means volunteering time and energy to improve the community and country.

Real patriotism involves strengthening our democracy – defending the right to vote and ensuring more Americans are heard. It is not claiming without evidence that millions of people voted fraudulently.

It is not pushing for laws that make it harder for people to vote based on this “big lie”. It is not using the big lie to run for office.

True patriots don't put loyalty to their political party above their love of America.

True patriots don't support an attempted coup. They expose it – even when it was engineered by people they once worked for, even if it's a president who headed their own party.

When serving in public office, true patriots don't try to hold on to power after voters have chosen not to re-elect them. They don't make money off their offices.

When serving as judges, they recuse themselves from cases where they may appear to have a conflict of interest. When serving in the Senate, they don't use the filibuster to stop all legislation with which they disagree.

When serving on the supreme court, they don't disregard precedent to impose their ideology.

Patriots understand that when they serve the public, one of their major responsibilities is to maintain and build public trust in the offices and institutions they occupy.

America is in trouble. But that's not because too many foreigners are crossing our borders, or we're losing our whiteness or our dominant religion, or we're not standing for the national anthem, or because of voter fraud.

We're in trouble because we are losing the true understanding of what patriotism requires from all of us.

- Robert Reich, a former US secretary of labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of [Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few](#) and [The Common Good](#). His new book, [The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It](#), is out now. He is a Guardian US columnist. His newsletter is at [robertreich.substack.com](#)
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**OpinionRetail industry**

# Where did all those US sweet shops in London come from? The problem is, we don't know

[Adam Hug](#)

Many of them rip off customers and owe us millions in business rates – but tracking down their owners is proving impossible

- Councillor Adam Hug is leader of Westminster city council



‘Why are there so many of these stores? Why do they often appear to be empty? Why are sweets being sold at eye-watering prices?’ Photograph: Belinda Jiao/Alamy

Mon 4 Jul 2022 05.19 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 09.32 EDT

Walk down the UK's most famous shopping street and you will see bright, inviting emporiums of Americana, stacked high with sweets and rainbow-coloured vape pens. Dotted between them you'll see identikit souvenir stores selling keyrings and miniature models of double-decker buses. Oxford Street has [at least 30 of these candy stores](#) on the last count, with some even in prime locations.

Everyone understands that retail had a really tough time during the pandemic, which saw big names leaving high streets across the country. Even so, shoppers and tourists are perplexed. Why are there so many? Why do they often appear to be empty? Why are sweets being sold at eye-watering prices?

The answer to the first question is the long-term decline of the high street [due to online shopping](#), compounded by the short-term shock of lockdowns during the pandemic. The increased number of empty units has created a headache for freeholders or long leaseholders of these buildings, who become liable to pay business rates on the empty stores. To avoid this, a number have let their sites to an intermediary company (or series of companies) or managing agent, who in turn let to other companies who run souvenir or sweet shops.

Anyone moving into an empty shop becomes liable for business rates instead of the freeholder or long leaseholder. The problem is establishing who the occupier actually is. When council officers visit US candy shops, they frequently meet staff who claim not to know who the owner is and point to a shell company licence certificate on the wall. The council has the job of trying to unpick a trail of false occupation names or shell companies that dissolve before we can take court action for business rates owed. When we do find the occupier, we encounter shell operations where assets may have already disappeared.

While some of the stores are legitimate, others are under investigation by Westminster city council for tax evasion and selling counterfeit goods. We are currently investigating unpaid business rates of £7.9m from 30 shops. That is the taxpayers' money – yours – being siphoned off. Westminster is

the largest collector of business rates in the country (£2.4bn per year) with the vast majority of the money redistributed across the country to other local authorities. Therefore this lost income affects all UK taxpayers, not just those in Westminster.

The ordinary customer often also gets ripped off, too. Unpriced goods ring up a hefty charge at the till. Children can find themselves forking out £13 for a bag of pick'n'mix. Some of these shops are also outlets for suspected fake and unsafe goods. In the last six months, Westminster city council officers have recovered [around £575,000 worth](#) of these items from candy and souvenir shops on Oxford Street.

To give you an example: we recently recovered more than £100,000 of suspected fake or unsafe items after raiding three shops on Oxford Street. From one store alone we recovered more than 2,000 suspected fake Willy Wonka bars. If that doesn't sound like big business, consider the mark-up. The chocolate inside these bars is sometimes genuine – a supermarket's own-brand – rebadged in fake Willy Wonka packaging. The original cost of the chocolate is around 40p; the fake bar is sold at £9 to £10. In other cases, as the Food Standards Agency warns, the chocolate may be hazardous. The haul is also suspected to include 3,000 vapes carrying excessive levels of nicotine; around 1,400 fake designer label phone covers; 78 fake designer hoodies and a number of bogus Apple AirPods; the list goes on.

Our trading standards officers make life difficult for these rogue traders with their enforcement activity, but they can't tackle the problem alone. We are pressuring the landowners of the buildings where these stores operate to reflect on whether a short-term ploy to deflect business rates serves the long-term future of Oxford Street. We know there are many landowners who want to work with us; however, so far there are some who are in denial about the problem, or who seem set on obfuscating in the face of reasonable requests from the council.

One significant measure the council is taking to stop the inexorable rise of the candy store is offering discounts to startup businesses who will take void spaces on. The [West End pop-up scheme](#) helps landlords secure a [reduction of 70%](#) in business rates where startup businesses are allowed to use an empty shop. Since May 2001, we have supported 38 up-and-coming brands

– ranging from a company that turned old kimonos into lampshades, to a lingerie business, to a company that produced recycled clothing.

We are working with central government and enforcement partners to take action. But we also need new measures in the forthcoming Economic Crime Act – like a change in Companies House legislation – to make it easier to navigate the labyrinthine world of shell company structures. Government agencies need the power and resources to investigate – and if necessary, take action – when similar firms are repeatedly created and closed by the same people. The end result must be to ensure that taxpayers' money isn't wasted, and that means understanding who is responsible in order to hold them to account.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that many of these shops may simply be vehicles for a tax evasion racket exploiting UK laws. I know other UK cities are being similarly affected, and it feels like the moment to take collective action.

Ultimately, if consumers want to go into US sweet shops and buy expensive goods, I can't stop them. But what I will strive to do is stop customers and taxpayers getting conned.

- Councillor Adam Hug is leader of Westminster city council
- ***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](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)***

## 2022.07.04 - Around the world

- [Australia Sydney braces for another night of flooding after region hit by torrential rain](#)
- [Media Fox and friends confront billion-dollar US lawsuits over election fraud claims](#)
- [Uzbekistan Government imposes regional state of emergency after deadly unrest](#)
- [China Xi Jinping in Covid scare during Hong Kong handover trip](#)
- [Economics Europe at risk of recession amid concerns Russia could cut gas supplies](#)

## New South Wales

# NSW floods: Sydney braces for two more days of flooding as state smashed by rain and wind

SES perform 252 flood rescues overnight and thousands urged to evacuate as threat of inundation remains in Hawkesbury and Nepean

- [Efforts to move cargo ship stranded off Sydney suspended](#)
- [Follow our Australia news live blog for the latest updates](#)
- [For Hawkesbury residents flooding is now a part of life](#)
- Get our [free news app](#), [morning email briefing](#) and [daily news podcast](#)



Buildings are inundated by flood waters along the Hawkesbury River in Windsor, Sydney on Monday as wild weather lashed NSW, forcing thousands to evacuate. Photograph: Jenny Evans/Getty Images

*[Caitlin Cassidy](#) and [Ben Doherty](#)*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 20.17 EDTFirst published on Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.48 EDT

The [New South Wales](#) State Emergency Service reported more than 5,300 requests for assistance on Monday night, including 252 flood rescues, mainly of drivers stuck in cars and residents needing to be relocated.

The wild weather continued in NSW through the night, with heavy rain and strong winds lashing the state.

Scores of evacuation orders were issued, mostly north-west of [Sydney](#), where major flooding occurred along the Hawkesbury and Nepean rivers at Menangle, North Richmond, Lower Portland and Windsor.

Following massive rainfall totals across multiple catchments over the past three days, some areas were expected to approach or exceed the flood levels of March 2021, and March and April of this year.

Residents in parts of Chipping Norton in Sydney's south-west were ordered to evacuate before midnight, with flood warnings for the Georges and Woronora rivers.

Camden, in Sydney's far south-west, received 197.4mm for the month to date, with residents enduring their fourth flood already this year.

The Hawkesbury River at North Richmond was expected to remain above 14m until Tuesday morning, with major flooding forecast. The Upper Nepean River at Menangle peaked at 16.61 metres on Sunday morning.

Gale warnings remained current for the Hunter coast and Sydney coast, as well as strong wind warnings for Sydney's enclosed waters, and the Macquarie, Illawarra, and Batemans coasts.

The NSW SES deputy commander, Ashley Sullivan, told the ABC the risk to homes and to lives would persist on Tuesday and into Wednesday.



Residents in McGrath Hill near Windsor in north-west Sydney. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

“Certainly with the persistent rain we are receiving, the threat will remain into today and tomorrow. Even when it does stop raining, the flood threats will continue, and particularly into the Hunter Valley where it is currently raining at the moment.

“We are paying particular attention as to what will happen over the next 48 hours, particularly on the Hunter River system as we start to see the rivers rise up there.”

There are 60 evacuations current, Sullivan said.

“The majority are in the Hawkesbury, Nepean, Georges and Woronora River system. Today those residents under that warning, we are asking them to prepare to evacuate.

“Wherever possible, review your flood plan, head over to friends’ or family’s and keep yourself safe. Particularly for motorists, please stay off the roads today ... stay at home wherever possible.”

Sullivan warned “this system will not diminish today or tomorrow particularly on the Hawkesbury-Nepean system, the flood threats remain”.

NSW flooding: drone footage shows extent of floods around Windsor – video

All major dams in the Sydney network were continuing to overflow, but at a slower rate than on Sunday.

The spill rate from Warragamba dam had fallen from a high of 515 gigalitres – equivalent to one Sydney Harbour – a day on Sunday afternoon to 380 on Monday.

Some 200 Australian defence force troops and two helicopters had been deployed to support the flood effort, while more may be required to assist in clean-up efforts.

SES volunteers have worked more than 10,000 hours since Friday, while more than 1,000 were on the ground on Monday afternoon supported by police and emergency services.

The emergency services minister, Murray Watt, told the ABC financial assistance including disaster payments would be on the table once NSW formally declared a state of emergency, expected to happen “imminently”.

“This is a terrible thing for anyone to have to go through just once, let alone four times in 18 months. So I’m not surprised to hear that people are at breaking point,” he said.

Greg Mullins, the state’s former fire and rescue commissioner, said the backdrop to La Niña, El Niño and the string of recent floods was climate change.

In the past 18 months, Australia’s east coast has experienced four major floods, while Sydney is in the midst of its wettest year to date with almost 1,700mm so far in 2022.

Mullins said the “frequency and intensity” of natural disasters was changing.

“Just as you’re recovering from the last disaster another one comes along and knocks you off your feet,” he said.

“The best recovery comes from the local community, but if they’re repeatedly hit hard, the concept of resilience starts to go out the window – it’s just too bloody hard.

“Rainfall now comes in short, sharp bursts rather than long gentle periods, so we’re overwhelmed. This is climate change in action.”

Mullins said he was buoyed the new government had expressed a willingness to listen to experts, which would be key in the recovery phase.

“We have to adapt to climate change as best we can and it’s going to be very expensive because we’ve undercooked emergency service funding and recovery,” he said.

“A good place to start is to stop paying subsidies to the fossil fuel industry.”

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[Fox News](#)

## Fox and friends confront billion-dollar US lawsuits over election fraud claims



Protesters outside the Fox News headquarters in New York. Media and legal experts believe Fox could be in trouble in the Dominion case. Photograph: Sarah Yenesel/EPA

Rightwing networks Fox News, OAN and Newsmax could be found liable in cases brought by voting machine company Dominion

*[Adam Gabbatt in New York](#)*

*[@adamgabbatt](#)*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 03.30 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 20.26 EDT

In the months following the 2020 US presidential election, rightwing [TV news](#) in America was a wild west, an apparently lawless free-for-all where conspiracy theories about voting machines, ballot-stuffed suitcases and dead Venezuelan leaders were repeated to viewers around the clock.

There seemed to be little consequence for peddling the most outrageous ideas on primetime.

But now, unfortunately for [Fox News](#), One America News Network (OAN), and Newsmax, it turns out that this brave, new world wasn't free from legal jurisdiction – with the three networks now facing billion-dollar lawsuits as a result of their baseless accusations.

In June, Dominion Voting Systems, which provided voting machines to 28 states, was given the go-ahead [to sue Fox Corp](#), the parent company of Fox News, in a case that could draw Rupert Murdoch and his son, Lachlan, into the spotlight.

In the \$1.6bn lawsuit, Dominion accuses Fox Corp, and the Murdochs specifically, of allowing Fox News to amplify false claims that the voting company had rigged the election for Joe Biden.

Fox Corp had attempted to have the suit dismissed, but a Delaware judge said Dominion had shown adequate evidence for the suit to proceed. Dominion is already suing Fox News, as well as OAN and Newsmax.

"These allegations support a reasonable inference that Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch either knew Dominion had not manipulated the election or at least recklessly disregarded the truth when they allegedly caused Fox News to propagate its claims about Dominion," Judge Eric Davis [said](#).

Davis's ruling is not a guarantee that Fox will be found liable. But the judge made it clear that this isn't some frivolous attempt by Dominion – and media and legal experts think Fox could be in real trouble.

"Dominion has a very strong case against Fox News – and against OAN for that matter," said Ciara Torres-Spelliscy, a professor who teaches constitutional law [at Stetson University](#) and a fellow at the [Brennan Center for Justice](#), a nonpartisan law and policy institute.

"The reason Dominion is suing is because Fox and other rightwing news outlets repeated vicious lies that Dominion's voting machines stole the 2020 election from Trump for Biden. But all of these conspiracy theories about Dominion's machines were just pure bunk, and Fox as a news organization should have known that and not given this aspect of the big lie a megaphone.

"What's particularly bad for Fox is [that] Dominion asked them to stop and correct the record in real time, and Fox persisted in spreading misrepresentations about the voting machine company."

Indeed, in his ruling, Davis noted that "other newspapers under Rupert Murdoch's control, including the Wall Street Journal and New York Post, condemned President Trump's claims and urged him to concede defeat".

In a statement, a Fox News spokesperson said: "Limiting the ability of the press to report freely on the American election process stands in stark contrast to the liberties on which this nation was founded, and we are confident we will prevail in this case, as the first amendment is the foundation of our democracy and freedom of the press must be protected."

A potential precedent in the Dominion v Fox case could be found in a recent case involving Sarah Palin, who [sued the New York Times](#). Palin claimed the newspaper maliciously damaged her reputation by erroneously linking her campaign rhetoric to a mass shooting. In February [a jury sided](#) with the Times, finding that a Times employee had not acted with "actual malice" against a public figure or with "reckless disregard" for the truth – the criteria necessary to prove defamation.

But the Times victory shouldn't give Fox too much hope, said Torres-Spelliscy.

"In the Palin case, the New York Times quickly corrected the mistake about Palin that had been added while an article was edited," Torres-Spelliscy said.

"By contrast Fox News kept up the bad behavior and repeatedly told myths about Dominion's voting machines. This is likely why judges in several of these Dominion defamation cases have not dismissed them."

Dominion isn't the only company seeking damages from Fox and its contemporaries.

Smartmatic, an election software company which provided voting software to precisely [one county](#) in the 2020 election but found itself subjected to claims that it was founded "for the specific purpose of fixing elections" by associates of Hugo Chavez, the former president of Venezuela who died in 2013, is [suing](#) Fox Corp, Fox News and associates for \$2.7bn.

Still, Fox News is the most-watched and arguably most influential cable news channel in the US, and is probably too big to fail.

But that isn't the case for the smaller rightwing networks OAN and Newsmax, which are also both [being sued](#) by Dominion and Smartmatic – in June, a Delaware judge [refused](#) Newsmax's motion to have the Dominion case dismissed, but did not weigh on whether Newsmax was innocent or guilty.

"I think OAN is going to be wiped out from the litigation costs. Forget about any judgment," said Angelo Carusone, president and chief executive of [Media Matters for America](#), which monitors rightwing media.

Carusone pointed out that OAN is already struggling to survive, after it was [dropped](#) by the DirecTV cable company – which was [reportedly](#) responsible for 90% of OAN's revenue – in April.

"We've started seeing, already, them scaling back programming, they've been laying off staff, they've been cutting back the number of programs. So

it's pretty clear that they don't have sufficient resources to weather a protracted litigation."

Newsmax, which is still carried by DirecTV, is "relatively cash flush" in comparison to OAN, Carusone said – enough to survive a trial, if not to pay the billions of dollars Dominion and Smartmatic are seeking.



The Newsmax booth at the NRA convention in Houston in May.  
Photograph: Patrick T Fallon/AFP/Getty Images

In a statement, Newsmax said it had "reported on allegations made by President Trump and his surrogates and at no time did we report these allegations were true. We also reported on critics of the Trump claims".

It added: "The Dominion suit is an assault on a free press and endangers all press outlets if it were to prevail."

OAN did not respond to a request for comment.

As for Fox, the most significant thing could be if the Murdochs are subjected to discovery – where they and Fox could be forced to hand over documents potentially including communications data – as part of the legal process, Carusone said.

Text messages obtained by the January 6 commission have already revealed that there was communication between [Fox News hosts and White House officials](#) regarding the insurrection – and it seems unlikely that is the only thing that was discussed.

“I think once you start to pull the discovery material, what you’re going to find is there was a lot of communication between the Trump people both internally and externally about pushing very specific lies and narratives,” Carusone said.

While Fox is more financially comfortable than OAN and NewsMax, it is not invulnerable. Fox News is due to renegotiate its contracts with cable providers at the end of this year, and Carusone said cable companies could use the lawsuit to drive down prices.

The Dominion and Smartmatic cases are likely to drag on for some time, and it remains to be seen how Fox News, OAN and NewsMax will react.

As for the news channels’ conspiratorial claims of election fraud, at least that is one thing that has already been settled.

The courts, the Department of justice, election officials [have investigated and dismissed](#) the accusations, as has the US Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

“The November 3 election was the most secure in American history,” the agency [said](#) in a statement in 2020.

“While we know there are many unfounded claims and opportunities for misinformation about the process of our elections, we can assure you we have the utmost confidence in the security and integrity of our elections, and you should too.”

William Barr, Trump’s attorney general, put it in rather less sophisticated terms.

The claims of election interference, Barr [told](#) the January 6 committee, were “bullshit”.

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## [Uzbekistan](#)

# **Uzbekistan imposes regional state of emergency after deadly unrest**

Government U-turns over plans to curtail autonomy of Karakalpakstan but fears rise tensions may escalate



A burnt out truck after protests in Nukus, the capital of the north-western Karakalpakstan region in Uzbekistan. Photograph: KUN.UZ/Reuters

*Reuters in Almaty*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.47 EDT Last modified on Mon 4 Jul 2022 04.55 EDT

Eighteen people were killed and 243 wounded during unrest in Uzbekistan's autonomous province of Karakalpakstan over plans to curtail its autonomy, Uzbek authorities said.

Security forces detained 516 people while dispersing protesters on Friday but have released many of them, the national guard press office told a briefing.

On Saturday, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev dropped plans to amend articles of the constitution concerning Karakalpakstan's autonomy and its right to secede. He also declared a month-long state of emergency in the north-western province.

According to official reports, protesters marched through the provincial capital of Nukus last Friday and tried to seize local government buildings.

Photographs from Nukus, published on Sunday by the news website Kun.uz, showed street barricades, burnt out trucks and a heavy military presence including armoured personnel carriers.

Videos shared on social media showed at least two severely wounded people being carried away by their arms and legs. One was bleeding from the abdomen, while the other was screaming.

Another showed a young man crouching by an apparently lifeless body in the street, screaming “a man is dying”, and running for cover as shots rang out.

An exiled opposition politician, Pulat Ahunov, told Reuters over the weekend that people were unable to move around or obtain more information because of a state of emergency imposed by the authorities.

Uzbekistan is a tightly controlled former Soviet republic where the government clamps down hard on any form of dissent. It was the second outbreak of unrest in central Asia this year, after [Kazakhstan crushed mass protests in January](#) and Russia and other former Soviet republics sent in troops to help restore order.

The protests in Uzbekistan were prompted by planned constitutional changes that would have stripped Karakalpakstan of its autonomous status. In a U-turn, the president dropped those plans on Saturday.

Ahunov, the chair of the opposition Berlik party, told Reuters from Sweden that he condemned the use of lethal force. “The authorities, from the start, should have opted for dialogue and negotiations,” he said. He said he feared

the potential for the situation to escalate into an ethnic conflict between Uzbeks and Karakalpaks, a minority group with their own language.

Authorities had called a public meeting for Tuesday to discuss the situation, he added.

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Kazakhstan said it was concerned by the events in Uzbekistan and welcomed moves by the authorities to stabilise the situation.

Steve Swerdlow, associate professor of human rights at the University of Southern California and an expert on the region, said Uzbekistan should engage as transparently as possible in declaring casualties and the use of force and over the longer term look at what concerns were at the heart of the protests.

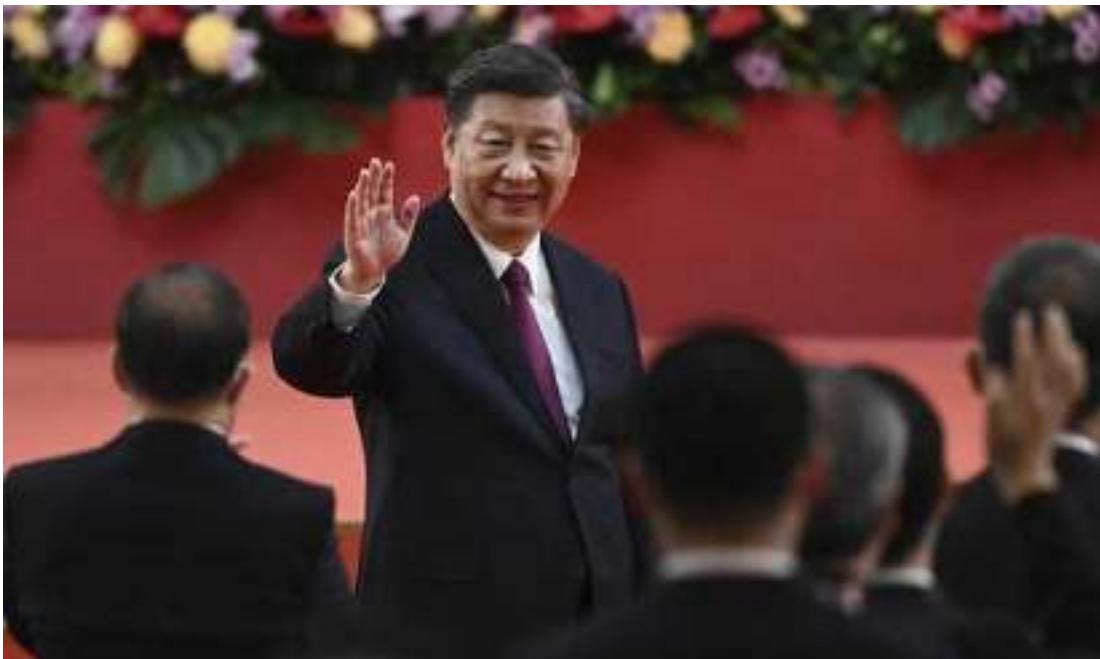
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[Xi Jinping](#)

## **Xi Jinping in Covid scare during Hong Kong handover trip**

Hong Kong legislator tests positive after meeting Chinese president, and city-wide testing begins in Macau to contain its worst outbreak



Xi Jinping in Hong Kong on Friday on the 25th anniversary of the city's handover from Britain. A city legislator who stood near the Chinese president has tested positive to Covid. Photograph: Selim Chtayti/AP

*Sum Lok-kei in Hong Kong*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 00.10 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 06.24 EDT

A Hong Kong legislator who appeared in a group photo with [Xi Jinping](#) during his visit to the territory has said he has tested positive for Covid, as Macau kicks off a new round of city-wide coronavirus testing.

In his first trip outside mainland China since the pandemic began, the Chinese president stayed for less than 24 hours in [Hong Kong](#) and met only

people who had undergone quarantine.

But Steve Ho, a legislator from the pro-government Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, revealed on Sunday that he had tested positive for Covid, a day after he met Xi.

Ho said he tested negative for Covid on 30 June, when he and other local politicians met Xi. In footage released by the Hong Kong government, Ho was seen standing two rows behind Xi when the group had pictures taken. The participants were masked.

Ho later tested positive, on 1 July, and refrained from attending events celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's transition from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

Hong Kong continued to have close to 2,000 new Covid cases a day, but its new chief executive, John Lee, said he had no immediate plans to conduct universal testing.

Lee said universal testing should be done at the start or towards the end of an outbreak. For now, he thought testing close contacts and people who had been in premises with confirmed cases was enough.

He also said there was no timeline to shortening Hong Kong's seven-day inbound quarantine.

Meanwhile in Macau, officials kicked off a new round of city-wide Covid testing on Monday for its more than 600,000 residents, as officials raced to contain the worst outbreak to hit the world's biggest gambling hub since the pandemic began.

Macau has only one public hospital, whose services are already stretched on a daily basis.

The move comes as the former Portuguese colony reported 90 new cases on Sunday, taking the total number of infections to 784 since the middle of June. More than 11,000 people are in quarantine.

All non-essential government services are shut, schools, parks, sports and entertainment facilities are closed and restaurants can only provide takeaway services.

Casinos are allowed to remain open but most staff have been asked to stay home, in line with instructions to the city's residents. The government said it would not shut casinos to protect jobs.

The stringent measures come after Macau has been largely Covid-free since an outbreak in October 2021.

*With Reuters*

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## Economics

# Europe at risk of recession amid concerns Russia could cut gas supplies

Energy prices had already surged in second half of 2021 but Russia's invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated this

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



The Haidach gas storage station near Straßwalchen, Austria. Photograph: Barbara Gindl/APA/AFP/Getty Images

*Jasper Jolly*

*@jjpjolly*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 01.05 EDT

Europe faces a rising risk of recession because of rising oil and gas prices amid concerns that Russia could turn off supplies completely, economists

have said.

Europe's economy will be hit by a variety of factors including falling demand in the US – its biggest export market – the continued fallout from [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#) and related [increases in food and energy prices](#), according to Nomura, a Japanese investment bank with significant operations in London.

Nomura said it expected the European economy to start contracting over the course of the second half of 2022 and for the recession to continue until the summer of 2023, with a total decline of 1.7% of GDP.

Energy prices had already surged in the second half of 2021 as leading economies lifted coronavirus pandemic lockdowns, but Russia's invasion of Ukraine has added an extra layer of difficulty, as the EU, the US and UK have sought to isolate Russia economically. Europe is still [heavily reliant on Russia for its energy supply](#), and Vladimir Putin has responded to sanctions by slowing gas supplies.

Russia has cut gas supplies through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany and the TurkStream pipeline to Bulgaria, and has shut off supplies to Poland via the Yamal pipeline.

Europe is struggling with “conditions that are very much global in nature (surging energy prices and inflation, rising geopolitical risks and uncertainty), which leads us to believe that European economies will suffer the same fate – recession – as the US,” wrote George Buckley, a Nomura economist. Inflation in the eurozone hit an annual rate of 8.6% in June, the [highest since the bloc was created in 1999](#).

Analysts at JP Morgan Chase, the US investment bank, said last week that Russia could also cause “stratospheric” oil price increases if it used output cuts to retaliate against [efforts to cap prices](#) by the G7 group of large economies. Analysts including Natasha Kaneva wrote that prices could more than triple to \$380 (£314) a barrel if Russia cut production by 5m barrels a day. One barrel of Brent crude oil for September delivery was worth \$111 at the end of last week on futures markets.

“It is likely that the [Russian] government could retaliate by cutting output as a way to inflict pain on the west,” wrote JP Morgan’s analysts. “The tightness of the global oil market is on Russia’s side.”

Kay Neufeld and Jonas Keck, economists at the Centre for [Economics](#) and Business Research, said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had created “a veritable pan-European crisis” and said there was at least a two in five chance of a European recession.

Germany, Europe’s largest economy, is particularly vulnerable because of [Russia’s control over the Nord Stream 1 pipeline](#). The pipeline is scheduled to close for a 10-day period starting on 11 July for planned annual maintenance. The German economy minister, Robert Habeck, told German media last week that the government feared Russia would decline to reopen the pipeline, a move that could cause shortages over the winter.

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“It seems clear that in the case of European gas shortages, a severe recession will be a near certainty,” wrote Neufeld and Keck. “This is because European countries are linked to each other not only via energy interconnectors but also through highly integrated supply chains.

“A tight gas supply will lead to further increases in energy prices for consumers, adding to inflationary pressures and claiming an even greater share of households’ disposable income, which is a recession risk in itself.”

European countries that are dependent on Russian gas are racing to find alternative supplies. The German government is hoping that two floating terminals that can accept liquid natural gas will be in operation this winter.

While the UK does not directly import gas from Russia, European shortages could still exacerbate the cost of living crisis by raising the price of gas on open markets. That would force the UK to pay more, a cost likely to be reflected in bills for consumers and businesses. Nomura has forecast a UK GDP decline of 1.5% during an expected recession.

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- [Rishi Sunak Former chancellor warns Tory rivals against unsustainable tax cuts](#)
- [Penny Mordaunt David Frost has ‘grave reservations’ about Mordaunt as Tory leader](#)
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[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

# Suella Braverman out of Tory leadership race as Rishi Sunak leads with 101 votes - as it happened

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Updated 3d ago

[Andrew Sparrow](#)

[@AndrewSparrow](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 13.00 EDTFirst published on Thu 14 Jul 2022 04.20 EDT

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[Braverman claims Mordaunt's record on gender-neutral language in bill shows she did not stand up for women](#)
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[Braverman out of contest as Sunak maintains lead - second ballot results](#)
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[Truss says 'business-as-usual economic management' has failed to deliver high growth for decades](#)
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[Liz Truss launches her campaign for Tory leadership](#)
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[Sunak claims he is candidate best able to beat Labour at next election](#)
- [3d ago](#)  
[Truss to launch campaign for Tory leadership with jibe at Mordaunt's inexperience, saying she is ready to be PM 'on day one'](#)

Suella Braverman knocked out of Tory leadership race – video

*Andrew Sparrow*  
[@AndrewSparrow](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 13.00 EDTFirst published on Thu 14 Jul 2022 04.20 EDT

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## Live feed

From 3d ago

[10.04](#)

## **Braverman out of contest as Sunak maintains lead - second ballot results**

**Sir Graham Brady**, the chair of the [1922 Committee](#), is announcing the results now.

Rishi Sunak - 101 (up 13)

Penny Mordaunt - 83 (up 16)

Liz Truss - 64 (up 14)

Kemi Badenoch - 49 (up 9)

Tom Tugendhat - 32 (down 5)

Suella Braverman - 27 (down 5)

That means Braverman is out.

Suella Braverman knocked out of Tory leadership race – video

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Updated at 11.53 EDT

Key events:

- [3d ago](#)  
[Early evening summary](#)
- [3d ago](#)  
[Braverman claims Mordaunt's record on gender-neutral language in bill shows she did not stand up for women](#)
- [3d ago](#)

## Second round ballot results - snap analysis

- 3d ago  
Braverman out of contest as Sunak maintains lead - second ballot results
- 3d ago  
Graham Brady due to announce second ballot results at 3pm
- 3d ago  
Tory leadership contest will push UK government 'even further to right', says Sturgeon
- 3d ago  
Tom Tugendhat 'still in this fight' for Tory leadership
- 3d ago  
Attorney general Suella Braverman says UK should withdraw from European convention on human rights
- 3d ago  
Tugendhat says he feels 'like prom queen' because rival candidates trying to get his support
- 3d ago  
Voting starts in second ballot for Tory leadership
- 3d ago  
Frost says he has 'grave reservations' about whether Mordaunt up to being PM
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Liz Truss's launch - snap verdict
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Truss says she wants to see defence spending rise to 3% of GDP by end of decade
- 3d ago  
Truss says she has 'record of delivery'
- 3d ago  
'I'm a loyal person,' says Truss, as she defends her decision not to resign from Johnson's cabinet
- 3d ago  
Truss says 'business-as-usual economic management' has failed to deliver high growth for decades
- 3d ago  
Liz Truss launches her campaign for Tory leadership

- [3d ago](#) [Sunak claims he is candidate best able to beat Labour at next election](#)
- [3d ago](#) [Truss to launch campaign for Tory leadership with jibe at Mordaunt's inexperience, saying she is ready to be PM 'on day one'](#)

Show key events only

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[3d ago](#) [13.00](#)

## Early evening summary

- [Penny Mordaunt was handed another key boost in the race to make the final two of the Conservative leadership race, with votes putting her in pole position to take on the frontrunner, Rishi Sunak, and the outsider Suella Braverman being eliminated.](#)
- [Boris Johnson is planning to stage parliamentary interventions on Ukraine, Brexit and levelling up, with allies of the outgoing prime minister hinting that those are the areas of his legacy he believes to be most under threat from his potential successor.](#)
- [Proposals to reform gambling laws have been postponed for a fourth time amid turmoil at the top of the Conservative party, sparking outrage from campaigners who warned the delay would cost lives.](#)
- [Nicola Sturgeon has accused Labour of giving “the proverbial two fingers” to Scottish voters, as she warned that regardless of who wins the Tory leadership race it is “virtually certain” to mean a further shift to the right for the UK.](#)



Sir Graham Brady, chairman of the 1922 Committee, announcing the results of the second ballot in the Conservative party leadership contest in the Houses of Parliament. Photograph: Kirsty O'Connor/PA

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Updated at 13.55 EDT

3d ago **12.55**

According to the Times' **Henry Zeffman**, Tory MPs believe that Andrea Leadsom will be chancellor if Penny Mordaunt becomes prime minister.

Excl: Andrea Leadsom would be Penny Mordaunt's chancellor if she succeeds Boris Johnson, Conservative MPs believe

Leadsom is running Mordaunt's surging campaign for Downing Street

More on @thetimes liveblog here □ <https://t.co/QyKgaYWMLd>

— Henry Zeffman (@hzeffman) July 14, 2022

A Mordaunt campaign source played down the suggestion Leadsom is a dead cert for the Treasury, saying: "Nothing pledged, nothing offered"

— Henry Zeffman (@hzeffman) [July 14, 2022](#)

The last time Leadsom came close to being offered the post of chancellor by a campaign was in 2016, when Boris Johnson was meant to offer her the post in return for her endorsement. But a letter containing the pledge was never handed over, Leadsom decided to run herself, and the setback contributed to Michael Gove deciding to withdraw support from Johnson, and Johnson abandoning his campaign.

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Updated at 12.55 EDT

[3d ago](#) [12.37](#)

## **Braverman claims Mordaunt's record on gender-neutral language in bill shows she did not stand up for women**

**Suella Braverman**, the attorney general who is now out of the Tory leadership contest, has accused Penny Mordaunt, who is now the favourite, of not standing up for women.

Referring to legislation passed to allow her as attorney general to take maternity leave (the Ministerial and Other Maternity Allowances Act), Braverman said Mordaunt was to blame for gender-neutral language in the original draft which referred to a pregnant person, not a pregnant woman. She told Sky News:

Penny is a very good politician, I disagree with Penny on some key issues, in relation to one specific matter, ie the maternity bill that was

passed for my benefit when I had my baby last year.

I do have to say that Hansard and the record shows that Penny Mordaunt, as the bill minister, the minister responsible for passing that legislation, did oppose and did resist the inclusion of the word woman and the word mother and did only concede after unsustainable pressure from the House of Lords.

I was quite disappointed by the way in which it was handled and the responsible minister, I'm afraid, didn't stand up for women and didn't actually reflect the views of a lot of our party on wanting women to be authentically represented on the face of the bill and in legislation.

Mordaunt has said [she changed the language in the bill](#), which was originally drafted by someone else.

Braverman also told Sky News she would consider her options before deciding who to back in the next ballot. But she said a key factor would be who would do the most to stop illegal migration across the Channel.

In a later interview with the PM programme on Radio 4, Braverman said she did not consider Mordaunt an authentic Brexiter – even though Mordaunt backed leave – because Mordaunt voted for Theresa May's Brexit deal.

And she criticised Mordaunt's stance on trans rights. She said:

My perception of Penny is she takes a different view to me when it comes to gender ideology and the position of trans. For example, I think she said a trans woman is a woman. I disagree with that.



Suella Braverman. Photograph: Sky News

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Updated at 13.58 EDT

3d ago 11.42

And here are takes from three more journalists on what the results of the second ballot mean.

From the FT's **Stephen Bush**

It's a lot of things I think. It's good: Sunak had the worst first ballot showing of \*any\* first round winner he did not go backwards, and he did better than Clarke, Portillo or Davis. It's great: he cleared the psychologically resonant figure of 100. It's terrible cos he got 13.  
<https://t.co/KJZCEK7DKw> [pic.twitter.com/qNeuvypbJG](http://pic.twitter.com/qNeuvypbJG)

— Stephen Bush (@stephenkb) July 14, 2022

For Liz Truss: it's great because she has extended her lead over Kemi Badenoch, she continues to be ahead of the pack in that rightwing lane. It's bad because her lead over Kemi Badenoch is still not that large and because of how well Penny Mordaunt's doing.

— Stephen Bush (@stephenkb) [July 14, 2022](#)

Really the only candidates you can say had an unalloyed good result are Kemi Badenoch (whatever happens from now she's won and established herself as a force in internal Tory politics) and Penny Mordaunt (for, uh, really obvious reasons).

— Stephen Bush (@stephenkb) [July 14, 2022](#)

From the Times' **Steven Swinford**

- \* There will be one hell of a battle for Suella Braverman's 27 backers in coming days - Truss thought most likely to benefit
- \* Will Tom Tugendhat now fold?
- \* The gap between Mordaunt and Truss has barely moved
- \* Sunak well course to make final 2

— Steven Swinford (@Steven\_Swinford) [July 14, 2022](#)

Kemi Badenoch gains nine votes, her team will be very pleased with that - still very much in running and a key figure in contest whatever happens

— Steven Swinford (@Steven\_Swinford) [July 14, 2022](#)

Rival camps think that Tom Tugendhat's 32 votes will split between Penny Mordaunt and Rishi Sunak

So big question would be whether Liz Truss can pick up enough votes from Braverman to bridge gap and counter votes Penny Mordaunt picks up from Tugendhat

— Steven Swinford (@Steven\_Swinford) [July 14, 2022](#)

Throw into this the ultimate random factor - the TV debates on Friday and Sunday

The outlier candidates have everything to gain

The frontrunners have a lot to lose

Both events have the potential to shake up the contest before Monday's vote

— Steven Swinford (@Steven\_Swinford) [July 14, 2022](#)

The Liz Truss path to No 2 slot is narrow:

- 1) She picks up sig numbers of 27 Suella Braverman backers
- 2) Penny Mordaunt \*doesn't\* pick up big chunk of Tom Tugendhat's backers if he falls
- 3) A big chunk of Kemi Badenoch's backers go to Truss rather than Sunak if she falls

— Steven Swinford (@Steven\_Swinford) [July 14, 2022](#)

From Talk TV's **Tom Newton Dunn**

My take on Tory 2nd ballot: Zahawi and Hunt backers split all ways and the big beasts Sunak + Truss are still not able to clean up. Suggests

the majority of MPs still want a fresh face. The last 2 is still all to play for + between 4 I think, if Tugendhat falls in with Badenoch.

— Tom Newton Dunn (@tnewtondunn) [July 14, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#) [11.36](#)

All five remaining candidates in the contest - Rishi Sunak, [Penny Mordaunt](#), Liz Truss, Kemi Badenoch and Tom Tugendhat - have agreed to take part in the first TV debate, on Channel 4 tomorrow at 7.30pm. This is from **Krishnan Guru-Murthy**, who will be moderating.

CONFIRMED. All 5 candidates to be Tory leader have agreed to take part in the first TV debate on Channel 4 at 7.30pm Friday night, lasting 90 minutes and moderated by me. <https://t.co/C6xkmEPbnI>

— Krishnan Guru-Murthy (@krishgm) [July 14, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#) [11.33](#)

**Kemi Badenoch** says the results today show a growing number of Tories support her brand of “honest politics and conservative principles”.

I am delighted that a growing number of my colleagues have faith in my vision for a return to honest politics and conservative principles. Thank you for your support.

Now is the time for change, and I am looking forward to continuing to make that case in the TV debates. [pic.twitter.com/R7VIA14Atv](https://pic.twitter.com/R7VIA14Atv)

— Kemi Badenoch (@KemiBadenoch) [July 14, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#)[11.29](#)

My colleague **Aubrey Allegretti** posted this yesterday giving the timings for the remaining parliamentary ballots in the Tory leadership contest.

Set your watches □

Here's the timings for the rest of the Tory leadership contest:

Thursday - second vote, result 3pm  
Next Monday - third vote, result 8pm  
Next Tuesday - fourth vote, result 3pm  
Next Wednesday - fifth and final vote, 4pm

Then, we'll have our final two! [pic.twitter.com/kenNz xvOBc](#)

— Aubrey Allegretti (@breeallegretti) [July 13, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#)[11.24](#)

According to the Spectator's **Fraser Nelson**, bookmakers' odds suggest **Penny Mordaunt** is now more than twice as likely to be the next Tory leader as Rishi Sunak.

Mordaunt now regarded as twice as likely to be PM as Sunak, the no2.  
<https://t.co/potWZQQjbK> [pic.twitter.com/ev9HmCcvjU](#)

— Fraser Nelson (@FraserNelson) [July 14, 2022](#)

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Updated at 13.59 EDT

[3d ago](#)[11.20](#)

**David Davis**, the former Brexit secretary who is backing Penny Mordaunt for next Tory leader, has described the Lord Frost comments about Mordauant (see [9.20am](#) and [11.31am](#)) as part of a “black ops” operation. He told Sky News:

It’s absolutely clockwork - you get to the point that somebody gets ahead and looks to be the real challenger, and then the black op starts, the incoming fire starts.

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[3d ago](#)[11.13](#)

A supporter of [Liz Truss](#) said her campaign had picked up “solid momentum” in what had been a “difficult round” for them, PA Media reports. **Simon Clarke**, chief secretary to the Treasury, said there was a limited pool of support they could have plausibly won over from the supporters of the candidates eliminated in the first round.

This is very much on the trajectory we thought. We are attracting broad support from people across the party.

- 
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Updated at 14.00 EDT

[3d ago](#) [11.11](#)

**Nadine Dorries**, the culture secretary and Liz Truss supporter, has urged MPs to unite behind Truss. Her message seems to be aimed particularly at Suella Braverman's supporters, who now must choose someone else to vote for, and supporters of Kemi Badenoch, another rightwinger. The point about Truss being someone “who actually has the ability to lead the country” seems to be a reference to Penny Mordaunt’s relative inexperience.

Great result for [@trussliz](#)

Now is the time for us all to unite behind a candidate who actually has the ability to lead the country as PM.

As Foreign sec, she imposed the very toughest sanctions on Putin. That took serious ability and sheer grit. [#LizForLeader](#)

— Nadine Dorries (@NadineDorries) [July 14, 2022](#)

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## Rishi Sunak

# Rishi Sunak warns Tory rivals against unsustainable tax cuts

Former chancellor endures tricky interview as Liz Truss seeks to make up ground before second round of Tory leadership voting

- [Latest politics news – live](#)



Rishi Sunak insisted he was the candidate who would be best placed to beat the Labour leader, Keir Starmer, at the next general election. Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

*Aubrey Allegretti Political correspondent  
@breeallegretti*

Thu 14 Jul 2022 04.51 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 05.49 EDT

Rishi Sunak has warned Tory leadership rivals against making unsustainable tax cut pledges just to win elections, as [Liz Truss fights to make up ground](#)

in Thursday afternoon's second round of votes in the race to become Britain's next prime minister.

Having [emerged as the frontrunner](#) in Wednesday's ballot of MPs with the support of a quarter of all Tory MPs, Sunak insisted he was the candidate who would be best placed to beat the Labour leader, Keir Starmer, at the next general election.

The former chancellor dodged questions about whether he had considered resigning before last week, when a mass exodus of ministers from government led to Boris Johnson's demise, and would not say if he understood many people's financial worries during the cost of living crisis given his own personal wealth.

However, speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Sunak said he believed in hard work and aspiration, adding "that's my story".

He and Truss were viewed for months as the two top contenders to replace Johnson, but the campaign teams of both have been alarmed by the performance of Penny Mordaunt.

The trade minister came second in Wednesday's vote and would far outstrip other candidates in a series of run-offs, according to a recent YouGov poll of about 900 Tory members.

With two Tory leadership hopefuls knocked out of the race for not securing enough votes, Sunak, Truss and Mordaunt, as well as the remaining three candidates, are scrambling to hoover up their backers. Jeremy Hunt, who got the support of just 18 MPs, had endorsed Sunak, while Nadhim Zahawi, who got 25, has remained silent.

Pressed on whether he was too slick or rich to understand the pressures faced by many during the cost of living crisis, Sunak told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that he did not judge people by their bank accounts but by their character – and his actions as chancellor for more than two years were what mattered most.

In a swipe at candidates, including Truss, who have pledged faster tax cuts, Sunak said: “Of course I want to cut taxes and I will deliver tax cuts. But we will do that in a measured way. And the only way to really do that sustainably over time is to ensure that the [Conservatives](#) win the next general election. And I’m convinced that I’m the best person to beat Keir Starmer.”

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He added: “I think our number one economic priority is to tackle inflation and not make it worse. Inflation is the enemy. It makes everybody poorer. And if we don’t act to tackle inflation now, it will cost families more in the long run, especially with mortgages.

“I will get taxes down in this parliament, but I’m going to do so responsibly. Because I don’t cut taxes to win elections, I win elections to cut taxes.”

Truss is [due to launch her leadership bid](#) on Thursday, and her supporters are urging those backing her rivals Suella Braverman and Kemi Badenoch to unite behind her to avoid the foreign secretary being left off the final ballot when members vote on a final two from next Wednesday.

Several more knockout rounds of voting by MPs are due to take place, with the result of the second ballot announced at 3pm on Thursday.

TV debates on Channel 4, ITV and Sky News will be held over the following few days, followed by further votes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

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## Conservative leadership

# David Frost has ‘grave reservations’ about Penny Mordaunt as Tory leader

Former Brexit minister and other Liz Truss allies hit out at Mordaunt after she came second in first ballot

- [Latest politics news – live](#)



Penny Mordaunt after launching her campaign for the Tory leadership on Wednesday. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/EPA

[Aubrey Allegretti and Jennifer Rankin in Brussels](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 06.50 EDTFirst published on Thu 14 Jul 2022 05.12 EDT

The [Conservative leadership](#) candidate Penny Mordaunt has come under fire from supporters of her rival Liz Truss who expressed “grave reservations” about her, as tensions ratchet up in the race for the second place on the final leadership ballot paper.

After Mordaunt usurped Truss to trail Rishi Sunak in [Wednesday's first ballot](#) of Tory MPs, allies of the foreign secretary sought to sow doubt about the trade minister's record on Brexit.

David Frost, who led the UK's negotiations with the EU, said when Mordaunt was his deputy she "wasn't fully accountable or always visible" during talks with Brussels.

"To be honest, I'm quite surprised she is where she is in this race," he told TalkTV on Thursday. "She was my deputy – notionally more than really – in the [Brexit](#) talks last year.

"I'm sorry to say this, she did not master the necessary detail in the negotiations last year. She wouldn't always deliver tough messages to the EU when that was necessary and I'm afraid she wasn't fully accountable or always visible. Sometimes I didn't even know where she was.

"I'm afraid this became such a problem that after six months I had to ask the PM to move her on and find somebody else to support me. From the basis of what I saw, I would have grave reservations."

Simon Clarke, the chief secretary to the Treasury and also a Truss supporter, said Frost's warning was "a really serious one". "Conservatives – and far more importantly our country – need a leader who is tested and ready," he added.

Another anonymous Truss backer said overnight it was the wrong moment to install a prime minister who needed "[stabilisers](#)".

British public 'fed up' of broken promises, says Penny Mordaunt – video

Mordaunt, who backed Brexit before the referendum in 2016, has sought to rely on those credentials as part of the contest, telling supporters at her campaign launch on Wednesday that she wanted to fully unleash the potentials of a "Brexit dividend".

Truss is a Brexit convert who was part of George Osborne's Treasury team during the remain campaign that was accused of peddling "project fear".

Truss's supporters were rattled on Wednesday night by Mordaunt pipping her to second place by taking 67 votes, while the foreign secretary got 50. Sunak was the frontrunner with 88.

Mordaunt, who had little interaction with the EU during her ministerial career, is not well known in Brussels. Those who have followed her career are not enthused about her moving to No 10. "We are bracing [ourselves]," said one EU official. "Not because she'd be a tough interlocutor. Because her reputation is she is totally incompetent. And that won't help."

The former defence minister gained prominence in the 2016 EU referendum campaign when she made [repeated false claims](#) that the UK could not veto Turkey's EU membership. She told LBC this week that she stood by those comments.

European diplomats are more familiar with other contenders, such as Truss, who has led the push to unilaterally rewrite the Northern Ireland protocol, a step that has brought EU-UK relations to a new low.

Some think the current frontrunner, Rishi Sunak, might take a more pragmatic approach to the protocol, because of the potential damage a trade war with the EU would inflict on the already weak UK economy. But few see any prospect of an improvement in EU-UK relations.

"We have a hope that it might improve one day, but we don't see in any of the candidates a radical change," a senior EU diplomat said. "Even if the style is different, the substance will not be very different."

Meanwhile a battle is under way among the remaining candidates' camps to hoover up supporters of those who dropped out: Jeremy Hunt has endorsed Sunak but Nadhim Zahawi has remained silent.

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Truss kicked off her leadership campaign with a rally on Thursday morning, as allies called on contenders Suella Braverman and [Kemi Badenoch](#) to unite behind her.

In an attempt to reinvigorate her campaign to be the next prime minister, Truss was expected to say her mission remained making the UK “an aspiration nation, where every child, every person has the best opportunity to succeed”.

Truss has also reiterated her promise to cut taxes, including by reversing the recent national insurance increase, which is earmarked to pay for social care. In an [interview with the Spectator](#) she suggested tax cuts could be paid for through extra borrowing.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/14/david-frost-grave-reservations-penny-mordaunt-tory-leader>

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## **Tory leadership race: who's still standing, what are they promising and who's backing them?**



The remaining candidates: Liz Truss, Kemi Badenochm Penny Mordaunt, Rishi Sunak and Tom Tugendhat Composite: Guardian

Household names and lesser-known Tories are in the mix to be the next PM, from Kemi Badenoch to Tom Tugendhat

*[Alexandra Topping](#) , [Ben Quinn](#) and [Helena Horton](#)*

Fri 15 Jul 2022 03.52 EDTFirst published on Sun 10 Jul 2022 15.56 EDT

If your head is reeling after the breathless psychodrama of the last few days, you are not alone. Yet, even before the black door of Downing Street had shut behind [Boris Johnson](#), the contest for his successor was well under way.

By Thursday afternoon, the field had been narrowed down to five candidates. Let's take a look at the remaining runners and riders:

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## Contents

1. [1Kemi Badenoch](#)
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1

## Kemi Badenoch



Kemi Badenoch in 2018. Photograph: Russell Hart/Alamy

**Best known for:** Being a former levelling up and equalities minister, and standing at the vanguard of the “war on woke”.

**The pitch:** A rising star on the party’s right, a fresh face who is determined to slash the state, “focus on the essentials” and stop government from being “a piggy bank for pressure groups”.

**Backers (as of Wednesday afternoon):** All those passing this stage must have at least 30 backers. Badenoch received 40 nominations, and has received public support from Michael Gove, Lee Anderson and Ben Bradley.

## Q&A

### **Who is backing Kemi Badenoch?**

Show

- Lee Rowley
- Lee Anderson
- Eddie Hughes
- Julia Lopez

- Tom Hunt
- Ben Bradley
- Justin Tomlinson
- Gareth Bacon
- Dr Caroline Johnson
- Andrew Lewer
- Michael Gove
- Neil O'Brien
- Michael Gove
- Leo Docherty
- Alex Burghart
- Lucy Allan
- Nigel Mills
- Marco Longhi
- Sarah Dines
- Rachel Maclean
- Robert Courts
- Tom Randall
- Steve Double

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

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## Where do they stand on ...

**Tax and spending:** With her pledge to introduce a micro-state, she has promised “lower taxes” – but says this is to boost growth and productivity, and would be accompanied by tight spending discipline.

**Boris Johnson:** A fierce defender when the government faced criticism over the controversial [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities](#) (Cred) report, she may have been disappointed to not see her star rise further in his government. While she argues Johnson had great success with Brexit and vaccines, he “came to embody” the feeling that things were not working.

**Culture war:** Long a lieutenant in the so-called war on woke despite her relatively short career, Badenoch argues that the UK is “falsely criticised as

oppressive to minorities and immoral because it enforces its own borders”, and has not shied away from full-throated participation in the culture wars – in her most recent pitch comparing “identity politics” to coercive control.

**Climate crisis:** Badenoch has said she will look again at net zero targets, telling the Telegraph that it would hit people in the pockets to transition to a green economy. However, she has gained the support of Gove, who is thought to be one of the greenest Tories and impressed many environmentalists when he was at the helm of Defra. Perhaps he will have a word.

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2

## Penny Mordaunt



Penny Mordaunt leaves 10 Downing Street, November 2018. Photograph: Reuters/Alamy

**Best known for:** It should probably be becoming the UK’s first female defence secretary, if only for 85 days. Sadly, she’s better known for taking part in the [ITV diving show Splash](#).

**What's their pitch:** Fairly vague so far with a campaign video – pitched somewhere between a Hovis advert and Rugby World Cup taster – which is light on policy and, indeed, her presence.

**Backers:** 67, including Andrea Leadsom, Caroline Dinenage and Damian Collins.

## Q&A

### **Who is backing Penny Mordaunt?**

#### Show

- John Lamont
- Nicola Richards
- Michael Fabricant
- Andrea Leadsom
- Kieran Mullan
- Sir Charles Walker
- Alicia Kearns
- Craig Tracey
- Harriet Baldwin
- Damian Collins
- James Gray
- Elliot Colburn
- Caroline Ansell
- Robbie Moore
- George Freeman
- Derek Thomas
- Maria Miller
- Theo Clarke
- Caroline Dinenage
- Duncan Baker
- James Sunderland
- Sarah Atherton
- Kate Griffiths
- Bob Seely

- David Davis
- Bob Stewart
- Dr. James Davies
- John Baron
- John Penrose
- Alberto Costa
- Caroline Nokes
- Jerome Mayhew
- Sir Mike Penning
- Jill Mortimer
- Trudy Harrison
- Mims Davies
- Luke Evans
- Peter Aldous
- Heather Wheeler
- Tobias Ellwood

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Penny Mordaunt launches Conservative leadership campaign – video

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## Where do they stand on ...

**Tax and spending:** The Portsmouth North MP has expressed her hope that “in the next few days we’ll be able to discuss how we get our economy growing again and enable our citizens to live well”, but is currently more preoccupied with fighting off critical questions about her views on gender.

**Boris Johnson:** Sacked as defence secretary by Johnson, her campaign video bizarrely features the former leader of the Conservative party joking: “Let’s get breakfast done.” Pitching to MPs who feel they have been sidelined and ignored during Johnson’s tenure, she said: “Our leadership has to change. It needs to become a little less about the leader and a lot more about the ship.”

**Culture war:** A former equalities minister and now a trade minister, Mordaunt has – until now – been an outlier in her party and has publicly supported trans rights. But in a sign of how important so-called culture war issues could be in the contest to replace Johnson, Mordaunt [tweeted to insist](#) that opponents were trying to falsely portray her as “woke” before even releasing her initial campaign video.

**Climate crisis:** Though she has previously not really spoken out on climate issues, her backers say she supports net zero and climate action, and that she is due to make an intervention in coming days. She is backed by Alicia Kearns, an MP from the 2019 intake, who has been vocal on what green jobs can do for her constituency of Rutland and Melton.

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3

## Rishi Sunak



Rishi Sunak leaves Millbank Studios in May 2022. Photograph: John Sibley/Reuters

**Best known for:** Being a super-rich former chancellor who wears expensive flip-flops, and once gave us all a half-price Nando's.

**The pitch:** A serious man for serious times, who won't give MPs a tax cut just because they want them – and trying to remind us we used to love him.

**Backers:** 88, including Dominic Raab, Jeremy Hunt, Gavin Williamson and [Grant Shapps](#).

## Q&A

### Who is backing Rishi Sunak?

Show

- Mark Harper
- Jacob Young
- Angela Richardson
- John Glen
- Laura Trott
- Mark Spencer
- Claire Coutinho
- Kevin Hollinrake
- Paul Maynard
- Robert Jenrick
- Bob Neill
- Liam Fox
- Oliver Dowden
- Mel Stride
- Bim Afolami
- Simon Jupp
- Simon Hoare
- Louie French
- Andrew Murrison
- Fay Jones
- Peter Gibson
- Helen Whately
- Maria Caulfield
- Craig Williams
- Sir Robert Goodwill

- James Cartlidge
- Simon Hart
- Gareth Davies
- Siobhan Baillie
- Rebecca Pow
- Anthony Browne
- Ruth Edwards
- Greg Hands
- Gary Streeter
- Laura Farris
- Andrew Bowie
- Alex Chalk
- Victoria Prentis
- Grant Shapps
- Dominic Raab
- Gavin Williamson
- Lucy Frazer
- Gillian Keegan
- Matt Hancock
- James Wild
- Mark Menzies
- Steve Barclay
- Chris Skidmore
- Andrew Jones
- Stephen Crabb
- Alun Cairns
- Simon Baynes
- Michael Ellis
- Theresa Villiers
- Jeremy Quin
- Nigel Huddleston
- Jeremy Hunt
- Will Quince
- Richard Holden
- Paul Howell
- Richard Graham

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Ex-chancellor Rishi Sunak launches Tory leadership campaign – video

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## Where do they stand on ...

**Tax and spending:** Sunak has indicated he will focus more on fiscal prudence than immediate tax cuts, with his video taking aim at other candidates who may offer “comforting fairytales” rather than face the hard economic reality.

In a field populated by other candidates promising cuts, that may become a challenge. Arch Johnson loyalist Jacob Rees-Mogg has dismissed Sunak since the contest began as “a high-tax chancellor”.

**Boris Johnson:** Sunak was a close ally of Johnson, and stuck with him throughout Partygate, but his resignation was seen as the straw that broke the camel’s back and launched a flurry of resignations. After this perceived treachery, the anyone-but-Rishi camp has gone on a war footing. One senior No 10 official was quoted [in the Financial Times](#) as calling Sunak “a treacherous bastard”, while a Johnson supporter in the cabinet told the paper: “Rishi will get everything he deserves for leading the charge in bringing down the prime minister.”

**Culture war:** For a former chancellor whose budget last October was criticised for devoting more time to alcohol duty [than to policies on care, housing, climate or violence against women](#), Sunak’s insiders nonetheless found time to stress that he was committed to protecting women’s rights from “gender-neutral language” in a article in the Daily Mail. “Rishi believes in people’s freedom to choose how they live and who they love, but that women’s rights must be protected as well,” the source said.

**Climate crisis:** Insiders say Sunak was very resistant to spending money on climate measures when he helmed the Treasury. He has, however, previously spoken out in support of net zero and made the case for a greener economy. Green Tories fear he could be swayed by the supporters of the many

rightwing candidates as they get knocked out during the contest, and look for a credible candidate to back.

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4

## Liz Truss



Liz Truss gives a statement to the House of Commons in May 2022.  
Photograph: UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor/Reuters

**Best known for:** Being a hawkish foreign secretary, a [pork markets](#) obsessive with a hatred of [disgraceful cheese imports](#).

**The pitch:** Told the Telegraph on Sunday: “It isn’t right to be putting up taxes now. I would reverse the national insurance increase that came in during April, make sure we keep corporation tax competitive so we can attract business and investment into Britain, and put the Covid debt on a longer-term footing.”

**Backers:** 50, including Nadine Dorries and Jacob Rees-Mogg.

Q&A

## **Who is backing Liz Truss?**

Show

- Alec Shelbrooke
- Dehenna Davison
- Jackie Doyle-Price
- Julian Knight
- Rob Butler
- Chloe Smith
- Dean Russell
- Marcus Fysh
- Darren Henry
- Ranil Jayawardena
- Simon Clarke
- Thérèse Coffey
- Kwasi Kwarteng
- Wendy Morton
- Vicky Ford
- James Cleverly
- Jacob Rees-Mogg
- Nadine Dorries
- Mark Pritchard
- Brendan Clarke-Smith
- Paul Bristow
- Chris Chope
- Mark Francois
- Iain Duncan Smith
- Chris Loder
- Kevin Foster
- Laurence Robertson
- Andrea Jenkyns
- Mark Jenkinson
- Ed Argar
- James Heappey
- Tom Purseglove
-

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Liz Truss launches her Tory leadership campaign – video

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## Where do they stand on ...

**Tax and spending:** Truss has been at pains to paint herself as an heir to Thatcher, with her allies stating that her economic pitch, rooted in “low-tax principles”, higher defence spending and trade deals would set her apart from other heavyweight contenders. She memorably hailed younger people as a generation of “Uber-riding, Airbnb-ing, Deliveroo-eating freedom fighters”.

**Boris Johnson:** Seen as a Johnson loyalist, her allies nonetheless reportedly lobbied the frontbench to back her to replace him at the height of the Partygate scandal.

**Culture war:** Truss, who holds the equalities brief alongside being foreign secretary, has said people should not have the right to self-identify as a different gender without medical checks, adding that she believed it was “dehumanising to be treated as a woman, rather than a person”.

**Climate crisis:** Many have privately joked that it shows what a dire situation the contest is in when the main climate hope lies in libertarian Truss, who did not include climate commitments in many trade deals when she ran the trade department. However, she is backed by the energy secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, who is relatively strong on renewable energy, and another backer, Vicky Ford points out that she was very supportive of Cop26.

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Tom Tugendhat in 2019. Photograph: Niall Carson/PA

**Best known for:** Condemning the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August last year with the words: “This does not need to be defeat, but at the moment it damn well feels like it.”

**The pitch:** A former soldier who would fight for Queen and country as PM, Tugendhat’s message, on repeat, is that the country needs a “clean start” and his bib is spotless.

**Backers:** 37, including Damian Green and Anne-Marie Trevelyan.

## Q&A

### **Who is backing Tom Tugendhat?**

Show

- Damian Green
- Rehman Chishti
- Aaron Bell
- John Stevenson
- Robert Largan

- Stephen Hammond
- Sir Robert Syams
- Anne-Marie Trevelyan
- Mark Logan
- Chris Green
- Anne Marie Morris
- Nickie Aiken
- Damian Moore
- Karen Bradley
- Paul Holmes
- Jake Berry
- Mark Pawsey
- James Daly
- Jo Gideon
- Neil Hudson
- Dr Ben Spencer
- Simon Fell

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Backbencher Tom Tugendhat launches Tory leadership campaign – video

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## Where do they stand on ...

**Tax and spending:** Pitching himself as the cost-of-living-crisis candidate, Tugendhat has promised “an unrelenting focus” on the issue. Despite being perceived as about the most leftwing candidate in the contest, Tugendhat has nailed his tax-cutting credentials to the mast, saying that “[taxes, bluntly, are too high](#)”, and has called for the national insurance hike to be scrapped – and he actually voted against it at the time. Also wants a drop in fuel tax and the dropping of “un-conservative tariffs”.

**Boris Johnson:** In a bid to separate himself from other candidates who have served in cabinet under Johnson – which is most of them – Tugendhat has distanced himself from the departing PM. Unlike others who have been sent out to bat for Johnson in media rounds while the rules of the game quickly

shifted while they were on air, Tugendhat has not defended Johnson over Partygate and other scandals.

**Culture war:** Tugendhat has been critical of “victim culture”, stating in a comment piece for [the Times](#) that “the most consequential victim of our age is somewhat different. Truth”.

**Climate crisis:** While in 2020 he called the climate emergency “one of our biggest challenges” and pointed out that Margaret Thatcher at points in her career made pronouncements on how we need to stop global heating, his campaign has not impressed green Tories. He has not mentioned the climate in his pitch, and instead has backed the idea of a cut in fuel tax.

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## 6

## Who's dropped out?

- Grant Shapps, the transport secretary, dropped out on 12 July and pledged support to Rishi Sunak’s bid.
  - Sajid Javid, the former health secretary, dropped out on 12 July, though didn’t immediately endorse any other candidate
  - Rehman Chishti, a backbencher, pulled out on 12 July after failing to gain a single public endorsement.
  - Jeremy Hunt (18 votes) and Nadhim Zahawi (25) failed to reach the threshold of 30 votes in the first round of voting on 13 July and were knocked out of the contest.
  - Suella Braverman (27 votes, down five) was knocked out in the second round of voting on 14 July.
-

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## 2022.07.14 - Spotlight

- Metropolis meltdown The urgent steps we need to take to cool our sweltering cities
- Coming out in later life ‘When my wife fawned over Richard Gere, I was secretly thinking, phwoar!’
- Extreme heat Around the world in videos, photos and graphics
- Dizziness, headache, dry skin ... How to spot heatstroke – and avoid it in the first place

## Architecture

# **Metropolis meltdown: the urgent steps we need to take to cool our sweltering cities**

All over the world, temperatures in urban areas are rocketing. What can we do? Axe air-con, whitewash roofs, unleash buried rivers – and try to be a bit more like Norwich



Symptom of the climate crisis ... volunteers paint a New York roof with specialised reflective coating. Photograph: Ken Cavanagh/Alamy



[Oliver Wainwright](#)

[@ollywainwright](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT

With temperatures set to hit 37C (98.6F) in the UK next week, and heatwaves only likely to become more frequent, it might be useful to see how other sun-scorched regions have adapted their cities to cope.

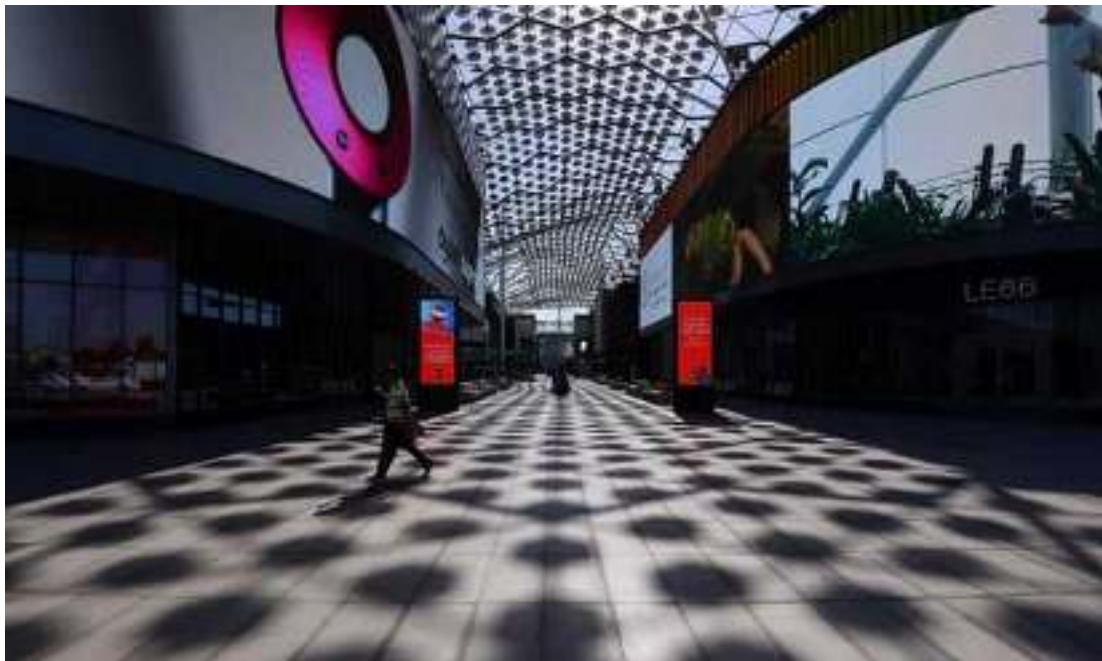
On a trip to Dubai a few years ago, I was shown a new outdoor shopping street that had apparently been carefully tuned to the desert climate. It was presented as a novel concept for this indoor shopping mall-addicted nation, designed in the manner of a pedestrian precinct familiar to those in less arid climes. A merciful breeze wafted along the pavement, and I wondered what clever environmental design allowed the street to feel so much cooler than the rest of the sweltering city.

America expends as much energy on air-con as Britain uses in total

“Outdoor air conditioning,” came the answer. Sure enough, between each shop unit, rows of jets were busy pumping processed icy air out into the 40C heat. Meanwhile, around the back of the block, generators spewed out hot

exhaust air, making other streets even more insufferable for those outside the chilled private precinct.

As temperatures soar across the world, [with London expected to feel like Barcelona by 2050](#), and Madrid set to be like Marrakech, there is a danger that outdoor AC units could soon become just as ubiquitous as the patio gas heater – the colossal emissions of both accelerating the extreme weather that they are designed to mitigate.



Colossal emissions ... outdoor air conditioning in Dubai's Citywalk.  
Photograph: Tom Dulat/Getty Images

Air conditioning is almost uniquely power-hungry, and [its use is only set to grow](#). The US expends as much energy on it each year as the UK uses in total, while during a recent heatwave in Beijing, half of the city's power capacity was going on AC. As hot, developing nations become more prosperous, and prosperous nations become hotter, the International Energy Agency estimates that the energy spent on air conditioning will triple by 2050 – a growth equivalent to the current electricity demand in the US and Germany combined.

So how can we adapt our buildings, streets and public spaces to cope, without resorting to pumping out energy-hungry, mechanically chilled air

and further heating our planet in the process?

The biggest cause of the [urban heat island effect](#) – which can make cities up to 10C warmer than neighbouring rural areas – is the stuff they are made of: hard, dark, dense materials like concrete, brick, tarmac and asphalt, which absorb the sun’s heat during the day, and re-radiate it at night. It sounds too simple a solution, but some argue that one of the most effective measures to cool cities down is to make their surfaces reflect light, rather than absorb it – particularly where you might not think to look: up on the roof.

Researchers at the University of Oxford found that making the rooftops of buildings a lighter, more reflective colour [could reduce daytime temperatures by up to 3C during a heatwave](#). That might not sound like a huge difference, but the scientists concluded that such a drop could reduce the number of heat-related deaths by up to a quarter – a massive life-saving measure, given there were over 2,500 excess deaths from heat during the 2020 heatwave.



Powerful cooling effect ... the revived Cheonggyecheon River in Seoul; the project cost \$900m. Photograph: Anthony Wallace/AFP/Getty Images

“Cool roofs can be really simple,” said co-author of the study Dr Clare Heaviside, who is now associate professor at University College London’s

Institute for Environmental Design and Engineering. “Think of Mediterranean countries, where the houses are painted white. The more reflective the rooftop, the lower the surrounding air temperature will be.” The modelling study, which focused on Birmingham and the West Midlands, found that the type of building made a difference, too. Modifying only half of the industrial and commercial buildings, with their expansive rooftops, had the same impact on lowering temperatures as adapting all of the residential buildings in the city – suggesting that real change could be easily implemented with a tweak to planning policy.

In the US, the roof-lightening crusade is already under way. Research by Nasa has shown that a white roof in New York City can be 23C cooler than a typical black asphalt roof on the hottest day of the summer. The city’s [Cool Roofs](#) campaign, which was launched in 2009, has already seen over 900,000 sq metres of roof space covered in a white reflective coating, saving almost 4,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year from cooling emissions.

Paris's buried river Bièvre was described as 'oily and black, streaked with acids'. It's now seen as a potential saviour

Meanwhile, the road-riddled city of Los Angeles faces a different dilemma: more than 10% of the urban land area is black asphalt, which absorbs up to 95% of the sun’s energy. In response, the city has trailed painting roads with a white reflective coating – at a cost of \$40,000 a mile. Initial measurements showed the coating could reduce temperatures by up to 5C, although others have suggested that, while the road surface itself may be cooler, the [reflected sunlight actually makes nearby pedestrians feel much hotter](#).

While the jury might be out on the benefits of white roads, most urbanists agree that planting trees is one of the best ways to cool cities down – without the danger of reflecting sunlight where it isn’t wanted. Beyond biodiversity benefits, flood mitigation and [pollution-scrubbing abilities](#), trees’ cooling powers come from both shade and transpiration, when the water within the tree is released as vapour through its leaves. One study in Manchester found that [street trees reduced surface temperatures by an average of 12C](#), and that concrete surfaces shaded permanently by a bank of trees were cooled by up to 20C in the summer. [A recent Swiss study](#) of almost 300 cities across

Europe came to similar conclusions, but it also found that green spaces without trees had a negligible cooling effect – and in some instances treeless green spaces were actually even warmer than the surrounding urban areas, due to the lack of shade. [Beware the greenwashers.](#)



Giant offender ... glass-lined high rises. Photograph: LUHUANFENG/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Although trickier to implement than greenery, bodies of water also have a powerful cooling effect on cities, through evaporation and by channelling air currents. A study of the River Don, which flows through Sheffield, [revealed](#) that the cooling impact of this small river extended into surrounding areas up to 30 metres away, especially in green spaces or streets that opened to the river.

In Seoul, the Cheonggyecheon River was revived in 2005, having been buried beneath an elevated highway since the 1960s. It was found that the temperatures along the waterway are up to [6C cooler than on parallel roads a few blocks away](#) – although critics of the \$900m project argue that the location of roads within the cooled zone means that [it is cars, not humans, who enjoy the benefits](#). Paris has also been considering plans [to reinstate the buried river Bièvre](#), a waterway described in 1899 as “oily and black, streaked with acids, dotted with soapy and putrid pustules”, but now seen as

a potential climate saviour in a city that saw summer temperatures reach over 42C in 2019. Could London's buried Fleet and Walbrook be next in [the riverine battle against urban heating?](#)

When it comes to the design of buildings themselves, our regulations are only just beginning to catch up with the hotter end of the climate crisis. Last year, for the first time, the building regs introduced a new section on overheating, appropriately titled [Part O](#). Until now, most environmental design measures in England have been focused on keeping our draughty homes warm, a task made even more pressing by stratospheric winter fuel bills.



Future facing ... homes on Goldsmith Street in Norwich are oriented north-south with added horizontal shades above the south-facing windows.  
Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

The result is that most contemporary housing is designed with scant consideration for rising temperatures. The proliferation of single aspect flats (with windows on just one side) leaves no possibility for cross-ventilation, while lower ceiling heights, large amounts of glazing and communal heating systems all add to the furnace feeling, and enhanced insulation levels mean it's now much harder for heat to escape once a flat has heated up.

Other regulations have brought their own unintended consequences. For example, the need to ensure that communal outdoor space receives enough direct sunlight at certain times of the year has spawned many developments with apartments that are oriented east-west, and therefore prone to overheating – as the sun is lower in the sky at these directions and shines straight through the windows.

“The guidance has always been about maximising daylight and sunlight as an asset,” says Annalie Riches, architect of the [Stirling prize-winning Goldsmith Street](#) low-energy social housing in Norwich. “But it hasn’t really acknowledged the problem with having too much of it.” At Goldsmith Street, they ensured the homes were oriented north-south, and added horizontal shades above the south-facing windows, like the peak of a cap. Such features are likely to become evermore common, with external shutters, blinds and louvres preventing too much direct summer sunlight from reaching the window in the first place.

As Rachel Harris of the [Architects Climate Action Network](#) argues, the future will not be about hi-tech, mechanical solutions, but getting the basics right, learning from vernacular techniques that have been tried and tested for centuries. “If orientation, shading and air flow are done right,” she says, “we should be able to keep people comfortable, even in increasingly extreme climates – without the need to reach for the aircon switch.”

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## Sexuality

# ‘When my wife fawned over Richard Gere, I was secretly thinking, phwoar!’: the people who come out in later life

Olympic athlete Kelly Holmes spoke openly about her sexuality last month for the first time at the age of 52. But she is not alone. We meet five people who embraced their true selves in their fifties and beyond



Norman Goodman: ‘When my wife died in 2017, part of me went with her. But at last I could shout about my sexuality.’ Photograph: Richard Saker/The Guardian



[Michael Segalov](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 02.31 EDT

There is no right age or time to come out as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans. These days, it is a rite of passage associated with the young; over generations, the average age for coming out has fallen. For some, though, it takes a little longer: last month, after 34 years in the public eye, the Olympic athlete Dame [Kelly Holmes came out](#) at the age of 52, for the first time speaking openly about her sexuality. She is by no means the only one. For some, it is a self-realisation that comes out of the blue; others may have spent a lifetime grappling with prejudice, with memories of a time when homosexuality was still criminalised, or a culture that once encouraged silence. Here, five LGBTQ+ people who came out later in life share their stories, proving that there is always time to embrace and explore identity or your sexuality.

## **Norman Goodman, 72, Manchester**

When I was very young, I thought I was gay. It's why, in the 1950s, I found school rather uncomfortable. Being Jewish meant being gay was never a possibility in my mind, even if our family wasn't particularly orthodox or religious. With nowhere to turn, I became confused about my gender and

sexuality. I was taken to doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists. I was admitted into a psychiatric unit and given a course of electroconvulsive therapy. Later, I had aversion therapy.

Watching Top of the Pops, I always fancied the blokes, but occasionally I'd find myself drawn to one of the women. So when I met Marilyn at the age of 22, and we got on so well, I decided I must be straight. We fell in love, and married two years later. With Marilyn by my side, I'd never been happier. Certainly, I knew I was still attracted to men as well: when my wife fawned over Richard Gere topless in a film, I was secretly thinking, "Phwoar!"

By 1984, I was working in a geriatric ward when a realisation hit me. "Hang on," I said to myself, "I like men and women, too." I was 34. Ten years later, I finally mustered the courage to tell Marilyn. At first, she thought I was messing around. After a few days of discussion, we agreed that we would keep it to ourselves. If I met a man, she said, it would be too much for her to handle. I had no intention of running off with blokes, I was just pleased to have shared my secret with her.

Ten years ago, my wife was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. After a horrendous five-year struggle, she passed away. When she died in 2017, a part of me went with her. We'd been married for more than 40 years. But this volcano deep inside me was preparing for an eruption. At last, I could shout about my sexuality – but I didn't know how to come out, or what that would entail. I considered trying to do it on The Jeremy Kyle Show. Thankfully, I didn't.

Then the opportunity just presented itself. I'm a volunteer at the Royal Exchange theatre in Manchester, and one day we were asked if we knew any older LGBTQ+ people who would participate in an oral history project. My hand shot up. The relief I felt was tremendous. From then, I wanted the whole world to know that I, Norman Goodman, am bisexual. Even today, saying that feels magnificent.

Since then, my entire world has changed. I got involved with [Out in the City](#): a local 50+ LGBTQ+ group, which organises weekly outings. One day, Tony, the group's coordinator, called me up and asked me out for a coffee. After a cinema trip, Tony told me he had feelings for me. I'd never been

with a man before, and at first we kept things friendly. We went out a bit, he stayed the night a few times. I found myself falling for him. In January this year, we met up in Marks & Spencer and we decided to make a go of it. Seven months later, we're still making each other happy.



Cailin Edwards, 71: 'In 2018, I told a friend I'd always felt myself to be a woman. It was the first time I'd said those words aloud.' Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

## **Cailin Edwards, 71, London**

I must have been only four or five when I first experienced gender dysphoria, although it wasn't something I could articulate with any clarity. I never wanted to hang out with boys, only girls; I longed to dress like girls and women.

These feelings persisted, but I kept them hidden. I knew I had questions, deep desires I was desperate to explore. But I felt this shame. I didn't want to be singled out or ridiculed. I studied and found work as an artist, I taught yoga, got married, and travelled the world as a professional photographer.

Then, in 2018, I found myself in a state of upheaval. I wasn't being who I wanted to be. The body I lived in had never felt like my own. No longer

could I deny the fact that I was a woman. It was making me miserable.

The prospect of losing my marriage, and my children not accepting who I am, terrified me more than anything. I was sitting on a park bench with a friend when I said to her: “I think I’ve always felt myself a woman.” It was the first time I’d said those words aloud. My friend said she had always thought it quite probable. We sat there, smiling.

Conveniently, I had a doctor’s appointment that afternoon. I brought it up, and was referred to the Gender Identity Clinic. It had taken so much for me to muster the courage to come out. Then I found out that the clinic had a 10-year waiting list. Instead, I started to self-medicate with hormones bought online.

I started to live out a dual life. I came out at college where I was retraining as a therapist, but at home it remained a secret. The first time I wore a skirt in public was in Bristol the following January. I felt the entire world was staring at me. Slowly, I became more confident.

During lockdown, I struggled. The hormones I’d been taking became inaccessible. Without oestrogen in my body, I went through menopause. I experienced the darkest moods I’d ever lived through. I saw an advert for [Opening Doors London](#), an organisation that supports older LGBTQ+ people. There, I found my tribe. And, thankfully, through that, [TransPlus](#) – an innovative NHS pilot scheme – stepped in to offer me the support and healthcare I needed. I’d say they saved my life in the process. Now, I’m going to have gender reassignment surgery.

All this encouraged me to come out to friends and family. For the first time, I was being seen and heard. There were mixed responses. One old painter friend couldn’t comprehend the truth, which upset me greatly; some of my extended family wasn’t exactly accepting. But my children, grandchildren and dear friends have been unbelievably supportive – beyond what I could have ever hoped for. It has taken some time, but my former wife has been kind and generous. Our separation was amicable.

The hostility against trans people in politics, media and sport alarms me tremendously. But these days, I’ve decided not to give a shit about what

others think of me. Training as a therapist has taught me to accept myself totally, be congruent with full confidence and positivity. I feel complete. I'm living the life I always knew I should, and I don't take that privilege for granted.



Evelyn Pittman: 'Married to a man and with two kids, at the age of 53, I fell wildly in love with a woman.' Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

## **Evelyn Pittman, 66, London**

I had a very long, straight start in life: married to a man and with two kids. Then, at the age of 53, I fell wildly in love with a wonderful woman. In many ways, it seemed to come out of the blue but, looking back, it can't have come from nowhere. I've thought a lot about why my sexuality was hidden for so long, even from me.

When I was young, the word "lesbian" wasn't even in my vocabulary. I was, after all, a child of the 1950s. There was a conspiracy of silence; discovering a path to being queer just didn't feel possible. So, at 53, it at last burst out of me. This woman and I got together, and it was truly magical.

My children at this point were in their 20s. We weren't a family big on personal conversations at the dinner table, but I needed to tell them. I

couldn't keep it a secret. One evening I texted my daughter to say I wouldn't be coming home that night because I had drunk a little too much to drive. It was totally out of character, and she clocked something was up. My son, meanwhile, had a lovely response: "Well, fair enough," he said, "who wouldn't love women?" Friends and family were wonderfully accepting. At this stage, I was a headteacher at a primary school. I'd started the job married to a man, and finished in a civil partnership with a woman.

As a teacher, a mother and a grandmother, I'm buoyed up by the world kids are entering into. Being different is never easy – there's still hostility and prejudice to be found – but young people today, I hope, at least have the language to explain who they are and what they feel. We all like certainties in life, I think. They make us feel safe and comfortable. But opening yourself up to uncertainties at any age can be indescribably rewarding.



Donna Personna: 'When I was 59, something shifted in my mind. It felt right that at last I started to identify as a woman publicly.' Photograph: Azha Luckman/The Guardian

## **Donna Personna, 75, San Francisco**

Activism has been a huge part of my life for as long as I can remember. In my college days, I worked with my fellow Latinos on equal-opportunity

programmes; later, my focus turned to HIV and Aids. For the past 15 years, my efforts have been centred on social justice and transgender rights. I'm radical in every aspect of my life; for me, defining myself was never a priority. I've never looked for acceptance or approval, and have always detested labels. So, it was forever unsaid but, to my mind, I was always a girl, then a woman.

In 1967, here in San Francisco, we had the summer of love. It was all hippies, free love and peace, baby. I hooked up with a group called the Cockettes: an avant garde LGBTQ+ bearded drag troupe. Through that time, the guys suggested I try dressing up, but I always declined; it felt too complicated. A few years later, I gave in and donned a dress for the first time. In every way, it fitted me perfectly.

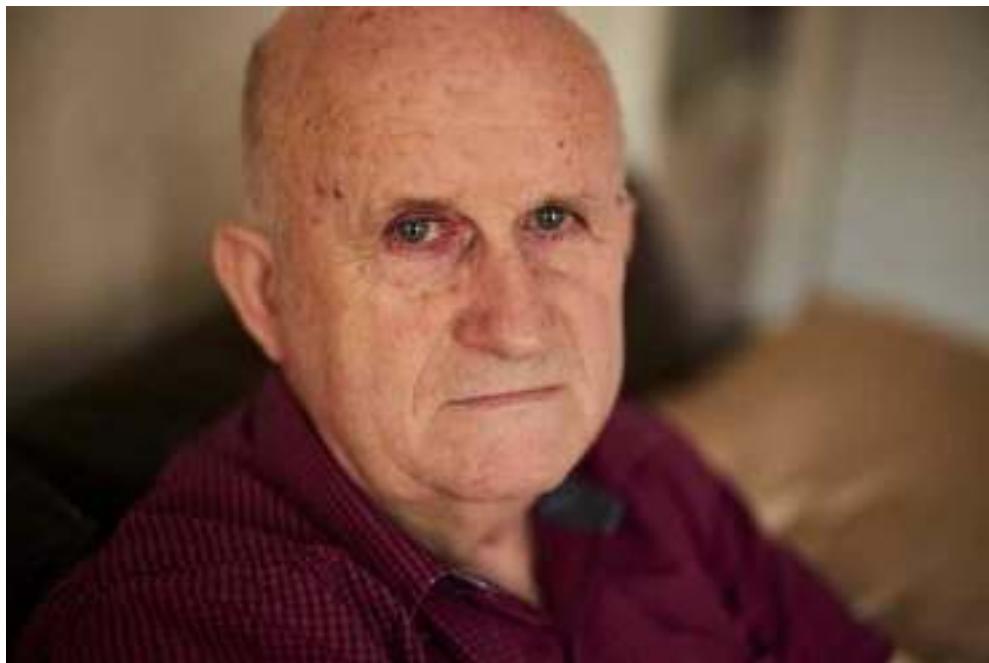
Still, I felt no great desire to explain myself to others. Then, aged 59, something shifted in my mind. It felt right that at last I started to identify as a woman publicly. With my parents now both deceased, I felt freed up to be myself. I'd spent a lifetime refusing to be put into a box, but this – to me – felt wholly natural.

Young LGBTQ+ folk today have their battles to fight. From preferred pronouns to basic rights, demands for progress continue. They're on a mission to change laws and minds, and rightly so. I guess I'm old, so see things differently. I'm 75 years old, and am the baby of my family. My siblings are old and set in their ways; they know who I am, and the life I lead, and I'm content to leave the rest unspoken. My nieces and nephews, however, know me as the woman I am. They call me "tía", aunt in Spanish.

When I speak to younger folks, I try to impart any wisdom I can: love and celebrate yourself, and if others agree that's just a bonus. They're demanding acceptance, but I'm over that. In asking for others' approval, you give them power unnecessarily. It's why I agreed to make a documentary about my life and self. I am who I am, and here it is – what you make of it is your problem.

To this day, labels frustrate me a lot. Even having to identify as transgender feels something of an aggression to me. Some day, I'm sure, that word will become history. For now, however, the revolution continues.

*Donna, a film about Donna Personna, is released in cinemas and on Bohemia Euphoria on 15 July*



Bill Drayton: ‘Strangely enough, it’s my ex-wife, I really have to thank: it’s she who helped me come out of the closet after 29 years of marriage.’  
Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

## **Bill Drayton, 74, Blackpool**

I moved to Blackpool last weekend. As soon as his spousal visa comes through, my husband is due to join me. Together, we’re about to start a new life, having met in 2014 when I was travelling in the Philippines. Strangely enough, it’s my ex-wife I really have to thank: it’s she who helped me come out of the closet. We were married for 29 years.

She and I first met at a concert in August 1985. From the outset, I think, she knew I was different. We married a few years later and loved each other dearly. All that time, I knew deep down I had these other feelings. They’d started when I’d been innocently infatuated with a boy at my prep school. While at public school, before the 1967 partial decriminalisation of homosexuality, it was thought of as being smutty and dirty despite the fact so many indulged in it.

When I had a breakdown in the early 90s, I presumed it was a consequence of the stresses of teaching. Retrospectively, I can see it was caused by the pressure of sustaining lies and facades; the guilt and shame of pretending I was straight when I wasn't.

In 1992, I went to see a psychologist. One day, I sheepishly returned home, telling my wife that the doctor had suggested I might be a homosexual. We both denied it, despite each of us knowing he was right. From time to time, my wife would bring it up again, but I vehemently refused to engage with the possibility. I was petrified, and instead turned to evangelical Christianity.

In 2011, I went on a trip to America. While I was away, my wife picked up a book: it was about a married man in his 60s coming out as gay. She became determined to find out the definitive truth about me once and for all. After collecting me from the train station, she spied an opportunity. Out of the blue, she asked once more: "Are you gay?" Bleary-eyed, jet-lagged and barely thinking, I said yes. At once, this great weight lifted off my shoulders. I'd previously been diagnosed with depression and bipolar disorder. From that day on, I've never had another symptom.

The marriage was over, but our friendship deepened. We continued to live together. She was relieved to know the truth, I think, after decades of deception. But that couldn't last for ever. Aged 63, I went on a date with a man for the first time. It was a revelation. I was like a child in a sweetshop after so many years of resisting temptation. That said, working through my internalised prejudice took time. I'd been taught by the church that homosexuals go to hell. Now, of course, I've said goodbye to this nonsense. Since then, my faith has broadened and deepened.

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# Extreme heat around the world in videos, photos and graphics

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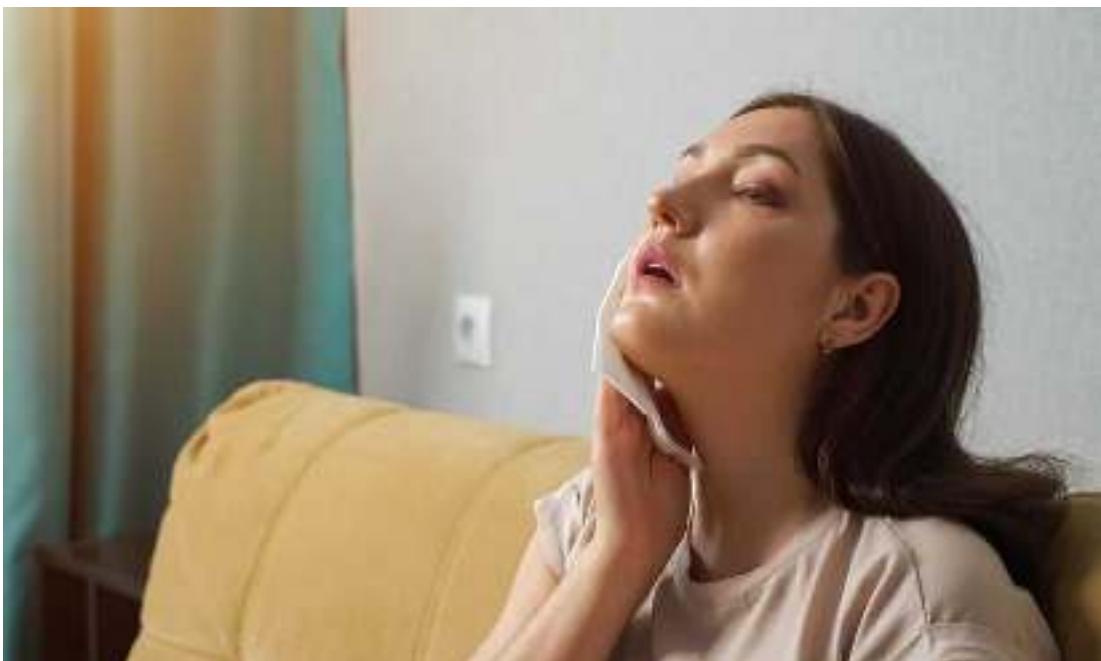
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## Dizziness, headache, dry skin ... how to spot heatstroke – and avoid it in the first place



Keep hydrated, but if you are not improving with water or struggling to keep it down, it may be time to dial 999. Photograph: LENblR/Getty Images/iStockphoto/posed by model

Are you just wilting a little, suffering from heat exhaustion or risking death from full-blown heatstroke? Here's how to tell the difference and protect yourself, your friends and family – and your pets

*[Emma Beddington](#)*

Thu 14 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT

The train tracks are on fire and the NHS may declare a [level 4 heat emergency](#) (there's no level 5). This is a summer of unprecedented temperatures, with more, and worse, to come. “The world is undoubtedly experiencing more extreme heating,” says Martin Siegert of the [Grantham Institute for Climate Change](#), highlighting “literally unbearable” temperatures in India and Pakistan this year. “We are now, on average, 1.2C (2.2F) warmer than we should be because of our emissions. This means that things, sadly, will get worse.” An extra 0.3C (0.5F) is “unavoidable”, meaning, Siegert says, “Extreme heating episodes will continue to increase in frequency and severity. Unless we deliver net zero by mid-century, temperatures will rise well above the 1.5C (2.7F) level, with terrible consequences for climate heating in ways we have yet to witness fully.”

The only solution is to take action, using our votes and voices to [press politicians](#) to reduce emissions, urgently. [Greenpeace](#), [Friends of the Earth](#) and many other charities have practical suggestions on how you can get involved. But right now we, our parents, grandparents, children and even pets are all at risk of heat exhaustion and, worse, heatstroke. What are the warning signs? What can you do to prevent it and treat it, and when do you need urgent medical help?



Keep drinking water, and keep an eye on how often you're going to the toilet. Photograph: Nes/Getty Images/posed by model

## Adults

In heatstroke, the brain loses the ability to regulate body temperature, potentially leading to a cascade of damage to the liver, kidneys, muscles and particularly the heart. It can develop rapidly, with little warning, and can be fatal. But before you reach the danger zone of heatstroke, most adults will experience symptoms of heat exhaustion. “Heatstroke is an emergency; heat exhaustion is not normally so,” says Dr Lynn Thomas, medical director of [St John Ambulance](#).

It is a good idea to look at [reliable symptom guides for heat exhaustion and heatstroke online](#), but in essence, heat exhaustion is that unwell feeling most of us have experienced at some point in very hot weather. “You may notice dizziness or being slightly confused, headaches, cramps; you’d be sweating, cool skin, feeling sick, have a faster breathing rate and quicker heart rate,” says Dafydd Beech, of the Red Cross National Community Education Team.

In contrast, a person suffering from heatstroke may still have dizziness, headache and discomfort, but crucially, their skin will become hot, flushed and dry. “The body is losing its ability to sweat,” says Thomas. “It can’t lose

any of that heat and it just keeps getting hotter and hotter. That can cause people to become quite confused. They can become unconscious, or have seizures and fits.” This is the danger zone: “If somebody is not improving with water and being cooled down; if they’re not sweating, even though it’s really hot; if they’re not managing to keep water down or drink water; if they have a temperature above 40C (104F) or they become unresponsive – please ring 999 no matter how busy it is,” says Thomas. She suggests using speakerphone. “Unfortunately, heatstroke could lead to somebody having a cardiac arrest. Hopefully you won’t get to that point, but if you do, the call handler will talk you through everything you need to do.”

It is trickier, of course, to recognise the symptoms in yourself, especially when one of them is confusion. “There is absolutely an increased risk of people developing heat exhaustion and heatstroke if they live alone,” says Thomas. “You may not notice you’re feeling a bit confused, because how would you know?” Beech advises to look out for any sense that “things start to feel worse, like: ‘Something’s not right here.’”

In addition to the basic advice to stay in the coolest part of your home, and avoid exertion, Thomas’s advice is to stay hydrated, “and keep an eye on how often you go to the bathroom: urine should be light-straw-coloured”. It is also important to be aware of the possible effects of any medication you are taking: “Some antidepressants can reduce the ability to manage high temperatures or reduce your ability to sweat,” Thomas says. “Ensure that you’ve got a method of calling on help if you need to do so,” adds Beech. “Have your phone near you.”

First aid for people afflicted by heat exhaustion and heatstroke is mainly common sense: move the person to a cool place, give them water to drink (this may not be possible for heatstroke sufferers), and try to cool the skin. Thomas suggests “a sponge or spray or ice packs; pour some water on the skin because that helps evaporation.” For more serious cases, Beech suggests “wrapping the person in cold, damper clothes”. It is important not to try to cool a heat exhaustion sufferer very rapidly, which can lead to shock. “We sometimes hear about throwing the person into cold baths: you shouldn’t do that,” says Beech. The aim is “slowly and steadily cooling the person down”.

## **Older people**

The symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke are the same for older adults, but they can be more vulnerable to dehydration, and may lose the urge to drink, which can increase the risks of heat-related illness. “The worry in elderly people is that they don’t always recognise some of the signs,” says Thomas. “Please check on your elderly relatives and neighbours way more frequently than you would normally; try to get them to stay inside and keep the curtains closed.” It can be difficult, she says, to persuade dementia sufferers in particular to drink. “Maybe put some water next to them with some ice in it; check they are drinking it. Tea is fine, thank goodness.”



Often, children won’t tell you that they want to cool down indoors.  
Photograph: allgord/Getty Images/iStockphoto/posed by model

## **Children and babies**

“It’s difficult with children, because they love being outside and they won’t necessarily say: ‘I need to go inside because I’m hot.’ So, make sure they are going to the loo regularly and having lots to drink,” says Thomas. Symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke are much the same in children as they are

in adults, but note that when babies are suffering from heat exhaustion, often they “get sleepier and don’t interact as much”.

To keep babies cool, “stay indoors or go out early”, says Claire Maguire, a National Childbirth Trust post-natal practitioner. When you do go out, [avoid clipping a muslin to the buggy or pram for shade](#): “Research says this can cause the inside of the pram to heat up and cause the overheating you were trying to prevent in the first place.” Maguire recommends getting familiar with your baby’s normal temperature (test on the back of the neck or the chest, not the extremities, which are cooler). “That way you know when they’re too hot.”

To cool a baby’s room, freeze water in a plastic bottle, cut the plastic away and stand it upright in front of a fan

Infant safe sleep guidelines recommend bedrooms should be at 16-20C (61-68F): tough in this weather. Maguire’s top tip is to three-quarters fill a two-litre bottle of water, freeze it, cut the plastic away, then stand it upright in a large roasting tin in front of a fan for half an hour or so before using a room. “Never point a fan directly at a baby,” says Maguire; they struggle to adapt to changes in temperature.

Maintaining hydration is vital, too. “Babies are very vulnerable to dehydration because of their volume-to-surface-area ratio: if they get dehydrated it can affect their health much more quickly than someone larger,” says Maguire. Breastfed babies may want to feed more often, she says; formula-fed babies can have small quantities of water regularly in a “free-flow sippy cup” (boiled and cooled if they are under six months). Keep a tally of wet nappies: “If you have an older baby, you’re probably used to the frequency of their wet nappies,” says Maguire. “If you have a much younger baby and you’re not quite sure what the rhythm is, it’s around six nappies a day.” If you’re in any doubt at all, Maguire says, call NHS 111, and the free [NCT support line](#) (0300 330 0700) can give individual advice on summer feeding. The Red Cross also has a free [baby and child first aid app](#).



Clip hairy dogs short, give them cold treats, and spare them the walks.  
Photograph: Vichakorn/Getty Images/iStockphoto

## Pets

Our furry housemates are also vulnerable to heat-related illness, says Dr Karen Humm, an emergency and critical care clinician at the Royal Veterinary College. Those that are overweight, those with thick fur designed for cold temperatures or flat-faced (brachycephalic) dogs such as pugs and bulldogs are even more at risk. “Dogs don’t sweat, really,” Humm says. “So if they can’t pant effectively, they can’t lose heat effectively.”

The warning signs that your dog may be dangerously overheating, Humm says, are “non-specific and that’s why it’s hard”. Panting excessively or more noisily than usual is a key warning sign. Chris Wilson, a small-animal vet based in London, says dogs can also seem “restless, or listless and out of sorts”. More severely heat-affected dogs can drool, or suffer vomiting or diarrhoea, and at worst, collapse and suffer seizures.

It is important, both agree, to act fast, well before this happens. Once an animal suffers heat-induced enzyme damage, this can be irreversible, even leading to multi-organ failure and death. “If you’re not sure and they don’t seem quite right, ring the vet. If they’re breathing noisily, definitely ring the

vet. If they are uncoordinated, stumbling, if they appear a little drunk or difficult to rouse or have collapsed, go straight to the vet – ring them when you’re on the way,” says Humm. “The emphasis is on stopping them from reaching that stage,” agrees Wilson.

Prevention is best. “Keep them shaded, keep them calm, offer them water,” recommends Humm. You can cool dogs with water applied to the skin, although Wilson warns that if you use a wet towel, it’s important to replace it regularly: “They can dry out really fast and end up insulating the dog further.” Dog behaviourist [Louise Glazebrook](#) says some dogs enjoy a paddling pool, or cubes of frozen bone broth to play with or chew on. “Put fans on, leave cold water with ice packs underneath, give access to cool, tiled surfaces and give cooling snacks, such as hard-boiled eggs or carrots from the fridge.” Clip hairy dogs short, she advises: “It doesn’t matter how they look: they need their belly and chest plate area to be clipped very short to allow their body to make contact with cool surfaces.”

People now mainly know not to leave dogs in hot cars, Humm says, [although it does still happen](#).

The next key message to get across is that on very hot days, it is vital only to walk dogs extremely early in the morning or late at night, or even not at all. “There’s a misconception that an animal won’t go for a walk if it’s bad for them, and it’s just not true,” says Humm. In a recent study, she says, three-quarters of heat-related illness cases were brought on by exercise. “If in doubt, leave your dog at home to rest and be in peace,” says Glazebrook, who notes that dogs’ tolerance of touch, petting and being handled is likely to decline in the heat, potentially leading to irritability. “Right now, *I* don’t want to be touched. It’s even worse for them – they have fur coats on!”

By contrast, cats rarely suffer heat-related illness unless they are trapped or without access to water. “They’re evolutionarily from much hotter places,” says Humm. “Cats are much more sensible than dogs,” adds Wilson. “They are quite good at regulating their temperature behaviourally.” They are, however, “notoriously bad drinkers. So leaving taps running, leaving glasses of water around, or some cats like to lick condensation off frozen bottles of water – all these are things you can do to make sure they’re getting enough fluids.”

Spare a thought, too, for rabbits in hutches in hot sunny places, Wilson says: “People forget about them at this time of year. Keep them in the shade, in cooler areas, make sure they have access to water and move them inside if you can get it cooler indoors.”

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## 2022.07.14 - Opinion

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- Revealed: hundreds of billions of stars. Now let's search them for life
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- 'She was my world. I loved her with my heart and soul': my glimpse into a stranger's grief

[\*\*Opinion\*\*](#)[\*\*Conservative leadership\*\*](#)

## **With tax cuts pledges galore, the Tories are out of touch with economic reality**

[Larry Elliott](#)



Labour would never be allowed to get away with the fantastical rhetoric of these Conservative leadership contenders



'Even Rishi Sunak, who has billed himself as the fiscally prudent choice, says tax cuts are a matter of when, not if.' Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Thu 14 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 06.23 EDT

Imagine for a second that it was Labour rather than the Tories [choosing the next prime minister](#). Consider what the response would be if the hopefuls said it would be no problem to find an extra £30bn to tackle poverty or an additional £40bn for the NHS, and vied with each other to come up with the most ambitious spending pledges.

It doesn't take a genius to work out what the response from the [Conservatives](#) and the Conservative-supporting papers would be. At the very least, there would be questions asked about how the plans would be financed. More likely there would be warnings of a run on the pound and imminent economic meltdown. The headlines would read something like: "Loony left plans to bankrupt Britain".

Funnily enough, a different view is taken of the deep and immediate tax cuts now being promised by almost all those bidding to replace Boris Johnson. To those egging on the candidates, these are not reckless fiscal incontinence that will give the City the jitters. They do not represent voodoo economics, in which tax cuts pay for themselves. If you think the Tories in the summer

of 2022 are in a similar place to where Labour was in the 2019 general election campaign, you could not be more wrong. As far as the right is concerned, tax cuts are the only way to grow the economy and make Britain great again.

This is wrong on many levels, but let's begin with the idea that there is something wildly dangerous about the level of taxes in the UK. International comparisons produced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [show](#) that last year tax revenues as a share of national income across its rich-country members stood at 32.9%. The figure for the UK was 32.8%.

To be sure, the UK's tax take is rising and is on course to be the [highest since Clement Attlee was prime minister](#), but this is to cover two developments: a pandemic and upward pressures on spending caused by an ageing population. The baby boomers are getting on a bit, and this has implications for spending.

A quick glance at the OECD international tax table shows the range of options. Countries that have generous welfare states are high-tax. Countries that have rudimentary welfare states can be low-tax. No countries have Swedish levels of public spending and US levels of tax.

There are those on the right who know this and are honest enough to spell out that the logic of lower taxes is a smaller state, with people expected to contribute more to their own welfare, whether through payments for healthcare or less generous state pensions.

The rank outsider Kemi Badenoch is really the only one of the candidates for Johnson's job prepared to argue that trade-offs between tax and spending [might need to be made](#). Even Rishi Sunak, who has billed himself as the fiscally prudent choice, says tax cuts are a matter of [when not if](#).

To the extent that there is an economic strategy, it is that cutting taxes will pay for themselves because they will lead to faster growth and higher revenues for the Treasury. This, supposedly, is what worked for Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, but it is simply untrue.

Cuts in income tax made by the incoming Thatcher government in 1979 were offset by higher VAT. Taxes were raised when the economy was deep in recession in 1981. It was only after several years of growth and a marked improvement in the public finances that income tax rates were cut. Until 1988, the top rate of income tax was 60%.

The idea that personal tax cuts are a magic bullet that will give the economy its mojo back and solve the cost of living crisis also represents a serious misdiagnosis. Britain has serious economic problems, but they are mostly long-term and structural rather than short-term and fixable through an injection of consumer spending power.

The reason inflation is heading for 10% and the trade deficit is ballooning is that supply is failing to keep up with demand, and the only way to deal with that is to address the UK's chronic deficiencies in skills, investment and infrastructure. Tony Danker, the director-general of the CBI, is quite right when he says personal tax cuts would only make inflation worse, and that if there are to be any they should be designed to boost investment and be part of an overall growth plan. Lower taxes would almost certainly lead to the Bank of England becoming more aggressive with interest-rate increases.

There are, of course, other ways of spending more while taxing less. One option would be to borrow more – something that could just about be done while sticking to the government's own rules, but which leaves little wriggle room should the economy continue to struggle.

Another option would be to print more money. According to the advocates of modern monetary theory (MMT), governments that issue their own currency do not need to rely on taxes or borrowing to cover their spending because they can print all they need up until the point when inflation becomes a problem.

It is reasonable to assume that in the current circumstances, with inflation already standing at 9.1%, none of the wannabe prime ministers is going to come out in favour of MMT. That, though, means they need to come up with a coherent explanation of why tax cuts are needed and how they would be paid for. So far there has been plenty of magical thinking and not much else.

- Larry Elliott is the Guardian's economics editor
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## OpinionJames Webb space telescope

# Revealed: hundreds of billions of stars. Now let's search them for life

[Louisa Preston](#)

For astrobiologists like me, the first image from Nasa's James Webb Space Telescope reveals infinite possibilities of life beyond Earth



Two observations of the Southern Ring nebula – in near-infrared light (left) and mid-infrared light (right). Photograph: NASA/Reuters

Thu 14 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 12.16 EDT

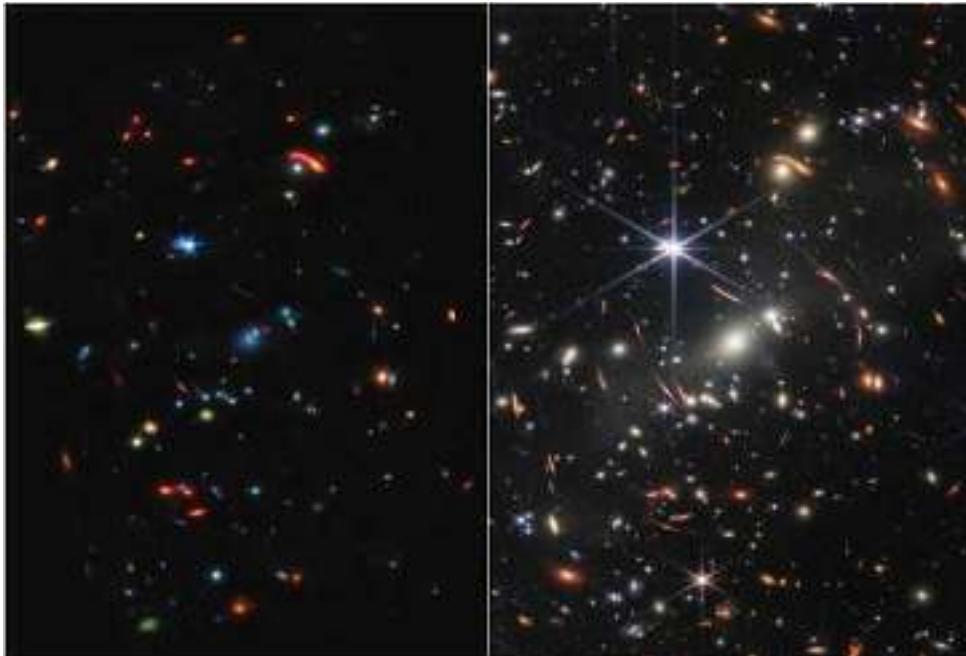
This week the [James Webb Space Telescope](#) made history, proving itself to be the most powerful space-based observatory humanity has ever built and revealing a tiny sliver of the vast universe around us in breathtaking detail. Astronomers the world over have been shown cheering, in floods of tears and lost for words. Astrobiologists like myself, who study the origins, evolution, distribution and future of life in the universe, are getting pretty excited too. By revealing images of galaxies from the dawn of time and

chemical data of planetary atmospheres, the JWST has the power to help us answer one of humanity's oldest questions: are we alone in the universe?

The first spectacular image released was of the galaxy cluster SMACS 0723, known as Webb's First Deep Field. This image covers just a patch of sky approximately the size of a grain of sand held at arm's length by someone on the ground – and yet it is crowded with galaxies, literally thousands of them. Within each galaxy, there could be on average 100 billion stars, each with its own family of planets and moons orbiting them.

Given the fact that in our solar system alone we have multiple habitable (Earth) or potentially habitable (Mars, Europa, Enceladus, Titan) worlds, then the odds of finding other planets or moons out there with the potential for hosting life as we know it have increased exponentially. The universe is probably littered with them.

Using a different instrument called MIRI (Mid-Infrared Instrument) on the same view reveals even more about the character of these stars and galaxies . Some appear blue because of not having much dust and older stars, while other objects, probably galaxies, appear red because they are shrouded in dust. For me, the most exciting are the galaxies now coloured green. The green indicates that the dust in these galaxies includes a mix of hydrocarbons and other chemical compounds – the chemical building blocks of life. ]



Galaxy cluster SMACS 0723 taken from Webb's First Deep Field, the first infrared image from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, shows dust levels in galaxies indicated by the colours blue, red and green. Photograph: NASA/Reuters

The team has also released an infrared spectrum taken with the [Fine Guidance Sensor and Near Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph \(FGS-NIRISS\)](#) instrument, which analysed starlight as it passed through the atmosphere of [Wasp-96b](#), a hot, Jupiter-like planet 1,150 light years away, orbiting closer to its star than Mercury does to our Sun. This bunch of wavy lines revealed to us the presence of water vapour in its atmosphere (the planet is way too hot for liquid water). This is a sensational result, and now the detective work really begins as we search the smaller, rocky planets in the hope of finding worlds where conditions are suitable for life.

So how will we do this? We look for Earth-like atmospheres, ones dominated by nitrogen, carbon dioxide and water, as an Earth-like atmosphere is, by definition, our gold standard of habitability. But Earth's atmosphere over the history of life hasn't always been composed this way, and we are sure other atmospheric mixtures can create habitable worlds. We call these "habitability markers", and they also include the glint of light reflecting off of oceans and the effects of vegetation.

Astrobiologists are also looking to find biosignature gases in these distant exoplanetary atmospheres – that is, gases indicative of biological activity. For example, oxygen is a dominant gas in Earth’s modern atmosphere, and most of it is produced from photosynthesis. Also, the dominant source of methane in our atmosphere is produced via methanogenesis, an ancient form of metabolism for some micro-organisms. I should say here that identifying unambiguous signatures of life isn’t going to be easy. Many have abiotic (non-life) sources as well as biological ones; they can be produced by volcanoes, water-rock interactions or even human activity.

At least for now, only those biosignatures with a global, planetary impact will probably be detectable. However, the detection of these habitability markers or biosignature gases using the JWST will be enough of an enticement to make us pause and more deeply explore the worlds in question. And that is more than exciting enough for now.

The JWST has already, in just a few days, transformed the way we look at the universe and will in the future open our eyes to the chemical and, if we are lucky, biological makeup of other worlds in it. Perhaps, we will finally get the proof that life in one form or another is universal, and, as I have always believed, that we have never actually been alone.

- Louisa Preston teaches planetary science and astrobiology at the UCL Mullard Space Science Laboratory
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## [Opinion](#)[UK weather](#)

# Extreme heatwaves are here to stay in the UK. It's time for us to adapt

[Vikki Thompson](#)

Britain's first 40C day will happen sooner or later, but there is still time to stop such temperatures becoming regular events



Parched grass in Hyde Park, London, earlier this week. Photograph: Future Publishing/Getty Images

Thu 14 Jul 2022 05.22 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 12.16 EDT

In case you haven't noticed, it's feeling pretty hot in the UK. The Met Office has issued a rare, amber, extreme [heat warning](#) and we have a level 3 [heat-health alert](#) in place – just one level below a national emergency. Extreme heat is often referred to as a silent killer. Its impact is not as immediately obvious as after storms or floods, yet in the UK approximately 2,500 people died due to heat-related illness in [2020](#), a worrying figure as extreme heat becomes increasingly common. Earlier this year, the Met Office raised the

threshold for what counts as a heatwave in some parts of the UK – and yet these events continue to happen with increasing frequency.

The problem isn't confined to the UK. Mainland Europe is experiencing its third major heatwave this year, with temperatures hitting a blistering 47C in parts of Spain. Many parts of Europe suffered an unusually dry spring, leading to widespread [drought conditions](#), and increasing the chances of wildfires during periods of extreme heat – as [Portugal is now experiencing](#).

The inescapable truth is that heatwaves are happening more often and becoming hotter, and this is due to human-induced climate change. Here in the UK, 40C summers are becoming more and more likely. Earlier this week, [forecasting models showed](#) simulations exceeding this marker, suggesting it is physically possible in the current climate. We are unlikely to hit those temperatures this month, with most forecasting models showing highs in the mid-30s, but [scientists at the Met Office](#) have shown that by the end of the century the UK could experience 40C days every three to four years under a high-emission scenario. If emissions are reduced to keep within the Paris climate agreement, the likelihood is reduced to around every 15 years. We are currently on track for somewhere between the two.

Last June, western North America experienced a record-breaking heatwave, with Canada setting a new national temperature record of 49.6C, almost 5C hotter than previously observed. An extreme of this magnitude was unthinkable before it occurred, but a [study last year](#) showed that scorching temperatures are to be expected, in a world experiencing undeniable climate change. The work highlighted Europe as one of the regions most at risk of these record-shattering heatwaves. According to lead author Erich Fischer – just like in disciplines such as the high jump, where world records are old and only broken by small increments – record-breaking heat should become rarer and margins smaller the longer we measure. But because of climate change we are observing the opposite; the climate is currently behaving like an athlete on steroids. Another [recent study](#) identified Europe as a heatwave hotspot, with the extremes increasing three to four times faster than the rest of the midlatitudes. Changes in the jet stream causing more persistent heatwaves are contributing to this accelerated trend, the research showed.

As temperatures get hotter, and more dangerous, quick adaptation will be key to reducing the impacts of heatwaves on society. There are many relatively simple measures that would help. Heat impacts are magnified in cities, and with almost [70% of the world's population](#) expected to live in cities by 2050, thinking about heat extremes within urban planning is essential. Adding more green spaces in cities would help lower air temperatures and create shaded spaces, reducing the need for mechanical cooling. That would not only be beneficial in a heatwave, but would also make cities nicer places in which to live. The benefits of adding green space are endless. They have been shown to reduce air pollution and flood risk and improve mental health and create better social cohesion.

As we look towards the end of the century, there is cause for cautious optimism. Although heatwaves are expected to get hotter and happen more as emissions continue, the most extreme events can be prevented through mitigation. Any reduction in [future emissions will help](#) reduce the magnitude of heatwaves we will experience. The sooner the world can achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases, the quicker these troubling trends will stabilise.

Vikki Thompson is a climate scientist at the University of Bristol

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**Opinion****Bereavement**

# ‘She was my world. I loved her with my heart and soul’: my glimpse into a stranger’s grief

[Adrian Chiles](#)



I can’t stop thinking about the woman who tweeted about her mother’s death – and the comfort it brought her



There's nothing wrong with reaching out to people you don't know in times of suffering. Photograph: fizkes/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Wed 13 Jul 2022 11.46 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 07.46 EDT

Last month, a woman shared the following with me: “My mum took a Covid test yesterday. It was positive. She died this afternoon. I can’t say that Covid was the cause of her death. She was my world. I loved her with my heart and soul. I am in pieces. My heart and my world are shattered. How do I go on without her?” Appalling, obviously, but the thing is, I don’t know this woman at all. Her howl of pain came my way in the form of a tweet, presumably having been liked or retweeted by someone I follow. Two weeks later, her suffering is still on my mind.

Yet when I first saw the tweet I winced. Why? Well, I suppose I felt this was oversharing. But being something of an oversharer myself, in these pages and elsewhere, this is hypocrisy on my part. I also might have suspected – how dare I? – that she was baring her soul on [Twitter](#) only because she didn’t have any real friends to talk to, poor woman. And it felt intrusive, even voyeuristic, to be privy to this stranger’s suffering. What business of mine is her grief? But equally, what business of mine is it to have a view on how she expresses it and to whom?

And what's wrong with reaching out to people you don't know? We're always told that it's healthy to share, and I totally get why, in her situation, she had the urge to scream it out to the world. Celebrities get to do this all the time when it's their turn to be bereaved. They often give interviews in which they speak of their grief. They get it out there and we sympathise with them. It's a good thing. So why should this only be the preserve of celebrities; why shouldn't everyone be accorded the same opportunity?

This stranger's tweet was less the social-media equivalent of a magazine interview than a version of standing on a chair in a crowded supermarket, bar, train station or wherever, and crying out to everyone in earshot. No one would advise sharing with strangers in this way in real life. If she'd done so she would have been regarded as deranged, plain and simple. Medical help may well have been sought. On social media, though, it kind of works. Twitter is rarely considered a safe place for anything, but for this woman, in her hour of need, that's exactly what it was.

The kindness of strangers is a beautiful, powerful thing and this was the most efficient way of accessing it. From the horrific first kidney punches of grief to the responsibility we all have to keep the memories of loved ones alive – here too, Twitter has its uses. Kara Goucher, an American athlete, tweeted this on 1 July: “40 years ago today my dad died after being hit by a drunk driver in NYC on his way to work. It shattered my life. Every year I post about him as a tribute. So that you might make a different decision, so that more loss may be spared. Please don’t drink and drive.” This was accompanied by a photograph of her dad.

And so we get, in some small way, to share a little of the loss and a fragment of the memory of those we knew nothing of. This is surely a good thing. I didn't tweet the woman who'd just lost her mum because I never tweet, although that might be a bit of a cop-out, as I'm not sure what I would have written. I'm thinking of her, though. I see that a few days later she went on to write, “I think Twitter may have saved my life.” I hope she's doing OK.

- Adrian Chiles is a broadcaster, writer and Guardian columnist

- In the UK, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 and the domestic abuse helpline is 0808 2000 247. In Australia, the crisis support service Lifeline is on 13 11 14 and the national family violence counselling service is on 1800 737 732. In the US, the suicide prevention lifeline is 1-800-273-8255 and the domestic violence hotline is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). Other international helplines can be found via [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org)
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## 2022.07.14 - Around the world

- [Global economy Recesssion risk rising as outlook 'darkens significantly' – IMF](#)
- [Environment European parliament votes to ban 'fly shooting' fishing in part of Channel](#)
- [Live Business: EU warns economic consequences of Ukraine war 'turning grimmer' as it hikes inflation forecast](#)
- [Hong Kong Activist 'Grandma Wong' jailed for eight months over pro-democracy protests](#)
- [Ghana 'Fix the country' activist says he was assaulted and illegally detained](#)

## [Global economy](#)

# **Global recession risk rising as economic outlook ‘darkens significantly’, IMF says**

Cost-of-living crisis ‘only getting worse’ says IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva, predicting a tough 2022, and ‘even tougher 2023’



International Monetary Fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva says war in Ukraine has exacerbated cost-of-living crisis and increased risk of global recession. Photograph: Fabrice Coffrini/AFP/Getty Images

[Martin Farrer](#)

Wed 13 Jul 2022 23.29 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 01.16 EDT

The outlook for the global economy has “darkened significantly” in recent months, the head of the IMF has warned, and the world faces an increasing risk of recession in the next 12 months.

The commodity price shock from the war in [Ukraine](#) had exacerbated the cost-of-living crisis for hundreds of millions of people, Kristalina Georgieva said on Wednesday, and it was “only getting worse”.

Inflation was also higher than expected, [she said in a blogpost](#) that came on the same day as the latest figures showed that prices in the US rose at a 40-year high of [9.1% in June](#).

Economists and investors now think the US Federal Reserve could hike interest rates by a historic 1% when its board meets in two weeks’ time.

The [Bank of Canada shocked markets on Wednesday](#) by raising its base rate by a full percentage point, while the Reserve Bank of New Zealand increased its benchmark rate by 0.5% this week, as did the Bank of Korea. Singapore’s central bank also tightened its monetary policy on Thursday.

Along with another expected move higher by the Fed, this keeps heaping pressure on other central banks to follow suit to bring inflation under control.

The market is now pricing in an 83% probability of a 100 bps hike at the FOMC meeting in 2 weeks, up from 0% a week ago.

When was the last time the Fed hiked rates by 100 bps in a single meeting? 1981.

When was the last time inflation was above 9% in the US? 1981.  
[pic.twitter.com/xC8Dj38TIx](https://pic.twitter.com/xC8Dj38TIx)

— Charlie Bilello (@charliebilello) [July 14, 2022](#)

With supply bottlenecks and repeated Covid lockdowns in China also crimping the world’s patchy pandemic recovery, Georgieva said the G20 finance ministers and central bankers gathering in Bali “face a global economic outlook that has darkened significantly”.

“The outlook remains extremely uncertain. Think of how further disruption in the natural gas supply to Europe could plunge many economies into recession and trigger a global energy crisis,” she wrote. “This is just one of the factors that could worsen an already difficult situation.

“It is going to be a tough 2022 – and possibly an even tougher 2023, with increased risk of recession.”

The IMF would be downgrading its growth forecasts for global growth for both 2022 and 2023 later this month, she said, having warned in April that its forecast of 3.6% was likely to be revised downwards.

The European Commission was expected to cut its eurozone GDP forecast for 2023 to 1.4% from 2.3% on Thursday, [according to Bloomberg](#), citing a leaked draft from the EU executive in Brussels. Inflation in the single currency area is expected to average 7.6% this year before falling to 4% next year, the document said.

The European Central Bank is under pressure to raise interest rates to combat inflation and protect the euro, which this week [slumped to parity with the US dollar](#) for the first time in two decades.

Georgieva said raising rates to combat inflation was one of three key policies needed to combat the threat to the world economy along with reducing government debt and more global cooperation.

But raising rates is a high-risk strategy for many countries amid increasing alarm in the UK, for example, that the Bank of England’s aggressive rate hikes [will plunge the country into recession](#).

EU countries also face the same dilemma at a time when it faces a potentially crippling energy crisis this coming winter if, as expected, [Russia](#) turns off the supply of natural gas over the bloc’s opposition to the Kremlin’s war against Ukraine.

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## Seascape: the state of our oceansFishing

# **European parliament votes to ban ‘fly shooting’ fishing in part of Channel**

Campaigners hail step towards end of practice in French territorial waters that has had ‘devastating’ effect on local fishers



A fly-shooting vessel in the Channel. The boats tow lead-weighted ropes along the seabed at either end of a net that captures entire shoals of fish.  
Photograph: Andrew McConnell/Greenpeace

Seascape: the state of our oceans is supported by



[About this content](#)

[Karen McVeigh](#)

[@karenmcveigh1](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 01.30 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 01.31 EDT

The European parliament has voted to ban “fly shooting” fishing in French territorial waters in the Channel, [following reports](#) that the technique, also known as demersal seining, was having a “devastating” effect on local fishers.

Campaigners described the result as a victory for small-scale fishers. Organisations representing coastal fishing communities on both sides of the Channel have warned that industrial trawling methods, including fly-shooting, are [decimating their livelihoods and the marine ecosystem](#).

While the European parliament does not have the power to ban the fishing method, MEPs said the vote on Tuesday sent an important message to decision-makers about the impact of fly-shooting on coastal fishing communities. The vote on an amendment to the [common fisheries policy](#), involving access to territorial waters, will now be considered by the European Commission, the parliament and EU member states.

Last year the UK was accused of allowing vessels using the fishing method “unfettered access” to the Channel without proper assessment of the impact on fish, the seabed or the livelihoods of coastal communities.

### Diagram showing how the wings on the nets work to increase the catch

“This is a very important day for the ocean and coastal fishing communities,” said Laetitia Bisiaux, a project manager for the French environmental organisation [Bloom](#). “MEPs were told about the destructive impacts of demersal seining by fishers who practice this technique themselves. The MEPs listened to the warnings that have long been ignored.

“The vote is a good political message from the EU parliament to the fishers, and to member states to ban this destructive technique,” she said.

Fly-shooter fishing boats, also known as Danish, Scottish or demersal seiners, tow lead-weighted ropes along the seabed at either end of a net that encircles and captures entire shoals of fish.

One expert told the *Guardian* that the method had between four and 11 times the “killing power” of inshore fishing boats.

The amendment to the fisheries policy was tabled by the French Green MEP Caroline Roose, who said it was an “important first step” towards a ban.

Roose said: “Yesterday’s vote sends a clear message in support of the fishers and NGOs calling for a moratorium on demersal seines in the Channel. The amendment itself allows the French government to ban its use off the French coast.

“This is only a first step as any decision to limit or ban the demersal seines in the Channel would need to be negotiated with the EU Commission and the member states. Public pressure will be key to make sure yesterday’s decision is actually implemented.”

Campaigners and organisations representing small-scale fishers in the UK welcomed the news, and said it was time for the British government to act.

In June 2021, the Department for Environment, [Food](#) and Rural Affairs said it was considering the potential impact of fly-shooting on the UK fishing industry. The UK licensed 15 fly-shooting boats between 2011 and 2021.

Jeremy Percy, a founding director and senior adviser at Low Impact Fishers of [Europe](#), said: “It’s a long road towards getting something done, but at least Europe seems to be addressing the issue. We’ve become very efficient at catching fish, but management and regulations have not kept up.

“We are all fishermen and we all need and deserve to make a living, but it should never be at the expense of another fishing sector and especially one that is so vulnerable, such as the UK’s smaller-scale fleet.

“It is all the more frustrating as we have left the EU, yet still allow whole-scale destruction by larger EU vessels to continue unabated.”

Fiona Nicholls, an oceans campaigner at Greenpeace UK, said: “Encouraging news from France – French fishermen are being listened to. Now it’s time for UK politicians to listen to what our fishermen need at home.

“Banning destructive industrial fishing like fly-shooting to properly protect the UK’s marine protected areas must be a priority for the government in 2022. Using post-Brexit licensing powers set out in the Fisheries Act, they could easily take swift action to protect our oceans and fishing communities.”

A Defra spokesperson said: “We recognise the concerns raised about fishing pressures in the English Channel, including methods such as fly-seining, and are working with industry on these issues.

“We have already stopped [pulse trawling](#) by EU and English-registered vessels in UK waters and any decisions on managing fisheries in future will be based on the best-available evidence.”

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[Business live](#)[Business](#)

# Shares, pound and oil slide as recession fears mount – as it happened

Anxiety over global slowdown knocks sterling to a two-year low, as oil falls to its levels when the Ukraine war began

Updated 3d ago

[\*Graeme Wearden\*](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 11.18 EDTFirst published on Thu 14 Jul 2022 02.42 EDT

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[UK rents grow at fastest annual rate in 16 years](#)
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[Italian bond yields jump ahead of confidence vote](#)
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[Global recession risk rising as economic outlook ‘darkens significantly’, IMF says](#)
- [3d ago](#)  
[Introduction: EU expected to forecast lower growth, higher inflation](#)



A currency trader watches monitors at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul today Photograph: Ahn Young-joon/AP

[Graeme Wearden](#)

Thu 14 Jul 2022 11.18 EDTFirst published on Thu 14 Jul 2022 02.42 EDT

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# Live feed

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[Introduction: EU expected to forecast lower growth, higher inflation](#)

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[3d ago](#)[11.18](#)

# Summary

## Time for a recap...

Fears of a global recession are sweeping markets again, driving oil down to its pre-Ukraine war levels.

Stocks have tumbled across Europe, as soaring inflation puts pressure on central bankers to raise interest rate even more aggressively. With the US dollar in demand, the pound has sunk below \$1.18 for the first time since March 2020, early in the pandemic.

The **FTSE 100** is down 110 points, or 1.5%, in late trading, while fears that Mario Draghi's government could collapse have hit stocks hard in Milan.

The EU added to the gloom, slashing its growth forecasts and predicting that inflation will be even steeper than feared.

And with the boss of Shell warning of the possibility of fuel rationing this winter, the next few months look increasingly troubled.

[Barratt, the UK's biggest housebuilder](#), is handing all its staff below senior management a £1,000 payment to help them cope with the cost of living squeeze, as well as a 5% pay rise.

Here are the rest of today's main stories:

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Updated at 11.21 EDT

[3d ago 11.10](#)

**Federal Reserve policymaker Chris Waller** has signalled that he favours raising US interest rates by 75 basis points this month - matching June's hike, which was the largest since 1994.

But Waller isn't ruling out a 100bp (or 1%) rise, saying that upcoming retail sales and housing data will show just how strong the economy is.

Fed governor Chris Waller says 75bps is his base case for the July policy meeting, but leaves the door open for a 100bp hike. "We have important data releases on retail sales and housing coming in before the July meeting," he says <https://t.co/3uk5NPsmPi> [pic.twitter.com/gjVHCUci0I](https://pic.twitter.com/gjVHCUci0I)

— Colby Smith (@colbyLsmith) [July 14, 2022](#)

Fed Governor Waller is inclined to stick with a 75bps rate hike in July, UNLESS the retail sales and housing data between now and then comes in hot. Tomorrow may be the most important retail sales number in a long while.<https://t.co/6fNr0quVU5> [pic.twitter.com/6beT53BGi8](https://pic.twitter.com/6beT53BGi8)

— Neil Irwin (@Neil\_Irwin) [July 14, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#)[11.04](#)

**Britain's night time businesses such as bars, casinos and nightclubs fear that [the latest rail strikes](#) will be another blow to the sector.**

Michael Kill CEO of the **Night Time Industries Association** says this summer is a critical moment for the sector:

"Our industry is suffering heavily from rising costs, as inflation reaches a high, with most reporting an estimated loss of up to 40% in trade

from previous strike activity, we must come together to support a recovery we can all benefit from.”

“Any consideration of long term strike action would be catastrophic, sporadic weekly or daily planned strike action is eating into consumer confidence, and will lead to an irreparable loss of business and jobs, after so much hard work has been put into recovery in the last 12 months.”

“Our sector is at a critical point in building to pre covid business levels, as we embark on one of the most important summer festival seasons.”

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### 3d ago[10.55](#)

The political instability in Rome has driven shares deeper into the red, with the **FTSE MIB** index down 3.5% in late trading.

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### 3d ago[10.54](#)

**Italy’s coalition government is teetering on the brink of collapse after the [Five Star Movement](#) refused to participate in a confidence vote, raising the spectre of a snap general election.**

Five Star, headed by the former prime minister [Giuseppe Conte](#), is a formerly anti-establishment party that has plummeted in the polls and lost parliamentarians since joining the government, hurt by policy U-turns and internal divisions.

The decision to sit out the vote – which political experts say is a tactical attempt to win back grassroots support – could push Mario Draghi’s already

fractured coalition to collapse, and even force early national elections later in the year.

Mariolina Castellone, the leader of Five Star in the senate.

“We are not taking part in the vote on this measure today ... but this position of ours is not about confidence in the government,”

The government survived the confidence vote, but Draghi had previously warned on multiple occasions that he would not carry on as premier without Five Star’s support.

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[3d ago](#)**10.45**

**Water company bosses should face jail for the worst pollution incidents, the Environment Agency has said as it detailed the sector’s “shocking” performance in 2021.**

The agency’s annual environmental performance report for water companies said it was the “worst we have seen for years”, as serious pollution incidents increased to 62 in 2021, the highest total since 2013.

There were eight of the very worst, category one, incidents, compared to three in 2020. [More here](#).

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Updated at 10.46 EDT

[3d ago](#)**10.40**



Gwyn Topham

**Back in the transport world, rail services around Britain are expected to be severely disrupted by the hot weather next week.**

Trains are expected to run slowly to reduce the risk of track and equipment failing in extreme heat, our transport correspondent Gwyn Topham reports:

Blanket speed restrictions are likely to be put in place around the south-east of England, with the air temperature forecast to possibly surpass the highest ever recorded in Britain, which was 38.7 in 2019.

Network Rail's emergency weather action teams are meeting on Friday to examine detailed forecasts, and will be expected to limit train speeds for safety if temperatures pass 35C.

Passengers will be informed that trains are likely to run with severe delays, particularly on main lines in and out of London, where a 60mph speed limit would have a significant effect on fast services.

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Updated at 11.06 EDT

3d ago[10.20](#)

Crude Oil is now below the level it was at the day before Russia invaded Ukraine, down over 30% from its high in March. Markets are increasingly pricing in a global recession and a slowdown in demand (similar to what we saw in the back half of 2008).  
[pic.twitter.com/KYHr6PJTOr](https://pic.twitter.com/KYHr6PJTOr)

— Charlie Bilello (@charliebilello) [July 14, 2022](#)

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3d ago[10.19](#)

US crude oil has sunk to its levels when the Ukraine war began, down 5% to around \$91.34 per barrel.

Oil back down to pre-Russian invasion levels.  
[pic.twitter.com/Xxhnmc0SBn](https://pic.twitter.com/Xxhnmc0SBn)

— Liz Young (@LizYoungStrat) [July 14, 2022](#)

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3d ago[10.13](#)

Britain's [FTSE](#) 250 index, which contains medium-sized companies, is down 1.6% in afternoon trading, around a one-week low.

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3d ago **10.09**

Each of the 30 members of the Dow Jones industrial average are in the red.

**JP Morgan** (-4.5%) are the top faller, followed by **Goldman Sachs** (-4%), after JPM and Morgan Stanley both disappointed with today's earnings' figures.

**Chevron** has lost 3.7% as the oil price drops to five-month lows.

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Updated at 10.13 EDT

3d ago **09.53**

### **Wall Street is taking an early tumble too.**

The Dow Jones industrial average has fallen by 563 points in early trading to 30,209, down 1.8% today.

Traders have been jolted by yesterday's jump in US inflation, which has led to speculation that the Federal Reserve could raise interest rate by a whole percentage point later this month -- as Canada did, unexpectedly, yesterday.

Shares in JP Morgan have fallen over 4% after it reported a fall in profits.

Jamie Dimon's warning that the global economy will be hit by the Ukraine war, rising inflation and falling consumer confidence will also be worrying traders.

Dow falls more than 500 points on inflation fears and as JPMorgan warns of risks to the economy <https://t.co/rXqHLSN9rD>

— Markets Insider (@MktsInsider) [July 14, 2022](#)

The rise in US producer price inflation, and the jump in jobless claims to eight month highs today ([see here](#)), also suggest growth is weakening even as prices keep rising higher.

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Updated at 10.06 EDT

[3d ago](#)[09.40](#)

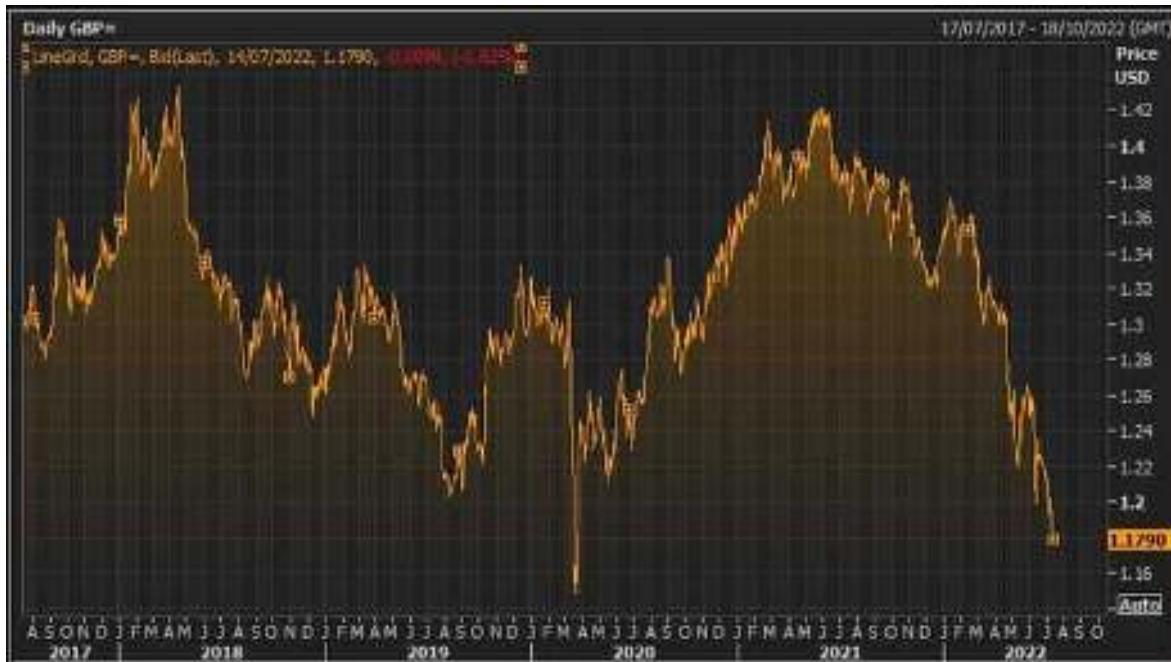
## Shares, oil, pound and euro slide on recession fears

**Shares, oil, the pound and the euro are all tumbling today as recession worries hammer markets again.**

In London, the [FTSE](#) 100 index of blue-chip shares is down 119 points, or 1.6%, at 7035, a one-week low.

Mining companies and oil giants are along the fallers, with **Anglo American** falling 6% and **Shell** down 4.5%. Insurance company **Admiral** is the top faller, down 17%, after a profit warning from smaller rival Sable this morning.

The pound has sunk below \$1.18 for the first time since March 2020, down a cent today...



The pound vs the US dollar over the last five years Photograph: Refinitiv

... while the euro has again fallen below parity with the US dollar, as it did yesterday for the first time in 20 years.

Recession fears have pushed oil down to its lowest levels since the Ukraine war began.

Brent crude, the international benchmark, has fallen 3.3% to \$96.29 per barrel, the lowest since 25th February.

Brent crude falls to the lowest since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.  
[pic.twitter.com/Dyr4ac4RfO](https://pic.twitter.com/Dyr4ac4RfO)

— Lisa Abramowicz (@lisaabramowicz1) [July 14, 2022](#)

Wednesday's surge in US inflation to 9.1%, a new 40-year high, has fuelled concerns that central banks will raise interest rates even faster -- despite signs of slowing growth.

**Craig Erlam**, senior market analyst at **OANDA**, says central banks are scrambling to hike aggressively in a desperate attempt to get it back under control and limit the shock to the economy.

Recession fears have fully gripped the markets and central banks are left with little alternative but to tighten aggressively into it...

Investors are clearly now of the view that the ship has sailed on that and the job now is ensuring any recession is shallow and brief. The expectation now is that the Fed will hike aggressively before reversing course in the middle of next year in order to stimulate the economy out of recession. Even that is looking optimistic at this point.

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[3d ago](#)[09.23](#)

## US jobless claims hit eight-month high

**The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits has hit its highest level in nearly 8 months.**

New applications for jobless support rose by 9,000 last week to 244,000, the highest since last November.

That indicates firms may have cut more staff as the US economy was hit by soaring inflation.

Analysts had expected the number to remain flat from the previous week.

The four-week average for claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, rose by 3,250 from the previous week, to 235,750.

More encouragingly, the total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits has dropped, down 41,000 to 1,331,000. That's around its lowest level in 50 years.

Weekly initial jobless claims starting to inch up. Now 244,000. Need 300,000 for recessionary warning. But now registering the tech layoffs we've been hearing about. Continuing claims fell however.

— Tracey Ryniec (@TraceyRyniec) [July 14, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#)[09.13](#)

**US producers continued to hike their prices last month, in a sign that inflationary pressures have not abated.**

Producer prices jumped by 1.1% during June, driven by an increase in the cost of goods, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports.

That drove producer prices up by 11.3% over the last year -- the largest increase since a record 11.6-percent jump in March.

Those costs feed through to consumers in higher prices.

US PPI grew 1.1% MoM and 11.3% YoY in Jun, up from 10.9% YoY in May. Core PPI up 0.3% MoM to 6.4% YoY (down from 6.7% YoY).

- Energy: 54.4% YoY
- Food: 12.7% YoY
- Processed Goods: 22.2% YoY
- Unprocessed Goods: 58.0% YoY [#PPI #inflation \(@BLS\\_gov\)](#)  
<https://t.co/SIEW6roGBH> [pic.twitter.com/K7ZVDrn1Ob](https://pic.twitter.com/K7ZVDrn1Ob)

— MTS Insights (@MTSInsights) [July 14, 2022](#)

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[3d ago](#)[08.45](#)

Looks like Twitter might be returning to normal....

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## [Hong Kong](#)

# Hong Kong activist ‘Grandma Wong’ jailed for eight months over pro-democracy protests

Wong, a familiar presence at the rallies, used her court appearance to label Hong Kong’s government an ‘authoritarian regime’



Grandma Wong was a regular feature at pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong  
Photograph: Marc Fernandes/NurPhoto/REX/Shutterstock

*Rhoda Kwan in Taipei*

Wed 13 Jul 2022 23.39 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 00.16 EDT

Hong Kong has jailed a 66-year-old activist known affectionately as Grandma Wong in relation to the [pro-democracy protests](#) that rocked the city three years ago.

A city magistrate jailed Alexandra Wong for eight months on Wednesday over two counts of unlawful assembly during a protest on 11 August 2019. Wong was a familiar presence at the protests, and was widely recognised for flying the British union jack.

Principal magistrate Ada Yim found Wong to have participated in two illegal assemblies, and cited her use of flags and slogans to encourage others to do the same.

From the dock, the bespectacled and grey-haired Wong struck a defiant note and criticised Hong Kong's government as an "authoritarian regime".

She also reiterated an earlier claim that she had been interrogated and detained by security agents in the Chinese mainland for 45 days and prevented from returning to Hong Kong for nearly 14 months. She said she was forced to give written and filmed confessions.

Wong is no stranger to the courts, and has continued to stage one-woman protests outside the city's court buildings in support of other pro-democracy activists during their hearings, despite Hong Kong's [punitive national security law](#).

The activist has previously been convicted of a series of other protest-related charges, including a four-day sentence in January for refusing to show her ID card during another protest, and a one-month sentence for assault in July 2021 for pushing a court security guard.

Wednesday's sentencing followed the sentencing of another elderly dissident just one day prior. Another city magistrate sentenced Koo Sze-tyiu, who is 75 years old and terminally ill with late stage colon cancer, to nine months in jail on Tuesday for "attempted sedition" for planning to protest against the Beijing Winter Olympics.

The sentence came in the same week the US congressional commission monitoring the development of human rights and the rule of law in China published a report saying the city's department of justice is increasingly pursuing politically motivated cases.

The report by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China published on Monday found the city's prosecution has played a "key role in carrying out political persecution in the city", citing an "increasingly apparent political motivation behind the department's actions."

"The Hong Kong government's hardline approach to dissent and pro-democracy views, and the growing number of political prisoners, raises serious concerns about the erosion of the rule of law in the city," the report summary read.

More than 10,500 people have been arrested in relation to the protests three years ago, over 2,900 of whom have been prosecuted.

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## [Ghana](#)

# Ghana ‘fix the country’ activist says he was assaulted and illegally detained

Cambridge doctoral student Oliver Barker-Vormawor says ‘trauma is still there’ as he files lawsuit



Oliver Barker-Vormawor founded the ‘fix the country’ protest movement and criticised the government on Facebook. Photograph: Facebook

*[Emmanuel Akinwotu](#) in Accra*

Thu 14 Jul 2022 00.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 14 Jul 2022 04.41 EDT

A prominent Ghanaian activist has accused authorities of subjecting him to a violent assault and illegal detention after he criticised the government in a series of Facebook posts.

Oliver Barker-Vormawor, a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge who founded the prominent “fix the country” protest movement, was

arrested after he landed at Kotoka airport in Accra in February on a flight from the UK.

In a lawsuit he filed last month, he alleges that he had his passport confiscated before being taken to a room and beaten for more than three hours by security officials. He says he was then blindfolded and taken in a convoy of police and military vehicles to a cell on the outskirts of the city, where he was stripped and forced to give officers access to his phone.

In a call from a safe house in Ghana, Barker-Vormawor said his detention lasted for two months and included stints in solitary confinement. “The trauma of it is still there ... I was suicidal,” he said.

Barker-Vormawor arrived back in the country during a crackdown on protesters from the movement he started. The demonstrations against worsening living standards, corruption and police abuses have continued in recent weeks, posing a challenge to the government, which is often portrayed internationally as a [standard bearer of good governance](#) in Africa.

Barker-Vormawor’s lawsuit alleges that while in detention, officials threatened him with being “disappeared”. It quotes an officer who Barker-Vormawor claims told him: “Person [sic] like you are like vermin, and every now and then we have to take the trash out.”

The trigger for his arrest was a Facebook post he had written a few weeks earlier in response to proposals for a controversial [“e-levy” tax on financial transactions](#). “If this e-levy passes ... I will do the coup myself,” Barker-Vormawor had written, in what he says was a tongue-in-cheek manner.

Government officials and the police, however, described the threat as genuine. “The post contained a clear statement of intent with a possible will to execute a coup,” police said, echoing an outcry from the government and its supporters.

The case of Barker-Vormawor, a former government adviser on access to justice and lawyer working at the UN office of legal affairs, has focused

attention on the increasingly brutal treatment of government critics in Ghana.

Protests and anti-government activism have grown in recent years, in response to a worsening economy and corruption allegations against the government of the president, Nana Akufo-Addo.

In May, hundreds of people demonstrated for days in Ghana's capital, Accra, before being dispersed by police with teargas. Twenty-nine protesters were arrested on suspicion of causing damage to public property.

As the protests have grown, so have allegations of abuse against Ghanaian authorities.

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In June last year, Ibrahim Mohammed, an activist in the Ashanti region who had been critical of the government, was killed by armed men on his way home, prompting local protests by young people. Witnesses said police and military officials shot live rounds during the demonstrations, and that two people were killed and four others wounded.

Barker-Vormawor also accused the government and those supporting it of putting pressure on employers to sack activists from his movement. "People have lost jobs, in some cases, because people in the presidency called their employers," he claimed. The government has been contacted for comment.

While many countries in west [Africa](#) have suffered coups, political turmoil, recessions, food scarcity and rampant insecurity, Ghana has often been seen as an emerging economy on the rise and a stable democracy in a troubled region.

Akufo-Addo was [elected with widespread support](#) in 2016 and won another four-year term in December 2020, though his support has waned as an economy [seen as a rising star](#) in the continent has suffered.

Barker-Vormawor said he regularly moves accommodation in response to threats against his life and that he feels for his family. "No one wants an

activist as a son or a partner, but I definitely don't want to stop what I'm doing," he said "I think we're in this for the long haul."

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- [Tory leadership race Zahawi pledges 20% cut to every department](#)
- [Rehman Chishti Who is the Tory leadership candidate?](#)
- [Mordaunt campaign Video edited after complaints roll in from people featured](#)

[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

# Tory leadership: candidates will need 20 MP backers to enter contest to succeed Boris Johnson – as it happened

Latest updates: nominations open and close on Tuesday, with first round of voting on Wednesday

- [Britain to have new PM by 5 September as leadership rules announced](#)
- [Who's standing, what are they promising and who's backing them?](#)

Updated 6d ago

[Tobi Thomas](#) and [Andrew Sparrow](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 15.21 EDTFirst published on Mon 11 Jul 2022 04.36 EDT

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Attorney general and Conservative leadership candidate Suella Braverman attends the Conservative Way Forward launch event in London. Photograph: Henry Nicholls/Reuters

[Tobi Thomas](#) and [Andrew Sparrow](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 15.21 EDTFirst published on Mon 11 Jul 2022 04.36 EDT

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## Live feed

From 6d ago

[14.42](#)

# Tory leadership rules announced

Sir Graham Brady, chair of the 1922 Committee, has announced the rules for the [Conservative leadership](#) contest.

- Nominations will open and close tomorrow.
- First ballot on Wednesday.
- Second ballot on Thursday.
- 20 supporters will be needed for each candidate.
- On the first ballot, any candidate to proceed must win 30 votes from Tory MPs.
- The winner will be announced on 5 September.
- 
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Updated at 15.21 EDT

Key events:

- [6d ago](#)  
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[Tory leadership contest has become 'arms race of fantasy economics', says Starmer](#)

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[6d ago](#)[15.02](#)

## Summary

- Tory leadership candidates will need [support from 20 fellow MPs to be included in the first round of voting](#), with nominations opening and closing tomorrow. The first ballot is on Wednesday, with candidates needing 30 votes from Tory MPs, and the second ballot is on Thursday.
- The winner of the leadership contest will be [announced on 5 September](#)
- [ConservativeHome](#) polling has found that Penny Mordaunt is in first place among Tory members to be the next PM, followed by Kemi Badenoch.
- [Education unions have written to the newly appointed education minister](#), Andrea Jenkyns, warning that her use of an obscene gesture and her excuses since would be unacceptable from a pupil or member of staff.
- The Conservative MP Jamie Wallis has been disqualified from driving for six months and fined £2,500 after being [found guilty of failing to](#)

[stop](#), failing to report an accident and leaving the vehicle in a dangerous position, after crashing his car and fleeing the scene.

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Updated at 15.20 EDT

[6d ago](#)[14.53](#)

When asked whether the threshold is too high for lesser-known candidates to reach, Sir Graham Brady denied that this is the case.

He added: “We do need to make sure there’s a decent period of time before the result is announced on September 5. We need to make sure there’s a reasonable chance for the party and the country to meet and question the candidates at regional candidates.”

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Updated at 14.57 EDT

[6d ago](#)[14.45](#)

**Tom Tugendhat** now claims to now have 20 endorsements from MPs supporting his bid to become leader.

We’re now at 20 endorsements from MPs - thank you to:[@JakeBerry](#) [@JamesDalyMP](#) [@jogideon](#) [@DrBenSpencer](#) [@DrNeilHudson](#)  
Mark Pawsey MP

We are building a broad coalition of support from all corners of the country.

— Tom Tugendhat (@TomTugendhat) [July 11, 2022](#)

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6d ago **14.42**

# Tory leadership rules announced

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- •

Updated at 15.21 EDT

[6d ago](#) [14.40](#)

More from Aubrey Allegretti on the rumours of the threshold being 20...

Threshold of 20 would mean potential difficulty for some Tory candidates.

Declared supporters so far (h/t [@GuidoFawkes](#) list):

Grant Shapps - 8

Sajid Javid - 11

Suella Braverman - 11 <https://t.co/IihJswwxjn>

— Aubrey Allegretti (@breeallegretti) [July 11, 2022](#)

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[6d ago](#) [14.36](#)

The Telegraph reports that Suella Braverman, a Conservative leadership hopeful, has told her fellow Tory MPs “don’t vote for me because I’m brown” but because of her clear vision to cut taxes.

The Telegraph’s Christopher Hope reports:

*The Attorney General also [set out her vision as prime minister](#) at a meeting of the reconstituted Conservative Way Forward, a Thatcherite thinktank.*

*Speaking alongside fellow Conservative leadership rival [Nadhim Zahawi](#) at the Churchill War Rooms, [Ms Braverman](#) made her pitch to 60 Tory activists and rightwing Conservative MPs.*

*She said: “Don’t vote for me because I’m a woman. Don’t vote for me because I’m brown.*

*“Vote for me because I love this country and would do anything for it.*

*“Vote for me because I have a clear vision and have experience working at the top of Government. But most of all, vote for me because I’m a Conservative.”*

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Updated at 14.43 EDT

[6d ago](#) [14.18](#)

**Jessica Elgot** has written an analysis of the lengths some Tory leadership hopefuls are going to in order to smear their rivals.

The propaganda flying around includes lurid rumours of affairs, business dealings and questionable tax statuses. Not all would meet the

public interest test. Those who have faced planted attacks so far include the chancellor, Nadhim Zahawi, but there are also expected to be coordinated efforts to undermine the campaigns of [Rishi Sunak](#) and Liz Truss.

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Updated at 14.20 EDT

[6d ago](#)[14.13](#)

The ipaper's Paul Waugh also saying that **20 Conservative MPs** will be the threshold for appearing on the ballot.

So, here we go. Tory leadership contenders will need at least 20 Tory MPs to get on the ballot paper, the 1922 committee has decided. Low enough to allow a decent choice, but high enough to weed out the no hopers.

— Paul Waugh (@paulwaugh) [July 11, 2022](#)

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[6d ago](#)[14.08](#)

New **Conservative Home** polling has found that Penny Mordaunt is in first place among Tory members to be the next PM, followed by Kemi Badenoch.

[Rishi Sunak](#) is in third place, Suella Braverman fourth, Liz Truss fifth and Tom Tugendhat sixth

WOW: new [@ConHome](#) finds Penny Mordaunt is in first place among Tory members to be the next PM, followed by Kemi Badenoch.

Rishi Sunak is in third place, Suella Braverman fourth, Liz Truss fifth and Tom Tugendhat sixth <https://t.co/EhV4fxL0vJ>

— Sebastian Payne (@SebastianEPayne) [July 11, 2022](#)

- 
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Updated at 14.09 EDT

[6d ago](#) [13.59](#)

**Sally Weale** reports that education unions have written to the newly appointed education minister, **Andrea Jenkyns**, warning that her use of an obscene gesture and her excuses since would be unacceptable from a pupil or member of staff.

Jenkyns, Conservative MP for Morley and Outwood, was widely criticised after she was pictured raising her middle finger at a crowd gathered at the entrance to Downing Street on the day of Boris Johnson's announcement that he was to step down as prime minister.

In a subsequent [statement](#), Jenkyns said she had received "huge amounts of abuse" and seven death threats in the past four years and was just standing up for herself. She added: "I should have shown more composure, but am only human."

The joint letter from Unison, the Association of School and College Leaders, the National Association of Head Teachers and the National Education Union, published on Monday, expressed grave concern at her actions and its likely impact on standards in schools.



New education minister Andrea Jenkyns sticks finger up at crowd outside Downing Street Photograph: @RhonddaBryant/Twitter

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Updated at 14.01 EDT

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## Conservative leadership

# Tory leadership race: Zahawi pledges 2p income tax cut within two years

Chancellor vows to slash spending if he gets top job as rival Liz Truss says she would cut taxes ‘from day one’

- [Politics latest – live](#)



Zahawi, the new chancellor, pledged to cut corporation tax, income tax and business rates. Photograph: Henry Nicholls/Reuters

*Peter Walker* Political correspondent  
[@peterwalker99](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 10.36 EDTFirst published on Mon 11 Jul 2022 04.31 EDT

Nadhim Zahawi has promised to cut income tax by 2p within two years if he becomes prime minister and condemned what he called the excessive taxation and spending of the government in which he remains the chancellor.

In another ramping up of what Labour has called an uncosted tax cutting “arms race”, Zahawi told Conservative activists that he would also reduce tax as a percentage of national income every year he was in power.

Earlier, [Liz Truss](#) also joined the race by promising in a Telegraph article she would “start cutting taxes from day one” if she took over from Boris Johnson as Tory leader and thus prime minister.

The foreign secretary, the 11th MP to enter the contest, said this would include reversing the increase to national insurance, introduced to pay for reforms to social care, and blocking an increase in corporation tax.

Speaking an event in Westminster organised by the Thatcherite group Conservative Way Forward (CWF), Zahawi, the former education secretary who took over at the Treasury after Rishi Sunak resigned last week, seemingly condemned the taxation policies he endorsed while in Johnson’s cabinet.

The work of the CWF, which has produced a charter for lower taxation and a smaller state, which Zahawi has endorsed, was “like the first buds showing on a spring morning after a long winter”, the chancellor said.

“It is a sign that finally, after too many years of tax and spending skyrocketing, the political landscape is once again coming back to the sensible policies championed by Margaret Thatcher,” he said.

Zahawi, who carried on with his speech even after a woman fainted with a loud crash in a packed and sweaty basement venue in the Churchill War Rooms, said he would cut income tax from 20p to 19p next year, and 18p in 2024.

He added: “Let me be clear: tax as a percentage of GDP will fall year on year if I become prime minister. That is a promise.”

He also promised to suspend all VAT and green levies on energy bills for two years to help people with energy costs.

In an earlier interview with Sky News to launch his campaign, Zahawi said he would finance tax cuts by getting every government department to cut their costs by 20%.

Asked by Sky reports about his financial and tax affairs, including that propriety and ethics officials alerted Downing Street to a HM Revenue and Customs “flag” before he was made chancellor, Zahawi said: “So I was clearly being smeared.”

Speaking at the same event the attorney general, Suella Braverman, called for “robust and radical” policies, including to shrink the state, but noted that factors like an ageing population made this complex.

“You can’t cut public services just like that when so many people depend on them,” she said, calling for reforms to public institutions and stronger families and communities.

In a speech in Gateshead on Monday morning, the Labour leader, Keir Starmer, condemned the rush to cut taxes among Tory leadership candidates, calling it an “arms race of fantasy economics”.

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Kwasi Kwarteng, the business secretary and a supporter of Truss, told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme that such tax cuts would require reductions in public spending, but declined to say how.

“I’m not going to specify cuts at the moment because we’ve got a leadership contest,” he said. “I’m sure that detail will be forthcoming as the leadership contest progresses.”

Other candidates already in the race include Sunak, who has ruled out immediate tax cuts; Jeremy Hunt, the former foreign secretary; the former minister [Kemi Badenoch](#), who was endorsed on Sunday night by Michael Gove; Sajid Javid, the former health secretary; the ex-defence secretary Penny Mordaunt; the transport secretary, Grant Shapps; and the senior backbencher Tom Tugendhat.

Rehman Chishti, the MP for Gillingham and Rainham who became a junior minister for the first time last week after 12 years in the Commons, has also joined.

The 1922 Committee of backbench Tories will set the rules for the first part of the race, in which the field will be whittled down to a final two, to be chosen between by party members. The committee is meeting on Monday evening [to finalise these](#).

Amid concern at the number of candidates, hopefuls may need to have 25 or more nominations to even enter the ballot of MPs, up from eight when the race was last held in 2019, with a hope of reducing the field to two in as little as a week.

ITV will host the first candidates' debate on 17 July followed by Sky News on 18 July.

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## Conservative leadership

# Who is Tory leadership candidate Rehman Chishti?

MP is far from a household name, even in the constituency of Gillingham and Rainham, which he has represented since 2010

- [Politic live: latest updates](#)

Little-known backbench MP joins Tory leadership campaign race – video

*Peter Walker* Political correspondent  
[@peterwalker99](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 08.47 EDT

Identifying the frontrunner in the now-11-strong field to become the next Conservative leader is a tricky business. But when it comes to naming the candidate with the least hope of success, one name stands out above all others: Rehman Chishti.

It is not unfair to say that even to the people of Gillingham and Rainham, whom he has represented in parliament since 2010, Chishti is hardly a household name, and would not have been in the thoughts of many locals if they considered who should replace Boris Johnson.

When he entered the Commons aged just 31, the former barrister was named in several profiles as a new MP to look out for, one even calling him a potential future prime minister.

But in the years since then Chishti remained firmly on the backbenches, rising no further than a brief stint as a vice-chairman of the Conservative party, and a year as Boris Johnson's special envoy for religious freedom.

It was only last week that he finally achieved ministerial status, becoming a third-tier minister at the Foreign Office, as the mass of resignations that eventually pushed Johnson to resign forced No 10 to draft in a series of newcomers.

Born in Pakistan, Chishti grew up in Kent, and after studying law and becoming a barrister spent a period as an adviser to Benazir Bhutto, the former Pakistani prime minister. Back in the UK, he became a councillor, and then an MP.

While he backed Johnson to become prime minister in 2019, Chishti resigned as a special envoy in 2020 over the internal markets bill, which gave ministers the power to unilaterally rewrite elements of the Brexit withdrawal agreement with the EU.

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His prime ministerial bid, which appears based more on raising his profile than any realistic prospect of victory, promises “aspirational Conservatism, fresh ideas, fresh team for a fresh start taking our great country forward”.

In a notably [low-key launch video](#), posted to Facebook, the MP stands in the windy countryside, where he discusses arriving in the UK aged six in 1984, unable to speak English, and policies including lower tax and a focus on better mental wellbeing.

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**Penny Mordaunt**

## Paralympian asks to be removed from Penny Mordaunt campaign video

English sprinter Jonnie Peacock edited out of promotional content, along with footage of Oscar Pistorius, after complaint



Penny Mordaunt is one of nine candidates for the leadership of the Conservative party. Photograph: Matt Dunham/AP

**Sophie Zeldin-O'Neill**

Mon 11 Jul 2022 04.56 EDTFirst published on Sun 10 Jul 2022 12.28 EDT

The Paralympic athlete Jonnie Peacock is among several public figures who have asked to be removed from the promotional video released by the Conservative MP [Penny Mordaunt](#) as she launched her party leadership bid.

On Sunday morning, Mordaunt, the MP for Portsmouth North, posted the video on her Twitter account with the caption “Our leadership has to change.

It needs to become a little less about the leader and a lot more about the ship.”

Peacock, 29, appeared in the original video crossing the finish line of a race in slow motion, with the voiceover speaking the words: “There must be focus on who we are.” The clip also featured a shot of South African sprinter [Oscar Pistorius](#), who was later convicted of the murder of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp.

### Penny Mordaunt launches Conservative leadership campaign – video

Peacock, an English sprint runner who won gold at the 2012 and 2016 Summer [Paralympics](#) tournaments, replied to the video on Twitter, saying: “I officially request to be removed from this video … anything but blue please.”

Peacock’s comment had received 25,000 likes by Monday morning – more than treble the number received by Mordaunt’s tweet announcing her entry into the leadership race.

The TV presenter Sue Perkins was among those who had tweeted in response to the athlete, saying: “Can’t believe you weren’t even asked for your consent. Oh, hang on ...”

Later on Sunday afternoon, an edited version was tweeted from Mordaunt’s account, with users quick to highlight the changes.

Journalist Hugo Gye said: “Mordaunt appears to have put out a new version of her launch video, which no longer features either [@JonniePeacock](#) (who complained about being included) or convicted killer Oscar Pistorius.”

“Is this a new one without [@JonniePeacock](#) who asked you to remove him?” said another user.

There were other changes including video from an interview with Prof Dame Sarah Gilbert, the British co-developer of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine, which was replaced with more generic footage of healthcare staff.

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Mordaunt's announcement continued to attract attention on social media throughout Sunday, with many likening the video to [a clip from BBC satire The Day Today](#), which uses the same background music.

She is one of nine candidates who have so far declared their candidacy for the leadership role following Boris Johnson's resignation.

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## 2022.07.11 - Spotlight

- Hard to swallow The 30% price hike that gets delivered with your meal
- Aslef boss Mick Whelan ‘There’s no cost to the economy in running rail properly’
- Museum of London Institution plans ‘epic leaving do’ before moving out
- A new start after 60 ‘I risked my house to launch a chain of 24-hour gyms’

## The ObserverMoney

# Hard to swallow: the 30% price hike that gets delivered with your meal

Restaurants say they have no choice but to pass on fees charged by the big food courier apps



Rahul Sharma, owner of The Regency Club, says raising app menu prices is the only way to survive.

[Shane Hickey](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 02.30 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 12.40 EDT

The pandemic was a boom time for food delivery as Britons relied on apps such as [Deliveroo](#) to get dishes brought to their door. But that convenience comes at a price, as consumers are often being charged higher prices – in some cases almost a third more – on takeaway menus as well as service and delivery fees.

Using apps such as Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Just Eat will often cost more than if you were ordering the same food in a restaurant or cafe, because restaurateurs say they need to make up for the fees levied by the apps, which are frequently around 30% of the price of the order.

In one case, a fish and chip takeaway in St Andrews charges £11.20 for haddock, chips and lemon if the customer orders in the shop, but £14.40 if they go through Deliveroo.

Wendy Napthine Frame, owner of Cromars, says this is to make up for a 29% fee the delivery service charges.

Deepak Shukla, who owns three cafes in south London, charges £3.90 for a cappuccino on Deliveroo and Uber Eats, but £3.10 if a customer comes through the door. A toasted sandwich is £6.50 on the apps and £4.90 in store. That means a lunch is 30% more to order from home.

“We inflate prices to support the fact that Deliveroo take a commission,” he says. “Otherwise, you’d make a loss after paying staff, as well as bagging and tagging.”

The use of delivery apps rose sharply during lockdown as restaurants, pubs and cafes were restricted from serving diners in person on their premises. In the first half of last year, Deliveroo doubled its customer orders [compared with 2020](#). [Just Eat saw similar rises](#) across Europe.

Customers typically pay a delivery fee and a service fee; the service fee is a percentage of the order before discounts are applied. Uber Eats charges 10% with a minimum of 99p and maximum of £2.99; Deliveroo’s 5% has a 99p minimum and £2.49 maximum; Just Eat’s is 5% with a 50p minimum and £1.99 maximum. The delivery fee is usually based on how far from the restaurant you are.

We have had to increase our delivery app menu prices by approximately 20% in order to survive

*Rahul Sharma*

Rahul Sharma, owner of The Regency Club, an Indian and Kenyan bar and grill in north London, says chicken biryani costs £11.95 if ordered in the restaurant or for takeaway. Using Uber Eats, however, this increases to £15.30. He has raised the price similarly when using the other platforms. After a delivery fee and a service fee – which changes by customer – the total comes to £18.12.

“We pay 30% commission to aggregators and they charge the customer a delivery fee and service charge,” he says. “To compensate for the unprecedented increases in cost, along with high fees from the aggregators, we have had to increase our delivery app menu prices by approximately 20% in order to survive; otherwise to be listed on an aggregator’s platform is just a costly marketing exercise.”

David Fox, co-founder of the Tampopo chain of restaurants, which has five locations in London and Manchester, says they raise prices by up to a pound on their main courses on their Deliveroo menu.



Wendy Napthine Frame, owner of Cromars fish and chips, has had to raise prices to make up for a 29% delivery service charge

“Restaurants and takeaways have to pay between 25% and 40% of take-out sales through delivery platforms,” he says. “If take-out is a significant part

of the total sales of a high street business, then that is a problem.”

But Peter Backman, a restaurant consultant, says not all restaurants charge extra, especially big chains where the price of the dishes are well-known to the consumer.

While customers do not have to pay the higher prices, many are prepared to, he says, especially since the lockdowns. “Delivery really took off in a huge way because it was the only way you can have a cooked meal that you haven’t prepared yourself. And the ‘premiumisation’ [paying more than you would have paid in the store] also went up,” says Backman.

“There is a whole class of customer for whom the convenience of being able to just pick up the phone and have a hot meal delivered within half an hour, or whatever it is, is a huge benefit. And they’re prepared to pay.”

Commission rates charged by Deliveroo vary depending on what type of service the restaurant or takeaway uses – such as whether they have their own couriers or use the company’s.

Restaurants which just use Deliveroo, instead of several services, often get better rates. “We encourage restaurants to set the same menu prices as they offer customers when dining in,” says Deliveroo. “Partnering with Deliveroo means restaurants do not, themselves, need to provide delivery services, fund marketing campaigns or customer services – we firmly believe our commission rates are competitive for the service provided.”

Just Eat typically charges 14% to a restaurant if consumers collect their own order, or if it is delivered by couriers from the restaurant.



Deliveroo doubled its customer orders during the pandemic when people couldn't go out to eat. Photograph: BMD Images/Alamy

Restaurants that use Just Eat's delivery network pay an average of 30%. It says: "Just Eat is only successful if our restaurant partners are successful. Our commission rates remain competitive, and despite rising external costs, our rates for marketplace restaurants have not changed for the last five years in the UK."

Uber Eats says: "Commissions cover a wide range of essential services for restaurants, from processing payments to supporting couriers, as well as providing dedicated customer support."

Consumers who want to order direct from their local takeaway can find a list of them with links on the site StraightFrom.com, operated by Flipdish, a tech company which gets restaurants' ordering systems online.

## The soaring cost of Friday fish and chips

The price of a Friday night fish supper has gone up and is set to rise even more as costs of supplies, from fish to mayonnaise to packaging, go up.

Chippies have come under increased pressure as the war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis and spiralling energy costs combine.

Wendy Napthine Frame, owner of Cromars Fish and Chips in St Andrews, says it has increased prices by 10% and could be forced to hike them more in the near future.

“Oil has doubled over the past few months. This is the biggest increase in our core ingredients. Mayonnaise that we use for our tartare sauce has increased. Our own batter mixture too has gone up due to the cost of flour,” she says.

The war in Ukraine has brought uncertainty about the supply of cod and haddock from the sea north of Norway and Russia.

Mark Polley of the Northern Irish chip-shop chain John Dory’s says fish costs have gone up 90%. “Of the whitefish that landed in the UK, 45% came from Russia and that is what supplies the chip shops. So it’s not available. [The high] oil price is also due to shortage as a lot of sunflower oils are from Ukraine. It also puts pressure on rapeseed oil, which had a very bad crop this year.”

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Interview

## **Aslef boss Mick Whelan: ‘There’s no cost to the economy in running rail properly’**

[Gwyn Topham](#)



Empty platforms at King's Cross St Pancras in London amid a strike by members of the RMT. Train drivers with Aslef are now balloting for action. Photograph: James Manning/PA

Head of train drivers' union takes pride in calling very few strikes – but enough is enough, he says



[@GwynTopham](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 08.19 EDT

Mick Whelan, general secretary of the train drivers' union Aslef, prides himself in rarely calling a strike since taking the helm in 2011. Now though, three years since most of his members last had a pay rise, industrial action looks increasingly likely.

Ballots close on Monday at eight major train operators where drivers are voting to back strikes, and three more are due in a fortnight – potentially giving Whelan the power to bring most of the railway around England to a halt.

The eventual departure of Boris Johnson – who has long backed driverless trains and refused to meet unions when, as London mayor (2008-2016), he

was responsible for transport in the capital – could slightly alter [the rail dispute](#), Whelan says.

“We do believe that Boris had unfinished business with us from his time as mayor,” he says.



Mick Whelan, general secretary of the train drivers' trade union Aslef.  
Photograph: Nick Ansell/PA

But Whelan also notes what he calls “the myths and legends” put out by the transport secretary, Grant Shapps – highlighting train drivers’ salaries (even when it was signallers and guards on strike) and damning so-called Spanish practices such as Sunday overtime and break-time allowances.

“Mr Shapps is talking about modernisation, which is actually degradation. Do drivers require time to walk from one end of a train to the other? Well unless someone’s invented some sort of Star Trek technology, yes we do.”

Walking time is factored in at stations such as St Pancras by train operators who do not know on which platform a train will arrive, he says: “If they knew, we’d adjust the walking times accordingly.”

Regarding the infamous Sundays when some trains did not run for lack of drivers on the day of the final of the 2018 World Cup or Euro 2020 (in

2021), Whelan says: “I wonder how many journalists on their day off would have volunteered to work. Or how many government ministers actually went to the match and got hospitality that day.”

In fact, he says, Aslef would like to extend the working week, but not enough drivers have been hired: “For 25 years I’ve been saying you can’t run the industry on voluntary overtime. I’m very much for full employment – even if it would take away a lot of our leverage.”

A long-recognised irony at Aslef is that, for all it is cast as the enemy of privatisation, demand for drivers – and hence their pay – has shot up as the rail industry fragmented after British Rail.

Now, even unofficial action short of a strike – such as declining overtime – can play havoc with timetables, as Scotrail recently experienced.

Whelan has no rose-tinted glasses for British Rail, but says: “I do believe that hundreds of millions of pounds are being wasted in privatisation.

I don’t understand how the government buys trains that end up in the hands of rolling stock companies at low cost and then rented back to the industry at high rates.

“Look at the directors who would have been very junior managers under BR ... and never attain the salaries, share options or dividends they’ve got in this industry.

“We work for Arriva, Avanti, Keolis, FirstGroup, who are quite happily making £500m out of these current contracts – much of which will go back to fund state railways in other European countries”. A number of train operating groups are owned in full or part by Germany, Italy and France.

The government said that maximum profit available in total to train operators last year under current contracts was £142m.

Ministers have contrasted drivers’ pay with nurses’, but Whelan says: “We want them to have what we have. Some salaries we pay public sector workers – where they have to go to food banks or have two jobs to survive – are a disgrace, and a taint and a stain on this country.”

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Although the rise in home working has hit rail's revenues, Whelan argues: "This idea that every household in the country spent £600 supporting rail workers, that's not true. What they did was spend £16bn running the industry because there was no footfall and there was a major pandemic.

"It was recognised that the railways needed to run, for food on shelves and to get key workers to work. We need that now and for the next 20 years – we should put railways at the centre of a green future."

Studies have shown that every pound invested in transport before the pandemic reaped £5 back for the economy; even now, Whelan says, "for that pound you still got double that back".

He adds: "There is no loss or cost to the economy in running your railways properly."

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## Museums

# Museum of London plans ‘epic leaving do’ before moving out

Five-month programme of special events will take place before relocation to new home in Smithfield



The Museum of London. Photograph: © Museum of London

*[Esther Addley](#)*

Mon 11 Jul 2022 04.00 EDT

An “epic leaving party” potentially lasting all night will be the final public event of the [Museum of London](#) before its building is demolished ahead of a move to a new site, its director has said.

The doors will close for the last time on 4 December, the museum has confirmed, “and we are really gearing up for that last weekend”, the museum’s director, [Sharon Ament](#), said. “If there is demand, we will stay

open 24 hours – we really want everybody who hasn't been to the Museum of London to come and see it.”

The institution, which claims to be the largest urban history collection in the world, has been situated since 1976 in an eccentric building in London Wall, but [announced in 2015](#) that it would move to a new home in derelict Victorian market buildings in nearby Smithfield.

Ament said she was not feeling sentimental about leaving the site, which is squeezed between the [Barbican housing estate](#) and a roundabout and has no entry at street level, requiring visitors to navigate a warren of raised passageways to gain entry.

“If I’m really truthful, I can’t wait to move,” she said. “It’s not fit for purpose as a museum any more. It has served us well until now, let’s say, but it really is time to move on.”

First, though, in a five-month blowout the museum will host a packed programme of events, taking in many of its best known and most popular collections, from prehistoric relics and Roman mosaics to artefacts from the Suffragette movement.



Detail of a reconstructed Roman living room. Photograph: © Museum of London

A busy [summer programme](#) is targeted at families, with opportunities for children to build a giant Roman mosaic from Lego, a Minecraft Roman temple or picnic like a Roman soldier.

School visits throughout the autumn will be structured around a different historical theme each week, and the museum is promising special behind-the-scenes access to some of its 7m artefacts during the Open House weekend in September. The programme will culminate with two weekend-long festivals before the shutters finally come down.

“I don’t know exactly what’s going to come up, and I’m really, really excited about that,” said Ament. “I’ve heard that some of our curators want to go big.” One artefact under discussion is the blimp balloon of [Donald Trump](#), which the [museum acquired](#) after it was [first flown by protesters](#) during the US president’s visit to London in 2018. “Oh, I would love to see that flying above the museum. Watch this space.”

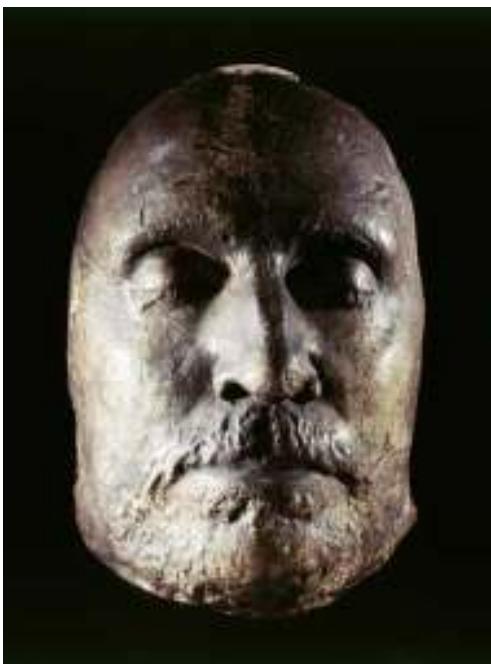


A recreation of one of the capital’s 19th-century pleasure gardens. Photograph: © Museum of London

Ament said she was proud the museum had showcased this newsy approach to collecting. “Museums generally work at a slower pace than most other channels, but what we want to do in our museum is be more journalistic, more rapid-response.” The [Whitechapel fatberg](#) – a huge mass of congealed grease that was collected from the capital’s sewers and put on display in 2018 – was another example, she said. “It was found one day, and we collected it the day after.”

Its final two exhibitions, focusing on [grime](#) music and the footballer [Harry Kane](#) – had been chosen specifically for their broad appeal, she said. “We have a responsibility to engage the whole of London.”

The museum may be relieved to be moving its collections – including the remains of 20,000 historic Londoners stored in a bunker beneath the [London](#) Wall roundabout – but there is controversy over what will replace the existing building.



Oliver Cromwell's death mask. Photograph: © Museum of London

The City of London Corporation, having [ditched plans to develop a £288m concert hall](#) on the site, is [consulting on an alternative scheme](#) for “a new business destination in London’s economic centre”. [Barbican residents are](#)

“dismayed”, however and a new campaign is trying to overturn the “monstrous, unsustainable proposals”.

One undoubted loss for the museum when it moves will be its current proximity to a stretch of the existing Roman wall, which visitors overlook even as they examine excavated Roman artefacts.

“But Roman London is all under our feet all over the place,” said Ament, “and yes, we’ll be saying goodbye to one part of London’s history and hello to another. Smithfield is a place where martyrs were burned, William Wallace was hanged, drawn and quartered; the big livestock markets were there. St Barts is the first public hospital in the country. It feels like history is all around.”

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[A new start after 60](#)[Life and style](#)

## A new start after 60: ‘I risked my house to launch a chain of 24-hour gyms’



‘I’m looking around for the next thing now’ ... Bob Cheek, 78. Photograph: Anna Gordon/The Guardian

Bob Cheek was in his 60s and worrying about his future. Then he hit on a scheme that would make him millions



[Emine Saner](#)

[@eminesaner](#)

Mon 11 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT

Shortly before he turned 65, Bob Cheek took a plane to the US and turned up at a 24-hour gym in California. He had read about this new type of gym in a magazine, back in Australia, and ended up outside one in San Diego, wanting to see how they were run. He knocked on the door; a man opened it and told him he couldn't come in because he wasn't a member. "I said: 'Can you just talk to me about this gym?'"

The man explained how it was run – that it was only supervised sometimes, and members could let themselves in at any time – and Cheek was sold. "What a great idea," he says, smiling. He couldn't wait to get back to Tasmania to open one. He already had a gym – a high-end, loss-making one. "So I had to do something."

Cheek had enjoyed a varied career. He grew up on his parents' farm in northern Tasmania, then became a professional Australian rules football player. When that career was coming to an end, he switched to journalism, becoming editor of a paper in Tasmania. He also "dabbled in a few things in

business". While many of his footballing peers went into running pubs, he was more interested in fitness, and invested in gyms "with varying degrees of success". As he complained to a friend that politicians didn't understand the pressures small businesses were under, "My friend said: 'Put up or shut up.'" So in 1996, Cheek stood as an MP for the Liberal party and was elected to the Tasmanian parliament, becoming leader of the opposition in 2001 before losing his seat the following year.

He came out of politics without a big pension, with a failing business, and wondered what to do next. "That's a very good incentive to get going," he says. "I wanted to keep doing things with my life anyway. I never thought of myself as old – age has never worried me." When we speak over Zoom, Cheek, 78, is in a hotel room in northern England, having cycled over the North York Moors that day, on a cycling trip that will eventually take him from Dublin to Copenhagen. "It's just a challenge," he says.

My life has got better as it's gone on: my 60s were one of the best decades of my life and my 70s are even better

He borrowed money to put into opening his first 24-hour gym in Hobart, Tasmania's capital. "It was a risk. If it hadn't worked out, I probably would have lost my house and everything else." It was a struggle at first, he says, to get the local government officials to agree to it. "Twenty-four-hour gyms were unknown. They thought they were going to be the headquarters for drug distribution and murders. They couldn't believe that people were going to go in at night and there would be no supervision."

The first opened in March 2009, and Cheek knew from the start it would be a success. It was far cheaper than most gyms and appealed to a wider range of people, including those who worked shifts and wanted to exercise at less common times. He says 700 people joined before it even opened. "I went into the car park that first night and saw it packed, and it was just an incredible feeling. So we kept building them." He built more in Tasmania, then started in mainland Australia, usually taking over old video rental shops – their open-plan layouts made them ideal – which were going out of business at the time.

Cheek, who has three children and several grandchildren, ended up owning 37 gyms across Australia, with plans to move into south-east Asia, and he loved it. Most of the members were under 40, and he says “it kept me young, too, being involved with all these younger people coming in. Gyms are the new meeting places for young people. In my day, everyone went to the pub; now they go to the gym. It was great seeing all these young people getting fit and having a good time, and older people as well. And, I’ll be honest, I was making a good quid too.”

In 2017, he sold the chain for a reported \$50m. He didn’t particularly want to and had turned down offers before, but he was having some issues with investors and was in his 70s by then, and people kept telling him they were amazed he wanted to keep going. “I had seller’s remorse for a long time,” he says, until the pandemic hit and he felt lucky not to be running gyms. But he still misses the business.

“It gave me a new lease of life,” he says. “My life has got better as it’s gone on: my 60s were one of the best decades of my life, and I think my 70s are even better. I know health can have a big say in that, but for me it was like a magic carpet ride, flying into my 60s. I didn’t even feel it – I felt like I was 35 again – and that’s about having a sense of purpose, building something and helping people. I worked really hard, but I loved it.” He smiles, happy even if he complains about his back and neck from a gruelling day cycling Yorkshire’s hills. “I’m looking around for the next thing now. I can’t go riding bikes for ever.”

*Bob Cheek has written a memoir, [Dumbbells to Diamonds](#)*

[Tell us: has your life taken a new direction after the age of 60?](#)

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## 2022.07.11 - Opinion

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[OpinionUber](#)

# The Uber files tell a simple truth: democracy depends on curbing mercenary tech giants

[Rafael Behr](#)



These revelations reveal the political credulity and negligence that has surrounded the growing power of Silicon Valley

[What are the Uber files?](#) A guide to cab-hailing firm's ruthless expansion tactics



Uber drivers in London protest during a 24-hour strike for better pay and conditions, October 2021. Photograph: Loredana Sangiuliano/Sopa/Rex/Shutterstock

Mon 11 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 08.26 EDT

There were taxis before there was [Uber](#), just as there were bookshops before Amazon and friends before Facebook. A large part of innovation is new ways to deliver old ideas. Technology gives the innovator an edge by lowering costs, enabling nimbler delivery and outcompeting established traders who are stuck with obsolescent methods.

That is the foundational myth of Silicon Valley folklore. It was the story that Uber propagated about itself in the years of its most explosive growth from a service for hailing rides around San Francisco to a global tech powerhouse. Here was the archetypal digital disruption – an app to match demand to supply with a slickness that blew competition off the road.

When those competitors (licensed taxi drivers) complained, their objections were dismissed by the newcomer as the death rattle of monopolists and luddites who were getting in the way of progress.

There was then, and still is, an argument to be had about regulation that inhibits innovation, and when it needs to change in step with changing times. That debate looks somewhat different in the light of leaked communications, dating from between 2014 and 2017 and published yesterday by the Guardian, showing the ruthless, aggressive methods that Uber used to force entry into various markets around the world.

The company's mercenary ethos is encapsulated in an exchange between senior executives discussing the threat to Uber drivers from attack in Paris, when the city's established taxi operators went on strike. [Travis Kalanick](#), Uber's co-founder and former chief executive, wanted his drivers to defy the strike with mass civil disobedience. When warned that this might provoke violent retaliation, Kalanick responded: "I think it's worth it. Violence guarantee[s] success."

The implication, which Uber denies, is that the company saw the threat to its drivers as part of a suite of public relations tools, alongside its many levers of private influence, to press for regulatory change. The scale of that operation, recruiting top politicians and power brokers around the globe to agitate for the company's interests, is breathtaking. (Also expensive. In 2016 alone, the company spent \$90m on lobbying.) Uber now says it is under different management with a different modus operandi. Kalanick [left the company](#) in 2017.

It's not unusual for an ambitious young company to pursue commercial interests with abrasive force. Ruthlessness is a historic driver of economic evolution. Some innovators have a philanthropic streak, others are rapacious. The pattern across history is that technology smashes its way into an economy and only later, once the wider implications are visible, does society organise a political response to mitigate the downsides. The Industrial Revolution generated phenomenal wealth for industrialists before there were laws against child labour. It took workers organising themselves into trade unions to bring a counterweight to forces that tended naturally towards mass exploitation and poverty pay. (Only last year, the UK supreme court [upheld an employment tribunal ruling](#) against Uber, which had claimed that it didn't need to provide its drivers with the minimum wage, paid leave or pensions because they were not technically categorised as workers.)

The success of liberal democracy – the best model yet devised for organising people into prosperous and free societies – depends on a balance between the wealth-generating impetus of the market and the obligations politics must impose on business for the greater good. Today, the difference between mainstream left and right in economic policy has come down to the question of where to adjust the levels between those competing demands; where the emphasis falls between the individual freedom to get rich and the collective duty to share.

Periodically that distinction is declared irrelevant by the forward march of history. But it keeps bouncing back. The Marxist project to eliminate capitalism entirely degenerated into tyranny and bankruptcy wherever it was tried in the 20th century. That failure was then seized as moral vindication by free-market fundamentalists who saw any state regulation of the economy as an assault on liberty.

The post-cold war triumphalist moment for the west coincided with the digital revolution, producing a culture of arrogance and political complacency around the new-tech economy. The Silicon Valley ethos combined California's gold-rush model of lawless capitalism with traces of utopian evangelism that the hippies had brought to San Francisco. The result was a cultish veneration of the internet startup as a new kind of business to which old rules did not apply, and whose purpose was improving humanity as well as making money.

The Uber files are a snapshot of a particular moment – the peak of political credulity and negligence around the growing power of tech companies. But the basic rules of the new digital economy turned out to be not so different from the old analogue ones. The type of regulation that might be needed to restrain corporate excess will be different in sectors that didn't exist a generation ago. The pattern of politics getting captured by corporate lobbyists is dismally familiar.

The revelation of Uber's sharp practices tells a simple truth about the tech revolution. It is the same one that is told by the arduous working conditions in an Amazon warehouse and the poisoned reservoirs of public debate where Facebook discharges hatred and misinformation. The cost of innovation

might be invisible to the consumer, but that doesn't mean it isn't there. And the job of democratic politicians is to be guardians of public interest, not the lubricants to private gain.

- Rafael Behr is a Guardian columnist
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## Boris Johnson leaves behind a sterling mess

[Barry Eichengreen](#)

A weak pound often appears as a harbinger of economic doom for the UK – now it looks poised to weaken further



Since peaking in the spring of last year, the pound has depreciated by about 10% against the dollar. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP/Getty Images

Mon 11 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 01.01 EDT

Boris Johnson's chaotic government, and its equally [chaotic collapse](#), are not the only source of panic in the UK nowadays. There is growing anxiety about the exchange rate of the British pound as well.

Since peaking in the spring of last year, the pound has [depreciated by about 10%](#) against the dollar. “Britain’s currency is getting slaughtered on international markets,” we are [told](#). Of the five currencies underlying the

International Monetary Fund's reserve asset, special drawing rights, only the Japanese yen has done worse than the pound.

Traders appear to view sterling more like the currency of a [troubled emerging market](#) than of a stable advanced economy. And now, with Johnson's resignation and the attendant political uncertainty, sterling is poised to sink further.

Admittedly, such views are subject to exaggeration. [Sterling](#) is not alone in weakening against the dollar. A 10% fall against the greenback is no catastrophe.

But sterling's decline is almost surely not over. Moreover, the pound is often an indicator of Britain's economic problems. Four times in the last century, sterling crises have exposed the economy's fault lines. The [1931 crisis](#) took place against the backdrop of a crushing 21% unemployment rate. There was much discussion then of whether high unemployment reflected Britain's poor productivity performance or the global depression.

In fact, it reflected both. The crux of the matter was that, with unemployment at stratospheric levels, the Bank of England couldn't countenance higher interest rates to support sterling when chronic budget deficits and reports of a [mutiny in the Atlantic Fleet](#) created a crisis of confidence. Currency speculators knew it, so they pounced, [driving the pound off the gold standard](#).

The [crisis](#) that erupted in 1949 embarrassed a British government that was seeking to restore sterling's role as an international currency. The financial tripwire was the monumental overhang of sterling debt held by the country's wartime allies, which the UK had sought to bottle up, unsuccessfully, with capital and exchange controls. The sterling these countries used to pay for Britain's exports couldn't be used to purchase goods from the US, where British motorcars and other manufactured exports were uncompetitive.

Moreover, Britain was short of dollars. Once the possibility of devaluation was mooted, the BoE experienced an uncontrollable run on its reserves.

The 1967 [crisis](#) was embarrassing to Prime Minister Harold Wilson personally. Wilson worried that higher import prices would undermine his supporters' living standards. Still, he couldn't prevent it. This crisis, too, had multiple causes, from the [six-day war](#) to a UK [dock strike](#).

But the fundamental problem, once again, was [weak productivity growth](#), which was [reflected](#) in uncompetitive exports, a trade deficit, and unemployment. To stimulate demand and growth, Wilson's Labour government [cut interest rates](#) and relaxed restrictions on borrowing for automobile purchases. This led, predictably, to further deterioration of the trade balance and another run on the central bank. Wilson sought to [reassure the public](#) that "the pound in your pocket" was as solid as ever. Labour's subsequent election defeat suggests that voters saw through the pretence.

The 1992 [crisis](#), when sterling was driven out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, again occurred against the backdrop of poor UK productivity performance. Output a hour worked [had fallen](#) from 96% of German levels in the early 1970s to just 87% by 1992. Pegging sterling to the Deutsche mark, Europe's [anchor currency](#), thus meant a cumulative loss of competitiveness. A weak US dollar and high German interest rates, which strengthened the mark, then further [heightened the difficulty](#) of maintaining the peg.

To defend sterling, the BoE might have raised interest rates. As in 1967, however, internal and external objectives were at odds. Higher interest rates [would have meant](#) more unemployment and required higher mortgage payments of the Conservative supporters of Prime Minister John Major. The BoE and Treasury caved in, and, with a push from [George Soros](#), so did sterling.

This history offers a guide to understanding sterling's current and future prospects. Fundamentally, Britain [suffers](#) from slow productivity growth. This malaise, though [not new](#), has been unusually severe since 2008, and especially since 2016. It has multiple causes, from fractious labour relations and antiquated infrastructure to weak investment and shortages of suitably trained workers. It is now [compounded](#) by the frictions and inefficiencies brought about by Brexit.

To sustain demand for its output, the UK therefore needs to price its goods more competitively. This requires either less inflation than abroad or a weaker exchange rate. But less inflation is not happening, because Britain is being hit hard by the global [energy price shock](#), and because unions, after a decade or more of austerity, are [demanding higher wages](#). Hence the fall in sterling.

The BoE still could wrongfoot currency traders. It could raise interest rates faster than currently expected, dampening down inflation and supporting the currency, albeit at the cost of a recession. Anything is possible. But a century of UK history suggests that this scenario is unlikely.

- *Barry Eichengreen is professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley, and a former senior policy adviser at the IMF.*

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## Friendship

# Old friend getting on your nerves? I ditched mine – and regretted it for years

Sindhu Vee

The fury, the sadness, the shame: nothing compares to the brutality of ‘girlfriend divorce’



‘Making up with her was the only way I could begin to make sense to myself again.’ Photograph: FG Trade/Getty Images

Mon 11 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT

I am at the stage in my life where, if I don’t like something or someone, I am absolutely fine with editing them out. If it’s wrong or unfair or stupid, I’ll pay my dues in this life or the next (I’m a Hindu), and I’m cool with that. But I am also at the stage in my life where I know there is a single exception to this hard-won self-care practice: my closest girlfriends.

There is no denying that these women are in my life to stay – regardless of how much they irritate, infuriate or frustrate me. Why? Because the bald truth is: these girlfriends are the scaffolding of my life. Whenever they are absent, I come unstuck. I need them.

Leaving someone you have loved and shared your life with for many decades – AKA your “life partner” – is an absolutely devastating experience. Yet it happens quite a lot and it is sometimes even celebrated as a new start. Sure, there is a certain protocol – get professional advice, don’t bitch to the kids and get ready for some truly extraordinary sex – but if I see a woman who left her partner because “it just wasn’t working” and she is happier now, I think: good for her – *go, you!*

I’ve learned to lean on my other close girlfriends, and sometimes on alcohol and lies

Divorce is one thing but “GFD” – girlfriend divorce – is another. Choosing to leave someone you loved since a time when you didn’t even understand the heft of that word is different. Choosing to leave someone who can recall moments from your life that you have long forgotten, who held your hair back as you drunkenly puked in an alley, distraught over the guy who didn’t call back, and who, eight years later, unquestioningly adjusted the bow in your hair when you married that same guy – when you dump *that* person “because things really weren’t working out” there is no celebration, no new beginning and absolutely zero protocol.

I know because I’ve been there. And, boy, did it suck. I won’t go into all the reasons we arrived (after a long, savage time of riding the suppression/resentment/guilt/gaslighting rollercoaster) at GFD and the extremely brutal final break. But I can share with you the aftermath.

After divorcing my girlfriend, the map of my road in life thus far became blurred, and the needle on the compass that showed me where to go next became wonky. There was no one to relive the thing that happened when I was 25 that made me opt out of an arranged marriage, or the fight with another close friend that left me ragged. Sure, I could tell other friends about

these things and old ones might even recall them, but only as static stories – none had lived them with me, from the inside, as she had.

After my initial self-righteous fury wore off (this took a while), every time she crossed my mind I felt a blinding sadness. Gradually, this became an ache of confused shame that I had not been able to do better by her. And then my life continued: new baby, new house, new friends, yada yada, yuck yuck, puke.

Then, one day, she sent an email and I replied – and that is the beginning of the story of how we got back together. But the real point is, I learned (the devastating way) how important my closest girlfriends are to me. Making up with her was the only way I could begin to make sense to myself again.

But the threat of shit hitting the fan still lurks. These days, I'm reliant on a mix of therapy, my spouse's ear (he would rather chew glass but he cannot handle another cataclysmic implosion in any of my friendships, so he soldiers on), and just keeping my mouth shut. I've also learned to lean on my other close girlfriends, and sometimes on alcohol and lies. Because, no matter what it takes, I ain't going back to yada yada, yuck yuck, puke-land.

Sindhu Vee is a comedian, writer and actor. She is taking her show [Alphabet](#) to the Edinburgh festival fringe this August.

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## OpinionPolitics

# Who should be the next British PM? It's time to think outside the box ...

[First Dog on the Moon](#)



Should it be Aloysius Twinkley Winkleyton, Wealthy Frot Magazine's Person of the Year, or this stick that went to Oxford? You decide!

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Mon 11 Jul 2022 02.39 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 09.38 EDT

[Cartoon by First Dog on the Moon](#)

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## Shinzo Abe

# Shinzo Abe: Antony Blinken says assassinated former Japanese PM was ‘man of vision’

The US secretary of state flies to Japan to give condolences to nation as country’s ruling LDP holds muted celebrations for poll victory



US secretary of state Antony Blinken talks to reporters after arriving in Japan on Monday to offer condolences over the assassination of Shinzo Abe.  
Photograph: Kazuhiro Nogi/AFP/Getty Images

*[Justin McCurry](#) in Tokyo*

Mon 11 Jul 2022 01.12 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 23.21 EDT

The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken has described assassinated former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe as a “man of vision”, as the country’s ruling party held muted celebrations following [a resounding election victory](#).

The Liberal Democratic party (LDP), which Abe led for almost a decade, and its junior coalition party increased their majority in the upper house on Sunday, [two days after Abe was shot](#) during a campaign speech in the western city of Nara.

The LDP and Komeito won 76 of the 125 seats being contested in an election overshadowed by the first assassination of a Japanese leader for almost 90 years.

The election in the less powerful chamber in Japan's parliament, had no bearing on the makeup of the government, but was seen as a referendum on prime minister Fumio Kishida's first 10 months in office amid growing regional security concerns and the cost of living crisis.

At 52% turnout was slightly up from three years earlier – a trend some analysts attributed to Abe's death – but the coalition's victory had been expected before he was killed.

Blinken, who had been in Bali attending a G20 meeting, said he had flown to Japan because “we're friends, and when one friend is hurting, the other friend shows up”.

Abe, he said, “did more than anyone to elevate the relationship between the United States and Japan to new heights”.

“We will do everything we can to help our friends carry the burden of this loss,” he added, calling Abe “a man of vision with the ability to realise that vision”, after a meeting with Kishida.

A wake will be held for Abe on Monday evening at Zojoji, a large Buddhist temple in central Tokyo, followed by a private funeral on Tuesday at the same venue. Media reports said a public memorial would be held at a later date.

The suspect in Abe's killing, Tetsuya Yamagami, has said that he targeted the politician because he believed he had connections to a religious group he blamed for bankrupting his mother.

Some Japanese media outlets have named the group as the Unification Church, which was founded in South Korea in 1954. Its members are colloquially known as “Moonies” after its founder, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Police have declined to reveal the group’s name.

Yamagami, 41, also admitted test-firing homemade guns at a facility connected to the group, according to media, but the location and nature of the test was not immediately clear.

His mother had made a “huge” donation to the group, leaving the family struggling to survive, he reportedly told police, adding that he had initially intended to kill the group’s leader in Japan but later targeted Abe.

Police found multiple homemade guns similar to the one used in Friday’s attack during a search of Yamagami’s apartment in Nara, adding that he appeared to have used online sources as a guide to making them.

The election result means that Kishida, an Abe protégé, may yet pursue his mentor’s lifelong ambition of revising Japan’s “pacifist” constitution.

While building public support for constitutional change will take time, Kishida is expected to use his party’s mandate to double defence spending amid concerns over North Korea’s nuclear weapons programme and increased Chinese military activity in the East and South China seas.

“He now has a green light for this, said Robert Ward at the International Institute of Strategic Studies.

Kishida said Sunday’s vote had been a victory for democracy. “It is significant we were able to pull this election together at a time violence was shaking its foundations,” he said after a moment of silence was held at the LDP headquarters on Sunday night.

Abe’s death at the hands of a gunman who was able to wander freely behind his target as he addressed a small group of voters has prompted criticism of his security arrangements.

The head of police in the Nara region has admitted that there were “undeniable” flaws, and on Monday, the government’s top spokesman, Hirokazu Matsuno, said he expected a full investigation into security loopholes on the day of the attack.

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## Macau

# Macau shuts all casinos in bid to contain worsening Covid outbreak

More than 30 closed for a week – with extension thought likely – and dozens of city zones locked down in gambling hub



Casino Lisboa is among Macau's more than 30 casinos ordered temporarily closed on Monday as part of the Chinese city's drive against its worst Covid outbreak. Photograph: Jason Lee/Reuters

*Reuters in Hong Kong*

Mon 11 Jul 2022 00.14 EDT

Macau has shut all its casinos for the first time in more than two years as authorities struggle to contain the worst coronavirus outbreak yet in the world's biggest gambling hub.

The city's 30-plus casinos, along with other non-essential businesses, will shut for one week from Monday and people have been ordered to stay at home. Police would monitor flows of people outside, the government said, and stringent punishments would be imposed for those who disobeyed.

Hospitals, pharmacies, supermarkets and fresh food markets are some of the essential services that can remain open.

Macau has recorded about 1,500 Covid-19 infections since mid-June. Around 19,000 people are in mandatory quarantine, according to government figures.

More than 30 zones in the city that have been deemed high risk are now under lockdown, meaning no one is allowed to enter or exit for at least five days. While the government said it was not imposing a citywide lockdown, the stringent measures mean Macau is effectively closed.

Macau adheres to China's "zero-Covid" policy that aims to stamp out all outbreaks, running counter to a global trend of trying to coexist with the virus.

Casinos were last shut in Macau in February 2020 for 15 days.

The government had previously been hesitant to close casinos due to its mandate to protect jobs. The industry employs most of the population directly or indirectly and accounts for more than 80% of government revenues.

Casinos owned by Sands China, Wynn Macau, SJM Holdings, Galaxy Entertainment, Melco Resorts and MGM Resorts have been effectively shut for the past few weeks, with no gamblers and minimal staffing as per government requirements for people to work from home.

Analysts said it was likely that the suspension could be extended by another few weeks, with a recovery in gaming revenue unlikely until the end of the third or fourth quarter.

“Even if the outbreak in Macau gets under control, it will likely be another few weeks before Macau-Zhuhai can remove quarantine requirements,” said Terry Ng, an analyst at Daiwa Capital Markets in Hong Kong.

Frustration is mounting at the government’s handling of the outbreak. Some residents have got into fights at testing centres while others have had to queue for more than 20 hours to access healthcare facilities.

Residents will be required to take part in mass Covid tests four times this week as the government attempts to cut transmission chains.

Residents have already been tested six times since mid June and are expected to do rapid antigen tests daily.

More than 90% of Macau’s 600,000 residents are fully vaccinated against Covid but this is the first time the city has had to grapple with the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

Authorities have added two hotels in popular casino resorts to be used as Covid medical facilities as they try to increase capacity to handle the surge of infections.

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## US Capitol attack

# January 6 hearing to focus on Trump's tweet to extremist group

Former president's notorious 'Be there, will be wild!' tweet was catalyst for violent protests, congress members will argue



Then-US president Donald Trump speaks to supporters from the Ellipse near the White House in Washington on 6 January 2021. Photograph: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

*[Hugo Lowell](#) in Washington*

Mon 11 Jul 2022 02.30 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 00.11 EDT

The House January 6 select committee is expected to make the case at its seventh hearing Tuesday that [Donald Trump](#) gave the signal to the extremist groups that stormed the Capitol to target and obstruct the congressional certification of Joe Biden's electoral college win.

The panel will zero in on a pivotal tweet sent by the former president in the early hours of the morning on 19 December 2020, according to sources close to the inquiry who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the forthcoming hearing.

“Big protest in D.C. on January 6th,” Trump said in the tweet. “Be there, will be wild!”

The select committee will say at the hearing – led by congressmen Jamie Raskin and Stephanie Murphy – that Trump’s tweet was the catalyst that triggered the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers groups, as well as Stop the Steal activists, to target the certification.

And Trump sent the tweet knowing that for those groups, it amounted to a confirmation that they should put into motion their plans for January 6, the select committee will say, and encouraged thousands of other supporters to also march on the Capitol for a protest.

The tweet was the pivotal moment in the timeline leading up to the Capitol attack, the select committee will say, since it was from that point that the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers seriously started preparations, and Stop the Steal started applying for permits.

The select committee also currently plans to play video clips from former White House counsel Pat Cipollone’s [recent testimony to House investigators](#) at Tuesday’s hearing.

Raskin is expected to first touch on the immediate events before the tweet: a contentious White House meeting on 18 December 2020 where Trump weighed seizing voting machines and appointing conspiracy theorist Sidney Powell as special counsel to investigate election fraud.

The meeting involved Trump and four informal advisers, [the Guardian has reported](#), including Trump’s ex-national security adviser, Michael Flynn, ex-Trump campaign lawyer Sidney Powell, ex-Overstock CEO Patrick Byrne and ex-Trump aide Emily Newman.

Once in the Oval Office, they implored Trump to invoke executive order 13848, which granted him emergency powers in the event of foreign interference in the election – though that had not happened – to seize voting machines and install Powell as special counsel.

The former president ultimately demurred on both of the proposals. But after the Flynn-Powell-Byrne-Newman plan for him to overturn the election fell apart, the select committee will say, he turned his attention to January 6 as his final chance and sent his tweet.

The response to Trump's tweet was direct and immediate, the panel will show, noting that Stop the Steal announced plans for a protest in Washington set to coincide with Biden's certification just hours after the former president sent his missive.

The Proud Boys – whose top members have since been [indicted for seditious conspiracy](#) over the Capitol attack – also started to crystalize what their plans were for January 6 the following day, according to federal prosecutors prosecuting the case.

On 20 December 2020, prosecutors have said, the former Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrio created an encrypted group chat called “MOSD Leaders Group” – described by Tarrio as a “national rally planning” committee that included his top lieutenants.

The day after Tarrio started the MOSD Leaders Group – the Monday after Trump's tweet that came on a Saturday – the leaders of Stop the Steal [applied for a permit](#) to stage a protest on “Lot 8” near the Capitol, and around that time, sent live the WildProtest.com website.

Through the rest of December and spurred on by Trump's tweet, the select committee will say citing the Proud Boys indictment, the Proud Boys leaders used the MOSD chats to plan a “DC trip” and tell their members to dress incognito for their operation on January 6.

Top members of the Oath Keepers militia group led by Stewart Rhodes, who have also been indicted for seditious conspiracy, made similar plans as they

prepared to obstruct the congressional certification of Biden's election win, the panel intends to show.

The select committee will then focus on how the Oath Keepers stockpiled weapons and created an armed quick reaction force ready to deploy to the Capitol, and how the group ended up as [the security detail for far-right activist Roger Stone](#) and other Trump allies.

One of the witnesses providing public testimony at the hearing is expected to be Jason van Tatenhove, a former spokesperson for the Oath Keepers who left the group around 2017 but is slated to discuss their motivations and how they operated.

The 1st Amendment Praetorian, Flynn's paramilitary group, is also expected to get a brief mention at the hearing, as will the various ["war rooms" at the Willard hotel](#), where both Stone and Flynn, as well as Trump's attorney, Rudy Giuliani, were spotted ahead of January 6.

The select committee, through Raskin's portion of the hearing, will run through the effects of Trump's tweet on preparations for January 6 right up until the morning of the Capitol attack and Trump's speech at the Save America rally on the Ellipse.

Congresswoman Murphy is then expected examine the Ellipse rally itself, and Trump's incendiary rhetoric where he told his supporters that he would march with them to the Capitol, giving the pro-Trump crowd the ultimate incentive to storm Biden's certification.

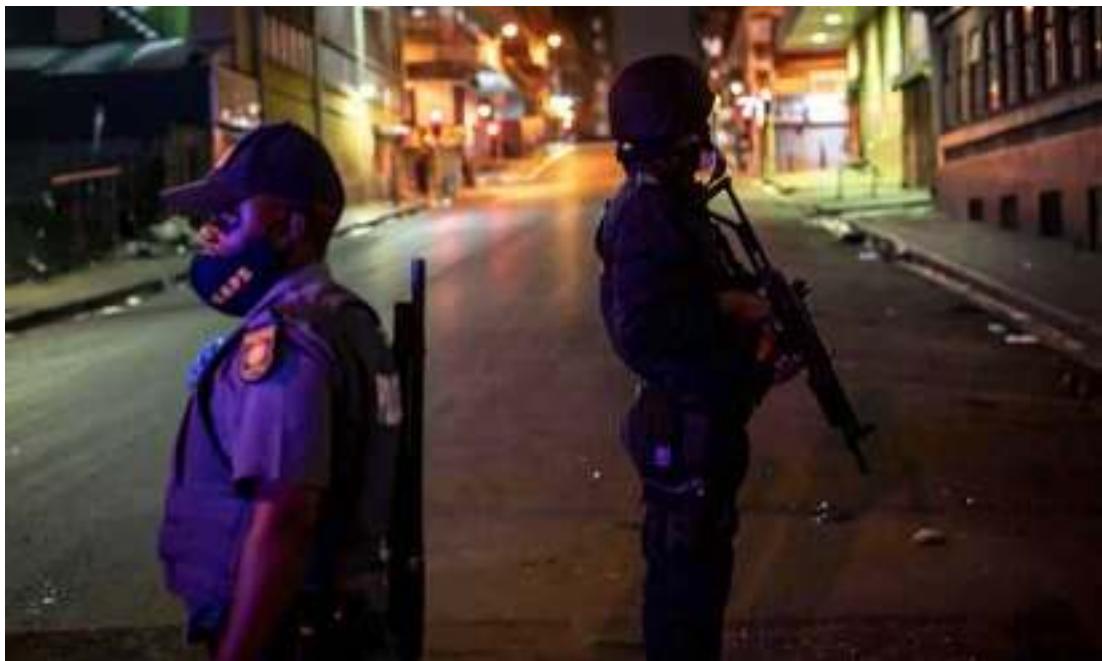
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## [South Africa](#)

# **South Africa bar shootings: four killed in KwaZulu-Natal on same night as 15 die in Soweto**

Police investigating if attacks linked, citing similarities as gunmen in both cases said to have fired at people ‘randomly’



Nineteen people have been killed in two bar shootings at the weekend, one in Soweto, near Johannesburg, and the other in the eastern city of Pietermaritzburg. Photograph: Shiraaz Moahmed/AP

*Agence France-Presse in Johannesburg*

Sun 10 Jul 2022 20.15 EDT Last modified on Sun 10 Jul 2022 22.48 EDT

Four people have been killed and eight wounded in a bar in eastern [South Africa](#) after two men fired indiscriminately at customers, police said, on the same night as a bar shooting in Soweto left 15 dead.

Police were trying to verify if the attacks were linked, they said, noting their similarity.

In the city of Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal province on Saturday night, two entered the bar and “fired random shots at the patrons” before fleeing, local police spokesman Nqobile Gwala said.

“A total of 12 people were shot. Two people were declared dead at the scene and the other two died in hospital,” he said.

“Another eight people are still in hospital after they sustained injuries.”

The dead were aged between 30 and 45.

The attack occurred about 8.30pm at a tavern in a semi-rural area 20km (12 miles) from Pietermaritzburg in the country’s east, close to a car wash and a liquor store, according to an AFP reporter on the scene.

The mayor, Mzimkhulu Thebola, said the assault was over very quickly without any robbery, conversation or fight.

“Every week we get news of people that have just been shot at randomly,” he said.

Blood stains were seen on the ground in front of the bar.

In Soweto hours later, gunmen killed 15 people and injured eight in a shooting at a tavern at a township close to Johannesburg.



A police investigator and forensic personnel at the scene of the Soweto bar shooting. Photograph: Ihsaan Haffejee/AFP/Getty Images

Police the victims had been shot randomly, according to witnesses, while they were drinking.

“When we arrived at the scene, 12 people were dead with gunshot wounds,” police officer Nonhlanhla Kubheka said.

Eleven people were taken to hospital, and three later succumbed to their wounds. The dead were aged 19 to 35 and included two women, provincial police chief Elias Mawela said.

There were no details regarding the assailants, he said, and forensic police were still collecting evidence.

The two deadly attacks came two weeks after the mysterious deaths of [22 people, mostly teenagers](#), in still unclear circumstances at a township tavern last month in the southern city of East London.

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## [Sri Lanka](#)

# Sri Lankan opposition parties plan unity government after president quits

Prime minister as well as Rajapaksa will step down after months of protests culminated in attacks on their homes



People wait to visit President Rajapaksa's house in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 10 July. Photograph: Dinuka Liyanawatte/Reuters

*[Hannah Ellis-Petersen](#) South Asia correspondent*

Sun 10 Jul 2022 13.29 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 00.14 EDT

Sri Lanka's main opposition parties have hurriedly moved to form an all-party unity government a day after the president and the prime minister said they would resign from office after mounting public pressure.

On Sunday, leaders from the main opposition political parties met to discuss an effective transition of power, following the much anticipated [resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa](#) on 13 July.

Caretaker prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who has only been in office since May, also agreed to step down if an all-party government could be formed to take over the running of the country. Wickremesinghe, whose [private residence was set alight](#) by protesters on Saturday, emphasised that the country was facing critical times and needed a stable government.

Protesters remained in Rajapaksa's residence, his seaside office and the prime minister's home, saying they would stay until the resignations are official. The president's whereabouts was unknown.

Soldiers were deployed around the city and the chief of defence staff, Shavendra Silva, called for public support to maintain law and order. But troops simply watched from afar as crowds of people [splashed in the garden pool](#) of Rajapaksa's sprawling residence, lounged on beds and took selfies of themselves on their mobile phones to capture the moment.

Wimal Weerawansa, a MP who was formerly with the ruling party but broke away as the country's economy collapsed, said that the opposition parties had "agreed in principle to form a government of unity with all parties' participation for an interim period." Discussions were said to be still continuing about who will be the new prime minister and president.

The unity government is likely to be only a temporary measure until parliamentary elections can be held. However, whoever takes over the running of the country faces a difficult road ahead, with Sri Lanka's economic woes showing no sign of relenting, and warnings that the fuel and food shortages could worsen. They could also face issues of public legitimacy. Many of the protesters who have been demonstrating against President Rajapaksa are not supportive of many of the MPs, who they view as still part of the political establishment that caused Sri Lanka's downfall.

Rajapaksa has been president since November 2019 and, alongside five other members of his family who held senior political posts, stands accused of corruption, bankrupting the country and triggering the worst economic crisis since independence.

President Rajapaksa had been facing months of sustained protests calling for him to step down from power but he had repeatedly refused. However, after a dramatic series of events unfolded on Saturday, when his offices and residence were overtaken by protesters and the house of the prime minister was set alight, he was faced with little option but to announce he would step down, a rare and historic triumph of people power in Sri Lanka.

The president's promise to resign by Wednesday in order to oversee a "peaceful transition" was conveyed through the parliamentary speaker late on Saturday night. But it was not followed up by an official address or letter of resignation and on Sunday he still remained in hiding, reportedly under the protection of the military.

However, despite his stark absence, he still seemed to be involved in the running of the country with reports on Sunday he had ordered a freshly delivered supply of cooking gas to be distributed across the country.

According to the constitution, once President Rajapaksa steps down, the parliamentary speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena will temporarily take over for 30 days, and then parliament will have to vote to appoint a formal presidential successor.

Particularly crucial for Sri Lanka is to have a government in place that can continue to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The country, which has already defaulted on its \$51bn of foreign debt, is hoping for an emergency \$4bn bailout as its foreign reserves have run out and it can no longer afford to import fuel, food and medicine, leading to what the UN recently described as an imminent "humanitarian crisis".

The IMF said on Sunday that it hoped for "a resolution of the current situation that will allow for resumption of our dialogue".

The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said that Washington was tracking the developments in Sri Lanka and urged parliament to work quickly to implement solutions and address the people's discontent.

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Speaking at a news conference in Bangkok, Blinken said that the United States condemns attacks against the peaceful demonstrators while calling for a full investigation into any protest-related violence.

Pope Francis opened his Sunday remarks after noon prayers at the Vatican by voicing concern about Sri Lanka.

“I unite myself to the pain of the people of Sri Lanka, who continue to suffer the effects of the political and economic instability,” the pontiff told the public in St Peter’s Square. “Together with the bishops of the country, I renew my appeal for peace, and I implore those who have authority not to ignore the cry of the poor and the needs of the people.”

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## Headlines tuesday 5 july 2022

- [Live Johnson urged to ‘own up to his web of lies’ after No 10 accused of not telling truth about Pincher](#)
- [Boris Johnson No 10 not telling truth over Chris Pincher, says former top civil servant](#)
- [Simon McDonald Ex-top civil servant who accuses No 10 of misleading public](#)
- [Chris Pincher A timeline of allegations and investigations](#)

[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

# Nadhim Zahawi becomes chancellor and Steve Barclay health secretary, replacing Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid – as it happened

This live blog has now closed, you can find all the latest UK political developments [in our new live blog](#)

Updated 6 Jul 2022

*[Samantha Lock](#) (now) , [Nadeem Badshah](#) and [Andrew Sparrow](#) (earlier)*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 21.09 EDTFirst published on Tue 5 Jul 2022 04.14 EDT

Key events:

- [6 Jul 2022](#)  
[Summary](#)
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[A summary of today's developments](#)
- [5 Jul 2022](#)  
[Alex Chalk resigns as solicitor general](#)
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Nadhim Zahawi and Steve Barclay are appointed chancellor and health secretary respectively, replacing Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid who have resigned from their roles. Composite: Getty Images/AFP/EPA

*[Samantha Lock \(now\)](#) , [Nadeem Badshah](#) and [Andrew Sparrow \(earlier\)](#)*  
Tue 5 Jul 2022 21.09 EDTFirst published on Tue 5 Jul 2022 04.14 EDT

Show key events only

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## Live feed

From 5 Jul 2022

[13.33](#)

## Javid/Sunak resignations - snap analysis

It could all be over for [Boris Johnson](#) - although quite how long it will take his enemies to finish him off is not at all clear and his defenestration does not look immediate. The two byelection defeats almost two weeks ago prompted calls for cabinet ministers to mount a coup against Boris Johnson, and it finally it seems to be happening.

We have not had confirmation yet, but it is impossible to believe that the resignations of Sajid Javid and Rishi Sunak were not coordinated. Perhaps there are more to come.

The Sunak resignation is the most serious of the two. Since the spring statement, the chancellor has not been the obvious heir apparent he once was. But he is still a powerful figure in the party. The resignation of Nigel Lawson helped to bring down Margaret Thatcher, although it took just over a year for that to eventually play out.

Even if there are no more resignations, the mood in the Conservative party has already turned against Johnson – perhaps decisively.

Under current rules Johnson is safe from another leadership challenge until next summer. But the executive of the 1922 Committee can change the rules whenever it wants. A new anti-Johnson executive is expected to be elected next week, but even the current executive – more evenly split between loyalists and critics – could act now if it felt there was a consensus in the party.

Johnson is famously stubborn, and he is unlikely to quit just because two ministers have decided to go. But increasingly Conservative MPs believe they have no chance of winning the next election under his leadership. Ultimately that assessment should prove decisive.

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Updated at 13.39 EDT

Key events:

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[6 Jul 2022](#)[21.09](#)

## Summary

Boris Johnson has been dealt the biggest blow of his premiership by the resignations of two senior cabinet ministers in the wake of his handling of the row over former deputy chief whip Chris Pincher.

Nadhim Zahawi and Steve Barclay have since replaced Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid as chancellor and health secretary.

Here are all the other developments you may have missed:

- Chancellor **Rishi Sunak**, health secretary **Sajid Javid**, four parliamentary private secretaries, the Conservative vice-chair, two trade envoys and the solicitor general all resigned on Tuesday evening.
- **Sajid Javid triggered the exodus, resigning as health secretary, followed a few minutes later by the chancellor, Rishi Sunak.** Javid said: “I regret that I can no longer continue in good conscience,” while

Sunak said the government should be run “properly, competently and seriously”. It appears likely the resignations of Javid and Sunak were coordinated. Most of the remaining members of the cabinet expressed support for Johnson to continue as PM. Johnson told Javid he was “sorry” to receive his resignation letter.

- **Education secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, was appointed as the new chancellor.** Zahawi made no comment when asked by press if he would “spray public money around to save Boris Johnson’s skin” before leaving in a ministerial car.
- **Steve Barclay was announced as the new health secretary.** The former Brexit secretary said it was “an honour” to take up the role. “Our NHS and social care staff have showed us time and again – throughout the pandemic and beyond – what it means to work with compassion and dedication to transform lives.
- **Michelle Donelan** was appointed the new education secretary after just two years as a minister, rewarded for her loyalty and her embrace of the culture wars and curbing of universities that have been a hallmark of Boris Johnson’s administration.
- **Bim Afolami** MP announced his resignation as Tory vice-chair live on TalkTV.
- **Jonathan Gullis, Virginia Crosbie, Nicola Richards and Saqib Bhatti** MP all resigned as parliamentary private secretaries while **Alex Chalk** resigned as solicitor general. Stafford MP, **Theo Clarke**, also resigned as trade envoy to Kenya.

- Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, said it's "clear the government is now collapsing". Starmer said government ministers have been "complicit" in the prime minister's disgracing of his office. "They backed him when he lied. They backed him when he mocked the sacrifices of the British people," he told reporters.
- A snap poll by YouGov this evening found that 69% of Britons say Boris Johnson should resign. This is 11pts higher than when the pollsters asked the same question on 9 June.
- Under current rules Johnson is safe from another leadership challenge until next summer. But the executive of the 1922 Committee can change the rules whenever it wants. A new anti-Johnson executive is expected to be elected next week, but even the current executive – more evenly split between loyalists and critics – could act now if it felt there was a consensus in the party.
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[6 Jul 2022 20.28](#)

Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley, **Jess Phillips**, has offered some sage advice this evening.

"I'm going to bed and you should too, because the absolute nonsense will still very much be happening in the morning," Phillips quipped.

I'm going to bed and you should too, because the absolute nonsense will still very much be happening in the morning.

— Jess Phillips MP (@jessphillips) [July 5, 2022](#)

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[6 Jul 2022 20.19](#)

Former Foreign Secretary, **Sir Malcolm Rifkind**, also believes [Boris Johnson](#) is on his way out.

Speaking to BBC Newsnight, Rifkind said:

He's out - the only question is whether it will take hours, days or a week or so.

I think he first became vulnerable the day he became prime minister. It was a terrible decision ... he was totally unfit to be prime minister ... It was an enormous gamble and one that shouldn't have been taken."

The former Scotland Secretary added: "Pretty well the whole country thinks he is a loser."

"The antipathy to Boris Johnson in Scotland is now matched by an equal antipathy to Boris Johnson in England and Wales as well..."

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Updated at 20.21 EDT

[6 Jul 2022 20.08](#)

**Ex-Scottish [Conservatives](#) leader, Ruth Davidson, has also weighed in on the fallout, describing Boris Johnson as “ill-equipped” to be prime minister.**

"This is clearly coming to the end game," Davison told BBC Newsnight.

[MPs] can either decide that it's going to end slowly, tortuously, drawn out, with rebellion after rebellion ... or they can move to change the rules of the '22 [committee] bring this to a head, make sure that the prime minister leaves ...”

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5 Jul 2022 19.56

**Andrew Mitchell, a former Conservative chief whip, has compared Boris Johnson to Russia's Rasputin.**

The Conservative MP told BBC Newsnight:

It's a bit like the death of Rasputin. He's been poisoned, stabbed, he's been shot, his body's been dumped in the freezing river and still he lives.”

Mitchell added that he believes it is “over” for the prime minister.

Well I'm afraid it is over and the question now is how much longer this is going to go on.”

“This is an abnormal prime minister - brilliantly charismatic, very funny, very amusing, big, big character, but I'm afraid he has neither the character, nor the temperament to be our prime minister.”

"It's a bit like the death of Rasputin. He's been poisoned, stabbed, he's been shot, his body's been dumped in a freezing river and still he lives."

Yet former Chief Whip Andrew Mitchell MP says "it is over" for Boris Johnson's premiership [#Newsnight pic.twitter.com/RDmpppspzt](#)

— BBC Newsnight (@BBCNewsnight) [July 5, 2022](#)

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### 5 Jul 2022 19.45

The Labour leader, **Keir Starmer**, said government ministers have been ‘complicit’ in the prime minister’s disgracing of his office.

“They backed him when he lied. They backed him when he mocked the sacrifices of the British people,” he told reporters earlier today.

Watch Starmer’s remarks in the video below.

[Keir Starmer: Tory ministers ‘complicit’ as the PM disgraced his office – video](#)

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### 5 Jul 2022 18.58

## A summary of today's developments

- On a bruising day for **Boris Johnson**, the chancellor, the health secretary, four parliamentary private secretaries, the Conservative vice-chair, two trade envoys and the solicitor general all resigned this evening.
- Sajid Javid triggered the exodus, resigning as health secretary, followed a few minutes later by the chancellor, Rishi Sunak. Javid said: “I regret that I can no longer continue in good conscience,” while Sunak said the government should be run “properly, competently and seriously”. Most of the remaining members of the cabinet expressed support for Johnson to continue as PM.

- Nadhim Zahawi was appointed as the new chancellor. Steve Barclay was announced as the new health secretary, while Michelle Donelan was appointed the new education secretary.
- Bim Afolami MP announced his resignation as Tory vice-chair live on TalkTV.
- Jonathan Gullis, Virginia Crosbie, Nicola Richards and Saqib Bhatti MP all resigned as parliamentary private secretaries while Alex Chalk resigned as solicitor general.
- A snap poll by YouGov this evening found that 69% of Britons say Boris Johnson should resign. This is 11pts higher than when the pollsters asked the same question on 9 June.
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Updated at 19.17 EDT

5 Jul 2022 18.54



Richard Adams

Michelle Donelan takes over from Nadhim Zahawi as education secretary after just two years as a minister, rewarded for her loyalty and her embrace of the culture wars and curbing of universities that have been a hallmark of Boris Johnson's administration.

Moving up from her current role of higher and further education minister, Donelan will have to quickly take charge of a mess of unfinished business left by Zahawi in his brief 10-month tenure, most notably the schools bill that last week the new chancellor was forced to gut after opposition from former ministers and supporters in the Lords.

But Donelan has impressed those who work with her for her no-nonsense attitude, and as someone who – unlike Zahawi or Johnson – isn't interested in the trappings of office or making friends.

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The new chancellor of the exchequer, Nadhim Zahawi, in his office at No 11 Downing Street. Photograph: Andrew Parsons/No10 Downing Street

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Updated at 18.41 EDT

[5 Jul 2022 18.30](#)



Boris Johnson appoints Nadhim Zahawi as the chancellor of the exchequer in the Cabinet Room of No 10 Downing Street. Photograph: Andrew Parsons/No10 Downing Street

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Updated at 18.41 EDT

[5 Jul 2022 18.24](#)

Conservative MP Andrew Mitchell, a former chief whip, has compared [Boris Johnson](#) with Rasputin.

“It’s a bit like the death of Rasputin. He’s been poisoned, stabbed, he’s been shot, his body’s been dumped in the freezing river and still he lives,” Mitchell told BBC Newsnight.

He was also adamant that it was “over” for the prime minister.

“This is an abnormal prime minister - brilliantly charismatic, very funny, very amusing, big, big character, but I’m afraid he has neither the character nor the temperament to be our prime minister.”

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Updated at 18.39 EDT

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**Boris Johnson**

## No 10 not telling truth over Chris Pincher, says former top civil servant

Boris Johnson briefed in person about 2019 complaint of alleged groping by ex-deputy chief whip, says Simon McDonald

'That is news to me': Raab claims Johnson was unaware of Pincher inquiry – video

*Peter Walker Political correspondent  
@peterwalker99*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 05.02 EDTFirst published on Tue 5 Jul 2022 03.35 EDT

Boris Johnson's claim that he was not aware of prior specific allegations against Chris Pincher is falling apart, after a former top civil servant wrote a formal letter to allege that Downing Street's version of events was untrue.

In a highly unusual move, [Simon McDonald](#), who had been the most senior official in the Foreign Office and is now a crossbench peer, told the parliamentary standards commissioner that the prime minister was briefed in person about a 2019 complaint of alleged groping by the former Conservative deputy chief whip.

Speaking later to the BBC, McDonald said Downing Street needed to "come clean", and that some ministers' statements on Pincher had been wrong.

No 10 not telling truth over Chris Pincher, says former top civil servant – audio

Dominic Raab, who was foreign secretary at the time, confirmed to the BBC that he had launched an investigation into claims about Pincher, then a junior Foreign Office minister, who resigned as deputy chief whip after being accused of drunkenly groping two men.

However, Raab said he did not know if Johnson had been briefed about the inquiry, as McDonald said. Raab said: “That’s news to me, I wasn’t aware of that. It’s not clear to me that that is factually accurate.”

He added: “I have discussed this with the prime minister over the last 24 hours. It is not my understanding that he was directly briefed.”

Asked if Johnson had specifically said he was not briefed, Raab added: “To be honest with you, I didn’t ask him. He didn’t raise it.”

McDonald’s letter, sent to Kathryn Stone, the parliamentary standards commissioner, and tweeted on Tuesday morning, appears to demolish the insistence of No 10 spokespeople and a series of ministers that Johnson was not aware of any “specific” allegations against Pincher before last week.

This morning I have written to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards - because No 10 keep changing their story and are still not telling the truth. [pic.twitter.com/vln9FU4V50](https://pic.twitter.com/vln9FU4V50)

— Simon McDonald (@SimonMcDonaldUK) [July 5, 2022](#)

On Monday, Johnson’s official spokesman [amended this to argue](#) that the prime minister had been aware of allegations, but that these were “either resolved or did not proceed to a formal complaint”.

In a scathing letter, McDonald, a long-time senior diplomat who was permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office from 2015 to 2020 and became a peer in 2021, made it clear he believed this was also untrue.

In the summer of 2019, shortly after Pincher became a Foreign Office minister, McDonald wrote, a group of officials complained about his behaviour, McDonald said, saying the claims were “similar” to those that emerged last week. An investigation upheld the complaint and Pincher apologised, he added.

It was, McDonald wrote, “not true” for No 10 to claim either that Johnson did not know about earlier complaints, or the amended line about the only complaint he knew about being unsubstantiated.

“Mr Johnson was briefed in person about the initiation and outcome of the investigation,” the letter said. “There was a ‘formal complaint’. Allegations were ‘resolved’ only in the sense that the investigation was completed; Mr Pincher was not exonerated. To characterise the allegations as ‘unsubstantiated’ is therefore wrong.”

He added: “I am aware that is unusual to write to you and simultaneously publicise the letter. I am conscious of the duty owed to the target of an investigation but I act out of my duty towards the victims.

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“Mr Pincher deceived me and others in 2019. He cannot be allowed to use the confidentiality of the process three years ago to pursue his predatory behaviour in other contexts.”

Talking to BBC Radio 4’s Today programme on Tuesday, McDonald said he knew for certain that a senior official briefed Johnson because that official then told him.

McDonald said: “I think they need to come clean. I think that the language is ambiguous, the sort of telling the truth and crossing your fingers at the same time and hoping that people are not too forensic in their subsequent questioning and I think that is not working.”

He singled out media comments by the children’s minister, Will Quince, on Monday that Johnson was “not aware of specific allegations”, saying: “The categorical assurance was wrong.”

Asked about the letter on Today, Raab confirmed the investigation had taken place. He said: “Simon and myself both spoke to Chris Pincher in person to make it clear that the inappropriate behaviour should never be repeated.”

Raab said he told the then-chief whip, but did not know if the prime minister was informed.

Angela Rayner, Labour's deputy leader, said Johnson's claims about a lack of prior knowledge of Pincher's behaviour "have been blown out the water".

She said: "It is now clear that the prime minister knew about the seriousness of these complaints but decided to promote this man to a senior position in government anyway. He refused to act and then lied about what he knew."

Daisy Cooper, the Liberal Democrat deputy leader, said: "Lord McDonald has shone a new light on this murky cover-up. Boris Johnson needs to own up to his web of lies and finally come clean today."

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## [Civil service](#)

# **Simon McDonald: ex-top civil servant who accuses No 10 of misleading public**

With four decades of experience as a diplomat and official, the 61-year-old is an unlikely figure to accuse a government of lying

No 10 not telling truth over Chris Pincher, says former top civil servant – audio

*Peter Walker Political correspondent  
@peterwalker99*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 05.39 EDT Last modified on Wed 6 Jul 2022 05.56 EDT

A brief glance at Simon McDonald's career résumé makes him appear one of the unlikeliest people to openly accuse a government of lying: four decades as a diplomat and official, with a string of top honours after his name, culminating in a peerage.

It is true that during his long stint at the Foreign Office, the man known formally as Lord McDonald of Salford had to deal with a string of hugely sensitive issues, from the tantrums of Donald Trump to being accused himself of complicity in undermining an overseas government.

The 61-year-old also had stints advising prime ministers and foreign secretaries, thus getting to know his way around the nitty gritty politics of his trade.

It is, however, more or less unprecedented for such an establishment figure, especially one whose previously public interventions have been mainly to support the status quo, to formally complain that Downing Street has been, in his view, [misleading the public](#).

Even McDonald's decision to become a crossbench peer in 2021, illustrating a willingness to air public views about political issues, gave little warning about his dramatic letter to Kathryn Stone, the parliamentary commissioner for standards.

'That is news to me': Raab claims Johnson was unaware of Pincher inquiry – video

A [regular contributor](#) to Lords debates, his spoken interventions have largely been to ask knowledgeable questions in foreign affairs matters, or to gently promote an establishment view of UK diplomacy.

The product of a now-defunct grammar school in Salford and then Cambridge University, McDonald joined the Foreign Office as a graduate in 1982 and held early diplomatic postings in Jeddah, Riyadh, Bonn and Washington DC.

He served as UK ambassador to Israel and Germany, and in London was adviser to Jack Straw when he was foreign secretary, and to Gordon Brown as prime minister. From 2015 to 2020, he was the lead official in the Foreign Office, a post formally known as permanent undersecretary.

In 2004, McDonald was [accused by the Saudi government](#) of organising an MI6 bombing campaign to undermine the country's royal family when he was deputy head of mission in Riyadh – claims, however, that came from British nationals who had been tortured by Saudi interrogators to bring about false confessions.

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As head of the Foreign Office, he had to handle the fallout of [Kim Darroch's resignation](#) as ambassador to Washington after a leak of official cables in which he criticised Trump, a situation [he conceded was unprecedented](#).

But much of his time in the role was spent reinforcing the standard Foreign Office line, for example making a [public intervention](#) in 2018 to reject

reports that his department had been left disoriented and demoralised by Brexit.

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## Conservatives

# Chris Pincher: a timeline of allegations and investigations

Boris Johnson's insistence he was unaware of accusations when promoting his ally to whips' office lasted just three days

- [Boris Johnson resigns – latest live updates](#)



Concerns about Chris Pincher's conduct were made to the Tory whips' office in February, and known about by Boris Johnson at the time, a No 10 spokesperson has acknowledged. Photograph: Russell Hart/Alamy

*[Rowena Mason](#) Deputy political editor*

Mon 4 Jul 2022 13.26 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 10.52 EDT

**November 2017**

[Chris Pincher quit the whips' office](#) after former professional rower and Tory activist Alex Story accused him of making unwanted passes, massaging his neck while telling him he would go far in the party and acting like a “poundshop Harvey Weinstein” towards him in 2001. He denied the allegations and a party investigation later cleared Pincher of wrongdoing.

## **July 2019**

Pincher was brought back into the government by [Boris Johnson](#) after a period on the backbench, becoming a Foreign Office minister and then a housing minister.

## **February 2022**

[Pincher](#) was made deputy chief whip by Johnson. The Sunday Times reports that a male Tory MP informed the whips' office at the time that Pincher had made an unwanted pass at him. Pincher has denied acting inappropriately. Conservative MPs have also said they informed their whips about general concerns about Pincher's conduct.

The announcement of his promotion was delayed by a referral to the Cabinet Office propriety and ethics unit to investigate an allegation about Pincher that had been reported to the whips.

## **29 June 2022**

Pincher attended an event for the Conservative Friends of Cyprus at the Carlton Club in Piccadilly. He was accused by two men of drunkenly groping them and had to be put in a taxi home. One of them told another whip, Sarah Dines, who reported the matter to the chief whip, Chris Heaton-Harris.

## **30 June 2022**

Heaton-Harris investigated the incident and Pincher offered his resignation. The Sun reported in the evening that he had [resigned as deputy chief whip](#)

and Pincher released a letter saying he had got drunk and embarrassed himself. Johnson declined to suspend him from the party saying the matter was closed.

## 1 July 2022

No 10's deputy official spokesperson insisted that the prime minister was not aware of any allegations against Pincher at the time of promoting him in February. He later corrected himself to say Johnson was not aware of any "specific" allegations against Pincher.

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## 3 July 2022

At least four more [allegations against Pincher emerged in the Sunday papers](#), including accusations that he groped two Tory MPs. Pincher denied the allegations. A source in the whips' office confirmed that a "matter" had in fact been raised with them in relation to Pincher at the time of his appointment to deputy chief whip.

## 4 July 2022

No 10 acknowledge that [Johnson had personally been aware of allegations against Pincher](#) at the time of his promotion. Nevertheless, his spokesperson insisted that at the time these allegations were "either resolved or did not proceed to a formal complaint". No 10 also declined to comment on a claim by former No 10 aide Dominic Cummings that Johnson had referred to his ally as "Pincher by name, pincher by nature".

A charity fundraiser, Mark Dabbs, went on the record with an allegation about Pincher, telling the Sun that the MP had groped his backside while posing for a picture together. Pincher is yet to respond to allegations.

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## 2022.07.05 - Spotlight

- ['They saw me as calculating' How adultification leads to black children being treated as criminals](#)
- ['Doctors should prescribe it!' The joys of wild camping – and why it is under threat in England](#)
- [Promised land How South Africa's black farmers were set up to fail](#)
- [Sydney What is causing its fourth major flood in two years?](#)
- [Report Flooding could exceed recent records as premier warns crisis 'far from over'](#)

## Children

# **‘They saw me as calculating, not a child’: how adultification leads to black children being treated as criminals**

The police strip-search at school of Child Q caused outrage. But experts say it is just one example of how black children are perceived as more mature – and culpable – than white peers



‘There is sometimes a total resistance by authorities like the Home Office and local councils to properly recognise racialised children.’ Illustration: Ngadi Smart at Studio Pi/The Guardian



Aamna Mohdin

@aamnamohdin

Tue 5 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT

Ahmed has a recurring nightmare. The specifics change, but the script stays the same: he is in terrible danger, he tries to call the police, but no one responds. He is alone. In the latest version, bullets were shot through his window, but the line was dead when he picked up a phone to call the police.

It is not hard to see why Ahmed (not his real name) can't shake such dreams. When he was 12, he was sitting in class when he was called into the headteacher's office. Two police officers were waiting for him, with his headteacher. They told him a man had handed himself into the police for the rape of a minor he had met on a dating app and that the number he had given for the child matched Ahmed's. Ahmed says he asked for his parents to be called, so they could be with him during his questioning, but he was ignored.

In the headteacher's office, Ahmed felt scared and alone. He says he was forced to hand over his phone, with a police officer telling him: "You have no choice." Despite being a child rape victim, he says he was made to feel like a criminal.

The police officer then went through messages on WhatsApp, Ahmed says, in front of his headteacher. It made him feel sick and uncomfortable that they could have seen intimate photos of him. When he asked again for his mum, he alleges the police officer stared at him, emotionless, and said: “We’ll just stay here all night until you confess.” Ahmed started crying. The interrogation began in the morning, but his mother wasn’t called by a member of the school staff until 5pm.

It feeds into racialised stereotypes, in particular about black children being aggressive, angry, more deviant

### *Jahnine Davis*

Now 18, Ahmed is speaking about his ordeal for the first time. He does so in the middle of a political storm over the treatment of black children within statutory services in the UK. After a number of startling cases – such as [Child Q](#), in which a 15-year-old was strip-searched at school – experts and campaigners have been raising the alarm about adultification bias, a description of the preconceptions that can lead black children to be treated as older, and less vulnerable, than they are.

“When I read back the report they wrote about me when I was a child, I didn’t even know the words they used about me, like manipulative,” Ahmed says. “Now, I think: ‘How could they speak like that about a child?’ I was treated as an adult.”

“What makes it worse is that the headteacher didn’t intervene. Now I look back and it’s so shocking that he left me in a room with those officers and I was crying. I don’t even remember him checking to see if I was OK. He didn’t call my family and he didn’t seem to care.”

A few days after the incident at school, one of the officers turned up at Ahmed’s house. He showed Ahmed’s parents and brother messages between Ahmed and the perpetrator, including a graphic picture or video of Ahmed naked.

In the police statement written up later, the officer said he did so to show the family Ahmed’s “outrageous behaviour”. In a complaint sent to the

Metropolitan police, Ahmed's legal representative noted "considerable concern" that the police officer would characterise a victim of a serious sexual offence in that manner.



'It's so shocking that the headteacher left me in a room with those officers and I was crying.' Illustration: Ngadi Smart for Studio Pi/The Guardian

Despite Ahmed being a child, the Crown Prosecution Service insisted it needed to trawl through 40,000 files of his personal data. It was nearly a year and a half before the perpetrator was charged and pleaded guilty to three counts of rape, one of attempted rape, one of inciting sexual activity with penetration and one of sexual touching. Ahmed was later diagnosed with PTSD.

Rachel Harger, a solicitor at Bindmans, who represented Ahmed, is clear: "Metropolitan police officers failed to properly recognise and treat Ahmed as a child from the moment they made initial contact with him." This, she says, can be seen in their "blatant disregard of Ahmed's rights as a child" during the initial meetings and their failure to properly support him.

The Met initially rejected a complaint about how Ahmed was treated, before accepting it in full on appeal. Notably, the investigating officer agreed that

Ahmed was discriminated against on the basis of his age and that the police's actions contributed to his PTSD.

But Harger doesn't think this failure to treat her client as a child is an isolated incident. "It is systemic across public bodies," she says. "There is seemingly a total failure by the state, sometimes a total resistance by authorities like the Home Office and local councils, to properly recognise racialised children [those from ethnic minority backgrounds] as children and in turn afford them the proper protection and safeguarding that these children are entitled to."

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The term adultification bias originated in the US in about 2008, but its usage has grown in the UK in recent months. The researcher and safeguarding expert Jahnine Davis says it can mean that children of colour are not seen as "innocent", as white children would be. It is a form of racism that has a disproportionate impact on black children, she says: "They're seen as being more responsible and more resilient and therefore sometimes able to safeguard themselves."

Davis, the director and co-founder of Listen Up, the UK's leading organisation dedicated to tackling this phenomenon in child safeguarding practices, adds that adultification is not simply about regarding black children as being more mature than other children. "It feeds into various different racialised stereotypes, in particular about black children being aggressive, angry, more deviant." These are stereotypes of black children and adults that stem from slavery and colonialism, she says.

As part of her research, Davis has explored why sexual abuse of black girls is frequently missed. Through interviews, she found that black girls are often not seen as children, but rather as "hypersexual beings". Black girls are perceived as being more responsible for their actions, more emotionally strong and more knowledgable about sex. The UK feminist organisation [Our Streets Now](#), which campaigns against street harassment, says that, as a result, black girls are harassed at a younger age, while women of colour experience more targeted and damaging types of harassment.

In 2020, Davis co-published a paper on the impact of adultification on black boys who had been criminally exploited. It was written in response to the murder of [Jaden Moodie](#), a 14-year-old boy who was killed on the street in London in 2019. At the time of his death, Moodie had been sleeping on his grandmother's sofa; he had been in education for only three of the past 22 months.



A protest outside Hackney town hall, east London, in solidarity with Child Q. Photograph: Sabrina Merolla/Zuma Press Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

At 13, the police had found him in possession of an air gun and a large, Rambo-style knife. But the children's services had decided to take no action outside the response of the Youth Offending Service. How, the paper asked, could the case of a vulnerable child with weapons be seen as “not one of welfare, but one of youth justice”?

When the Child Q scandal had exploded earlier that year, Davis had again called for children to be treated equally. The case concerned a teenage girl who had been strip-searched at school in east London by Met officers after wrongly being suspected of carrying cannabis. The incident provoked [days of protest](#) after it emerged that Child Q was searched without an adult other than the officers present, while she was on her period and without her parents being contacted.

The Met said the actions of its officers were “regrettable” and “should never have happened”. The school said that, while it was “not aware that a strip-search was taking place, we wholly accept that the child should not have been left in the situation that she was”.

For Adrian Rollins, a deputy headteacher in Nottingham, the case raises questions about protocol. At a bare minimum, if a child is involved, a member of the school staff should be involved, he says. Before a search goes ahead, a parent must be informed. He describes what occurred in the Child Q case as gross misconduct and a clear sign of negligence. “Why would the school allow that, irrespective of any child?” he says. “The trauma that will cause a child could be lifelong.”

Mumtaz Musa, a 20-year-old student, attended one of the Child Q protests. She says she was shocked when she read about the case on social media. “Even now, I don’t have the words to convey how angry, disgusted and sad I am. If this is how I’m feeling, what is Child Q feeling like?”

One white teacher decided to search my bra and I refused. After, I had to spend a whole week in isolation

*Sara Bafo*

She had not come across the word adultification until then, but says she felt its pernicious impact as a schoolchild. She was excluded often when she was at school, as well as being sent to isolation or detention. “I went through all of my schooling without being diagnosed with ADHD; no one picked up on it. All my teachers just assumed I was being defiant and my impulsive outbursts were seen as me being rude. They associated my behaviour as a child with words you would use to describe an adult – they saw me as calculating and disrespectful, not just a young child struggling. They never gave me any grace as a child,” she said.

Sara Bafo, a recent graduate who also attended a protest, thinks the Child Q case was not an isolated incident. She believes that what happened to Child Q lies at the intersection of racism and sexism known as misogynoir. These two prejudices compound each other and result in, Bafo believes, black girls being sexualised at a very young age; it portrays them as angry and deviant

and robs them of their innocence. This reinforces the harmful stereotypes that black girls can handle abuse and even invite it.

She recalls being searched in school – and the way she was treated when she objected. “I remember being in class and we had to, once again, go through the process of being searched. This one white teacher decided to search my bra and, for the first time, I refused. I stood up for myself because I knew the people who had authority would not. After I refused, I had to spend a whole week in isolation – because I asked a teacher not to search my breast because I felt uncomfortable.”

A month after the story of Child Q broke, adultification was blamed in another case. This time, an eight-year-old black boy was [forced to clean his five-year-old sister](#) after she soiled herself at an after-school club in north London. The boy said he was forced to do it in front of other people, despite toilet facilities being located nearby.

Such scandals may be shocking to black people, but they are not surprising. “When something like this happens, it ultimately brings back memories to people of when they were disproportionately treated like criminals before anything else by the authorities,” Rollins says. “Would it have happened if it was a blond-haired, blue-eyed English student? Who knows? The bottom line is it wasn’t.”

Aika Stephenson, the legal director of Just for Kids Law, a children’s rights organisation that is supporting Child Q and her family, agrees. “Day in, day out, you see the adultification of black boys playing out in the approach that’s taken by police. It is about not seeing them as children, it’s about the way that they’re seen as a threat. Would you speak to a 16-year-old white child in that way? Would you immediately ramp up?”

Children internalise the adultification they experience, she says. “If everyone treats you as if you’re older, then children start to believe that they have to function at that level.”

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Ahmed’s treatment has had a devastating impact on his life. He has been traumatised by his experiences with the police and his school, he says. His attendance dropped dramatically and he did worse in his GCSEs than he had

hoped. He ended up moving schools, which helped. “When I was there, memories of what had happened come flooding back. Whereas at the new school, there was no association with anything like that,” he says.

He believes he would have been treated differently had he been white. “Firstly, if I was white, chances are my parents would have spoken English – they would have called them. I believe they would have cared more about me and my welfare. I believe they would have made sure I was OK,” he says.

Ahmed has been watching the reports on the Child Q case with interest. “I thought, when I experienced this, this must be the worst thing that could possibly happen. When I read about Child Q, I saw it could get so much worse.”

He believes things like this will keep happening to black children unless there is a systematic review of policing practices. He wants police officers to be removed from schools.

A spokesperson for the Met said: “On this occasion, it’s clear some aspects of our contact with the victim fell below the standards we expect. While no evidence was found to suggest anyone involved in the investigation had a case to answer for misconduct, concerns were raised about the actions of one officer who took a statement from the victim in the early stage of the inquiry. This was addressed directly with the officer involved through additional training and extra supervision.” The spokesperson added that officers across the Met are to receive training to address the adultification of children.

For Davies, any solution begins with the serious acknowledgment that racism exists. “As a society, we need to really love black children more than we do. And I mean love and care for them so that, when we see them, we question: if that’s not good enough for my child, why is it good enough for anyone else’s?”

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## **'Doctors should prescribe it!': the joys of wild camping – and why it is under threat in England**



Sam Wollaston gets to grip with his tent – and the great outdoors – at Great Mis Tor in Dartmoor, Devon. Photograph: Jonny Weeks/The Guardian

Designated areas of Dartmoor are the only places in England where you can camp out in the wild if you respect the environment. But for how long?



[Sam Wollaston](#)

[@samwollaston](#)

Tue 5 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 16.46 EDT

What was that?! I was asleep, now I'm suddenly wide awake. It's the middle of the night, I'm alone in the middle of Dartmoor, and there's someone or something moving around outside my tent. Over the whistling of the wind, I'm sure I heard footsteps, and a sinister grinding noise. A murderer maybe? An escaped convict, filing through his leg irons, before coming to do me in. Dartmoor prison is just beyond that hill, after all. (OK, so it's mainly for non-violent criminals these days, but you try telling yourself that in the dark, on the moor. Fear does funny things to the imagination.) Or is it a beast, perhaps – the actual Hound of the Baskervilles?

Then I remember the pot-bellied horses I saw walking up here yesterday, and summon up the courage to unzip the door for a peek. Ha, not a Dartmoor pony, but a sheep. The grinding was the sound of mastication. Baaaa, now bugger off. It's still not very inviting out there, driving drizzle, there'll be no star-gazing tonight, so I zip back up and huddle down.

Why am I camping on Dartmoor, like some kind of tragic middle-aged gatecrasher to the Duke of Edinburgh's award? Short answer: because I can. Unlike Scotland, which has a much more permissive attitude to it, designated areas of Dartmoor are the only places in England where wild camping is allowed (Wales, also, does not allow wild camping). Now, this too is being threatened. Alexander Darwall, a City fund manager, and his wife, Diana, who own 1,127 hectares (2,784 acres) of south Dartmoor, [have filed a case](#) questioning the legal basis of the Dartmoor National Park Authority's (DNPA) bylaws, which allow for responsible wild camping.

You carry all you need in a rucksack, stay no more than one or two nights, and leave no trace

*Kevin Bishop (DNPA)*

It comes down to interpretation of a section of the Dartmoor Commons Act, which gives the public the right to access the moor for the purpose of outdoor recreation. The Darwalls are questioning whether that should include wild camping, which they claim is a threat to the environment and adds to the risk of wildfires. The park's chief executive, Kevin Bishop, [told the Guardian last month that it does include wild camping](#), provided it's done properly. "This means you carry all you need in a rucksack, stay no more than one or two nights, and leave no trace."

But don't confuse wild camping with "fly camping" – pitching your tent a few metres from your car, making a fire, a mess, and probably a lot of noise – which is a threat to the environment, a fire risk and [became a problem during the pandemic](#).

So, I'm wild camping. I had to walk along a path that led from the road up into a cloud. Destination: Great Mis Tor, a hill with a rocky outcrop that looks like it was built by Makka Pakka from In the Night Garden. There, I found an area of flat, if a little soggy, ground on which to pitch my tent.

I have done a bit of wild camping in my time. Or camping, as it used to be called. (See also wild swimming – how long before we're calling a picnic "wild eating"?) My dad – not a fan of campsites, or paying, or hordes, or rules – used to lead us into the hills in the Lake District to camp by

windswept tarns. We played rummy in a rain-lashed tent, made porridge with powdered milk and dug holes to poo into, while my school friends jetted to sunny Spanish Costas.

I have subjected my own children to camping holidays, though of a softer variety – in campsites, with facilities, accessible by car. We don't have all the ridiculous stuff people bring with them – tables and chairs, a portable pizza oven – but, still, it feels a bit fraudulent. Setting up here, in a cloud on Great Mis Tor, listening to rain driving horizontally into nylon, is like a direct line to childhood holidays. I'm hoping not to have to dig any holes.

I was also hoping to perhaps bump into other people up here, not because I'm desperate for company, but to ask them about camping on Dartmoor: why they do it and how they feel about it being under threat. But other people, it seems, have more sense than me about being out today.



The morning after ... Sam Wollaston enjoys a cup of tea. Photograph: Jonny Weeks/The Guardian

No matter – there are other ways to talk to people these days. I've got a signal, and I've joined a Facebook group called [Dartmoor Wild Camping](#); perhaps some of its 3,800 members would like to tell me what camping on

Dartmoor means to them? Of the dozens of responses, several mention mental health.

They include this one, from Graeme Field, who says: “Having suffered from depression on and off for years, having the ability to get out on the moors on my own and pop my tent up within the permitted areas is a massive step towards improving my state of mind. If this was taken away, I’m not sure how I’d cope at times. Wild camping on Dartmoor is simply the best self-help one could pursue – doctors should prescribe it.”

Becky Harrison posts to say: “Dartmoor has its own wilderness, a place no one can control, regardless of who owns land there. Breathe and smell the moorland air, its distinctive aroma, take it wherever you go, in the car, to the office, at home, and when there are hard times there are good memories. Spending a week alone camping on Dartmoor will teach you more about yourself than today’s society will; it will change your life.”

Ian Ripper’s family has been “camping and enjoying Dartmoor since our boys were babies, sleeping under the stars. Both lads are now veterans of [Ten Tors](#), all thanks to accessible wild Dartmoor. It’s so wrong that anyone can try to close it off.”

For Emily Marbaix, a wild camp is about “getting away from the noise of other people and having a chance to support my mental and physical health and remind myself of all the things I have to be grateful for”. And so on; dozens of excellent reasons to want access to the moor.

People have been traversing this landscape since neolithic times

*Shamus McCaffery*

Shamus McCaffery, founder of the [Dartmoor Access Group](#), has been tramping about and camping on Dartmoor for about 40 years, but that is nothing in the history of tramping and camping on Dartmoor. “People have been traversing this landscape since neolithic times,” he tells me, pointing out that one Dartmoor stone row [predates Stonehenge by up to 1,000 years](#).

“Bring that forward to a few hundred years ago, and people have worked the landscape, moorsmen have extracted tin and peat, the whole of Dartmoor is scarred with industrial actions of mankind, which has now blended itself back in and nature has taken back over. People today, the wild campers, the recreational users, mountain bikers and walkers, they’re a continuation of that, they are the moorsmen and women of today.” And, he says, they should have the same rights to be there.

McCaffery doesn’t think that the DNPA is necessarily on the side of these people, pointing out that they have tried to [limit access to the park for recreational use](#). He is constantly on their case, firing off letters and freedom of information requests to them, and he founded the Group [Dartmoor Access Group](#) to defend the rights of people like him to be – and camp – on the moor.

He points out all the other people who use the moor, such as the Ministry of Defence. “Military training areas on Dartmoor occupy 13,000 hectares (about 32,000 acres). You’ve got troops and helicopters taking off and landing all over the place.” Then there’s hunting. “People careering across the countryside on horseback in pursuit of 30 or 40 hounds, which may or may not be chasing down wildlife.” And “swaling”, the burning of vegetation, by “commoners” (farmers who have rights to use the common for their livestock), a practice defended by the Dartmoor authority, but condemned by others, [including George Monbiot](#).

McCaffery thinks that, when you’ve got troops and helicopters storming and swarming all over it, horses and dogs, and farmers torching it, a few people enjoying the peace in their little tents in the middle of nowhere might not be the biggest threat to the moor.

I’ve already found out about the military operations. There was a red flag flying from the top of Great Mis Tor when I got here. And a sign: “You are approaching a military firing range for which there are bylaws restricting your right of access. When a red flag or light is displayed on the pole, do not cross the line of red and white poles. Do not touch any military debris, it may explode and kill you.” Later I heard the rumble of artillery fire.

After the curious incident of the sheep in the night-time, I sleep fitfully and I am, literally, up with the larks – woken early by my own personal skylark alarm clock, hovering overhead. But it's hard to get cross about that – it's certainly an improvement on the first bus of the day hitting the speed bump directly outside my house, which is how my days usually begin. The wind has calmed down, and it's no longer raining, so I'm unzipping again and ... oh gosh, Dartmoor looks stunning in the morning.

It also looks like it should be for everyone. Wisps of mist linger in the valley, and there's the line of red or white poles – I won't be heading in that direction today, into the line of fire. There are some cows there; I hope they don't get hit. A herd of black cows, moving over the plain, or could they be buffalo? There is something of the wild west about the scene. It's a pretty special place to be waking up in the morning. I'm beginning to understand what people from the group were on about: it feels good to be here, free and timeless.

I've got a little stove and there's a perfect flat rock to put it on, a ready-made breakfast table. I've got teabags and cereal, even fresh milk (powdered was too painful a memory). A wheatear joins me for breakfast, flitting around between the rocks. It's a privilege to be here, and not one I would want to lose. Soon, I'll pack up and be on my way. Apart from a slightly flattened area of grass, no one would know I'd ever been here at all.

This article was amended on 5 July 2022 to correct a typographical error in the figure quoted for the area covered by military training areas on Dartmoor. The conversion from hectares to acres was also amended.

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# Promised land: how South Africa's black farmers were set up to fail

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## New South Wales

# Explaining the ‘unusually extreme’ rain and weather that caused Sydney’s fourth major flood in two years

Jury still out on role played by global heating, but hotter ocean temperatures off Australia could have fuelled the NSW storms

- [Sydney flood levels could exceed recent records as NSW premier warns crisis ‘far from over’](#)
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NSW State Emergency Service respond as flood waters submerge residential areas following heavy rain in Windsor, Sydney on Tuesday. Photograph: Loren Elliott/Reuters

[Adam Morton](#) and [Graham Readfearn](#)

Tue 5 Jul 2022 01.16 EDTFirst published on Mon 4 Jul 2022 23.33 EDT

The fourth major flood to hit greater Sydney in less than two years had no single cause. It was triggered by a confluence of events that combined over the weekend to dump as much rain in some areas as Melbourne or London typically receive in a year.

The extent of the flooding was exacerbated by circumstances on the ground – a saturated landscape that was unable to absorb much more water after the wettest start to the year on record, and dams being close to full and unable to hold the downpour.

Global heating may have exacerbated the intensity of the storm, though scientists say the jury is out on the role it played. One notable point: the waters off the Illawarra on Sunday were more than 2C hotter than average for this time of year – and warmer oceans tend to fuel heavier storms.

## So what happened?

The rain wasn't a surprise – a deluge was forecast mid-last week – but the amount of water dropped on the city on Saturday was greater than expected.

Ben Domensino, a meteorologist with Weatherzone, said it was caused by a tropical moisture that came down from the country's north and fed into a low pressure trough off the New South Wales coast. The low pressure trough had an east coast low – an intense low pressure system, sometimes called an extratropical cyclone – embedded within it.

It resulted in more intense rain across Friday night and Saturday than some weather forecasting models had predicted, particularly for outer suburban and regional areas south of Sydney. The ferocity of the storm had subsided by Sunday morning – rain was lighter than models had suggested on Sunday and Monday – but by then much of the damage had been set in motion.

Parts of the Illawarra, around Wollongong, received more than 700mm over three days. To put this into context, Melbourne and Canberra each average less than 650mm a year.

In Sydney's west, Warragamba dam received 244mm over three days to 9am Monday, mostly on Saturday. The intense early burst of rain led to it spilling from about 2am Sunday when forecasts had suggested that would not happen until that afternoon.

Scientists said this was not necessarily a failure of forecasting. East coast lows always cause heavy rain and damaging winds, but the precise timing of their impact is difficult to forecast.

Kimberley Reid, an atmospheric scientist at Monash University, said the weather models showed about five days ahead "that something big was going to happen" over eastern Australia, and it was not unusual for forecasts to be a few hours out.

Domensino said this east coast low was likely to have carried more rain than most because it had more water to draw on. He said the ocean temperatures off the coast of the Illawarra were between 2C and 3C hotter than the long-term average.

Like almost everywhere else, the waters around much of Australia have been getting warmer due to global heating driven by the burning of fossil fuels. Scientists have established the atmosphere can hold roughly 7% more moisture for every additional degree of warming.

Domensino said it meant the east coast low on the weekend "had a lot more water to tap into, which is partly why we saw so much rain". In short, heat may have amplified the impact.



Toni Guest works to salvage belongings from her flooded home in South Windsor in Sydney on Tuesday. Photograph: Loren Elliott/Reuters

## Untangling the climate influence

Dr Andrew King, a climate scientist at the University of Melbourne, agreed to a point. He said published science had demonstrated that the climate crisis intensified short duration rain events, but it was harder to assess what part it played in the type of multi-day deluge that hit NSW.

“It is quite hard to tell if there is climate change influence – there may well be, but it is hard to untangle the noise,” King said.

King said the backdrop to the current flooding was two La Niña events that had inflated rainfall over the past two years. [La Niña](#) involves strong trade winds blowing west across the Pacific, pushing warm surface water towards Asia and typically delivering increased rainfall across much of Australia, cooler daytime temperatures south of the tropics and warmer night-time temperatures in the country’s north.

The Bureau of Meteorology last month declared the 2021-22 La Niña over, but it warned winter was likely to be wetter than usual and there was a 50%

chance the atmospheric and ocean pattern [would return for a third straight summer.](#)

At the same time, the bureau said another influence on Australia's rainfall, this time in the Indian Ocean, has been heading in a direction that tends to deliver more rain.

The Indian Ocean Dipole has been close to hitting a negative phase for weeks. When westerly winds push warmer water closer to Australia's north-west, this makes more moisture available for rainfall in the winter and spring.

King said the current flood was still fuelled by colder waters in the tropical central and eastern Pacific and warmer water in the western Pacific. It had increased the likelihood of a low pressure system and meant there was "a bit more energy in the system around Australia".

He said the current floods were breaking records in some places and "definitely unusually extreme". But he also said Sydney had a history of heavy rain and the underlying weather systems were not unprecedented.



A kayaker paddles through a flooded residential area in South Windsor on Tuesday following heavy rain in Sydney. Photograph: Loren Elliott/Reuters

## At saturation point

The rain that fell during the back-to-back [La Niña](#) events has saturated the ground. It's a bit like a sponge on a kitchen bench – once saturated it can't hold any more water. What the land can't absorb flows straight into river catchments.

King said there had been so much rain in Sydney this year that the landscape now had a reduced capacity to absorb moisture. "The earlier events and the latest flooding aren't independent of each other," he said. "The ground is just saturated and the dams are full so if you get more rain it floods very easily. It doesn't go into the ground as it normally would."

It raises questions about how well prepared the city was for another deluge. Stuart Khan, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of NSW, is among those who argue Warragamba dam, in particular, should be kept at a lower capacity to reduce the impact of flooding when it comes.

He said rather than allow the dam to be 97% full, as it was before the flood, it would make sense to keep it about 60% full through strategic release of water when it was safe to do so. This change to using the dam for flood mitigation as well as water supply would be possible if Sydney doubled its capacity of desalinated water through a new plant in the Illawarra and boosted its use of recycled water, he said.

King said it was clear that greater planning for future extreme rain events was needed.

"We do know that areas of eastern Australia do suffer extreme floods from time to time. We've seen it over the last couple of years sometimes and also going back further," he said. "We do need to be more resilient to that."

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## New South Wales

# Record rainfall displaces 50,000 people as Sydney's wild weather moves north

Parts of New South Wales have had more than 700mm of rain since the floods hit, with record July rainfall in a matter of days

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Areas around the Hawkesbury-Nepean rivers such as Windsor have flooded again following three days of intense rainfall and floods across Sydney's north-west. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

*Ben Doherty  
@bendohertycorro*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 07.40 EDTFirst published on Mon 4 Jul 2022 23.16 EDT

Record rainfall has displaced 50,000 people from their homes in [Sydney](#), with more than 150 evacuation orders and warnings remaining in place on Tuesday night as the wild weather headed north.

Parts of [New South Wales](#) have had more than 700mm of rainfall since the floods hit, while areas of the Illawarra have experienced record July rainfall in a matter of days.

Another 73 mm over the last 24 hours brings [#Sydney](#)'s running annual total up to 1769 mm. Not only is this Sydney's wettest year-to-date on record by whopping 191 mm (above 1578.3 mm from 1890), this is also ALREADY the city's 11th wettest year in records dating back to 1859. [pic.twitter.com/JvZjIgTrew](https://pic.twitter.com/JvZjIgTrew)

— Ben Domensino (@Ben\_Domensino) [July 5, 2022](#)

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— Ben Domensino (@Ben\_Domensino) [July 5, 2022](#)

Emergency services crews made 141 flood rescues on Monday night and a further 150 across Tuesday.

More than 19,000 homes remained without power and heavy rain and strong winds continued across the state. There were more than 100 evacuation orders in place on Tuesday evening, and a further 60 evacuation warnings.

New evacuation orders were still being issued for parts of Hawkesbury and the Hunter Valley on Tuesday evening, including Macdonald River and Webbs Creek, north-west of Wisemans Ferry, and the townships of Bulga and Broke along the Wollombi Brook.

The NSW SES deputy state duty commander, Ashley Sullivan, told the ABC the focus was shifting from Sydney to other areas of the state including the Hunter, Central Coast and mid-north coast.

“There are ongoing flood rescues for either motorists that continue to drive into flood waters or are isolated due to the severe weather impacting NSW,” he said.

“We’re asking the communities to remain vigilant. There is still severe weather impacting large areas.”

Sullivan said while the rain was not expected to be as severe in the coming days, 100mm of rain was expected on the mid-north coast. The Bureau of Meteorology said heavy rainfall would also persist in parts of the northern tablelands on Tuesday evening, while easing in the Hunter.

The BoM warned heavy rainfall since Sunday morning had caused “significant” river level rises along the Hunter River catchment with further rises expected overnight into Wednesday.

Major flooding was occurring at Bulga and Wollombi above March 2022 levels, while moderate flooding was possible at Singleton from Wednesday. Wollombi Brook was expected to reach up to 14 metres, above major flood levels.

“Onshore flow combined with an upper trough will continue to bring persistent rainfall,” the Bureau of Meteorology said.

“A coastal trough is also forecast to develop across the north-east later this evening then deepen in response to a highly amplified upper trough and associated low on Wednesday, before pushing further offshore late Wednesday.”

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Isolated six-hour totals of up to 125mm were possible in the mid-north coast and south-eastern areas of the northern tablelands, increasing the risk of landslides in already saturated catchments.

“Damaging winds are no longer expected across the warning area. However, strong and gusty winds may still provide the risk of trees toppling in softer and very saturated soils, particularly about the coastal fringe and ranges,” the Bureau of Meteorology said.

NSW emergency services were rushing to restore access to bridges and roads hammered by storm damage on Tuesday, with more than 500 Rural Fire Service personnel deployed to clear debris and fallen trees.

Parts of the Blue Mountains train line had been suspended amid a major landslip at Mount Victoria, which forced a road closure at Barrengarry Mountain.

coal trains won't be crossing the mountains for a while yet again. There is a 40m long, 20m wide, 60m deep sinkhole at Mount Victoria next to the main Western train line... [pic.twitter.com/miMl0GbmJI](https://pic.twitter.com/miMl0GbmJI)

— Declan Kuch (@agentdeclan) [July 5, 2022](#)

Further south, residents in parts of Kangaroo Valley were [cut off for the second time in six months](#) after the rain washed away their only access road.

The SES had answered more than 5,300 calls for help since the beginning of this emergency, including several rescues of drivers stuck in cars and residents needing to be evacuated.

The SES reported one hoax call of a person needing to be rescued from a roof, which was a dangerous diversion of critical resources, authorities said.

Scores of evacuation orders had been issued, mostly north-west of Sydney, where major flooding had occurred along the Hawkesbury and Nepean rivers at Menangle, North Richmond, Lower Portland and Windsor.

Following [massive rainfall totals across multiple catchments](#) over the past three days, North Richmond, Windsor, Wisemans Ferry and Sackville were experiencing flood peaks above March 2022 with further rises possible.

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Photograph: Tim Robberts/Stone RF

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The premier, [Dominic Perrottet](#), warned the current crisis was “far from over”.

“Don’t be complacent. Be careful when you’re driving on our roads,” he said. “There are still substantial risks for flash flooding across our state and once again, as we always say, please don’t drive through flood waters.”

Sullivan, from the SES, said the situation remained volatile. He said the SES had received 475 calls for help overnight Monday.

“Certainly with the persistent rain we are receiving, the threat will remain into today and tomorrow,” Sullivan said. “Even when it does stop raining, the flood threats will continue.”

Authorities were acutely concerned about the Hunter valley over the next 48 hours as the Hunter River system swelled.

Thousands evacuated as major floods hit NSW – video

The emergency management minister, Steph Cooke, said there were about 400 people in evacuation centres in the high-risk areas and 150 in emergency accommodation.

She said people across Sydney should stay at home “unless you really need to leave the house” as damaging winds were expected.

“We’re not out of the woods yet.”

Jane Golding, from the Bureau of Meteorology, said rain would be persistent over the Hunter region on Tuesday before moving north.

“The floods, even if the rain has eased, will wet those areas where the rain has eased and we’re seeing showers at the moment … it will take a bit of time for the water to make its way out to sea.

“So major flood warnings are likely to continue for the next couple of days.”

Wild weather continued to hamper efforts to tow the stricken cargo ship MV Portland Bay to deeper waters after the vessel lost power south of Sydney.

The Port Authority of NSW warned there would be “long days ahead” for the operation as the multiagency response team prepared for “slow and steady progress” amid torrential conditions.

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## 2022.07.05 - Opinion

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[\*\*Opinion\*\*](#)[\*\*Economic policy\*\*](#)

## Families facing income woes on a par with Greece and Cyprus? That's 'global Britain'

[\*\*Polly Toynbee\*\*](#)



A new report shows household income growth in the UK has plummeted. This is hardly the prosperity we were promised



Cost of living protesters in Manchester city centre, 2 April 2022.  
Photograph: Jake Lindley/Sopa Images/Rex/Shutterstock

Tue 5 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 06.07 EDT

Read this, and you may just put your head in your hands, gather up your family and plan to emigrate. This year's [annual living standards audit](#) from the Resolution Foundation contains graphs that risk plunging readers into downright despair at this benighted country's state.

It has come to this: UK household income growth between 2007 and 2018 fell behind the rest of Europe, with only Greece and Cyprus below us. Ireland grew by 6%, France by 10%, Germany 19%, while the UK fell back – yes, backwards – by 2%. All countries struggle in this energy shock, but after 15 years of [income stagnation](#), “global Britain” is the hardest hit and least resilient.

“A toxic combination of both low growth and persistently high income inequality” is this audit’s definition of the British disease. Among EU countries, [only Bulgaria](#) is more unequal than us.

With the Bank of England predicting a [steep rise in unemployment](#) to 5.5%, many will be shocked when they discover UK jobseeker’s allowance at its

lowest on record, just 13% of average pay. Sweden pays 80% of previous pay for those seeking a new job. In this fragile society, more than a quarter of households say they couldn't manage a month on their meagre savings.

Economic commentators warn of the gathering storm clouds of a recession. Consumer confidence, the best predictor, has hit an [all-time low](#) as alarming news tumbles out daily. Sterling fell against the dollar by 10% this year, after already falling substantially since the Brexit vote.

The balance of trade was once so crucial that in 1970, the first election I covered as a junior reporter, Harold Wilson's shock defeat was partly caused by last-minute bad trade figures registering a mere 0.2% deficit. Compare that to our stonking post-Brexit trade [deficit of 8.3%](#), the worst since records began in 1955. No wonder the government bars any Brexit impact assessment. The Resolution Foundation found Brexit caused a post-referendum rise in the cost of living equivalent to an [increase of £870](#) a year for the average household. That makes restoring EU trade an urgent necessity.

All this is about to be made worse, deliberately. Disregarding the cause of this inflation, the Bank of England is bent on raising interest rates to throttle nonexistent demand. Orthodoxy ordains inflation must be crushed by intentionally raising unemployment. To the Bank of England, with a hammer, every worker looks like a nail. Never mind that stagnant pay has zero responsibility for inflation.

Whenever technical “recession” arrives, Monday’s audit shows that living standards have been in a 15-year recession and are now plummeting further. The half of households below median income levels rely 70% on pay and 30% on benefit top-ups – so both are responsible for Britain’s slump in living standards. Pay needs to keep rising – but benefits also need the same triple lock as pensions.

That surely means these [strikes must succeed](#) to stop pay retreating. And then pay must keep rising. The Bank’s call for restraint is so economically wrongheaded that there will be no cure until we escape the Treasury and Bank of England orthodoxies that helped land us here.

Of course we should tax more, and more fairly: look at the shabby long-term social consequences of paying lower tax than France and Germany. We should tax the rich until their pips squeak, when they have gained so much recently while the rest lost out. But, in the end, all that can sustain us is rising productivity.

However, business is on strike over investment. Already abysmal, preferring dividends and share buybacks, business investment has [fallen 9.2% below](#) pre-Covid levels. Profits of the largest non-financial companies rose 34% in 2021, compared with pre-pandemic levels, says the Institute for Public Policy Research thinktank: time to rein in profiteering. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research finds the cause of Britain's weak productivity is low business investment, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient innovation and low skills.

Where the market fails, the state has to step in. Jettison Treasury rules defining capital spending as only on bricks and mortar, and invest in human capital. Why is further education [funding so low](#) and apprenticeships falling, while universities [cut places](#)? To shoot through a decade of moribund productivity takes a burst of investment daring, imagination and determination. The only hope is renewable energy, insulation, housebuilding, and research and development to match more successful countries with highly trained and educated people. Borrowing confidently to invest wisely and optimistically shores up a country's credibility against a threatened slide in sterling's value.

Beyond fossilised Treasury thinking, better ideas abound. Take this one from the economist Richard Murphy: the £70bn a year invested in tax-free ISAs should only earn that tax relief by investing in productivity-boosting [green government bonds](#), securely backed, paying a decent return.

The audit reminds us that Britain signed up to the international sustainable growth goals. That includes "by 2030 to reduce by half the proportion living in poverty", while raising the "income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average". Incomes need to rise, not just for social justice but for productivity.

Without bravery and imagination, the Treasury and the Bank of England will tighten the screw, causing lower living standards, higher unemployment and worse inequality in a downward productivity spiral. But don't emigrate yet: with political will and nerve, we can stop sliding ever further below countries we once equalled.

- Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist
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**OpinionPride**

## **This terrifying backslide on LGBTQ rights is a threat to women's rights too**

[Owen Jones](#)



It's no surprise that people opposing the rights of this minority are also anti-abortion. Unless we unite, patriarchy will come for us all



‘Now we simply celebrate past victories.’ A rainbow arch at No 10 to mark Pride month. Photograph: Henry Nicholls/Reuters

Tue 5 Jul 2022 05.40 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 07.27 EDT

Is Pride a protest, a party or a corporate jamboree? London’s annual [Pride](#) took place this Saturday – the first since 2019, due to Covid – and, while the banks marched and the capital’s LGBTQ citizens revelled, a shadow loomed over the parade. All minorities must at some point confront a cruel truth: complacency bred by the illusion that history is a story of perpetual progress is an unwise error. After Britain’s anti-gay laws were repealed and unapologetic homophobia lost its vice-like grip over public opinion, Pride became depoliticised. The important battles had been won. Now we simply celebrate past victories in a mass piss-up, allowing some companies with questionable records to wrap themselves in the feelgood rainbow flag.

Well, bad news: history isn’t a merry tale of humanity skipping into an ever-more enlightened sunny upland. London Pride took the correct decision this year to ban [uniformed police officers from marching](#), re-imposing a ban lifted in 2003. It was a nod to this reality: families of the victims of the murderer Stephen Port denounced the Metropolitan police for [institutional homophobia](#) after a disastrously bungled investigation into the so-called “Grindr killer” – a reminder that, no, the authorities are not your friend.

Across the Atlantic, the reversal on LGBTQ rights is stark. It was unsurprising but gruesome when Donald Trump banned trans Americans from serving in the US military, and [eliminated civil rights protections](#) for trans people in healthcare. Despite Democratic rule at federal level, this backslide is continuing. The so-called “[don’t say gay](#)” law in Florida, which bans schools from discussing sexual orientation or gender identity between Kindergarten and third grade, is one striking example. Even more terrifying is Texas’s banning of gender-affirming healthcare for young trans people, with their parents now [legally defined as child abusers](#) if they seek it. Republicans across the US are seeking to introduce so-called “bathroom bills”, banning trans people using toilets corresponding to their transitioned gender.

In this deteriorating climate, it’s unsurprising that reported [anti-LGBTQ hate crimes](#) are [soaring](#) across the US. The same here, too: reported homophobic and transphobic hate crimes have [surged in the UK](#). In January, the Council of Europe placed the UK in the same category as Hungary, Poland, Russia and Turkey for its position on [LGBTQ rights](#), while for the third year running the UK has been relegated in the annual ranking of LGBTQ rights [across Europe](#). The overriding reason is the anti-trans moral panic that grips British society, fostered by an overwhelmingly hostile media and a government that is using trans people as a prop in a “[culture war](#)” (just as Margaret Thatcher used gay people in the 1980s), and has refused to ban trans conversion practices.

There is a common culprit here: and it’s the P-word – patriarchy. It is no coincidence that attacks on gay and trans rights in the US have been accompanied by the onslaught against reproductive rights – or indeed that the same politicians are leading the charge against each. Historically, it has ever been thus: it was natural that the Russian revolution legalised both homosexuality and abortion, while Joseph Stalin re-criminalised both over a decade later. Progress and regression were interlinked. More recently, Hungary’s far-right government has [banned](#) the teaching of young people about LGBTQ issues, ended legal recognition for [trans and intersex](#) people and toughened its [anti-abortion](#) stance. The same applies in the opposite direction. Thanks entirely to grassroots struggle in the face of a reluctant political elite, Ireland has loosened its abortion laws, introduced equal

marriage and made it easier for trans people to transition. This understanding of common struggle is reflected by Ireland's Abortion Rights Campaign, which [boycotted](#) the Irish Times because of its negative stance on trans issues.

The past and the present offer an obvious truth: the fate of women – of all sexualities – and LGBTQ people are bound together. While women are the principal targets of patriarchy (that is, a society rigged in favour of men), this system also punishes those seen to deviate from rigid gender norms. Improving the position of women will probably be accompanied by progress for LGBTQ people; likewise, rolling back women's rights will also mean those of LGBTQ people deteriorate in tandem.

This underlines why it is wrongheaded to claim that trans rights and women's rights are on a collision course. Is it a coincidence that the [lawyer](#) who was instructed to act against the Tavistock Clinic – which provides gender-affirming healthcare for young trans people – previously worked on cases involving abortion rights and a challenge to legalising the homosexual [age of consent](#)? Is it really a coincidence that the rightwing Tory MP David Davies – who called claims to introduce equal marriage “[barking mad](#)” and consistently voted against [abortion rights](#) – would so gladly support [groups](#) that are opposing trans rights?

For LGBTQ people on both sides of the Atlantic, the reversal of progress is bewildering and frightening. But it isn't happening in isolation. After suffering historic defeats, patriarchy is roaring back, and it's angry. Our rights and freedoms are bound together: we rise together, and unless we're united, patriarchy will come for us all.

- Owen Jones is a Guardian columnist
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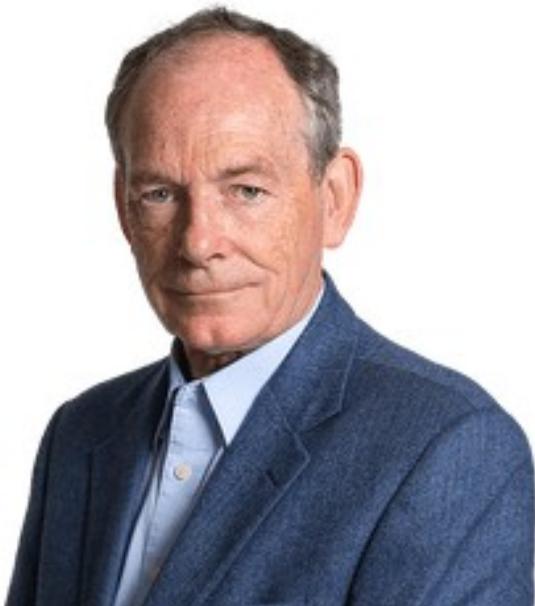
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**OpinionDevolution**

# The United Kingdom is broken. It's time for a new British federation

[Simon Jenkins](#)



Celtic grievances have erupted once more, and can no longer be waved away by Whitehall



A Celtic cross at Kilnave Chapel, Islay, Scotland. Photograph: Richard Handley/Alamy

Tue 5 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 07.14 EDT

The legendary Welsh rugby star Phil Bennett, who [died last month](#), would rouse his team against England, calling them “bastards … taking our coal, our water, our steel … They exploited, raped, controlled and punished us – that’s who you are playing.” It was fighting talk, only half in jest. It was Celts against the English.

In British history and politics, the Celts have grievances that wax and wane, but they never heal. They have erupted once more over Brexit and Ireland and in a revived demand for Scottish independence, a process Boris Johnson and latterly Keir Starmer have [vowed to resist](#). The result of this relentless nagging pressure has been to make the boundaries of the United Kingdom among the most unstable in Europe.

That a once-imperial nation on a small archipelago in the Atlantic cannot hold its domestic union in place is astonishing. Partly underlying its disunity is a notional split of the population into “Celts” and “Anglo-Saxons”, based on a fanciful conquest of one by the other supposedly in the fifth century. Modern genetics has shown the divide to be meaningless, yet it is embedded

in the politics of the so-called Celtic fringe – or at least in England’s reaction to it.

Traditional histories maintained that some time in the late bronze or iron ages a group of European tribes called Celts invaded and overwhelmed the ancient Britons, spreading their disparate but related languages over the entire population. They survived the Roman occupation intact but tradition again holds that, on the Roman retreat, they were overwhelmed in turn by invading Saxons. These invaders reputedly drove the Celts westwards and created an English empire of the British Isles. No trace of the preceding Celtic remained in its language.

The details of both these invasions have long been challenged by scholars. In the 1960s, the historian JRR Tolkien dismissed the Celtic age as a “fabulous twilight … a magic bag”. The archaeologist Grahame Clark protested against “invasion neurosis”, the idea that all social change required a conquest. Since the 1990s, DNA archaeology has indicated that the diverse peoples of the British Isles were many and various, their settlement dating back to the stone age. As the prehistorian Barry Cunliffe has argued, today’s Celtic speakers probably migrated up the Atlantic littoral from Iberia long before anyone knew of Celts.

This might be of no account were it not for the manner in which the eastern Britons asserted supremacy over their western neighbours and maintained it ever since. From the Normans onwards, the rulers of the half of the British Isles called England created one of the most centralised states in Europe. Medieval wars against the Welsh and Scots and later conflicts with the Irish duly bred a passionate western and northern aversion towards the English. In the 19th century this was reciprocated by an English invention of a “Celtic” stereotype. Matthew Arnold dismissed Celts as “romantic and sentimental … lacking the temperament to form a political entity”, so unlike the “disciplined and steadily obedient” Anglo-Saxons.

It is significant that this collective abuse of the Welsh, Scottish and Irish never met a collective response. There was no Celtic solidarity, never one nation, language or culture, let alone a military or political alliance. To the English these peoples should see themselves as what amounted to English

counties, like Yorkshire or Kent, to be assimilated into a “great British” union. Wales was forced to join in 1536, [Scotland](#) in 1707 and Ireland in 1801.

Wales came into union peacefully, Scotland grudgingly and [Ireland](#) never. Irish rebellions followed one after another until it won its independence in 1922. Thereafter a rump United Kingdom did cohere. It was sustained by a Tory unionist obsession and by a Labour party that saw it as embodying Aneurin Bevan’s “unity of the British working class”. Celts were for fairy tales and antiquarians.

This makes the more extraordinary what happened at the end of the 20th century. Infuriated by Thatcher’s centralism, in 1989 a majority of Scottish MPs demanded the return of a Scottish parliament. Seizing the moment, Labour’s Tony Blair would later deliver a modest devolution to new Scottish and Welsh assemblies. These assemblies sparked a sudden outbreak of regional identity politics. Nationalism surged back to life. In Scotland, the Tory party all but vanished.

In 2007, Scottish nationalists took power in Edinburgh and have never lost it. Though the popularity of independence among the Scots has risen and fallen, voters under the age of 50 are overwhelmingly in favour. The odds at present are on [Scottish independence](#) one day. Meanwhile in Northern Ireland, Brexit chaos has fuelled an expectation of a vote for reunion with the south in the future. Even in Wales, the nationalist Plaid Cymru has acquired new vigour, with support for an “independent” Wales at between a quarter and a third of voters.

The response of England to this burst of dissent has been inert. Across Europe, nation-building has been long been a vexed art. Violently in Yugoslavia and Ukraine, and relatively peacefully in Spain and Italy, central governments have struggled ceaselessly to hold the loyalty of their component peoples. As the political historian Linda Colley has shown, this has required respect for identity and ingenuity in devolution. German *Länder* enjoy considerable autonomy. Spain’s Basques and Catalans have degrees of economic, fiscal and judicial sovereignty. Swiss cantons even have differing definitions of democracy.

Britain's Boris Johnson really could not care less. The prime minister has called devolution in Scotland "[a disaster](#)". After Brexit, he insisted that all EU powers and subsidies be repatriated not to the devolved governments but to London. On trade, he appeases the wildest Northern Ireland unionism. A mere [one in five](#) of voters in England now profess to care if Scotland goes independent, yet Johnson fights to retain this first English empire with all the fervour of Edward I.

If I were Northern Irish, I would vote to rejoin the prospering south. If I were Scottish, I would wonder why I was once richer than Ireland and Denmark but am now poorer, and would opt for independence, whatever the pain. Yet I am neither of these things. I believe that a federated United Kingdom of England, Scotland and [Wales](#) benefits greatly from its diversity.

Lumping Celts together as one people and one problem that can be swept under a unionist carpet is demeaning to the ambitions of Irish, Scots and Welsh. It will not silence them. It will not help the search for what is now critical, a bespoke autonomy for each nation in a new British federation.

- Simon Jenkins is a Guardian columnist. His book *The Celts: A Sceptical History* is published this month by Profile

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## Global oil and gas prices have been highly volatile – what will happen next?

[Kenneth Rogoff](#)

Supply and demand shocks seem likely to keep prices up despite fears of recession in US and Europe



A man looks at the screen as he refuels his car at a Shell gas station in Los Angeles, California. Photograph: Étienne Laurent/EPA

Tue 5 Jul 2022 02.20 EDT

Over the past two and a half years, world oil and gas prices have been subject to demand shocks and supply shocks – and sometimes both simultaneously. The resulting volatility in energy markets is a reflection and a microcosm of a careening global economy.

The price of [Brent crude oil](#) declined from a “normal” \$68 a barrel at the end of 2019 to \$14 a barrel in April 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic spread worldwide. Two years later, in March 2022, the price soared to \$133 a barrel after Russia invaded Ukraine. Now it is falling again amid growing fears of a recession in the US. But the price could rise sharply if the Chinese economy bounces back from the [stupor](#) induced by its zero-Covid policies.

What will happen next, and how can policymakers keep their eye on environmental sustainability in the face of this market turmoil?

One reason why oil and gas prices are so volatile is that short-term demand for energy responds much faster to changes in growth than to price changes. So, when there is an energy shock, it can take a huge price change to clear the market.

And the pandemic was the mother of all shocks, bringing about the biggest sustained shift in demand since the second world war. Before Covid-19, global oil demand was about 100m barrels a day but lockdowns (and fear) sent demand plummeting to [75m barrels a day](#). Suppliers could not collectively turn off the spigot fast enough (slowing down a gushing oilwell is not a trivial task). On 20 April 2020, the oil price fell briefly to [minus \\$37 a barrel](#), as storage facilities became overwhelmed and suppliers sought to avoid dumping penalties.

Investment in new oil and gas production had already been weak prior to the pandemic, partly in response to worldwide initiatives to steer economic development away from fossil fuels. The World Bank, for example, [no longer finances fossil fuel exploration](#), including projects involving natural gas, a relatively clean energy source. Environmental, social, and governance [investing](#) and regulations are reducing oil and gas projects’ access to financing, which of course is the point. That is perfectly fine if policymakers have laid out a feasible transition plan to reduce reliance on fossil fuels but this has been a challenge, especially in the US and Asia.

There was really no plan to cope with the V-shaped recovery in oil demand that came with the post-pandemic rebound

Oil, coal, and natural gas still account for [80% of global energy consumption](#), roughly the same share as at the end of 2015 when the [Paris climate agreement](#) was adopted. Policymakers in Europe and now the US (under President Joe Biden) have laudable ambitions to fast-track green energy during this decade. But there was really no plan to cope with the [V-shaped recovery](#) in oil demand that came with the post-pandemic rebound, much less the [energy-supply dislocations](#) resulting from the western-led sanctions on Russia.

The ideal solution would be a [global carbon price](#) (or a [carbon credit trading scheme](#) if a tax proves impossible). In the US, however, the inflation-panicked Biden administration is seriously considering going in the opposite direction, and has [called on Congress](#) to suspend the federal gasoline tax – \$0.18 a gallon – for three months. The recently announced [G7 plan](#) to cap Russian oil prices makes sense as a sanction but Russia is already selling to India and China at a steep discount, so this is unlikely to have a big impact on the global price.

Only a short while ago, the Biden administration was using its executive powers to stunt the growth of US fossil fuel production. Now it is championing [higher output](#) from foreign suppliers, even those – notably Saudi Arabia – that it had previously [shunned](#) on human rights grounds. Unfortunately, being virtuous by limiting US oil production while at the same time soaking up output from other countries does not really do much for the environment. Europe, at least, had a semi-coherent plan until the Ukraine war brought home just how far the continent – especially countries such as Germany that have taken [nuclear power](#) out of the equation – is from achieving a [clean-energy transition](#).

As with all kinds of innovation and investment, strong growth in green energy requires decades of consistent, stable policies to help de-risk the massive long-term capital commitments that are needed. And until alternative energy sources can start to substitute more fully for fossil fuels, it is unrealistic to think that rich-country voters will re-elect leaders who allow energy costs to blow up overnight.

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It is notable that the protesters who have successfully pressed some universities to [divest from fossil fuels](#) do not seem to be lobbying nearly as hard to turn down heating and air conditioning. The energy transition needs to take place but it will not be painless. The best way to encourage long-term producer and consumer investments in green energy is to have a reliably high carbon price; gimmicks such as [divestment initiatives](#) are far less efficient and far less effective. (I also [advocate](#) establishing a World Carbon Bank to provide developing economies with funding and technical assistance so that they, too, can cope with the transition.)

For the moment, oil and gas prices seem likely to remain elevated, despite [fears of a recession](#) in the US and Europe. As the Northern Hemisphere's summer driving season gets under way, and with the Chinese economy potentially rebounding from zero-Covid lockdowns, it is not difficult to imagine energy prices continuing to rise, even if the Federal Reserve's [interest rate increases](#) sharply curtail US growth.

In the longer term, energy prices look set to rise unless investment picks up sharply, which seems unlikely given current policy guidance. Supply and demand shocks will most likely continue to roil the energy market and the global economy. Policymakers will need strong nerves to manage them.

*Kenneth Rogoff is professor of economics and public policy at Harvard University and was the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund from 2001 to 2003*

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## 2022.07.05 - Around the world

- Hong Kong New leader John Lee spent \$1.1m on election campaign in which he was sole candidate
- Analysis Trump 2024 run could upend midterms – and deflect risk of prosecution
- Employment Neglect Africa now and we will face labour shortages globally, IMF warns
- Japan Artificial intelligence used to detect rip currents as beach season hots up
- US Anger as families of US detainees in Middle East left off Blinken call

## Hong Kong

# New Hong Kong leader John Lee spent \$1.1m on election campaign in which he was sole candidate

Donations flooded in to office of security hardliner despite lack of any rivals to beat for job of chief executive



Hong Kong's new chief executive, John Lee. Photograph: Reuters

*Rhoda Kwan in Taipei*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 00.42 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 00.58 EDT

Hong Kong's new chief executive, John Lee, received almost HK\$11.3m (US\$1.4m) in donations during his election campaign earlier this year, according to official filings released on Monday. Lee had run for the city's top job in May via a small-circle election in which he was the only candidate.

Lee spent around HK\$9m (US\$1.1m) of the donations on his campaign, the majority of which were split between advertisements, gatherings, office rent and transportation. The majority of advertising costs, around HK\$2m, went to social media advertising, while HK\$710,000 of funds allotted for office rent and transportation was spent on security. The unused funds were donated to local charity the Community Chest of Hong Kong, the filing said.

Lee's social media campaign in the lead-up to his election included Facebook and Instagram posts promoting his candidature for office. Posts included cartoon images featuring quotes and detailing his proposed policies with the tagline "Brother Chiu can help you", in reference to Lee's Chinese name Lee Ka-Chiu.

The donations came from 59 pro-Beijing business and community groups, according to local media reports. Lee, who along with 11 other Hong Kong and Chinese officials is under US sanctions for [his role in the crackdown on dissent](#) in the former British colony, received the donations in cash, and bought three banknote counters and a safe for the funds.

Beijing overhauled the city's electoral processes in early 2021, cutting direct representation and introducing a "patriots only" requirement in a move that critics say ensured no candidate could be chosen without the support of the central authorities.

Under the new system, a committee of about 1,500 mostly pro-Beijing business and other stakeholders choose the city's leader in closed-circle elections from vetted candidates.

Hong Kong's pro-democracy political opposition has been all but crushed under a national security crackdown since mid-2020, with the overwhelming majority behind bars pending trial, withdrawn from public life or in self-imposed exile.

Lee's spend on social media advertisements was more than six times that of previous chief executive Carrie Lam's election campaign in 2017. Lam spent about \$300,000 on running her Facebook page during closed-circle elections

against two other nominated candidates. Lam in 2017 had raised around HK\$18.7m and spent HK\$12.5m.

Under Hong Kong's election laws in 2022, the maximum amount of expenses a chief executive candidate can incur during an election campaign is \$17.6m.

Lee's office did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the donations.

The former security chief, widely seen as a hardliner and staunch Beijing loyalist, was sworn in as Hong Kong's chief executive on Friday last week by Chinese president Xi Jinping on the [25th anniversary of the city's handover](#) from British to Chinese rule.

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## Donald Trump

# Trump 2024 run could upend midterms – and deflect risk of prosecution

Rumors are swirling that the ex-president could make an announcement soon, as January 6 revelations continue



Donald Trump appears on a video screen as Cassidy Hutchinson testifies before the January 6 panel. Photograph: Eric Lee/EPA

## Edward Helmore

Tue 5 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 10.42 EDT

Speculation is swirling in the US media that [Donald Trump](#) is considering announcing a 2024 presidential run as early as this summer and in the face of ever more damaging revelations from a congressional investigation of his role in the January 6 attack on the Capitol.

Irrespective of Trump's chances of winning a second term, another presidential campaign under consideration – as reported by [the New York](#)

[Times](#), [CBS](#) and other US outlets – could give the former president a multi-year shield to deflect the attention of prosecutors.

The reports have come after committee hearings into the 6 January 2021 Capitol riot that could see the congressional panel itself recommend Trump face criminal charges for his role in an attempt to thwart the certification of Joe Biden's electoral win. Or the justice department could charge Trump via its own investigation of the scheme.

In testimony to the panel last week, Cassidy Hutchinson, a former aide to Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows, strengthened a potential criminal case when she alleged that Trump knew his supporters were armed when he encouraged them to march on the Capitol.

But if Trump were to run for a second stint in the White House, most experts believe it would – at the very least – complicate any decision to criminally charge him. It would also be likely to bolster his support in the Republican party, which has begun to ebb slightly in the wake of the January 6 revelations.

It would also, perhaps, stem the rise of Florida's governor, Ron DeSantis, who has emerged in recent months as a genuine potential rival to Trump with the promise of pursuing the same rightwing agenda but with more traditional political skills and style.

A former House Republican aide [told MSNBC](#) on Saturday that Trump would probably announce his intentions soon.

"Well, we all know from past experience that Donald Trump doesn't care about anybody else but Donald Trump," said [Kurt Bardella](#). "So it doesn't surprise me that when faced with the criticism that's been mounting right now, following the January 6 hearings, he's thinking about pulling the trigger."

At recent rallies, Trump has been relatively explicit about his designs. "This is the year we're going to take back the House, we're going to take back the Senate, and we're going to take back America," he said at a recent rally in

Illinois. “And in 2024, most importantly, we are going to take back our magnificent White House.”

“The advantages of declaring now are that potential rivals could be dissuaded from running against him,” said Carl Tobias, Williams chair in law at the University of Richmond. “Meanwhile, the pressure will build for the January 6 committee to move quickly to find as much damning information as it can and refer it over to the attorney general.”

Carly Cooperman at Schoen Cooperman Research said Trump could be attempting to change the narrative because the January 6 hearings have painted him in a bad light. Cooperman also cautioned that the speculation could be just that – rumors – and that some Republican officials might try to stave it off.

“I’m skeptical Trump will actually make an announcement before the midterms. [Republicans](#) would rather have the conversation be about the economy, inflation and a referendum on Biden. An early announcement from Trump would change the midterm elections to become a referendum on Trump and his claims of election fraud in 2020,” Cooperman said.

On Sunday, Trump’s Republican party nemesis, Congresswoman Liz Cheney, [told](#) ABC’s Jonathan Karl that the party could not survive if Trump were the nominee in 2024. “Those of us who believe in Republican principles and ideals have a responsibility to try to lead the party back to what it can be,” Cheney said.

Trump has reportedly told advisers that declaring a run for the White House now would allow him to strengthen his argument that other criminal investigations against him in New York and Georgia are politically motivated.

According to a CBS report on Sunday, Trump’s deliberations are fluid and no decision has been made on a bid or the time of an announcement. As with other media reports, sources said to be close to Trump requested anonymity.

Typically, a presidential candidate waits until after the midterms in November, but the presidential cycle has been stretching longer and now begins as early as two years before the general election. A declaration now could upend both parties' midterm strategies.

Trump told [Newsmax](#) last week that he thought “a lot of” the committee hearings were about trying to prevent him from running in 2024.

“I am leading in all the polls – against Republicans and Democrats. I am leading in the Republican polls in numbers that no one has ever even seen before. And against Biden, and anyone else they run, I am leading against them.

“At the right time, I will be saying what I want to do,” Trump added. But [in comments to the New Yorker last month](#), Trump said he was “very close to making a decision” about whether to run.

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## Employment

# Neglect Africa now and we will face labour shortages globally, IMF warns

West's response to effects of Covid and Ukraine war condemned as shortsighted 'collective failure' to invest in future human capital



Kenyan children working at a quarry near Nairobi. The human capital needed by the world had not got enough attention, said the IMF's Abebe Aemro Selassie. Photograph: Brian Inganga/AP

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*Liz Ford*

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Tue 5 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 02.02 EDT

The international community would be “playing with fire” if it failed to help [Africa](#) recover from Covid and the impact of the Ukraine war, the International Monetary Fund’s director for the continent has said.

Failure to invest and support the continent was shortsighted and detrimental to the global economy, as half of the new entrants into the global workforce over the next decade would come from sub-Saharan Africa, Abebe Aemro Selassie, director of the IMF’s Africa department, told the Guardian.

“In 10 years, one out of every two individuals entering into the global labour force will come from sub-Saharan Africa – the very children whose education the pandemic has disrupted,” he said.

“The human capital we need to motor the global economy is not getting the attention it needs. It’s a massive collective failure,” he added.

“Almost certainly – unless we think robots are going to take care of everything – there is going to be a shortage of labour in most advanced

economies, and even elsewhere.

“Despite all the innovations we have had, labour has shifted from one sector to another, and 60-70% of the population has remained in work.



‘Labour input, increasingly, can only come from Africa’, says the IMF’s African department head, Abebe Aemro Selassie. Photograph: Allison Shelley/IMF/EPA

“People will move to different professions, but people will still keep working. Globally, we are going to need labour to complement capital, and that labour input can, increasingly, only come from Africa.”

Selassie, who has worked at the IMF for 28 years, added that the successes seen across the continent since the 1990s – the result of domestic reforms, a booming global economy, and generous aid and debt relief packages – had “gone into reverse”.

Covid, the Russian invasion of Ukraine (which has disrupted global supply chains and led to [soaring commodity prices](#)) and falling aid budgets had exacerbated the continent’s already slowing economies, he said.

Selassie told the 13th Andrew Crockett lecture [governors’ roundtable for African central bankers](#) in Oxford last week that the IMF had given sub-

Saharan countries \$50bn (£41bn) since March 2020 to support them during the pandemic, “but its effectiveness would be greater still if it was complementing, rather than partly offsetting, declining support from other development partners.”

Three African countries – Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan – are facing acute food insecurity because of failed rains, rising food prices and a lack of donor support.

The UK government, the fourth largest donor, has cut aid spending from 0.7% of its gross national income to 0.5%, which resulted in a 20% reduction in funding between 2020 and 2021 – from £14.4bn to £11.5bn. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has also halved humanitarian aid spending from £1.53bn in 2020 to £744m in 2021.

Despite the difficulties Africa was facing, Selassie had “absolutely no doubt” about the region’s future, he said. “One way or another, it will develop,” he added.

“The question is: can we accelerate this development and avert too many people suffering in that process?”

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## [Japan](#)

# Japan deploys artificial intelligence to detect rip currents as beach season heats up

AI system identifies currents and bathers, and sends a warning to lifeguards via a smart watch



People relax on Yuigahama Beach in Kamakura, Japan. The beach will see AI technology help identify rip currents and warn bathers. Photograph: Carl Court/Getty Images

*[Justin McCurry](#) in Tokyo*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 01.02 EDT Last modified on Tue 5 Jul 2022 23.27 EDT

Early July is the cue for [Japanese surfers](#) and sun seekers to descend on beaches across the country – and one beach on the Pacific coast is turning to artificial intelligence to ensure that their time in the water is without incident.

Officials in Kanagawa prefecture, south of Tokyo, have introduced an AI system to identify rip currents – which cause 60% of drowning deaths – and send a warning to bathers and lifeguards, according to the Mainichi Shimbun.

The beach at Yuigahama, a popular beach in the town Kamakura, which reopened on 1 July after two years of closures due to the coronavirus pandemic, is a [well-known surfing spot](#) and is expected to attract huge numbers of people during what the meteorological agency predicts will be an unusually hot summer.

Experts at the [Japan](#) Lifesaving Association and Chuo University in Tokyo collected rip current data over six months in the winter of 2021 to ensure the system worked, the [Mainichi reported](#).

According to the lifesaving association, a web camera mounted on a pole identifies a rip current and anyone swimming its vicinity, and then immediately notifies a lifeguard via a smart watch.

The images were also used to develop a warning system that sends government officials real-time information about bathers after a tsunami occurs, the newspaper said.

The rip current measure is part of a local drive to revive the beach after the pandemic hiatus, and push the area's environmental credentials. Yuigahama is one of about 20 beaches in the prefecture that have been closed for the past two summers.

“There are some beach huts that haven’t been able to operate for two years, and they’re keen to get started again,” said Mieko Konishi, the chair of the Kanagawa Beach Federation of beach hut owners. “We want to operate our facilities while taking virus countermeasures similar to those in ordinary restaurants.”

Bars and restaurants lining Yuigahama have introduced biodegradable forks and spoons – reportedly a first in [Japan](#) – and slopes have been built to improve access for people who use wheelchairs.

“We’re taking a progressive approach that is barrier-free, safe and eco-friendly,” Motohide Masuda, the head of the Yuigahama Beach Business Association, told the Mainichi. “We hope people will enjoy a modern Yuigahama.”

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## [US news](#)

# Anger as families of US detainees in Middle East left off Blinken call

‘Infuriating’ exclusions made just weeks before Joe Biden’s Saudi visit and expected rapprochement with the crown prince



Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince, in this October picture. Biden is due to visit Israel and Saudi Arabia later this month. Photograph: Bandar Al-Jaloud/Saudi Royal Palace/AFP/Getty Images

*[Stephanie Kirchgaessner](#) in Washington*

*@skirchy*

Tue 5 Jul 2022 02.57 EDT Last modified on Wed 6 Jul 2022 00.11 EDT

Family members of several US nationals who are being held in [Saudi Arabia](#) and Egypt were not invited to attend a recent call with Antony Blinken, the secretary of state, in a move that was called “infuriating and discriminatory” by one critic.

The apparent decision to exclude the families from a 22 June call between Blinken and relatives of US nationals who are hostages or otherwise wrongfully detained in Russia, Venezuela, Rwanda and other countries, was made just weeks before Joe Biden's controversial trip to the Middle East and [an expected rapprochement](#) between the US president and Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince.

Biden is due to visit Israel and Saudi Arabia later this month as part of a summit where oil production is likely to be high on the agenda, as well as a focus on improved relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

The trip marks [a major change in Biden's approach to Saudi Arabia](#). During his 2020 campaign for the presidency, Biden vowed to make Saudi Arabia a “pariah” to punish the kingdom and its young crown prince for ordering the 2018 murder and dismemberment of the Washington Post columnist [Jamal Khashoggi](#).

Biden's decision to abandon that pledge has been met by a sense of betrayal and anger by Saudi and other dissidents and human rights activists who say [Biden is unlikely to make](#) any practical gains from an unreliable partner.

Frustration among some dissidents and activists were heightened after Blinken held a call with families of hostages and other wrongfully detained US nationals in various countries – but not Saudi Arabia and [Egypt](#).

Carine Kanimba, the American daughter of Paul Rusesabagina, the jailed Rwandan dissident, was on the call along with other families.

“Blinken reaffirmed the commitment of the US government to bring our loved ones back home,” Kanimba said. “Some people got to ask questions. We are all in the same situation.”

While Kanimba did not have access to a full invitation list – and one was not released by the state department – she said she believed the call was meant for families of individuals who have formally been designated as hostages or wrongfully detained under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, which was meant to give the US government more tools to support the families of hostages.

The call did not include families of [Salah Soltan](#), an academic and legal US permanent resident and the father of human rights defender Mohamed Soltan, who is in prison in Egypt, or [Hosam Khalaf](#), who has been held without a trial since 2017.

It also did not include the families of the American [Walid Fitaihi](#), a doctor who is under travel ban in Saudi Arabia, or the families of [Salah al-Haidar](#) and his mother [Aziza al-Yousef](#), a prominent women's rights activist and US national who are all barred from leaving Saudi. The family of [Badr Ibrahim](#), a US-Saudi journalist, was also not invited.

Some family members said they were angry about what they believed was a political decision to shift focus away from their own families' plights because of Biden's coming trip.

"The intentional and hypocritical cherry-picking of which 'wrongful detention' cases to raise or meet with is infuriating and discriminatory," said one individual who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "The willingness of the US to expend its political capital in resolving wrongful detention cases is not consistent and is based on some arbitrary criteria: is your wrongfully detained family member detained in a country that is a foe or ally? Is it a picture-perfect case that is ripe for resolution?"

Another person said they felt their family's plight was simply no longer a priority for the Biden White House.

The state department declined to respond to the criticism. An official said the department reviews cases under the Levinson Act to determine if individuals have been "wrongfully" detained.

"The review assesses the facts of the case against enumerated criteria, without regard to political factors such as the US relationship with the country of detention," the state department official said. "We also continue to advocate for the immediate lifting of coercive travel restrictions for US nationals. We take our responsibility to assist all US nationals seriously, and we press for fair and transparent treatment in all cases."

The statement, sent by email, suggested that the state department was differentiating between individuals who are considered hostages and wrongfully imprisoned, and those – like many US nationals in Saudi Arabia – who may not leave Saudi Arabia but have been released from prison.

The news came as rights advocates pointed to separate comments by Michael Alan Ratney, who has been nominated to serve as ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and recently said in congressional testimony that Saudi had made “a bit of progress” on “freedom of expression, the rights of women, judicial transparency”.

Seth Binder, director of advocacy at Pomed, which advocates for democracy in the Middle East, said those claims were unsubstantiated. He said that any decision to keep the families of detained Saudi and Egyptian US nationals off the Blinken call was troubling, and that Biden’s decision to meet with Mohammed bin Salman showed that “human rights concerns have been sacrificed for what they have determined are more important national security interests”.

Some advocates, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said there were only dim hopes that the Saudis would agree to any human rights-related demands in exchange for Biden’s forthcoming visit.

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- [Conservative leadership race David Frost urges Kemi Badenoch to step aside for Liz Truss](#)
- [Leadership debates When and where to watch the debates](#)

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# Tory leadership debate: rivals discuss tax, energy, NHS, the green economy and trust in first televised head-to-head – as it happened

The five candidates face off in a televised Channel 4 debate

- [When and where to watch the Conservative leadership debates](#)

Updated 1d ago

[Martin Belam](#) and [Tom Ambrose](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 18.36 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 04.41 EDT

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[Former minister urges Kemi Badenoch to pull out and support Truss bid](#)



Left-right: Kemi Badenoch; Penny Mordaunt; Rishi Sunak; Liz Truss; and Tom Tugendhat are all hoping to land the top job at No 10. Photograph: Victoria Jones/PA

[Martin Belam and Tom Ambrose](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 18.36 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 04.41 EDT

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## Live feed

From 1d ago

[16.12](#)

## Snap verdict

Even though this was a one-party TV debate, the spin room will still be all about people who backed a particular candidate saying their particular candidate did best, but I'll bring you some reaction to the debate shortly.

My quick tuppence is that [Rishi Sunak](#) didn't do anything to torpedo his position as current front-runner among MPs, even if he may not have put in a performance that would wow the public. Tugendhat was clearly the most likeable candidate to the audience in the studio, but isn't really credibly likely to get into the last two, which leaves Badenoch, Truss and Mordaunt.

I don't think any of the three of them had a particular stellar evening. I didn't feel that Mordaunt shone, Truss maybe had her best moments when she was toe-to-toe with Sunak over tax and borrowing (even if you think he is more fiscally credible), and Badenoch was quite good at bringing things back to a personal level, but her platform of "speaking the truth" is still quite light on actual policies.

Here's some interesting snap polling from Opinium, showing good news for Tugendhat – as far as the public is concerned at any rate.

### □BREAKING - SNAP DEBATE POLL□

Tonight we asked over 1000 normal voters to watch the debate and we have just asked them who they thought performed best.

Results:

Tugendhat 36%

Sunak 25%

Mordaunt 12%

Badenoch 12%

Truss 6% [pic.twitter.com/0q4IliqQNM](https://pic.twitter.com/0q4IliqQNM)

— Opinium (@OpiniumResearch) [July 15, 2022](#)

Opinium also has some polling on how people of different political persuasions felt the contest went, which is broadly similar.

Among Tory 2019 voters it was a neck and neck between Tugendhat and Sunak.

However, among Conservative swing voters (who will decide whether the Tories hold their majority at the next election) the results were:

Tugendhat 33%

Sunak 28%

Mordaunt 14%

Badenoch 12%

Truss 6% [pic.twitter.com/A3Xrq4nioD](https://pic.twitter.com/A3Xrq4nioD)

— Opinium (@OpiniumResearch) [July 15, 2022](#)

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Updated at 16.24 EDT

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[1d ago](#)[18.35](#)

## Summary of the day

- The five remaining Conservative candidates to be the next UK prime minister took part in a TV debate on Channel 4 on Friday night. **Kemi Badenoch, Penny Mordaunt, Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss and Tom Tugendhat** featured in a programme hosted by **Krishnan Guru-Murthy**.
- **In an often difficult night for all the candidates, Sunak openly ridiculed Truss's tax plans.** Condemning what he called a wider “unfunded spree of borrowing and more debt” among his competitors, he condemned the Truss’s proposal to put off repayments of public debt built up due to Covid. “There is no such thing as Covid debt,” a visibly irritated Sunak told the foreign secretary. “Debt is debt. And the answer to too much borrowing can’t be yet more borrowing. It’s as simple as that.”
- **Mordaunt and Badenoch clash with visible enmity about the former’s views on trans rights.** Mordaunt, meanwhile, asked about negative briefings about her from some of the other camps, refused to say she trusted the other candidates.

- A long section on trust saw none of the five willing say whether the prime minister they hope to replace, Boris Johnson, was honest. “Sometimes,” said Badenoch, while Mordaunt talked about “really severe issues”, and Truss spoke of “mistakes”. Tugendhat won applause by saying, simply: “No.”
- Despite pressure from some Tory grandes including former Brexit minister David Frost to unite behind a single candidate representing the right of the party, **Badenoch**’s team said “She has no intention of stepping down and is in it to win.”
- It was revealed that Mordaunt has repeatedly advocated the use of homeopathy on the NHS. Homeopathy is a treatment based on the use of highly diluted substances that practitioners claim can cause the body to heal itself.
- Badenoch and Truss have declined to answer questions put to them by the LGBT+ Conservatives group by their deadline of 1pm today. The group gave each of the leadership contenders a three-question questionnaire. Tugendhat, Sunak and Mordaunt managed to answer on time, although the group has since reached out to Badenoch and Truss to encourage them to submit their answers.
- Boris Johnson is planning to stage parliamentary interventions on Ukraine, Brexit and levelling up, with allies of the outgoing prime minister hinting that those are the areas of his legacy he believes to be most under threat from his potential successor.

- Channel 4 has said an investigation into allegations made by the culture secretary, Nadine Dorries, that a reality TV show she appeared on used paid actors [has found no evidence of fakery](#). The broadcaster asked the producers of the 2010 reality show Tower Block of Commons, in which Dorries was one of a number of MPs who went to live in deprived communities, to investigate the claims she made to the culture select committee in May.
- The Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, visited a section of the Berlin Wall earlier today while on a trip to the German capital to meet politicians and business leaders. Starmer was pictured by the landmark, erected in 1961 by the communist authorities to separate East and West Berlin.

*That is it from me, Martin Belam, for tonight. Thank you to my colleague Tom Ambrose for his live blogging earlier today. Tom will be back with you tomorrow, and I will be here on Sunday. Do join us. In the meantime, I suspect you might also enjoy [John Crace's sketch on today's debates and hustings](#).*

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[1d ago](#)[18.13](#)

On the climate crisis issue, of the five candidates tonight, **Kemi Badenoch** remained the only candidate who would not commit to the UK's current net zero pledge. She said:

The pledge was made in 2018 for 2050, none of us are going to be here as politicians in 2050, it's very easy to set a target you are not going to be responsible and accountable for when the time comes. The important thing is to make sure that we do this in a sustainable way. Many of the things we are doing could economically damage our country.

My colleague Helena Horton wrote earlier today that, after initial alarm from green Conservatives about how little the environment was featuring in the leadership contest discussion, [Sunak, Mordaunt, Truss and Tugendhat had all committed to 2050.](#)

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[1d ago18.06](#)

**Michael Gove** is doubling down on his support of **Kemi Badenoch** after tonight's debate. He says "she has the right stuff".

Kemi is winning among Newsnight jury - she has the right stuff

— Michael Gove (@michaelgove) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[1d ago18.01](#)

This is what Sam Coates, the deputy political editor as Sky News, had to say in his live analysis earlier when the debate had concluded. He suggested it was a strong performance from [Rishi Sunak](#), and a tough night for Liz Truss:

Tonight was dominated by two things, the issue of trust and the economy. And what was really striking was the ability of Rishi Sunak to drag that debate about the economy onto his own terms.

He grilled both Penny Mordaunt and Liz Truss about their tax plans. Whether the nation could afford them. Whether or not they might increase inflation.

He was the one framing the argument and putting the others under pressure, even though arguably his plan, which is not so much help now as those two, is a harder sell on the country.

He went on to say about the current foreign secretary:

Tonight also mattered for Liz Truss. Bits of her pitch were clearly quite tough. She is essentially standing by her decision not to resign from Boris Johnson's government, and pledging her loyalty to him even now, but it didn't look like it went down particularly well with the audience.

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[1d ago](#) [17.50](#)

I do sometimes subscribe to the view that if your candidate has done or said something daft, it is best to lean into it on social media on the basis that “any publicity is good publicity” and “people will be talking about us rather than someone else.”

So while confessing I may be about to fall into that trap, there appears to be *a lot* of confusion on social media about just quite what [Penny Mordaunt](#) meant by this statement – “The top 180 innovations that we have had. How many are used in the NHS. None” – or why her social media team would then make it into a graphic.



Photograph: Twitter

As you can probably imagine, the quote tweets of it have been a sight to behold, not least a procession of NHS staff pointing some pretty basic “innovations” they use like the wheel and electricity, or the good old [fall-back to a Monty Python reference](#): “Aside from the internet, penicillin, recombinant antibodies, MRI scanners, CAT scans, lateral flow tests ... what inventions has the NHS ever used?”

*Update: the relevant tweet was later deleted, so a screenshot has been added.*

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Updated at 18.36 EDT

[1d ago](#)[17.39](#)

Harry Lambert offers [this analysis](#) of tonight over at the New Statesman:

Liz Truss has the backing of 64 MPs but no wavering MP can be encouraged to join her camp after tonight's showing. That was no surprise – I suggested Truss would perform poorly tonight, as anyone

else who has watched the foreign secretary try to navigate questions on air before would probably have done, and I think the Tory right would be wise to drop her and swing behind Kemi Badenoch (who is fourth among MPs, with the backing of 49). Badenoch was the calmer and more assured performer this evening. But I do not expect the Tory right to align, and that will keep Mordaunt on the path to a run-off with Sunak.

Read more here: [\*\*New Statesman – Who won the first Tory leadership TV debate?\*\*](#)

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[1d ago](#)[17.33](#)

A couple of tomorrow's front pages are out, and you can see exactly where some people have hitched their wagons. For the Mail, it is news of a "Liz tax boost for families" as they tout a plan from the Truss camp for "a radical overhaul of the tax system."

"She wants to ensure parents are not penalised for time out of work to look after family members," the paper says, adding that "couples with young children or caring responsibilities."

It also refers to her as Miss Truss on the front page.

Saturday's Mail: Liz tax boost for families [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#) [#DailyMail](#) [#Mail](#) [pic.twitter.com/SLeNWf0xzt](https://pic.twitter.com/SLeNWf0xzt)

— Tomorrows Papers Today (@TmorrowsPapers) [July 15, 2022](#)

The Telegraph, meanwhile, leads with [Penny Mordaunt](#) saying that she is "up to the job".

Saturday's Telegraph: Mordaunt insists she is up to the job [#TomorrowsPapersToday](#) [#DailyTelegraph](#) [#Telegraph](#)

[pic.twitter.com/AkJyCPq5PY](https://pic.twitter.com/AkJyCPq5PY)

— Tomorrows Papers Today (@TmorrowsPapers) [July 15, 2022](#)

You can also get “free” sun lotion with the Daily Mail tomorrow, though it comes at a cost of £3.95 P&P and not linking the extreme heat the country is facing with the climate crisis.

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[1d ago](#)[17.23](#)



John Crace

*John Crace has delivered [his sketch of both tonight's debate and the earlier online hustings](#):*

Hard to believe but it's only just over a week since the latest Tory psychodrama began. It feels longer. So much longer. Time bends and stalls when you're in the parallel universe of a [Liz Truss](#) speech. She leaves audiences begging for a lethal injection. The other leadership contenders are

little better, registering mostly as absences on the space-time continuum. Negative energy.

But we are where we are and we have moved on to [the first of the televised debates](#), a weird gameshow where the only audience that counts are the 360 or so Tory MPs who may or may not be watching. The rest of us are merely voyeurs, having no say in which two clowns will still be standing by next Wednesday evening. This is apparently how the UK likes to choose its prime minister these days. Very on brand for a country that has become a laughing stock.

First, though, there was a warm-up Zoom hustings on the Conservative Home website. Think a weekly meeting of junior sales reps. Only infinitely more boring. It's almost as if no one really wants the job. Which would actually suit the rest of us.

The only highlights were the flatlining Truss forgetting to unmute herself – she's at her most articulate when you can't hear her – and Ready4Rish! suggesting that his biggest fault is his perfectionism. I'd say a far greater fault was being in charge of an economy that is predicted to have the second lowest growth in the G20. If he was a real perfectionist he'd have made sure we were bottom. The other three – [Penny Mordaunt](#), Tom Tugendhat and Kemi Badenoch – said nothing memorable at all. Which meant they easily came out on top.

**Read more here: [John Crace – The Tory leadership debate: desperate as a sales pitch, worse as entertainment](#)**

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[1d ago](#)[17.19](#)

**Rishi Sunak** has gone for not just posting a video clip of his closing statement ...

In my [#C4LeaderDebate](#) closing statement, I set out how we are going to build a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Watch below and go to <https://t.co/3cXn1rnFNA> to lend your support.  
[#Ready4Rishi pic.twitter.com/Uc58PDTToKF](#)

— Ready For Rishi (@RishiSunak) [July 15, 2022](#)

... but also a behind-the-scenes montage as well.

Thanks to everyone who watched and joined in with the [#C4LeaderDebate](#).

Join the team at <https://t.co/3cXn1rnFNA> [pic.twitter.com/z3eCn6n9uD](https://pic.twitter.com/z3eCn6n9uD)

— Ready For Rishi (@RishiSunak) [July 15, 2022](#)

**Kemi Badenoch** has posted slides of her closing speech. It is possible to interpret that as an indication of the difference between the campaign money they have behind them.

This is the best country in the world, that is why I chose it at 16 and is why I want to be the next PM. [#KemiForPM #C4LeaderDebate](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/5N8VP3DOFY](https://pic.twitter.com/5N8VP3DOFY)

— Kemi Badenoch (@KemiBadenoch) [July 15, 2022](#)

Interestingly, **Liz Truss** and her team have opted to go with a video clip of the segment where she talked about transgender rights, rather than her closing statement. Truss said:

When I started in the Women and Equalities job, there was a plan to move forward on self-ID. I believe in women's rights. I also believe that transgender people should be treated with respect.

So what I did is I changed the outcome of that work, so that we were able to make the process simpler and kinder, but not move ahead with self-ID.

Which I think is the right position, because I think people understand that women's faces domestic violence shelters need to be protected for women, but at the same time, everybody is should be free to live their lives as they want and be treated with respect. So that is the balance I sought to achieve.

□ Everybody should be free to live their lives as they want and be treated with respect. [#LizForLeader](#) [#C4LeaderDebate](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/dnishyk9zF](https://pic.twitter.com/dnishyk9zF)

— Liz for Leader (@trussliz) [July 15, 2022](#)

Truss did get cut off for exceeding her 45 seconds in her final speech, which may have made it a less appealing clip to use.

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[1d ago](#) [17.07](#)

Over on social media, it has not gone unnoticed that **Liz Truss** was very much cosplaying as **Margaret Thatcher** tonight, even down to a specific outfit Thatcher wore in [a 1979 election broadcast](#).

For the [#C4LeaderDebate](#) Liz Truss has recreated Margaret Thatcher's appearance from her 1979 election broadcast down to the last detail  
[pic.twitter.com/pqzJPADQsl](https://pic.twitter.com/pqzJPADQsl)

— Andrew Gunn □□ (@ASGunn) [July 15, 2022](#)

The wizard from the Harry Potter world, **Dumbledore**, has also been trending on Twitter, because people have spotted that **Tom Tugendhat**'s line

“It’s easy to stand up to your enemies - it’s sometimes harder to stand up to your friends” sounds like a line from the Philosopher’s Stone where the grand old wizard says “It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.”

Elsewhere, [old man yells at cloud](#).

In the Leadership debate there were no questions about how they would reform government and slim down a top heavy expensive No 10. They need to show the way by delivering more with less.

— John Redwood (@johnredwood) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[1d ago](#)[16.58](#)

## **Full report: Tory leadership race explodes into acrimony during TV debate**



Peter Walker

*Here is Peter Walker's [report on tonight](#):*

**The [Conservative leadership](#) race has exploded into acrimony and recrimination after the first televised debate saw open arguments over tax and identity politics with also none of the five candidates willing to say Boris Johnson is honest.**

Coming hours after Liz Truss sought to reinvigorate her faltering campaign with [a sudden announcement](#) of new tax cuts costing more than £20bn a year, Rishi Sunak the ex-chancellor, openly ridiculed his former colleague's plans during the Channel 4 broadcast on Friday evening.

Condemning what he called a wider “unfunded spree of borrowing and more debt” among his competitors, Sunak condemned the Truss's proposal to put off repayments of public debt built up due to Covid.

“There is no such thing as Covid debt,” a visibly irritated Sunak told the foreign secretary. “Debt is debt. And the answer to too much borrowing can't be yet more borrowing. It's as simple as that.”

When Truss argued that better monetary policy would mitigate inflation even with tax cuts, Sunak snapped: “Liz, we have to be honest. Borrowing your way out of inflation isn't a plan, it's a fairytale.”

In an often difficult night for all the candidates – also comprising [Penny Mordaunt](#), the trade minister and bookmakers' favourite; the former levelling up minister Kemi Badenoch; and the backbencher Tom Tugendhat – not a single member of the audience of floating voters raised their hands when asked if they trusted politicians.

A long section on trust saw none of the five willing say whether Johnson was honest. “Sometimes,” said Badenoch, while Mordaunt talked about “really severe issues”, and Truss spoke of “mistakes”. Tugendhat won applause by saying, simply: “No.”

A separate show of hands after a debate on energy bills saw just three people say they felt politicians were doing enough to help people. When asked at

the end of the debate if it had made them more likely to vote Conservative, only 10 of the audience raised their hands.

Read more from Peter Walker here: [Tory leadership race explodes into acrimony during TV debate](#)

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[1d ago](#)[16.51](#)

It was essentially an internal debate for the Conservative party but on national television tonight, and the SNP's MP for Dunfermline & West Fife, **Douglas Chapman**, has made quite clear what he thought about it all.

Five key takeaways from the first Conservative leadership debate 1. Nothing here for [#Scotland](#) 2. Nothing here for [#Scotland](#) 3. Nothing here for [#Scotland](#) 4. Nothing here for [#Scotland](#) 5. Nothing here for [#Scotland](#)

Let's move on. [#ScottishIndependence](#)<https://t.co/YKQ3hvEn87>

— Douglas Chapman MP □ (@DougChapmanSNP) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[1d ago](#)[16.50](#)

The candidates have begun to post clips of their highlights or closing messages on Twitter, so for those of you who didn't see, or would like to re-live those moments, here are **Penny Mordaunt** and **Tom Tugendhat**.

My closing statement tonight at the [#C4LeadersDebates](#) and my message to all of you at home watching is clear.

I'm not the legacy candidate, I'm a fresh start and I'm focused on all of our futures. [#PM4PM](#)

Show your support and join my campaign tonight □  
<https://t.co/gLBuDolmbk> [pic.twitter.com/yBJUQSpZVm](https://pic.twitter.com/yBJUQSpZVm)

— Penny Mordaunt (@PennyMordaunt) [July 15, 2022](#)

Thank you to all those who watched tonight's [#C4Leaders](#) debate.

One thing is clear - we need [#ACleanStart](#).  
[pic.twitter.com/F9QNRCrZch](https://pic.twitter.com/F9QNRCrZch)

— Tom Tugendhat (@TomTugendhat) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[1d ago](#)[16.40](#)

I've put together my five key takeaways from tonight's debate:

### **Tom Tugendhat was the only one able to answer freely**

Given the opportunity to answer "Yes" or "No" to the question "is Boris Johnson honest?", [Tom Tugendhat](#) was the only person able to do it. He got warm applause for simply saying: "No".

### **Truss has a delivery mantra problem**

Truss tried to focus again and again about delivery in every department, saying that her trade deals with Australia and Japan had been considered impossible, and that she had stood up to Vladimir Putin. But it all felt heavily scripted from her.

## **Sunak's Treasury experience is a potential asset – but not with party members**

Frequently during the debate he demonstrated a better command of the numbers and Treasury brief, but you still ended up with the feeling that a man instinctively fiscally conservative is being pushed into a corner and portrayed as a leftist for not wanting to cut taxes.

## **Trans rights questions are not going away for Mordaunt**

The trade minister claimed to be baffled that anybody found her position unclear. It may not be high up the agenda when you poll voters on what they care about, but expect to see this get asked of the women standing to be PM again and again.

## **There was little love in the room for any of the candidates**

It wasn't a feral BBC Question Time audience, but at times, particularly when issues around trust and Partygate were being touched upon, the disdain for the audience with politicians was palpable. Whoever wins out of this contest in the end, they have an uphill climb.

## **There's more here: [Five key takeaways from the first Conservative leadership debate](#)**

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[1d ago](#)[16.35](#)

Henry Zeffman at the Times has pinpointed the exchange in the middle where Truss and Sunak were at odds about future tax and borrowing plans. He [writes](#):

After a tieless and relaxed Rishi Sunak explained why he believes tackling inflation is more important than tax cuts and warned against more government borrowing, Liz Truss saw her moment.

She reeled off a list of countries that are borrowing more than the UK, adding: “I believe they’re taking the right approach and we should take a similar approach.”

Sunak has had three years of practice at explaining the abstractions of fiscal and monetary policy in digestible, human terms — and it showed. But it is important to remember how eager Conservative MPs and the Conservative base are for tax cuts. Sunak’s position has the advantage of being clear and firm, but it remains a position that many of his colleagues loathe. Truss stands robustly on the other side of that divide.

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[1d ago](#)[16.30](#)

Here is a set of assessments from my colleague Peter Walker, who ultimately called the night a victory for Keir Starmer.

Final assessments:

Sunak: did quite well, mainly punchy interventions on economics/tax. But he's still the legacy man, Johnson's no 2 - and that's a problem.

Mordaunt: sounded fluent, no big errors, but equally hard to remember much of what she said.

— Peter Walker (@peterwalker99) [July 15, 2022](#)

Truss: a tough night. A bit wooden, as ever. Got the worst of the tax exchanges.

Badenoch: Actually said a few interesting things (and a few odd ones), but she still won't make the final two.

Tugendhat: Possibly the best performance - but he's still out of the race on Monday.

— Peter Walker (@peterwalker99) [July 15, 2022](#)

And finally:

Starmer: often criticised for just sitting back and letting his opponents make tear each other apart, but paid off handsomely this time. Tonight's winner.

— Peter Walker (@peterwalker99) [July 15, 2022](#)

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## Conservative leadership

# Penny Mordaunt accuses Tory leadership rivals of ‘black ops’ campaign

Trade minister says spate of negative coverage is an attempt keep her out of final round of voting



Penny Mordaunt has been the subject of a ‘dossier’ in the Daily Mail on her supposedly liberal views. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

*[Jamie Grierson](#) and [Peter Walker](#)*

Fri 15 Jul 2022 07.37 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 04.14 EDT

Penny Mordaunt has said other [Conservative leadership](#) campaigns are running “black ops” briefings trying to damage her because they do not want their candidate to face her in the final round of voting, by Tory party members.

There has been a recent spate of negative coverage of the bookmakers' favourite to succeed Boris Johnson, including an attack from the former Brexit negotiator [David Frost](#), and a lengthy "dossier" in the Daily Mail, setting out Mordaunt's supposedly liberal views.

In an [interview with Sky News](#), the trade minister said she believed she was being targeted to stop her reaching the final round of voting, in which Tory members decide between two candidates chosen by the party's MPs.

"People obviously are trying to stop me getting into the final because they don't want to run against me," Mordaunt said.

Mordaunt remains second behind [Rishi Sunak](#), the former chancellor, in MPs' votes, but polling suggests she would beat any other candidate among members if she makes the final part of the race.

Frost has stepped up his attacks on her, saying she was "absent on parade" when he worked with her on post-Brexit negotiations last year.

Friday's Mail featured a long article detailing [what it called "troubling"](#) facts about Mordaunt, including that she has liberal views on transgender issues, has never married, and that she and her former partner "had eight cats, but no children".

"People are going to try and stop me, and it's right. That is right. Anyone going for this job needs to be tested and scrutinised," Mordaunt told Sky. "You'll see from my campaign that I'm not engaging in any of that."

"I am running a positive campaign, and I'm talking in this campaign about the issues that the public are worried about ... And that's why I'm not engaging in any of these black ops."

Earlier on Friday, Frost urged [Kemi Badenoch](#) to pull out of the Tory leadership contest to bolster Liz Truss's position in the race.

Truss was picking up support from the Tory right after the attorney general, Suella Braverman, was eliminated from an increasingly bitter leadership

race in which Sunak came out top and Mordaunt second in the latest round of MPs' votes.

The contest is descending into acrimony as the candidates prepare for the first TV debate on Channel 4 on Friday evening.

Writing in the [Daily Telegraph](#), Frost said: "Kemi and Suella Braverman set out convincing programmes, with differing emphases, for change.



Suella Braverman and Kemi Badenoch outside parliament. Braverman was knocked out of the leadership contest after receiving 27 votes in the second round. Photograph: Twitter/Matt Goodwin

"But Liz's depth of experience, her energy and ideas – as well as the simple fact she has the most votes of the three – put her in the lead.

"It is now time for pragmatism. I urge Kemi to stand down in return for a serious job in a Truss administration."

Badenoch's campaign, however, said she was "in it to win".

The former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith, who is also backing Truss, declined on Friday to directly criticise Mordaunt but emphasised Truss's experience.

He told LBC: “We can’t just elect somebody because, for a short period of time, they may look better than others. What we’re actually electing is not, in a way, a popularity contest. We’re electing somebody who has to govern for probably two years with a huge set of crises.”

Braverman was knocked out of the race after receiving 27 votes in the second round. She immediately assailed Mordaunt over the issue of trans rights and later announced she would be backing Truss’s bid.

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Since launching her campaign Mordaunt has sought to play down the idea that she is too “woke” for the tastes of Tory members.

The issue of trans rights is likely to be raised in tonight’s 90-minute debate at BT studios, which will be moderated by the Channel 4 news anchor Krishnan Guru-Murthy.

The candidates will be questioned by a London audience of 50 to 100 people, most of them floating voters, with Guru-Murthy asking follow-up questions.

The candidates will take turns to respond, followed by eight to 10 minutes of debate between them. They will have 45 seconds each for closing statements at the end.

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## Conservative leadership

# When and where to watch the Conservative leadership debates

The contenders to become prime minister face three televised debates over five days



The candidates still in the race (clockwise from top left): Liz Truss, Kemi Badenoch, Tom Tugendhat, Rishi Sunak and Penny Mordaunt. Composite: *Guardian*

*[Jamie Grierson](#)*

*[@JamieGrierson](#)*

Fri 15 Jul 2022 04.24 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.13 EDT

Keir Starmer has said Tory MPs are “tearing each other apart on a daily basis” as the fight to be the party’s next leader unfolds. On Friday night a live instalment of the psychodrama will be broadcast on Channel 4 – the first of three televised debates between the candidates.

[The Guardian](#) will be liveblogging all of the debates. Here is a short guide to where and when they can be watched.

### **First debate – Friday 15 July, 7pm Channel 4**

Britain's Next PM: The Conservative Leadership Debate will air from 7pm to 9.30pm and will be presented by the Channel 4 News anchor Krishnan Guru-Murthy. It can be watched live on Channel 4 or on demand on All 4.

### **Second debate – Sunday 17 July, 7pm, ITV**

The second debate will air on ITV from 7pm on Sunday 17 July. It can be watched live or on catch-up on ITV Hub.

### **Third debate – Tuesday 19 July, Sky News**

The third debate, on Sky News, will be hosted by Kay Burley, with questions from a live virtual audience. By this stage more candidates will have been eliminated through further rounds of voting in Westminster.

From Monday, there will be further ballots each day to whittle down the remaining contenders with the candidate that comes last being knocked out. The leadership hopefuls will be reduced down to two by Wednesday, just in time for parliament breaking for summer on Thursday. Conservative party members will then vote on their chosen leader and the winner will be unveiled on Monday 5 September.

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## 2022.07.15 - Spotlight

- ['Change is possible' Meet the Gen-Zers who embrace climate optimism](#)
- [Schlager louts? Row erupts over 'sexist' pop hit in Germany](#)
- [A complicated story Why we need nuanced depictions of abortion in books](#)
- [Experience I gave birth at a Metallica concert](#)

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## **‘Change is possible’: meet the Gen-Zers who embrace climate optimism**



Caulin Donaldson picks up trash and inspires others to do the same.  
Photograph: Caulin Donaldson

These people in their 20s decided to combat climate grief by taking on one small piece of the environmental crisis

[Neelam Tailor](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 03.07 EDT

When it comes to the climate, each generation represents a different stage of grief.

In the 1960s, we ignored signs of climate change and steamed ahead with big energy. In the 1970s and 1980s, anger began to mount. Some scientists, like physicist Carl Sagan, raised red flags around a changing climate, while others, like the head of the UK Met Office John Mason, tried to debunk “alarmist US views”. Meanwhile, fossil fuel companies began investing in PR campaigns to amplify doubt about the climate crisis, a trend that continued well into the 1990s.

The 2000s saw the depression stage of grief. The science was undeniable and while many began to take action, the climate dread set in – something psychologists say is a big obstacle to taking action.

Enter Gen-Z. If you’ve spent much time on eco TikTok, you’ll know that they’re extraordinarily good at shaking off the climate dread and spreading climate optimism – perhaps it is the acceptance stage of grief. We spoke with a few of them to find out more.

## **Caulin Donaldson, 26, has been picking up trash from Florida’s beaches every day for more than 700 days**

Trash Caulin (real name Caulin Donaldson) grew up in Tampa Bay, Florida, and has always loved the ocean. But the way some people behaved made him angry. “People would come up to me and they’re like, ‘this is my favorite beach in the world’, and then I would watch them leave all their trash right in the sand.”



Caulin Donaldson, who has 1.4m followers on TikTok. Photograph: Caulin Donaldson

“I was really mad about it. So I went to my first ever beach cleanup and the dude was like, ‘bro, all of us are mad, but you’ve got to fight this with positivity.’ I tried it and it did work – I was getting more reciprocation from the positive messages.”

Donaldson hasn’t looked back since and somehow makes picking up trash incredibly joyful. His 1.4m TikTok followers love watching his playful love of the planet, and high-energy personality.

Many of them have been inspired to pick up trash in their local areas: “People are like, ‘my kid loves watching you every day and now he’s out picking up trash’. I just got a comment saying ‘I was waiting for my friend’s track meet to end and I was really bored, so I just started picking up trash. I never would have thought to do that if I didn’t watch your videos.’ ”

An “anti-echo chamber” is how Caulin describes TikTok. “This is why TikTok has literally changed environmental activism,” he says. “The way the algorithm works is I can have 10 followers and go ‘hey guys, let’s recycle today’, and TikTok will put me in front of people who aren’t searching me and don’t know who I am”.

Climate activism is huge on the social media site – the hashtags #climatechange and #eco have 2.4bn and 1.6bn views respectively.

## **Franziska Trautmann, 24, turns glass into sand to save Louisiana's eroding coastlines**

“This is our planet too, and we don’t have time to wait for these old people to make decisions. We’re just doing it ourselves,” says Franziska Trautmann, AKA “[that sand girl](#)” on TikTok.

While sharing a bottle of wine with her friend Max Steitz in 2020, the 24-year-old reflected on the fact that her state, Louisiana, had no glass recycling facility. Her wine bottle was going to end up in landfill. “I wanted to work towards being a part of the solution instead of continuing to be a part of the problem,” she said. The US recycles [only about a quarter of its glass](#). This pales in comparison with countries in Europe, which recycle between [60% and 80% of their glass](#).



Franziska and Max receiving the ‘returning the favor’ cheque. Photograph: Franziska Trautmann

Trautmann and Steitz founded Glass Half Full, Louisiana’s only glass recycling facility. The glass is turned into sand and used to restore the state’s

eroding coastline. Louisiana loses an [American football field's worth of land every hour](#) due to coastal erosion.

While studying at Tulane University in 2019, and with no money and growing student debt, the pair crowdfunded their first machine and began collecting bottles in the back garden of a frat house. They have diverted more than 2.2m pounds of glass from landfill since then, and have a huge recycling facility warehouse.

On [TikTok](#), Trautmann answers questions from her audience with humility, without a hint of patronizing. Sand is the most exploited resource after water, and Trautmann regularly reminds her 260k TikTok followers that we're in a global sand shortage. "You might be thinking: 'what about the Sahara desert?' Well, the sand we need for concrete and coastal restoration needs to be coarse and a bit angular, and desert sand is far too fine and rounded," she says in one of her videos.

Glass Half Full caught the attention of the television host Mike Rowe. After filming what they thought was a documentary, Trautmann and Steitz were surprised with a \$32,000 cheque on his show Returning the Favor. This allowed them to level up and buy a huge pulverizing machine.

Wine bottles to sand: the TikToker trying to save our coastlines – video report

Glass Half Full was awarded a National Science Foundation grant alongside scientists at Tulane University. Together with the scientists, Trautmann and Steitz have been conducting experiments with the glass sand looking for contaminants, and seeing how it works with native plants and marine wildlife. The results were so positive that the group just laid 15 tonnes of glass sand on the coast, and worked with the Pointe-au-Chien tribe to restore part of their land.

"My message to people is always to take my story as something that you can also do. So we saw an issue in our community, and instead of continuing to wait for someone else to solve it, we decided to just go for it. We didn't have any money, any recycling knowledge, we didn't know about glass and sand

issues. We learned everything along the way. If you see a problem that you want to solve, just go for it.”

## **Zahra Biabani, 23, wants to displace the fast-fashion industry by founding the world's first sustainable clothing rental company**

She is just out of college and writing a book on the power of climate optimism, while also launching the world's first sustainable fashion rental marketplace. She creates regular TikTok videos educating her audience on environmental issues. Oh, and she just did a TED Talk.

Zahra Biabani really makes you reflect on what's possible to do as a 23-year-old.



Zahra Biabani wants to take on fast fashion. Photograph: Zahra Biabani

The environmentalist from Houston, Texas, is about to launch [In The Loop](#), her mission to make sustainable and ethical brands more accessible to young people.

Through research, she found that the main barriers for young people in renting clothes were cost, size exclusivity, and the lack of styles that people want to wear.

Biabani is bringing together a marketplace of eco-friendly brands with stringent entry requirements. “We make sure they pay a living wage, that 50% or more of their garments are made with intentionally sourced fabrics, and we also make sure that they offer public five- and 10-year sustainability goals,” she says.

For one-time renters, each piece of clothing is 75% cheaper to rent on her site than the retail price. You get the items for three and a half weeks, return them using the included returns label on the reusable shipping bags, and then In The Loop does the cleaning, restocking, and ships out the next month’s cycle. And this is all done from Biabani’s parents’ garage.

When Biabani learned that 56% of Gen Zers [believe humanity is doomed](#), she started posting weekly positive climate news stories, which were met with a lot of gratitude. Climate optimism, Biabani says, isn’t about discrediting the trove of science and evidence that the climate crisis threatens our future on Earth – it’s a way to cultivate hope so people continue fighting.

“We’re not able to make change if we don’t believe change is possible. So climate optimism is just a framework for unlocking the full potentiality of climate solutions that we desperately need.”

## **Thomas Lawrence, 23, is building a sustainable marketplace to take on Amazon**

“I think it’s time for Congress to be lobbied the other way. I’m not a blind optimist, but we also have to accept the world as it is. Money makes the world go round. I’m not saying I want it to be that way. But that’s the way it is,” says Thomas Lawrence, the founder of Good People Inc.

“If big oil, big meat and whatever else are going to lobby Congress in the US with their millions to keep their pockets heavy and to keep the world

they want it to be, then why can't we do the same thing? It's time there was a bit more influence for the right side of history," he says.

The 23-year-old entrepreneur is building a corporation that "only does good for the people and the planet." Good People Inc wants to take on Amazon and give people an ethical, value-driven alternative. "They [Amazon] created a market that they're now the only player in, and that's the reason that lots of people can't give up Amazon. The definition of a monopoly is that consumers don't have another choice."

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Good People Inc is already providing more than 200 products to people in the UK and is growing each day; the US site has also just launched. The company was born from a frustration with the way marketing tricks us. "I hate all these brands that make people spend their hard earned money by making you feel inadequate, or like you need something when you don't," he says. "A big problem for consumers isn't always that they can't get their stuff, the issue is that they desire the stuff in the first place."

In order to sell products on the marketplace, retailers have to pass a number of regulations that Lawrence has put in place, including zero waste packaging, no plastic use, transparency about the provenance of ingredients, and how staff are treated.

What is it about Gen-Z that is resulting in so much direct action and optimism? "I think that my generation and millennials are starting to realize they have to take the matter into their own hands, rather than waiting on the people that are currently in charge to help."

If all goes to plan, Good People Inc will end up as a co-op, owned by those who work there, and will have the capital and power to take on corporations in their own playground.

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## [Germany](#)

# Schlager louts? Row erupts over ‘sexist’ pop hit in Germany

Town festival authorities refuse to play chart-topping Layla by DJ Robin & Schürze, prompting complaints of censorship



Schlager music is particularly popular with German tourists on the Spanish island of Mallorca. Photograph: zixia/Alamy

[Philip Oltermann](#) in Berlin

[@philipoltermann](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 00.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.10 EDT

They are loud in volume, unsophisticated in tune and often offensively bawdy in content. With titles ranging from Sex With a Bavarian to Big Tits Potato Salad, the Ballermann sub-genre of schlager pop is a big hit in German-dominated nightclubs on the Balearic island of Mallorca, but is more likely to elicit winces of embarrassment or *Fremdscham* at home.

Yet this week German newspapers have been filled with detailed analysis of schlager song lyrics, and even the country's justice minister felt inclined to share his musical taste after a Bavarian city decided to banish this holiday season's Ballermann hit from its beer halls for its sexist tendencies.

Layla, by DJ Robin & Schürze, which has sat atop the German singles charts for the last three weeks, is a song about a madam at a brothel who is "more beautiful, younger, foxier" than the other sex workers at her establishment.

### Layla by DJ Robin & Schürze

Whether Layla is the brothel's owner or an employee herself is unclear: the song also refers to her as a *Luder*, meaning "hussy" or "minx". With a chorus of "La-la-la-la-la-la-Layla, la-la-la-la", the song's storytelling ambitions are limited.

On Monday, the city of Würzburg let it be known that it would not play the song at the annual Kiliani fair, which is organised by the municipal authorities. "We understand that the song may be catchy, rousing and melodic," said the city's spokesperson, Christian Weiß. "But that doesn't change the fact that sexist lyrics are unacceptable and aren't appropriate for our festival."



Würzburg officials say they will not play the song Layla by DJ Robin & Schürze at the Kiliani festival. Photograph: Christian Ruger/Alamy

In the western city of Düsseldorf, a shooting club in charge of organising the fair also said it would not play the song. “I am of the opinion that this song belongs everywhere but our festival site,” the club’s chair, Lothar Inden, told the broadcaster WDR.

Bild, the powerful German tabloid, pounced on the story as what it saw as evidence of a modern kind of censoriousness. “People are being prescribed how they should talk, how to write, and now how to party. This prudish nannying of the politically correct brigade must stop. We are heading for an anti-fun society.”

The German justice minister, Marco Buschmann of the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), himself a maker of electronic music in his spare time, joined the debate on Twitter: “You don’t have to like schlager lyrics. You can find them stupid and distasteful. But in my opinion an official ban is one step too far.”

Neither Würzburg nor Düsseldorf authorities have taken the step of issuing an edict that would amount to an official ban, however. “We are not guardians of public morals, but the organisers,” an official in charge of the Kiliani fair told Bayerischer Rundfunk radio. A spokesperson for the mayor of Düsseldorf said there was no plan to ban the song.

In 2021, Würzburg authorities took a similar step to stop playing the so-called Donaulied or Danube Song after a student launched a petition against “beer-tent sexism”. The traditional folk song describes a man raping a sleeping woman he encounters on the banks of the Danube, though in some modern schlager versions the lyrics are changed to describe their intercourse as consensual.

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## Books

# A complicated story: why we need nuanced depictions of abortion in books

A long-dormant topic has now been given a moving, powerful and timely literary anthology, beautifully edited by Annie Finch



The fight continues ... A pro-choice protester in South Carolina.  
Photograph: Meg Kinnard/AP



[Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett](#)

[@rhiannonlucyc](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 05.01 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 05.19 EDT

The first abortion I encountered in literature isn't named. In Ernest Hemingway's short story Hills Like White Elephants, which I studied at school, a man and a woman wait at a sleepy Spanish train station for the express to Madrid and conduct a veiled conversation as they drink:

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.”

The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on.

“I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”

The girl did not say anything.

“I’ll go with you and I’ll stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it’s all perfectly natural.”

“Then what will we do afterward?”

“We’ll be fine afterward. Just like we were before.”

In four quietly devastating pages of dialogue, the man piles on the pressure and the tension mounts, but the narrative is more nuanced than it being simply a case of a woman manipulated into a termination.

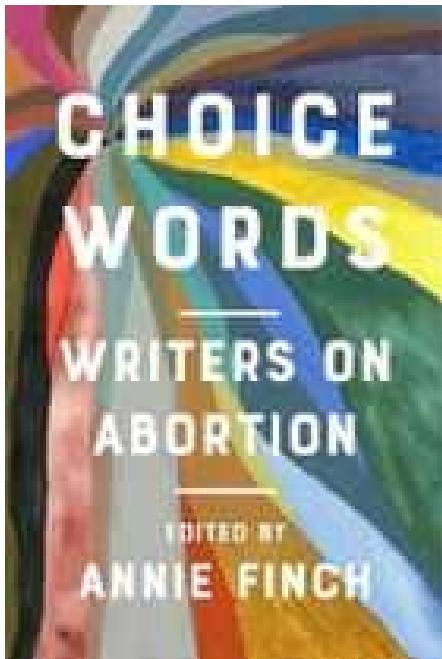
The ‘Shout your abortion! No regrets!’ rationale of social media is politically important, but lacks the nuance of creative work

When the English teacher asked us if we understood what the story was about, I remember feeling rather smug when I put my hand up and said “it’s an abortion”, though it is far more obvious to me now as an adult, as is the metaphor of the white elephant as an unwanted object that is difficult to discard. I hadn’t read much about abortion in books, but I knew about it from whispered conversations with friends – there was a high incidence of teenage pregnancy in the area where I grew up. Not long after this, we read The Soho Hospital for [Women](#), a poem by Fleur Adcock, in class, and my understanding of abortion expanded further; it could mean a kind of death (she references Hine-nui-te-pō, the Māori goddess of the underworld), but also freedom. In the final verse, Adcock is out of hospital after an unnamed procedure which can be read as an abortion:

Whereas I stand almost intact,  
giddy with freedom, not with pain.  
I lift my light basket, observing  
  
how little I needed, in fact;  
and move to the checkout, to the rain,  
to the lights and the long street curving.

I’ve been thinking about these two examples a lot recently, in light of the reversal of [Roe v Wade](#). In the intervening years, I had noticed how few literary abortions there were, to the point where I took note of them when they cropped up. When they do, they don’t necessarily sit easily with the political case for reproductive rights. Like much writing on abortion, they deal with complex emotions, and in doing so act as direct counterpoints to

the “Shout your abortion! No regrets!” rationale of social media, which, while politically important, must lack the nuance of more considered creative work.



Choice Words, edited by Annie Finch. Photograph: Haymarket Books

Which is why I have so appreciated Choice Words: Writers on [Abortion](#), edited by Annie Finch, the first major literary anthology on the subject (it was released in 2020 but perhaps didn't garner much attention because of the pandemic). As Finch notes in the introduction, her 20-year search for examples led her to discover that “major writers had indeed written about the subject, but that much of the literature was hard to find, unpublished, or buried within larger literary works”. The result of her labour is an extraordinarily varied and diverse range of global voices and forms: poetry, fiction, memoir, and plays, but also tweets and journals, and many in translation, from the 16th century to the 21st.

Little of it is simplistic, and much of it is incredibly moving, whether it's Lucille Clifton's “the lost baby poem” (“you would have been born into / winter/ in the year of the disconnected gas / and no car”) or Lindy West's account of trying to access a termination (“I didn't want to wait two more weeks. I didn't want to think about this every day. I didn't want to feel my body change. I didn't want to carry and feed this artefact of my inherent

unlovability ...”). Some, such as Jennifer Hanratty’s Tweets in Exile from Northern Ireland, which describe her journey to Liverpool for a termination after a scan showed her baby had anencephaly, are fury-inducing. Her description of boarding the flight brought me to tears: “I know that we made the right choice, but my body is desperate to hold him, to have him with me. If we were treated at #home he’d be with us”. So did Hanna Neuschwander’s [A Birth Plan for Dying](#), an account of a late-stage abortion due to serious abnormalities. She writes that “I don’t seek pity, but to have your worst personal pain to be the site of the most toxic conversation in public life is awful. It is awful every day.” As heartbreaking as it is, she knows that “ending River’s life was the most moral decision that I have ever made”.

That is one of the most resonant themes of the collection, and one that is rarely discussed: abortion as an act of love, or compassion. Another is abortion as “a normal human activity”, which should be free from the tyranny of control or judgment, and from which it is possible to move on without it being an emotionally difficult life event – Julia Conrad’s short piece about her mother’s five abortions, and the corned beef sandwich she ate after her first, being a case in point. And yet another is the freedom to choose – to have an abortion, yes, but also to not have an abortion, as in the case of the millions of women who want to keep their female babies; Shikha Malaviya writes of this “missing fifty million” as a “celestial realm / of abandoned girls”.

This varied anthology, spanning continents and centuries, can only increase our collective understanding of abortion, resisting as it does simplistic narratives. I feel profoundly grateful for Finch’s endeavour, and I’m sure those with experience of abortion will feel even more so. [A Kickstarter campaign](#) has seen copies donated to clinics across the US; sadly, some of those clinics may now close. The words in these pages are a rallying cry, a reminder that the fight continues.

- Choice Words: Writers on Abortion edited by Annie Finch is published by Haymarket Books (£21.99). To support The Guardian and Observer,

order your copy at [guardianbookshop.com](https://guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply.

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## Experience: I gave birth at a Metallica concert

The doctor cut the cord as the band finished their set. It was magical



Joice and Jaime Figueiró with their baby Luan James at the stadium where he was born in Curitiba, Brazil. Photograph: Isabella Lanave/The Guardian

*Joice Figueiró*

Fri 15 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT

Jaime and I met at school when we were 12, got together two years later and have now been married 17 years. We run a tattoo studio in Curitiba, Brazil, are fans of rock and metal, and have done work for lots of musicians.

After becoming parents to our daughter, Letícia, it had been harder for us to get to concerts. But when [Metallica](#) announced they were coming to Brazil

in 2020, we didn't hesitate to get tickets. It would be a dream come true to see Metallica live – Jaime's late dad used to listen to them all the time.

Due to the pandemic, the concert was postponed until May 2022. We found out I was expecting again and I realised: "Oh my God: I'll be 39 weeks pregnant at Metallica." I thought I'd have to give my ticket away, but then I heard there would be a special area at the stadium for pregnant women.

A few days before the show, we asked the doctor for his advice. He said: "You're feeling fine, you'll be sitting – it should be fine." He advised me to get some rest and not to go too hard at the concert – no moshing.

When we arrived at the stadium, I felt fine. I thought: "I'm feeling good, Metallica will be here soon – I'm living the dream." I actually started to cry, because I felt so happy to be there; after the pandemic, it felt special. But as soon as the band came on stage, I started to feel contractions.

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I had spent 36 hours in labour when I had Letícia, so I thought: "It's OK, I can handle this. I can see at least the first half of the show." I was trying to hold on a little bit, thinking: "I need to see Metallica."

They played my favourite song, Whiskey in The Jar. But then, in the second half, the contractions got a lot stronger. Jaime kept looking over at me, concerned; he could see I was suffering. We called the security guys over. Jaime told them I was in labour and they couldn't believe it. They said: "Oh my God. A baby is coming?"

Then everything went crazy: they started running around, trying to prepare. They took us to the medical clinic at the side of stage. It only took four minutes or so, but it felt like for ever. Metallica were still playing.

As soon as we reached the clinic – where there was an emergency doctor and a medical kit – my waters broke. The security guys had initially called

an ambulance, but the baby came in about 10 or 15 minutes. He was born just as Metallica were playing the last song of their encore, Enter Sandman.

But the baby didn't cry, and he was a purple colour. Everyone was silent. Jaime started to pray. The doctor cut his umbilical cord and finally he started bawling, just as Metallica finished their set. Fireworks started to boom from the stage and the crowd was cheering. Everyone started to cry. It was a magical moment.

We had to be escorted to the ambulance as tens of thousands of people were leaving the stadium. When they saw us, they realised a baby had been born at the show. Everyone started clapping and congratulating us on "the Metallica baby".

I thought it was going to be a funny story to tell my friends and customers, but it became international news. It started with the local newspaper, then we were on TV in Brazil. Reporters came to the hospital.

We found out Metallica's team had been trying to reach us on Instagram. They asked if we would accept a call from the band. "Of course," we said.

Jaime put his phone on speaker and we heard: "Hi, it's James [Hetfield] from Metallica." I couldn't believe it. I said: "Seriously? It must be a joke. It can't be real." James was so kind. He asked if I was OK, if the baby was healthy. We told him the whole story. He has three children and he said the second comes faster than the first, and the third, the fastest, because they know the way out. We laughed.

We had already chosen the name Luan for the baby. But people started to ask: "Why not something related to Metallica?" We felt such a connection with James on the phone that we decided to make Luan's second name James – it just felt right. Now he won't be able to listen to any music but metal. He is a baby headbanger – his grandfather would have been proud.

As told to Elle Hunt

Do you have an experience to share? Email [experience@theguardian.com](mailto:experience@theguardian.com)

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## 2022.07.15 - Opinion

- While Britain burns, the Tories are ... fiddling with themselves again
- Here comes summer and 11 weeks of school holidays. Tell me, where's the joy in that?
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## While Britain burns, the Tories are ... fiddling with themselves again

[Marina Hyde](#)



There's a great river of molten horror approaching. What better time for a nice, long, frenzied leadership contest?



Sir Graham Brady announces the results of the first round in the Conservative leadership contest, Houses of Parliament, London, 13 July 2022. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Fri 15 Jul 2022 05.55 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.23 EDT

I do hope you're enjoying the triennial Conservative party leadership contest, which has frequently resembled tipping-out time at [Arkham Asylum](#). Various insane claims have been made – “Rishi Sunak is a socialist”, “Only Liz Truss can save Brexit now” – and the UK remains very much in search of a costumed vigilante to rescue it. Boris Johnson insists he will leave Downing Street “with my head held high”. But by who? Which of our hopefuls will be grasping that severed noggin by the famously unkempt hair, and roaring something totally questionable about public service?

We've already said goodbye to historical footnotes such as Jeremy Hunt; footnotes' footnotes, such as Rehman Chishti; and verrucas on the footnotes, such as Suella Braverman. Making all the running is supposed cleanskin [Penny Mordaunt](#), whose ascent from comparative obscurity to the office of prime minister would be like an arranged marriage, giving the British public and Penny all the time in the world to get to know each other after the event. The scale of the knifing operation against Mordaunt is laid bare by the [anonymous briefing](#) that she would make Andrea Leadsom her chancellor of the exchequer. I hear what you're thinking: Andrea Leadsom? Chancellor?

IN THIS ECONOMY?! But yes. Of course, *of course*. The second I heard it, given the experience of the past few years, I realised that I had long ago subconsciously accepted the inevitability that Andrea Leadsom hadn't actually finished with us. In fact, I think I've ... always known it.

Anyway: on to Rishi Sunak, who, having once been relatively adored, is now about as popular with Tory members as shingles or contemporary art. Sunak is the sort of guy who wouldn't have even tried a joint at university because he already wanted to go into politics: "Can't risk it, mate." He has the air of someone who has spent most of his adult life in a permanent state of path-plotting and calculation – yet was somehow unable to spot the biggest possible bear trap: his wife's non-dom status. The best thing Sunak did this week was to patronise Johnson in a manner that will have sent the latter absolutely up the wall, declaring that the outgoing PM "has a good heart". Oof. Three weeks ago Johnson was telling people he'd be in power till 2030; this week, yesterday's man was being firmly shunted into "he has a good heart" corner. Though not one of the truly great sports, politics – like tennis, or the various American ones – can be very watchable.

Next up: Liz Truss, who got lost trying to exit the room in which her launch was held. Asked how she felt about trailing to Sunak and Mordaunt, she ventured: "I've been focused on making sure Vladimir Putin is defeated." Mm. But look – she's still fighting for this title. And fighting dirty, according to the other campaigns. Indeed, there has been much talk about the so-called "dark arts". I must say I have a slight issue with the term "art" in this context. Just as sledging is supposed to be an "art form" that can be mastered by any Australian cricketer who can call someone a fat prick, so the "dark arts" are something at which Gavin Williamson can be regarded as a virtuoso.

The backdrop to all this is the government apparently grinding to a halt. Johnson seems likely to bin off next week's PMQs for a foreign visit, if he can find a country that will have him. Priti Patel this week refused to honour a scheduled appearance before the home affairs committee. Why bother? It was a question that led Dominic Raab to the same conclusion, as the justice secretary subsequently said he couldn't make next Wednesday's committee to discuss his dubious bill of rights.

The [last time](#) the Conservatives indulged in one of their leadership contests, during the Brexit wars of 2019, I thought it was a bit like that plaster cast victim from Pompeii who looks like he died masturbating. Volcanologists [say it's unlikely](#) that's what he was doing, but we are in the realm of metaphor here. There's a great river of molten horror approaching, but hey – let's just crack out a nice, long, frenzied leadership contest.

This time round, it feels like one of those movie scenes when the phone rings while the hero is involved in a life-or-death car chase. Because it's the movies, the hero takes the call, usually with some version of the immortal cliche: "Sorry, I'm a little busy right now ..." Something similar is happening to the country. As we speed further into the hideous known unknowns of various crises, the Conservative party is blithely dialling in with a two-month leadership contest that is apparently unrelated to reality.

When I hear that the candidates made time this week to speak to the [Common Sense Group](#) of Tory MPs, who are obsessed with things like statues and the interpretation of British history, it would have been nice to think at least one of them had a sufficient sense of occasion to utter the words: "Sorry, I'm a little busy right now...." Honestly, is the cost of living crisis over? It had better be. Because I think we all need to know that Britain is on the immediate cusp of unprecedented prosperity before we can excuse any potential PMs spending so much as one nanosecond talking to some wingnuts about the culture wars. This is mad. No one – NO ONE – should have time for this stuff right now. It's like the Republicans spending the buildup to the Iraq war making sure the French fries in the Congressional cafeterias were renamed "freedom fries".

Their own Commons chamber is leaking to the point of occasional closure, this week saw a [four-day fire](#) on Salisbury Plain, and [temperatures of 40C](#) are forecast for next week. I'm not sure how much more the gods of metaphor can do to make the situation readable for these people. Let's face it, they did pestilence for the past two years and got nowhere.

To pluck a question that actually matters from the full banquet of them currently pressing on the nation: why can't people see their GPs? Does any of the candidates want to talk about that material reality for much of the population? No. Instead we are subjected to endless speeches about how this

or that person's record of "delivery" speaks for itself. Oh right: *delivery*. I mean, look around you. They have delivered THIS. All they do is break eggs, but you never get an omelette. As we settle into the third [Conservative leadership](#) contest in just over six years, which will guarantee our fourth prime minister in the same time period, it increasingly feels as though the key question for the millions not focused on reality-avoidance is: "Where is our omelette? WHERE IS OUR FRICKING OMELETTE?"

- Marina Hyde is a Guardian columnist
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## Opinion**School holidays**

# **Here comes summer and 11 weeks of school holidays. Tell me, where's the joy in that?**

[Emma Brockes](#)



The gap between my children's experience in the US and my own unreliable memories of the long break is a source of anxiety



‘At seven years old, were we really off on bikes all day so that no one knew where we were?’ Photograph: GAZ/Alamy

Fri 15 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 12.26 EDT

The school summer holidays in the US fall on different dates according to where in the country you live, but they have one characteristic in common. In [New York](#), where we are into our third week, the summer stretches endlessly before us, way beyond the six-week period of the British system. Last year, through a combination of Covid and the early falling of Yom Kippur, public schools in New York closed for three months in the summer. This year, we’re back to the standard 11-week break, in line with the rest of the US – a curtailment for which we’re supposed be grateful.

I’m not grateful, obviously. Eleven weeks is an enormously long time to fill, even with the generous free summer camp provisions laid on by the city. It pushes parental resources to the absolute brink, and interferes with all the rosy ideas one used to have about summer. When holidays drag on this long, they turn from opportunities to relax into onslaughts to be weathered, something even the kids – parked in various facilities between 9am and 6pm daily, like tiny adults holding down tough summer jobs – start to feel after a few weeks.

In my case, I suspect a lot of this anxiety is connected to the distance between my children's experience of summer and the memories I have of my own. It is a staple of generation X parenting to reminisce about the seemingly endless periods of unstructured time that characterised our days off from school – memories that get wilder with every retelling. At seven years old, the current age of my children, were we really off on bikes all day so that no one knew where we were? Surely that was nine, or 10, although by current standards a child of even that age whose whereabouts was unknown to her parents would pretty swiftly become the object of a police search.

We didn't have phones, obviously, just as we didn't have bike helmets or organised fun. Coverage of Wimbledon had finished by the time the holidays started, and beyond a few baby TV programmes in the morning and a couple of shows for older kids in the late afternoon, we were left – in a phrase I've unironically used on my unimpressed children – “to make our own entertainment”.

We built forts. (Did we though? More than once?) We put on plays (ditto). We played endless games of gin rummy. (We definitely did this, but why that should present itself as something wonderful to aspire to, I can't clearly understand now.) We read books. (OK, this is one that I genuinely worry about. On the other hand, maybe it's fine.)

I grew up in the 80's, but in my memory, these scenes unspool with the sepia-tint of LP Hartley's *The Go-Between*, or the movie version of *Atonement*, or Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding*, which was definitely not set in Aylesbury.

The nostalgic whitewash of this version overlooks the massive amount of, usually maternal, effort put in to keeping us occupied during those weeks, something I sense most parents can't or won't do these days. Perhaps we were all just better at boredom, back then. I refuse to play more than three rounds of Connect 4 in a row with my kids, and absolutely can't be involved with the Barbies. I get twitchy with lethargy after too long in the playground.

I tell myself that in New York, it's simply [too hot to be out](#), and that in a city of 8.3 million people, choked with nose-to-bumper traffic, fresh air is probably fresher inside, after being pushed through the filter of an air-conditioner. I'll take them swimming – three hours of amazing faff for 30 minutes in the water – but I'll complain about it a lot. And yet, packing them off to their eight-hour-a-day summer camp, I worry that something is lost.

Overthinking things is obviously the typifying parental gesture of our times. My kids have half settled at camp but are shocked by its rigours and are finding the long day hard. (They need to “push through” said a counsellor this week, which made my heart sink; they have an entire lifetime to learn to push through things.)

With nine more weeks on the clock, I'm looking at contingencies, and shrinking at the \$6,000-a-kid cost of the private-sector alternatives. This is nuts, I think. All of it: not just the private camps, but the insistence on parking them anywhere for this long. Perhaps the genuinely bold move would be to let them stay home, being ignored while I work, and watching so much garbage on the iPad that it ceases to appeal. Beyond which – I'm too doubtful to try it, but can't quite shake the dream – lies the mirage of the perfect summer break of my memory.

- Emma Brockes is a Guardian columnist based in New York
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[Opinion](#)[Boris Johnson](#)

## **Would-be Tory leaders don't want to tackle social inequality. That's a gift to Labour**

[Chris Bickerton](#)

Candidates are abandoning the 'levelling up' agenda – offering Starmer the chance to claim the strategic ground over Brexit



Lucy Powell, Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves en route to a shadow cabinet meeting in High Wycombe, 12 July 2022. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Fri 15 Jul 2022 05.06 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 12.43 EDT

One way of making sense of current events within the British Conservative party is to think of them as the unravelling of the changes that Boris Johnson had wreaked. It's true that the repudiation of the Cameron era in the immediate aftermath of the EU referendum in 2016 opened the door to reheated Thatcherism, the much hoped for [Singapore-on-Thames](#) as

Britain's post-EU future. At the same time, there was an awareness among some, including Theresa May, that the 2016 vote signalled something far more profound: a revolt by voters against a political class that had abandoned them. This called for a more interventionist state, tackling searing regional inequalities, finally trying to fix the mess of British vocational training – themes and policies quite alien to the soul of the Tory party.

The Johnson-Cummings-Gove team in operation from the summer of 2019 pursued this second agenda, with dramatic effect when Johnson won an enormous majority in the December election. The neo-Thatcherites did not disappear; indeed, they formed a core part of Johnson's government. But they were ideologically isolated, forced to swallow the political pivot towards "levelling up" and the Tory party's electoral embrace of working-class northern voters.

This new direction for the Tories was electorally very successful, even if the 2019 election had as much to do with disaffection at Corbyn as it did with support for Brexit and a hoped for post-Brexit social dividend. And yet, curiously, it is being repudiated by almost all of the candidates for the Tory leadership. One by one, they are committing themselves to cutting taxes and a return to policies much closer to the Tory party comfort zone. The frontrunner, Rishi Sunak, one of the architects of government economic stimulus during the Covid-19 pandemic, has recently committed himself to running the economy just as Margaret Thatcher did. Unless there is a candidate that emerges as the obvious representative of an interventionist state committed to tackling social equality, this will leave a gaping hole in British politics. The theme that has animated our politics for years has fallen away in a matter of weeks.

For Labour, this represents an enormous opportunity. Ever since the 2016 vote, the party has struggled to think strategically about Britain outside of the EU. When it should have been formulating its own vision for life after Brexit, much of its apparatus was consumed by the dual effort of getting rid of Corbyn and fighting for a second referendum. Without any strategic thinking on the Labour side, the door was left wide open for Dominic Cummings, Munira Mirza and others to seize the moment, crafting a large

Tory majority on the back of promises of a new, more interventionist state committed to reducing regional and social inequality.

The current leadership campaign, and a general election, if one is to be held reasonably soon, offers Labour a golden opportunity to claim the strategic ground over Brexit. Committed to [keeping the UK out of the EU](#), the Labour party can now develop a vision for the UK, one that makes full use of the political and economic freedoms that the UK enjoys by being outside of the EU. If the EU represents an attempt to constitutionalise a set of economic imperatives – freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and people – as is commonly argued on the political left, then being outside the EU presents the British left with an enormous opportunity to change this unequal relationship between political and economic goals.

Will the Labour party seize this opportunity? Though the party seems keen on a general election, it is also likely that it will emulate the Tory party pivot, putting forward its own economically conservative plan while trying to keep discussions of Brexit to a minimum so as not to enflame those Labour voters still hopeful that the UK may one day rejoin the EU. This would be an enormous mistake. The electoral and political terrain successfully claimed by Johnson is being evacuated. It would be almost unbelievable if the Labour party did not try to make itself the party committed to tackling the country's enormous social and regional inequalities.

This would require the Labour party to reengage with its own Eurosceptic tradition, one that rejected European integration because of the constraints it would place on a national project of social and economic transformation. It would also require the party to think about Brexit more deeply than it has done thus far, and to think about what vision and plan it has for the UK as a country outside of the EU. This is a tall order given the party's recent history, but the opportunity is there for the taking.

- Chris Bickerton is a professor of modern European politics at the University of Cambridge
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## OpinionConservative leadership

# There are Tories of diverse origins and skin tones. What they need now is real difference

[Nesrine Malik](#)

It is positive to see more politicians of colour, but if the result is Sunak's austerity or Badenoch's culture war, how have things changed?



'Rishi Sunak, the frontrunner by some estimates, could well become the first person of colour to be prime minister.' Photograph: Alberto Pezzali/AP

Fri 15 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 15 Jul 2022 02.10 EDT

We are witnessing the most racially diverse [leadership race](#) for a major party in British political history. Candidates over the course of the contest to be the new Conservative leader have included Nadhim Zahawi, Suella Braverman, Rishi Sunak, Kemi Badenoch, Sajid Javid and Rehman Chishti. Sunak, the frontrunner by some estimates, could become the first person of

colour to be prime minister. If a similar exercise were to take place in the Labour party today, it is highly unlikely that there would be anywhere close to that many ethnic minority MPs in the running, and certainly none with a realistic chance of winning. Does this look and sound like a good thing? Well, it depends. And it's also worth asking: a good thing for whom?

It's certainly a good thing for the [Conservatives](#), who can use the diversity of the leadership shortlist to score a point against the left. Already predictable arguments are being made that the shortlist proves that liberals just talk about equality but have no interest in achieving it, unlike the Conservative party. It's also rather handy to have a feelgood story about the most diverse leadership election in history to distract from what has become a contest in deluded economic extremism on the one hand and nastiness about "workshy" and "woke" people on the other. And as we have seen, deploying senior politicians of colour, such as Priti Patel, to apply the hard-right Tory party agenda, on border policies for instance, is a neat way to absolve both the party and its voters from charges of racism.

Take Kemi Badenoch. It is remarkable how much of the former equalities minister's lack of substance on policy and her aggressive mining of culture-war issues those on the right will stomach – not least because they see what they want to see: a young black woman who has refused to "toe the line". Above all the other qualities she is lauded for possessing, Badenoch is most frequently trailed as "smart" and "serious". Note, to date, her opposition to the online safety bill for "[legislating for hurt feelings](#)", reheated hyperbole about identity politics, and a critique of something called the "[Ben and Jerry's tendency](#)" to focus on "social justice, not productivity and profits" (I think the US ice-cream company is doing just fine). Where Badenoch does seem to have some smarts is in knowing how she can be of use to a Tory parliamentary cohort that desperately wants to avoid talking about the actual, material state of Britain after 12 years of Conservative-led government. She ended her campaign launch article by quoting the prominent black conservative [Thomas Sowell](#): "When you want to help people, you tell them the truth. When you want to help yourself, you tell them what they want to hear."

This is not to imply that there is no place for people of colour on the right. People of colour belong wherever they feel they belong. There is a lot of synergy between the values of some migrants from Africa and Asia and conservatism, and not just the feel-good stuff about ambition, entrepreneurialism and opportunity. Racism, tribalism, ethnic and caste hierarchies and colonial legacies of disdain towards the “lower orders” are all native (or at least, not terribly alien) to many of the originating cultures from which Britain’s racial minorities come. The assumption that they all join together, unwooed and untargeted by active campaigning, in one lumpen voting bloc for the left, because that’s where some diffuse and remote racial interest lies, betrays a patronising, one-dimensional view of these communities. Black and brown people are as self-interested, complicated and as prejudiced as anyone else.

But there is a difference between finding a party that serves your interests, and using your position in that party to undermine the interests of others. This takes us back to the central question – who is diversity in the upper ranks of the Tory party good for? I am not sure it is good for me, if it means Nadhim Zahawi can apply even more restrictions on schools because teaching about Black Lives Matter means disseminating “[partisan political views](#)”. It is not good for me that Suella Braverman, who was eliminated from the contest on Thursday, wants to [withdraw from the European court of human rights](#). It is not good for me that Sunak, who as chancellor slashed international aid, now says we should be “[grateful” for austerity](#), and promises to tighten the fiscal screws during a cost of living crisis. Not to mention Priti Patel and her Rwanda asylum policy.

I understand it can be galling if people of colour demand more access, representation and inclusion, and then when it is granted they roll their eyes and say, “No, not like that.” And don’t get me wrong, there may be some positive secondary effects from seeing people from different cultures and backgrounds in influential positions by normalising their presence in powerful circles – the optics are good and it enriches Britain’s mainstream political and popular culture. I’d rather see it than not. But does it mean that Britain has crossed some important threshold when it comes to race? The answer is no. There has to be a point to diversity, you see – that’s why so many people of colour bang on about it. In government, its purpose should be to expand and enhance perspectives so that policymaking is more

compassionate, more observant of the plight of marginalised people who were never represented in the places that impact their lives the most. It doesn't mean one privately educated millionaire being replaced by another of like mind carrying out the same policies.

But that's what diversity has become defined as in this country; a means of celebrating the increased number of non-white faces in unfamiliar places as long as they leave those places unchanged. It is about the promotion of elite individuals into the establishment, bestowing upon them power and riches. Real diversity should disrupt the status quo. The phoney version we have ended up with is concerned with changing the appearance of Britain but not its fundamental nature or the way its resources are shared. It is a disconnected lever, a phantom light switch.

Our discussion about race in the UK is stuck in a place where it is understood that racism is really rather vulgar and passe, and that people of colour really are very welcome – as long as they steer quite clear of supporting actually existing anti-racist movements, or ever mentioning that there are problems with racism in this country that affect everything from [mortality](#) to employment [opportunities](#). In short, if they tell people what they want to hear.

- Nesrine Malik is a Guardian columnist
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- [US Capitol attack Secret Service agents' January 6 texts were erased after oversight request](#)
- ['Game over' Steve Bannon audio reveals Trump planned to claim early victory](#)
- [Donald Trump Former president to face sworn deposition in New York lawsuit as legal troubles mount](#)
- [Live Business: copper price slides as China's GDP misses forecasts, and European car sales plunge](#)
- [Burberry Sales fall 35% in China on back of Covid lockdowns](#)

## Secret Service

# Secret Service agents' January 6 texts were erased after oversight request

Office of Inspector General revealed that messages from 5 and 6 January were destroyed only after the request was made



A government watchdog has found that Secret Service agents deleted text messages sent and received around the January 6 attack. Photograph: J Scott Applewhite/AP

*[Hugo Lowell](#)*

Thu 14 Jul 2022 19.52 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.08 EDT

Texts sent between US [Secret Service](#) agents on 5 and 6 January 2021 were erased after the agency's oversight body sought the communications in a review into the Capitol attack, according to a letter from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG).

The disclosure in the letter, sent on Thursday to the House homeland security and Senate homeland security and government affairs committees, marked the latest failure for the Secret Service amid increasing scrutiny of their actions over the attack.

Appearing to rebuke the erasure of the messages, the inspector general, Joseph Cuffari, decried the move and noted that the destruction came only after the body sought the communications as part of an internal investigation into the agency's response to the January 6 events.

"The USSS erased those text messages *after* OIG requested records of electronic communications from the USSS," Cuffari said, including the emphasis on the sequencing of when the records destruction occurred.

Cuffari also noted in the letter that the Department of Homeland Security staff told investigators that they were not permitted to directly turn over records to the oversight body, and that they first needed to be vetted by its lawyers.

"This review led to weeks-long delays in OIG obtaining records and created confusion over whether all records had been produced," Cuffari added.

The timing of the message destruction raised in the letter, earlier [reported by the Intercept](#) and also reviewed by the Guardian, raised the prospect that senior leadership at the Secret Service, tasked with protecting the president, tampered with records.

The letter indicated that the erasure came as part of a "device-replacement program". But it was not clear on Thursday as to why that would involve the loss of communications just as they were being investigated by the agency's independent oversight body.

A spokesperson for the Secret Service could not immediately be reached Thursday evening.

Asked about the disclosure, Bennie Thompson, the chair of the House select committee investigating the Capitol attack who is also the chair of the House

homeland security committee, told reporters that he was disturbed about the incident.

“It’s concerning, obviously, and if there’s a way we can reconstruct the texts or what have you, we will,” Thompson said. The chairman also left open the possibility of calling in Secret Service agents to testify about the matter, and about the Capitol attack more generally.

The revelation was the latest damaging incident surrounding the Secret Service in recent weeks, after former Trump aide Cassidy Hutchinson testified to the select committee that [Donald Trump](#) initiated an altercation with an agent on 6 January.

Hutchinson testified that Trump tried to [wrestle control of the presidential SUV](#) because he wanted to go to the Capitol, over his security detail’s objections, and reportedly had his hands around the neck of the agent driving the vehicle.

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## US elections 2020

# ‘Game over’: Steve Bannon audio reveals Trump planned to claim early victory

Recording shows the president intended to ‘take advantage’ of early vote lead and declare himself the winner prematurely



Steve Bannon in Washington last month. ‘When you wake up Wednesday morning, it’s going to be a firestorm,’ Bannon said, according to the audio. Photograph: Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

*[Adam Gabbatt](#) in New York and [Hugo Lowell](#)*

Thu 14 Jul 2022 11.12 EDTFirst published on Thu 14 Jul 2022 09.58 EDT

Days before the 2020 presidential election Donald Trump was planning to declare victory on election night, even if there was no evidence he was winning, according to a leaked [Steve Bannon](#) conversation recorded before the vote.

In the audio, recorded three days before the election and published by [Mother Jones](#) on Wednesday, Bannon told a group of associates Trump already had a scheme in place for the 3 November vote.

“What Trump’s gonna do is just declare victory. Right? He’s gonna declare victory. But that doesn’t mean he’s a winner,” Bannon, laughing, told the group, according to the audio.

“He’s just gonna say he’s a winner.”

The release of the audio comes as Bannon is due to go on trial Monday for criminal contempt, after he ignored a subpoena last year from the House select committee investigating the [attack on the US Capitol](#) on January 6 last year.

After several attempts to postpone the trial beyond 18 July – including on Wednesday, when Bannon’s attorneys [cited](#) some of his past comments during Tuesday’s January 6 committee hearing, and the planned airing of a CNN documentary on Bannon this coming Sunday – a federal judge for a second time denied Bannon’s [motion to delay](#), and ruled Bannon could not make two of his principal defences to a jury.

Bannon had said he was now willing to testify before the House select committee, but the offer was [dismissed](#) by the justice department as a “last-ditch attempt to avoid accountability”, and US district judge Carl Nichols, a Trump appointee, said the trial must go ahead.

Before the 2020 election it had been reported that Trump planned to declare victory early, and in the Mother Jones audio Bannon says Trump planned to “take advantage” of the likelihood that Democratic postal votes would be tallied later than in-person Republican ballots.

Trump did exactly that hours after the election, [claiming](#), “Frankly, we did win this election”, even as millions of ballots were yet to be counted, and after Fox News had – correctly – [called the state of Arizona](#) for Joe Biden.

“As it sits here today,” Bannon said later in the audio, describing a scenario in which Trump held an early lead in swing states, “at 10 or 11 o’clock Trump’s gonna walk in the Oval, tweet out: ‘I’m the winner. Game over. Suck on that.’”

Mother Jones said the audio, which is nearly an hour long, was recorded during a meeting between Bannon and supporters of Guo Wengui, an exiled Chinese mogul whom Bannon helped launch a series of rightwing websites.

In the meeting Bannon said Democratic supporters were more likely than Republicans to vote by mail, meaning their votes would be counted and reported later.

That would lead to a public perception that Trump was winning the election, according to the audio. Democrats would “have a natural disadvantage”, Bannon said.

“And Trump’s going to take advantage of it. That’s our strategy. He’s gonna declare himself a winner.”

“So when you wake up Wednesday morning, it’s going to be a firestorm,” Bannon said.

“You’re going to have antifa, crazy. The media, crazy. The courts are crazy. And Trump’s gonna be sitting there mocking, tweeting shit out: ‘You lose. I’m the winner. I’m the king.’”

[Axios](#) reported before the 2020 election that Trump had “told confidants he’ll declare victory on Tuesday night if it looks like he’s ‘ahead’”, and Bannon said [on his podcast](#) on the day of the election that Trump would claim victory “right before the 11 o’clock news”. The Mother Jones audio supports both claims.

Trump, the only US president to have been impeached twice, lost the election: Biden won 306 electoral votes to Trump’s 232. About 81.3 million people voted for Biden, compared with 74.2 million for Trump.

Bannon’s offer to testify to the January committee – a development [first reported by the Guardian](#) – was kept up in the air by Judge Nichols, who

said he would rule on that motion at trial since it was possible for Bannon to argue he was unclear about the date of his subpoena default.

At trial, the justice department intends to call as witnesses FBI special agent Stephen Hart and the select committee's deputy staff director, Kristen Amerling, and may also call Sean Tonolli, a select committee attorney, according to the government's [witness list](#).

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## [Donald Trump](#)

# Trump to face sworn deposition in New York lawsuit as legal troubles mount

Attorney general's office to begin interviews but depositions delayed following death of Ivana Trump, ex-president's first wife



Trump and his two eldest children, Ivanka and Donald Jr, were summoned to give sworn depositions. Photograph: Shannon Stapleton/Reuters

*[Chris McGreal](#) in New York*

Fri 15 Jul 2022 11.45 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 03.45 EDT

The New York attorney general's office was expected to begin questioning Donald Trump and two of his children over allegations of financial fraud today after the former president failed in his legal effort to block what he has called a politically motivated "witch hunt", though the deposition has been postponed after the [death of Ivana Trump](#).

Trump and his two eldest children, Ivanka and Donald Jr, have been summoned to give sworn depositions after the state attorney general, Letitia James, said a three-year civil investigation uncovered evidence that the Trump Organization routinely inflated the value of properties, including office blocks, apartment buildings and golf courses, in order to obtain loans at favorable rates and to claim tax breaks.

The AG's office alleges that the former president's Trump Tower apartment block was recorded as being three times as large as it really was as part of the fraud.

The depositions will be made at the state supreme court in Manhattan. It is not immediately clear on which day the former president will be questioned but Trump's lawyer has indicated that he will invoke his constitutional right against self-incrimination and refuse to answer questions.

The case adds to a string of legal troubles for Trump, including the possibility of criminal charges for tax evasion. The Trump Organization and its longtime chief financial officer, Allen Weisselberg, are expected to go on trial later this year on charges of tax fraud following a parallel investigation by the Manhattan district attorney's office.



A view of Trump Tower in New York. Photograph: Justin Lane/EPA

In addition, the House committee investigating the January 6 storming of the Capitol has said there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the former president and some of his allies committed crimes in his attempts to overturn the 2020 presidential election.

Prosecutors in Atlanta, Georgia, have convened a grand jury to consider whether Trump broke state law in trying to stop election authorities declaring that Joe Biden won the state. Earlier this month the grand jury subpoenaed US Senator Lindsey Graham and Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani as part of the criminal investigation.

The Trump Organization also faces a trial later this month over an assault by its security guards on protesters against the then presidential candidate's racist attack on Mexicans in 2015. Trump has denied ordering the assault.

Trump lost a series of court cases that attempted to quash the [New York](#) civil investigation as politically driven and then to avoid testifying.

A lawyer for the attorney general's office told a judge there is enough evidence to support legal action against the former president and his company but that no decision has been taken on prosecutions. If James presses ahead with the case and wins, she could seek an order winding up the Trump Organization.

Trump and all three of his children have also been summoned to give depositions next month in a class action lawsuit brought by people who say they were tricked into investing in companies Trump was paid to endorse on his programme, Celebrity Apprentice. "The Trumps conned each of these victims into giving up hundreds or thousands of dollars – losses that many experienced as devastating and life-altering," the lawsuit claims.

The [deposition](#) delay follows the death of Ivana Trump, Donald Trump's first wife and the mother of Ivanka, Eric and Donald Jr.

"In light of the passing of Ivana Trump, we received a request from counsel for [Donald Trump](#) and his children to adjourn all three depositions, which we have agreed to," the New York attorney general's office said.

“This is a temporary delay and the depositions will be rescheduled as soon as possible. There is no other information about dates or otherwise to provide at this time.”

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# Company insolvencies jump 40% in England and Wales; China's growth slumps – as it happened

Pandemic and economic uncertainty caused by Brexit have added to pressures on businesses, insolvency expert says

Updated 2d ago

[\*Graeme Wearden\*](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 10.30 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 02.42 EDT

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An empty shop in the town of Maidenhead, where more businesses have closed down since the pandemic. Photograph: Maureen McLean/REX/Shutterstock

[Graeme Wearden](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 10.30 EDTFirst published on Fri 15 Jul 2022 02.42 EDT

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### Company insolvencies jump 40% in England and Wales

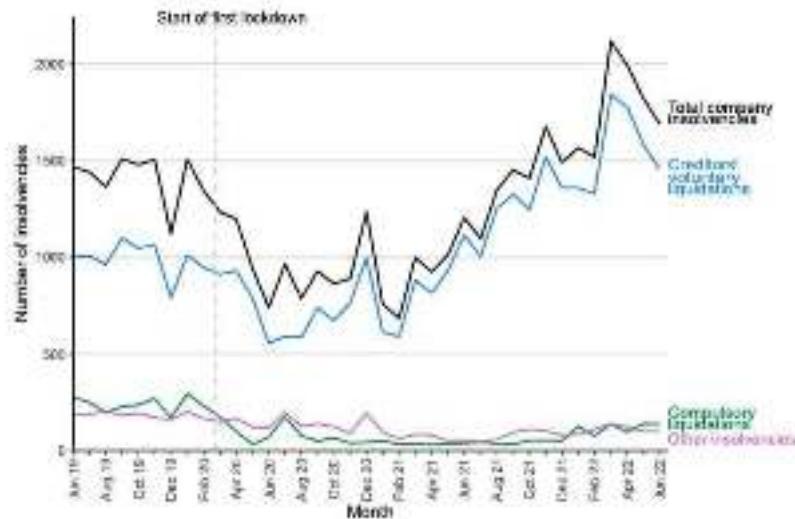
**The number of company insolvencies in England and Wales has risen by 40% year-on-year, as more firms are forced under by tough economic conditions.**

There were 1,691 company insolvencies in June, the Insolvency Service reports, up from 1,207 in June 2021. That's also 15% more than before the pandemic, although lower than in May.

Most of June's insolvencies (1,456) were Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations (CVLs), in which a firm takes the decision to be liquidated because it can't pay its bills.

But there were also 3.6 times as many compulsory liquidations in June 2022 as in June 2021, and the number of administrations was 2.3 times higher than a year ago.

**Figure 1: The number of registered company insolvencies in June 2022 was higher than pre-pandemic levels, driven by a higher number of CVLs.**  
England and Wales, June 2019 to June 2022. Not seasonally adjusted



Photograph: The Insolvency Service

**John Bell**, director of licensed Insolvency Practitioners [Clarke Bell](#), warned that the race to replace Boris Johnson will unsettle businesses:

The economy is in a state of flux as the Government goes into freefall and clamours to find a new leader and Prime Minister.

The uncertainty is set to stall the economy and unsettle UK plc.

**Bell** adds that companies have been hit by the pandemic, the economic uncertainty caused by Brexit, along with other current events such as the Ukraine war

Due to the heavy impact and persistence of these problems, it's no surprise that many directors of struggling companies are facing compulsory liquidation. However, it is the worst type of liquidation, stripping directors of any control and often ending in personal consequences for directors.

As such, it should be avoided at all costs. My advice to struggling businesses is to confront your financial issues before liquidation is forced upon you. There are many methods and steps to take to close down a company before you reach compulsory liquidation stage.”

**Nicky Fisher**, Vice President of insolvency and restructuring trade body **R3**, says inflation is driving up company costs and adding to the strain on bosses:

Not only are directors facing immediate strain to deal with this inflationary pressure, but they will also be looking at re-evaluating investment decisions and wider business strategies in the medium-term. This is likely to act as a further drag on the economy in the months ahead.

“At the same time, consumer confidence has hit its lowest point since the start of the pandemic, bringing down consumer spending, which could mean that sectors such as travel, retail and hospitality could particularly struggle as these are the things people usually cut first.

Number of corporate insolvencies exceeds 1,600 in June, up 40% on 2021 - business owners should not be complacent given ongoing economic pressures which will start to be felt in [#insolvency](#) numbers in next few months [@R3PressOffice](#) [@accountancylive](https://t.co/0spkTIaaC8)

— Accountancy Daily (@accountancylive) [July 15, 2022](#)

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Key events:

- [2d ago](#)  
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[US retail spending holds up amid soaring inflation](#)
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[BlackRock's Fink: investment environment 'not seen in decades'](#)

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[2d ago](#)[10.30](#)

## Closing summary

**Stock markets are ending the week on a positive note, as investors regain their nerve despite the latest signs of economic slowdown.**

In London, the [FTSE](#) 100 is now 112 points higher, or 1.6% up, at 7153, led by engineering firm **Rolls-Royce** (+5.5%), with airline group **IAG** (+4.4%) close behind.

The pound is clawing back from two-year lows, at \$1.184, while the euro is back about parity with the dollar at \$1.006.

Fiona Cincotta, Senior Financial Markets Analyst, at City Index, says:

Yesterday saw a disappointing start to the earnings season yesterday after JPMorgan and Morgan Stanley saw net income fall around 30%, missing forecasts. The fact that the banks are setting aside large sums for potential bad loans suggests that they are concerned about a possible recession.

Helping stocks higher today have been less hawkish comments from known Federal Reserve hawkish, which have helped the market pare back aggressive Fed hike bets.

With hawks Christopher Waller and James Bullard both supporting hiking rates by 75 basis points, not 100 bps that the market priced in after Wednesday's red hot inflation.

Here are today's main stories:

*Have a lovely weekend. GW*

- 
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2d ago 10.29

US consumer sentiment has inched up this month, but remains near its lowest in decades.

The University of Michigan's index of consumer morale rose to 51.1 this month, up from 50 in June, and better than hoped.

But as **Surveys of Consumers Director Joanne Hsu** explains, consumer sentiment was relatively unchanged, remaining near all-time lows.

Current assessments of personal finances continued to deteriorate, reaching its lowest point since 2011.

Buying conditions for durables adjusted upwards, owing both to consumers who cited easing supply constraints and those who believed that one should buy now to avoid future price increases, which would exacerbate inflation going forward.

University of Michigan preliminary July [#consumer #confidence](#)

prior: 50.0

consensus: 50.0

actual: 51.1

Still one of the lowest readings on record. [#Recession](#) secured.  
[pic.twitter.com/TmxYvjZ9hN](https://pic.twitter.com/TmxYvjZ9hN)

— MacroTourist (@Gloeschi) [July 15, 2022](#)

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2d ago 10.06

## Virgin Media O2 explores bid for TalkTalk



Mark Sweeney

**Virgin Media O2 has explored making a multi-billion pound offer for broadband and telecoms company TalkTalk in its latest move to build scale to create a new “national champion” to challenge BT and Sky.**

The pay-TV, broadband and mobile giant, which is jointly owned by Spain's Telefonica and John Malone's Liberty Global, is understood to have held exploratory talks with the Salford-based TalkTalk.

TalkTalk, founded and chaired by Sir Charles Dunstone, has been in play since April when it emerged that the company had received a number of tentative approaches about a sale.

Companies including Vodafone and Sky have previously been linked with potential offers for the business, which was taken private in a £1.8bn deal with Martin Hughes' Toscafund last year.

It is understood that TalkTalk and its bankers Lazard believe the business is now worth as much as £3bn. Virgin Media O2, which is working with LionTree, is understood to have explored the possibility of making an offer for TalkTalk but has not tabled a formal bid.

If a deal was to go ahead it would be the first major move by chief executive Lutz Schuler since the £31bn Virgin Media O2 joint venture was formed two years ago. Virgin Media O2's potential interest in a deal with TalkTalk was first reported by the Telegraph.

The UK is poised for a potential wave of consolidation in the telecoms sector with companies such as Vodafone arguing that regulators need to relax their view on competition concerns to bring them more into line with other markets such as the US and parts of Europe.

In February, telecoms regulator Ofcom formally dropped its long held position that a merger between any of the UK's big four mobile operators should be blocked at all costs.

Under former chief executive Sharon White, Ofcom was an outspoken opponent of Three UK's attempted £10.25bn takeover of O2, which was blocked by competition regulators six years ago.

Liberty Global, Virgin Media O2 and TalkTalk declined to comment.

Shares in BT have dropped 7.5%, to the bottom of the [FTSE](#) 100 leaderboard, since news of **Virgin Media O2's** interest broke.

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[2d ago](#)[09.59](#)

**Wall Street is bouncing back from its wobble yesterday.**

The **Dow Jones industrial average** has jumped by 1.2%, or 368 points, in early trading to 30,999 points.

Almost every sector is up, led by energy and financials.

Fears that the US central bank could lift interest rates by a whole percentage point - for the first time in decades - may be easing off, after Wednesday's

surge in inflation to 9.1%.

Consumer and producer prices in June surprised to the upside, suggesting underlying price pressures remain firm.

While a 100bp hike at the July FOMC meeting is a possibility, we think the Fed will opt for a 75bp increase. BofA [pic.twitter.com/whJBzyq3G1](https://pic.twitter.com/whJBzyq3G1)

— Mike Zaccardi, CFA, CMT (@MikeZaccardi) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[2d ago](#)[09.49](#)

Uggh...Industrial production moved down 0.2% in June, led by a 0.5% drop in manufacturing output and a 1.4% drop in utilities output. Mining advanced. Manufacturing weakness was in primary metals, machinery, motor vehicles, and among most non-durable goods industries. [pic.twitter.com/foKupI4vVc](https://pic.twitter.com/foKupI4vVc)

— Dr Thomas Kevin Swift (@DrTKSwift) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[2d ago](#)[09.48](#)

[The decline in US industrial production and manufacturing output in June](#) is partly due to zero-covid shutdowns in China, suspects **Michael Pearce**, senior US economist at Capital Economics.

Those lockdowns temporarily paralysed global supply chains again, adding to weaker demand for US goods as economic demand slows.

Pearce told clients:

What had been surprising is how well activity in the factory sector had held up in recent months, but the downward revisions to the May data and further decline in June now match the downbeat message from the survey data that manufacturing activity has slowed, and mirrors the broader slowdown in global manufacturing output.

With activity in China rebounding, however, and inventory across most of the economy still looking lean, US manufacturing output growth should slow rather than collapse.

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[2d ago](#) [09.33](#)

**US manufacturing output has weakened, indicating that the factory sector eased off last month.**

Total industrial production dipped 0.2% percent in June, new figures show, while manufacturing output declined 0.5% for a second consecutive month.

Both readings are weaker than expected, taking the shine off [the stronger-than-forecast retail sales figures earlier](#).

June industrial production fell -0.2% vs. +0.1% est. & +0.2% in prior month; factory production -0.5% vs. -0.1% est. & -0.5% in prior month (rev down from -0.1%); Utilities -1.4% vs. +1.9% prior; mining +1.7% vs. +1.2% prior [pic.twitter.com/j9Aml0l4nG](#)

— Liz Ann Sonders (@LizAnnSonders) [July 15, 2022](#)

Industrial Production in the United States decreased 0.20 percent in June of 2022 over the previous month. <https://t.co/d2vCglcZ6l> [pic.twitter.com/l1SIQPI7CF](#)

— Trading Economics (@tEconomics) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[2d ago](#)[09.19](#)

**The European Commission is proposing a ban on the import of Russian gold, as part of an adjustment to its sanctions regime following the Ukraine invasion.**

A package agreed by the EC today would introduce a new import ban on Russian gold, aligning EU sanctions with those of its G7 partners..

The package also reiterates that EU sanctions do not target in any way the trade in agricultural products between third countries and Russia, in an attempt to protect food security around the world (already threatened by the blockage on Ukrainian grain).

The EC is also proposing extending the current EU sanctions for six months, until the next review at the end of January 2023.

The proposal will now be discussed by EU member states.

□□ The [@EU\\_Commission](#) adopted a new package of measures to strengthen our sanctions against Russia. [@vonderleyen](#): “Moscow must continue to pay a high price for its aggression.”

Now up to Member States [@EUCouncilPress](#) to discuss next week.

More here: <https://t.co/FlnbGhGZIy> [pic.twitter.com/OSZjEDQEbn](https://pic.twitter.com/OSZjEDQEbn)

— Daniel Ferrie □□ (@DanielFerrie) [July 15, 2022](#)

Russia's brutal war against Ukraine continues unabated.

Therefore we propose today to tighten our hard-hitting EU sanctions against the Kremlin, enforce them more effectively and extend them until January 2023.

Moscow must continue to pay a high price for its aggression.

— Ursula von der Leyen (@vonderleyen) [July 15, 2022](#)

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[2d ago](#)[09.10](#)



Gwyn Topham

**Rail passengers across England and Wales have been urged to only travel if necessary next week, with extreme temperatures forcing blanket speed restrictions across much of the network.**

Network Rail said the impact on train services would vary by region, but that journeys would take significantly longer. It said there was a high likelihood of cancellations, delays and last-minute alterations to services on Monday and Tuesday.

Long-distance train journeys, such as London to York, could take four hours instead of two, with trains forced to travel below 60mph for safety.

Vulnerable passengers and those with health conditions should avoid travelling, Network Rail said, while passengers who choose to travel should check if their train is running and ensure they are prepared for the heat with plenty of water to drink.

Rail passengers in Scotland should also check their journeys before travelling and take sensible precautions.

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[2d ago](#)[09.05](#)



**Refuse collection workers in the West Midlands are to strike on the opening week of the Commonwealth Games, PA Media reports.**

Members of the GMB union will take five days of action - on July 28, when the Games open in Birmingham, July 29 and August 4, 5 and 8.

The union said private contractor Serco, which runs refuse collection services across Sandwell, had offered a real terms pay cut to workers.

Justine Jones, GMB Midlands organiser, said:

“Strike action is a last resort, but Serco top brass have forced the hand of hundreds of hard-working local refuse workers.

“Our members have asked for nothing more than a fair pay rise, after keeping communities here in Sandwell clean and safe throughout the pandemic.

“The eyes of the world will be on our area during the Commonwealth Games, it’s a shame that Serco have put the bottom line before their own workforce and community in this way.

“This is a big distraction from the Games and we hope Serco see sense and urgently bring a pay offer to the table that reflects the hard work and dedication of our members.”

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[2d ago](#)[08.47](#)

Here's some snap analysis of the US retail sales report:

□□Modest [#retail](#) sales gain in Jun

□Sales +1.0%

△Adj. for inflation -0.3%

□Core 0.8%

△Adj. for inflation +0.1%

Core sales revisions ↓

Gas +3.6%  
Online +2.2%  
Furn 1.4%  
Rest/bars +1.0%  
Autos +0.8%  
Sports +0.8%  
Food +0.4%  
Elec +0.4%  
Merch -0.2%  
Cloth -0.4%  
Build mat -0.9% [pic.twitter.com/7xkekUJy4Q](https://pic.twitter.com/7xkekUJy4Q)

— Gregory Daco (@GregDaco) [July 15, 2022](#)

US retail sales for June up by 8.9% year over year. Not bad, but growth running below inflation. And without gasoline sales (which rose 49.9% year-over-year) growth comes down to 5.4%. [#RetailSales](#)

— Neil Saunders (@NeilRetail) [July 15, 2022](#)

US June Retail Sales: The data tends to support the Fed proceeding with a 75 basis point hike. This data does not scream 100 basis point hike as the central bank moves forward in its price stability campaign. [pic.twitter.com/LPNsgrPr29](https://pic.twitter.com/LPNsgrPr29)

— Joseph Brusuelas (@joebrusuelas) [July 15, 2022](#)

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Updated at 08.49 EDT

[2d ago](#) [08.42](#)

**US retail spending holds up amid soaring inflation**

**Just in: US retail sales jumped by more than expected last month, as rising inflation drove up prices in the shops and online.**

Retail sales rose 1.0% in June, ahead of forecasts of a 0.9% rise, and were 8.4% higher than a year before.

That follows a 0.1% monthly drop in May (which has been revised up from -0.3%)

The figures aren't adjusted for inflation, and show gasoline stations spending was 49% higher than in June 2021, while food services and drinking places grew sales by 13.4%.

US retail sales in June stronger than expected.

Headline +1.0% m/m (expected +0.8%)

Ex-autos +1.0% m/m (expected +0.6%)

May figures revised up too.

— Jamie McGeever (@ReutersJamie) [July 15, 2022](#)

US retail sales grew 1.0% MoM in Jun after -0.1% MoM in May. Ex-gas sales up 0.7% MoM.

- Gas: 3.6% MoM (up 49.1% YoY)
- Food & Drinking Services: 1.0% MoM
- Furniture: 1.4% MoM
- Nonstore: 2.2% MoM
- Auto: 0.8% MoM [#retail #sales \(@uscensusbureau\)](#)  
<https://t.co/CG6qXFrv39> [pic.twitter.com/rfyxQmyQLv](http://pic.twitter.com/rfyxQmyQLv)

— MTS Insights (@MTSInsights) [July 15, 2022](#)

It suggests that consumers didn't cut spending heavily in June, despite a slump in confidence last month as inflation hit a 40-year high of 9.1%.

That may give the Federal Reserve the green light for another hefty interest rate rises later this month.

the value behind retail sales is its timing

one of the earliest looks we get at US consumer behavior for most recently completed month

data also often a little dirty, hence the revisions

but, nothing here seems to be a glaring stop light for the [#FOMC](#)  
<https://t.co/b6XGXTSjm1>

— James Stanley (@JStanleyFX) [July 15, 2022](#)

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Updated at 09.00 EDT

[2d ago](#)[08.08](#)

**BlackRock's Fink: investment environment ‘not seen in decades’**



Photograph: Shannon Stapleton/Reuters

**The head of investment group BlackRock has blamed the toughest investment environment in decades after profits tumbled by almost a third.**

Net income at BlackRock fell 30% in the second quarter of 2022 to \$1.12bn, a bigger fall than expected. Assets under management at the firm dropped by 11% to below \$8.5trn.

Laurence D. Fink, Chairman and CEO, points out that it's been a tough year:

“The first half of 2022 brought an investment environment that we have not seen in decades.

Investors are simultaneously navigating high inflation, rising rates and the worst start to the year for both stocks and bonds in half a century, with global equity and fixed income indexes down 20% and 10%, respectively.

“BlackRock generated net inflows of \$90 billion in the second quarter demonstrating our ability, once again, to deliver industry-leading organic growth even in the most challenging environments. Our connectivity with clients has never been stronger. Over the last twelve

months, we've delivered over \$460 billion of net inflows reflecting 5% organic base fee growth.

Market volatility has pushed some investors out of the market, and also pushed down the value of assets which managers charge their fees on.

Here's some good analysis:

1/3. BlackRock's Q2 also misses. Interesting to see that EPS has already got back down to Q2 2020 levels. <https://t.co/GBE5NuDU2I> [pic.twitter.com/NJIGXUPbKC](https://pic.twitter.com/NJIGXUPbKC)

— One Bubble to Rule Them All (@shortl2021) [July 15, 2022](#)

2/2. Critical question for BlackRock, financials & market in general is how much of the bumper earnings quarters in 2020/21 was just result of pandemic-related fiscal & monetary stimulus & will have to be stripped out going forward.

— One Bubble to Rule Them All (@shortl2021) [July 15, 2022](#)

3/3. And to what degree did the market incorrectly project these pandemic-related "Peloton-style" portion of earnings into the future?

— One Bubble to Rule Them All (@shortl2021) [July 15, 2022](#)

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Updated at 08.18 EDT

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## Burberry group

# Burberry sales fall 35% in China on back of Covid lockdowns

Lola handbag range and signature trenchcoat give luxury fashion retailer boost elsewhere



Burberry has warned of uncertainty regarding the economic outlook in the short-term and is ‘actively managing’ the impact of soaring inflation.  
Photograph: Shannon Stapleton/Reuters

[Mark Sweney](#) and [Sarah Butler](#)

Fri 15 Jul 2022 04.32 EDT Last modified on Sat 16 Jul 2022 00.11 EDT

Burberry has reported sales growth of only 1% in its latest financial quarter because of the [impact of Covid-19 lockdowns in China](#), while sales were boosted elsewhere by its Lola handbag range and signature trenchcoat.

The luxury fashion retailer said sales fell 35% in mainland [China](#) because of restrictions and store closures to contain the latest outbreak of the

coronavirus, while sales grew 16% across the rest of the world in the 13 weeks to 2 July.

The company reported the strongest growth in Europe, Middle East, India and Africa (EMEIA), with sales up 47% year on year with spending levels back above pre-pandemic levels, as sales to American tourists also bounced back strongly.

The company said sales to Asian tourists, especially Chinese, remained weak, and trade in the UK was not as strong as Europe after tax-free shopping for non-EU visitors was [axed in 2020](#) as part of Brexit.

Julie Brown, the chief operating and financial officer of [Burberry](#), said the majority of sales in Europe were now to locals as the number of Chinese tourists visiting its stores were down 90%.

“There is a tendency for consumers to go to mainland Europe rather than the UK. We would like to see more support to drive recovery in UK tourism,” she said, adding that the ability to claim a VAT refund could be a “key driver of tourism”.

Sales of leather goods, led by its Lola handbag range, grew by 21% outside mainland China, while outerwear, driven by rainwear and jackets, grew by 19%.

Burberry warned of uncertainty regarding the economic outlook in the short-term and said that the company was “actively managing” the impact of soaring inflation, which in the UK has hit [a 40-year high of 9.1%](#) and is heading higher.

Overall, the company reported a 1% year-on-year increase in comparable store sales to £500m.

Shares fell 5% in early trading on Friday, making Burberry the biggest faller on the FTSE 100.

“In theory, luxury goods retailers should be bombproof from inflationary and even recessionary environments, with the profile of the consumer at the

top end being insulated from the economic constraints of many others,” said Richard Hunter, the head of markets at Interactive Investor. “However, the closure of shop windows in key regions and the lack of a full return of the Asian tourist still remain headwinds.”

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Burberry said that it continued to invest and innovate, including launching a campaign for the Lola range featuring models such as Bella Hadid and creating a virtual collection on the online gaming platform Roblox.

Other initiatives included a seasonal campaign for its TB Summer Monogram collection, featuring Gisele Bündchen, and signing the South Korean Premier League footballer Son Heung-min, who plays for Tottenham Hotspur, as a brand ambassador. The announcement of the signing on Instagram fuelled record engagement for Burberry, up more than a fifth on the company’s previous most popular post.

“Our performance in the quarter continued to be impacted by lockdowns in mainland China but I was pleased to see our more localised approach drive recovery in EMEA, where spending by local clients was above pre-pandemic levels,” said Jonathan Akeroyd, the [chief executive at Burberry](#). “Our focus categories, leather goods and outerwear continued to perform well outside mainland China and our programme of brand activations boosted customer engagement.”

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- [Live Jacob Rees-Mogg and Nadine Dorries back Liz Truss for Tory leadership](#)
- [Boris Johnson Labour to call for no-confidence vote in PM](#)
- [Tory leadership Tax cut pledges ‘risk inflation and inequality’](#)

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## Eight MPs make it on to first Tory leadership ballot – as it happened

Kemi Badenoch, Suella Braverman, Jeremy Hunt, Penny Mordaunt, Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss, Tom Tugendhat and Nadhim Zahawi garner enough support

- [Eight candidates to fight first round of Tory leadership race](#)
- [Boris Johnson denies Labour request for time for no-confidence debate](#)

Updated 4d ago

[Nadeem Badshah](#) (now); [Andrew Sparrow](#) (earlier)

Tue 12 Jul 2022 18.41 EDTFirst published on Tue 12 Jul 2022 04.01 EDT

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[Graham Brady confirms eight candidates in first ballot for Tory leadership](#)
- [5d ago](#)  
[1922 Committee chair Graham Brady set to announce names of Tory MPs in first ballot](#)
- [5d ago](#)  
[Javid accepts he is out of leadership contest after struggling to get enough nominations](#)

- [5d ago](#)  
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1922 Committee announces eight candidates for Tory leadership contest – video

[Nadeem Badshah](#) (now); [Andrew Sparrow](#) (earlier)

Tue 12 Jul 2022 18.41 EDTFirst published on Tue 12 Jul 2022 04.01 EDT

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## Live feed

From 5d ago

[13.04](#)

## **Graham Brady confirms eight candidates in first ballot for Tory leadership**

**Sir Graham Brady** is reading out the names of the candidates who will be in the first ballot. He reads the names in alphabetical order. They are:

Kemi Badenoch

Suella Braverman

Jeremy Hunt

Penny Mordaunt

Rishi Sunak

Liz Truss

Tom Tugendhat

Nadhim Zahawi

Brady says the first round ballot will take place tomorrow between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. The result will be announced soon afterwards, he says.

He does not name the MPs who have not made it, but three MPs said today they would not stand after struggling to get the support of 20 MPs. They are:

Rehman Chishti

Grant Shapps

Sajid Javid

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Updated at 13.12 EDT

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[Badenoch says state should be smaller and do less, instead of pandering to 'every campaigner with moving message'](#)

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[Rishi Sunak's launch - snap verdict](#)

• [5d ago](#)

[Shapps pulls out of Tory leadership contest and backs Sunak, saying he has 'competence and experience' to be PM](#)

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['It's question of when, not if - Sunak promises to get tax burden down](#)

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[Sunak pays tribute to Johnson, saying he's 'remarkable' and 'has a good heart'](#)

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[Raab and Shapps back Sunak for next Tory leader](#)

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[Rishi Sunak launched leadership campaign](#)

• [5d ago](#)

[Truss wins backing from Rees-Mogg and Dorries, positioning her as Johnsonite, 'Stop Sunak' candidate](#)

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[Zahawi hits back at Sunak, saying 'cutting taxes isn't fairytale'](#)

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[Why Labour is tabling no-confidence motion in government](#)

• [5d ago](#)

[Boris Johnson's allies launch bid to stop Sunak as survey casts doubt on former chancellor's leadership chances](#)

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[4d ago](#)[18.41](#)

# A summary of today's developments

- Kemi Badenoch, [Suella Braverman](#), Jeremy Hunt, Penny Mordaunt, Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss, Tom Tugendhat and Nadhim Zahawi have all progressed to the first ballot which will take place tomorrow between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. The result will be announced soon afterwards.
- Sajid Javid, the former health secretary and former home secretary, is out of the contest as he was struggling to get the 20 nominations he needed.
- Rehman Chishti's campaign for the [Conservative leadership](#) is over after being unable to receive any public endorsements from colleagues. Grant Shapps also failed to make it to the first ballot.
- Priti Patel, the home secretary, announced she will not be standing for the Tory leadership. She is not backing any other candidates, but she does not rule out doing so later in the contest.
- The government and [Labour](#) are involved in a briefing war about the rights and wrongs of the No 10 decision not to allow a no-confidence debate in the government tomorrow. Labour is accusing Downing Street of “an abuse of power”, but No 10 says it is Labour that is actually abusing the system because it is “playing politics”.

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[4d ago](#)[18.34](#)

Conservative MP James Sunderland has cast doubt on the commitment of [Penny Mordaunt](#) to the UK's net zero climate target.

Sunderland, a supporter of Mordaunt, told BBC Newsnight: "It is on her radar, it is a very important Government policy at the moment but net zero of course has to be balanced against the immediate priorities affecting British people.

"This is about cost-of-living crisis, this is about money in pockets, and ultimately, Penny will make a decision as to whether we can relinquish those green subsidies, those green taxes, as they've been called. But we have to do what is right now for people in the UK."

He added: "I think it is important that we follow the net zero agenda, we have got very aggressive green policies in this country.

"Nothing is off the table.

"At this current point in time, if the British people are struggling, a pragmatist, a responsible Prime Minister, would look at that particular policy and assess whether or not to waive it."

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[4d ago](#)[18.12](#)

**Thangam Debbonaire has said Labour is considering all its options amid a row over the tabling of a no confidence vote in [Boris Johnson](#).**

Labour had earlier accused the government of "running scared" after it blocked plans by the opposition to stage a Commons no confidence vote in the prime minister and his administration.

The shadow leader of the Commons told BBC Newsnight: “I’m not going to reveal all of our tactics. There’s various other things that we could try and at the moment we’re considering every single one of them.”

She also refused to be drawn on reports that Labour and the SNP are considering applying for an emergency debate, instead accusing the government of running scared.

Debonnaire said: “Why would the government be so chicken as to not to take the motion of no competence? They could do that tomorrow. They still could do that on Thursday, or they could do it next week?”

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Updated at 18.16 EDT

[4d ago](#)[17.49](#)

The front page of Wednesday’s Guardian.

Guardian front page, Wednesday 13 July 2022: Leadership battle leaves eight Tory rivals scrapping for votes [pic.twitter.com/MFRDORmVzC](https://pic.twitter.com/MFRDORmVzC)

— The Guardian (@guardian) [July 12, 2022](#)

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[4d ago](#)[17.38](#)



Richard Partington

**Labour has committed to “ironclad discipline” with the public finances and cutting Britain’s debt burden if it gets into power, in an attempt to draw a clear dividing line with Tory leadership hopefuls promising billions of pounds in tax cuts.**

Rachel Reeves, the shadow chancellor, will use a speech on Wednesday to bind a future Labour government to strict borrowing limits designed to protect the public finances while allowing it to lay the foundations for a growing economy.

As the candidates vying to replace Boris Johnson as prime minister promise tax cuts worth billions of pounds without being clear on how they would be funded, Reeves will argue “the tables have turned” on fiscal credibility.

“Any lingering sense that the Conservatives are the party of economic responsibility has been shredded to pieces over the past few days,” she will say.

Get the full story here: [Labour to pledge ‘ironclad discipline’ with public finances](#)

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Updated at 17.41 EDT

4d ago **17.16**

**The Scottish secretary Alister Jack has confirmed he will not reveal who he is supporting in the Tory leadership race.**

Widely seen as a close ally of [Boris Johnson](#), Jack told BBC's Reporting Scotland he will not declare who he is backing in the race to succeed the prime minister.

"I'm not going to declare who I am going to be supporting in the race," Jack said.

Instead, he said he would be speaking to all the candidates about issues facing Scotland.

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Updated at 17.23 EDT

4d ago **16.58**

Anne-Marie Trevelyan has backed Tom Tugendhat's pledge on defence spending if he wins the leadership race.

The good news about this pledge and [@TomTugendhat](#) as PM is that he understands defence and will ensure it is well invested and change delivered on procurement methods & modernisation.  
<https://t.co/w3OZmvw8tM>

— Anne-Marie Trevelyan (@annietrev) [July 12, 2022](#)

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Updated at 17.08 EDT

4d ago16.43

Labour and the SNP are considering applying for an emergency debate after an earlier row with the government over a no confidence motion in the government and prime minister, Sky News is reporting.

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4d ago15.36

Here is Labour MP Chris Bryant's reaction to Matt Vickers being named deputy Tory chair.

What. On. Earth? <https://t.co/a6q1MhVykn>

— Chris Bryant (@RhonddaBryant) July 12, 2022

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Updated at 17.09 EDT

4d ago15.31

**The government abandoned its plan to use controversial pushback tactics to turn away migrants in the Channel after trials, MPs have heard.**

Armed forces minister James Heappey told the defence committee the Ministry of Defence (MoD) initially recommended against the tactic, which was dropped following the conclusions of Royal Navy experts after trials by the Royal Marines.

The policy would have allowed Border Force patrols to intercept migrant vessels in the Channel and take them back to France.

It was due to be challenged at the high court earlier this year but was dropped just over a week before.

Heappey told the committee the small, often overloaded, craft used are each treated as a “vessel in distress” and escorted back to the UK under mariners’ obligation to save life at sea.

He said:

We were asked to explore how those tactics could be used in the Dover straits, and our analysis after a series of trials in Weymouth with various techniques and an analysis of the water and the type of threat that was being faced was that it was inappropriate, and the argument was won.

Government decided not to do that because the evidence provided by professional mariners within the Royal Navy was such to compellingly make the case for not doing it.

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Updated at 17.10 EDT

[5d ago](#)[15.18](#)

**The Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey has reacted to reports suggesting that Boris Johnson is blocking Labour’s bid to hold a vote of no confidence.**

He said:

This sounds more like Donald Trump than a serious British government.

If the rumours are true and Boris Johnson has blocked a vote of no confidence in the House of Commons, this is just more evidence that he is totally unable to lead our country.

Voters will never forgive the Conservative party for propping up Johnson, who is more interested in himself and his legacy than tackling the health crisis and cost of living emergency.

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Updated at 17.11 EDT

[5d ago](#)15.01

**The former Conservative party leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith has yet to declare which candidate he will be backing.**

However, he told Sky News he was “impressed by pretty much all of those who have come to … hustings which we have just held”.

“This for once wasn’t about Europe, it wasn’t directly about taxation but was about how do you work to improve the quality of life for those who are the poorest in society,” he said.

“It forced candidates to stop the to-and-fro bickering about who will cut taxes and not cut taxes and actually get down to talking about real lives.”

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Updated at 17.11 EDT

[5d ago](#)14.36



Jessica Elgot

**In the race to face Rishi Sunak, it may be [Penny Mordaunt](#) who capitalises on the disarray of the right of the Conservative party as it splinters into bitter factions.**

The trade minister has an impressively organised campaign that has led to mutterings about how much work she has put into her day job. She has racked up the second-highest number of endorsements after Sunak, dedicating time to one-on-one meetings with MPs rather than the airwaves.

Her allies say she will now step up a gear and show her strengths as a media performer in the coming days. “The more people see of Penny, the more they warm to her, which is a huge advantage,” one said, a remark which may not apply to her rivals.

**Read the full piece here: [Bitter split in Tory right may boost leadership chances of Penny Mordaunt](#)**

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Updated at 17.12 EDT

5d ago **14.27**

Here is the moment Sir Graham Brady confirmed the eight candidates for the Conservative party race.

1922 Committee announces eight candidates for Tory leadership contest – video

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**Boris Johnson**

## **Government refuses Labour time to debate no-confidence motion**

Labour criticises ‘unprecedented’ refusal to allow debate time for motion of no confidence in Boris Johnson

- [Politics latest – live](#)



If the government loses a vote of confidence in Boris Johnson, it could trigger a general election. Photograph: Guy Bell/Rex/Shutterstock

*[Alexandra Topping](#)*

Tue 12 Jul 2022 12.38 EDTFirst published on Tue 12 Jul 2022 03.45 EDT

A bitter row has broken out between Labour and the government over Keir Starmer’s plan to table a motion of no confidence in Boris Johnson’s government.

Labour reacted with fury after Downing Street refused to allow parliamentary time for the motion it had tabled. Longstanding convention is that, if the leader of the official opposition tables a motion of no confidence, the government makes time for it to be debated and voted on.

A Labour spokesperson said: “This clapped-out government is running scared and refusing to allow time to debate Labour’s vote of no confidence motion.

“This is totally unprecedented. Yet again the Tories are changing the rules to protect their own dodgy mates. All the Tory leadership candidates should denounce this flagrant abuse of power to protect a discredited prime minister.”

However, Tory whips said Labour’s motion fell outside the scope of the convention by identifying Johnson. A government spokesperson said: “We have given Labour the option to table a straightforward vote of no confidence in the government.

### Graphic

“They have chosen to play politics by tabling a vote of no confidence in the government and the prime minister. As the prime minister has already resigned and a leadership process is under way we do not feel this is a valuable use of parliamentary time.

“Should Labour amend their motion appropriately, they can have the next business day for it to be debated.”

Labour said the motion had been ruled in order by the House of Commons clerks, and pointed to the 1965 confidence motion, which mentioned the prime minister. A Labour source said the government was “talking out of their hat”.

Starmer had said the government should not be able to “cling on” until 5 September, when the result of the Tory leadership election [is due to be announced](#).

The government would almost certainly win any such vote, with Conservative MPs reconciled to Johnson remaining in place until his successor is appointed. Even the most anti-Johnson Tories would be keen to avoid the risk of triggering a general election.

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Labour had hoped to be able to attack Tory MPs for effectively voting to keep Johnson in No 10 until the autumn.

James Murray, Labour's financial secretary to the Treasury, said on Tuesday the party's motion was "the last opportunity to get Boris Johnson out of Downing Street before the end of parliament next week".

He told Sky News: "Boris Johnson should go now. And we hope that the Conservative MPs agree with us on that [...] I think the whole country realises Boris Johnson just has no integrity and honesty. I think it's time for him to go."

The row came as a wide field of Conservative candidates jostled to secure the 20 supporters necessary to get their names on the ballot paper.

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## Tax and spending

# **Tax cut pledges by Tory leadership hopefuls ‘risk stoking inflation and inequality’**

Economists and Conservative opponents say proposals would blow hole in public finances



George Dibb of the IPPR thinktank says the tax plans do not match the needs of families struggling with the soaring cost of living. Photograph: Matthew Horwood/Getty Images

*[Richard Partington](#) and [Peter Walker](#)*

Tue 12 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT

The scale of tax cuts promised by [Conservative leadership](#) hopefuls would blow a hole in the public finances and could lead to rampant inflation, Tory opponents and economists have warned.

Nadhim Zahawi, who took over as chancellor last week, used a leadership speech on Monday to announce tax policies that would cost an estimated £50bn a year, almost as much as the combined budgets of the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office.

Sajid Javid, the former health secretary, who also served as chancellor, launched his leadership bid with tax cuts he said would cost about £40bn a year, including a reduction to income tax, scrapping the recent rise in national insurance, and a temporary 10p a litre extra cut in fuel tax.

Of the 11 candidates vying to become the new prime minister, almost all have made lavish pledges to reduce the tax rate and shrink the state, with costings generally left vague.

The pound has fallen to the lowest level in two years in recent weeks amid growing concern over the strength of the British economy and political instability during an intense squeeze on households and businesses.

Economists said the proposals would risk stoking inflation and inequality, while adding to government borrowing or requiring sweeping spending cuts. Rishi Sunak's camp believes some of the promises would lead to a fiscal black hole amounting to tens of billions of pounds.

Nick Macpherson, the former top Treasury mandarin, said the candidates were showing themselves to be “less the heirs to Margaret Thatcher; more the disciples of Recep Erdogan”, referring to the Turkish president’s economic policies, which have been blamed for contributing to [inflation hitting almost 80%](#).

Gavin Barwell, a Conservative peer who was Theresa May’s chief aide, said the leadership candidates risked telling the Conservative party “what it wants to hear”, and not the truth.

“You can’t have Thatcher levels of taxation and Johnson levels of public spending – particularly given the damage Brexit has done to economy and increased demand for public services post-Covid,” Barwell [tweeted](#).

Labour said multibillion-pound pledges had been “casually tossed on to the pages of the newspapers” in a matter of days.

Pat McFadden, the shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, said: “Tax cuts have to be sustainable. They can’t just be plucked out of the air. They claim to be able to fund these through efficiencies or cuts in civil servants. Next it will be the tooth fairy. If Labour were making promises like this, we’d be getting killed for it.”

A series of candidates have said they would scrap a planned increase in corporation tax due next April from 19% to 25%, with Javid promising to cut the headline rate to 15% over time.

According to HMRC’s [ready reckoner tables](#), which provide rough estimates for the cost of tax changes, a 10-percentage-point reduction would cost £32bn a year by the end of the current parliament in 2024-25.

Another candidate, the attorney general, [Suella Braverman](#), used her speech on Monday to say much public spending could be replaced by a greater role for families and communities.

Zahawi promised to cut income tax by 2p by 2024, scrap the corporation tax rise and scrap VAT and green levies on fuel for two years. The former education secretary said his plans could be paid for by cutting the number of civil servants by 20%, although this is estimated to save less than a tenth of the cost of his proposed tax cuts.

On Zahawi’s pledges, Torsten Bell, the head of the Resolution Foundation thinktank, calculated that the changes to income tax, energy bills and corporation tax would total £50bn a year by 2024. This is only £5bn less than the budget for the defence ministry and Foreign Office.

Jeremy Hunt, another former health secretary, has [promised](#) tax cuts worth more than £30bn, including a reduction in corporation tax to 15%. Liz Truss, the foreign secretary, has also [pledged](#) to “cut taxes from day one” by reversing the national insurance rise and promising to “keep corporation tax competitive”.

It comes Sunak, the former chancellor and early frontrunner, launched a coded attack on rivals offering unrealistic tax and spending plans, describing them as “comforting fairy tales” that would ultimately burden future generations.

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George Dibb, head of the Centre for Economic Justice at the centre-left IPPR thinktank, said the plans did not match the needs of families struggling with the soaring cost of living.

“These tax cuts are no longer being promised as a way of addressing cost of living. It’s more of an arms race to win over Conservative party members and its totally divorced from reality.”

If the government wants to avoid higher borrowing levels, steep spending cuts would probably be made despite public support for ending austerity and fresh investment in public services, he said.

“My concern would be we’re seeing a significant shrinkage of the state already over the past 12 years of Conservative government through austerity. I don’t think there’s much efficiency to squeeze out of the system,” he said.

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## 2022.07.12 - Spotlight

- [The long read ‘Thank the lord, I have been relieved’: when abortion was safer than childbirth](#)
- [‘The whole thing tastes like gherkins!’ Are vegetable martinis really the drink of the summer?](#)
- [Bombs, blackmail and wire-taps How I spent my childhood on the run from the FBI](#)
- [Wild waves, perfect pipes Milton Avery, the original abstract expressionist – review](#)

# ‘Thank the lord, I have been relieved’: the truth about the history of abortion in America

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## **‘The whole thing tastes like gherkins!’ Are vegetable martinis really the drink of the summer?**



Worth a shot? Stuart Heritage spends an afternoon making veggie cocktails at home. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

From asparagus to Greek salads, bars across the UK have been adding greens to classic cocktails. Is this a surprisingly great way to get your five a day or a horrible mistake?



[Stuart Heritage](#)

[@stuheritage](#)

Tue 12 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 11.18 EDT

Over the years, the martini has become a totem of simple, effortless cool. A clear spirit, some vermouth, shaken over ice and poured. It's pure. It's sophisticated. It's a way to get incredibly drunk, incredibly fast. This year, though, a new trend has swaggered into view: the vegetable martini. A martini that tastes of vegetables might sound disgusting, but last month the news site Bloomberg called it "London's latest drinking craze", so who am I to argue?

Veggie martinis are on the rise: in central London, Eve Bar has a tomatoey Brusketta martini and Science + Industry in Manchester offers a Mushroomtini. In Dalston, east London, Three Sheets makes a beetroot-infused Earth martini, while Tom Kerridge's Michelin-starred pub the Hand and Flowers, in Marlow, recently introduced a martini made with the chef's own small-batch vegetable gin. Frankly, I wanted in.



Savour the flavour ... a Mushroomtini cocktail at Science + Industry, Manchester.

How did I achieve that? By visiting fancy bars and making sexy small talk with glamorous strangers? No, I made veggie martinis at home on a Tuesday afternoon while my seven-year-old had a nosebleed in the next room. Here's how I got on.

## Green spice martini

The most complicated drink on my tasting menu, the green spice martini is based on a cocktail on the menu at [Benares](#), London. The base is vodka, but to that is added lemon juice, ginger juice, elderflower cordial and “cumin and coriander syrup” – which includes toasted cumin seeds and a fistful of fresh coriander. I’m not sure how it’s meant to taste, but there is a chance that I over-toasted the cumin because it was bitter, like very boozy coffee. However, after a little experimentation (chucking in loads more elderflower cordial), it suddenly became delicious. I drank the whole thing – in retrospect, quite foolish. Potentially the drink of the summer.

**Verdict:** potentially the drink of the summer.



Hot, but cool ... The Green Spice martini at Benares, Mayfair.

## Britney asparagus martini

This was based on the [Portobello Road Distillery recipe](#), which uses special asparagus-flavoured vodka. But I didn't have any, so I bunged a load of chopped-up asparagus spears into some regular vodka and left it overnight. The flavoured spirit is mixed with sherry and two dashes of saline solution. In a nice bar, prepared by an expert, this is probably lovely and complex. In my bodged-together test kitchen, with no understanding of what constitutes a dash, the results were hideous. The martini tasted exactly like asparagus and salt, so it was a bit like drinking the sea where someone has just urinated.

**Verdict:** not the drink of the summer.

## Pickletini

There is a lovely simplicity to this one, based on the [Pickletini recipe by Dima's Ukrainian vodka](#). It's a classic James Bond-style martini – vodka, vermouth, shaken with ice – except it also contains pickle juice, a real drink you can buy that tastes like gherkins. Which means, inevitably, the whole drink tastes like gherkins, not traditionally a desirable flavour on a night out. There is a reason that 007 never sidled up to a bar and growled: "Martini.

Shaken, not stirred. And can you make it taste like the worst bit of a Big Mac, please?"

**Verdict:** not the drink of the summer.



The real thing ... a Horiatiki martini topped with oregano at Firebird in Soho.

## Horiatiki martini

Now for a drink that literally nobody wanted to try. This is largely down to the recipe – Horiatiki is Greek salad. The night before drinking, you take some gin and add cucumber, tomato, oregano and – wait for it – feta cheese. You are not so much making a cocktail as pickling a salad. However, after a night of steeping, it smells delicious. Really delicious, like a pizza. The oregano is fresh and fragrant, and the feta adds just the right level of saltiness. The cocktail – based on a drink at the [Firebird](#) restaurant in London – was easy to down, and all the notes I made as I drank were extremely positive. Then again, I was incredibly drunk at this point, so who knows?

**Verdict:** the drink of the summer!



And finally ... Stuart Heritage grates celery for his own experimental recipe.  
Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

## Celery martini

A small admission. This wasn't a proper recipe. What happened was: I went shopping for this experiment before I knew what I would be making, and wrongly assumed that celery would feature in most vegetable cocktails. None did, which left me with more celery than I would usually eat in a decade. So I made my own drink by extracting the juice from half a bunch of celery (by grating it and then squeezing out the juice through a muslin, as you do with potatoes when making hash browns), then mixing it 50/50 with vodka. Is it a martini in any recognisable sense? No. But is it delicious? It is. It's by far the veggiest cocktail of the lot, to the extent that it tastes as if it's good for you. It's basically a health drink! Drink of the summer?

**Verdict:** drink of the year! Good God, I'm drunk ...

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## [Television](#)

# Bombs, blackmail and wire-taps: how I spent my childhood on the run from the FBI

Due to a series of bombings, podcaster Zayd Ayers Dohrn's militant leftwing parents spent the 70s fleeing the US government. His insightful new political podcast profiles the childhood he spent being chased



Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers with their son, Zayd outside the federal court in New York in 1982. Photograph: David Handschuh/AP

*Zayd Ayers Dohrn*

Tue 12 Jul 2022 05.26 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 10.37 EDT

I was born underground. When I was a kid, my parents were on the run from the FBI and my mom, Bernardine Dohrn, was on the US government's 10 Most Wanted List. J Edgar Hoover called her "[The most dangerous woman in America](#)".

My parents never hid any of this from me. I knew, from when I was three or four, that we used fake names. I knew we moved around a lot, made calls from public phones, and paid for everything in cash. I knew somebody was chasing us, but didn't know what "FBI" meant – why they, or it, wanted to catch us or what would happen if they did.

As I grew up, I learned my parents were leaders of the Weather Underground organisation, a militant leftwing group that carried out a series of bombings in the 1970s as a protest against the war in Vietnam, as well as police violence against Black people in the US.

When I was four, my parents turned themselves in after more than a decade underground. Most of the charges against them had been dropped due to government misconduct – the FBI had illegally wire-tapped their friends and relatives, searched their apartments without warrants and even plotted using kidnapping and blackmail to catch them. Nonetheless, my mom still went to jail when I was five – for refusing to testify against her friends and former comrades.

Some of my earliest memories are of visiting her behind bars, sneaking pocket-sized books past the metal detectors so she could read to me; and, later, visiting other radicals serving long prison sentences. Many had children my age; one of those kids, [Chesa Boudin](#), became my adopted brother.

So I have thought a lot about the consequences of radicalism. About the damage extremist violence can do – to a country or a society, and to the loved ones of political combatants on both sides.

I don't have the political certainty of my parents – which is why I'm a writer, not an activist. But I'm interested in the messy tangle of personal and political forces that motivate people – to risk their lives and families to try to change the world. So, over the past few years, I've been writing a documentary podcast series, [Mother Country Radicals](#), which is both a family memoir and a wider history of the revolutionary underground – a story that turns out to be more dramatic and surprising than I ever imagined,

and holds important lessons for today – about what radicalises people, and how activists can fight creatively for political change.



Alex Wagner, Zayd Dohrn, Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers at the Mother Country Radicals premiere in New York. Photograph: Michael Loccisano/Getty Images for Tribeca Festival

As I was conducting interviews for the podcast, [the murder of George Floyd](#) provoked uprisings across the US. They came with a predictable reactionary response: white paramilitary vigilantes, such as [the Proud Boys](#), [the Patriot Front](#), and [Kyle Rittenhouse](#) – preparing to defend “their” neighbourhoods from urban lawlessness and imaginary immigrant caravans and far-left [Antifa hordes](#).

It stood in distinct contrast to something I came across during my research: the critical and complicated connection between Black and white revolutionaries in bygone decades. Members of the Weather Underground and the [Black Panther Party](#) (BPP) (and later, the BPP’s militant offshoot, the Black Liberation Army) were allies. In fact, they were more than that; they were comrades who worked together, aided and abetted each other on the run and fought shoulder-to-shoulder in the struggle against racism.

Most of the people I spoke to – be they members of the Weather Underground or the Black Liberation Army – were first radicalised by the killing of Black people by police: specifically the [murder of Fred Hampton in 1969](#) and Clifford Glover – a 10-year-old boy shot by an undercover cop in Queens in 1973. These killings enraged an entire generation of young activists, setting them on a path to violent revolution.

The more research I did for the podcast, the more I realised that there are crucial differences between leftwing revolutionaries and the rightwing fascist movement of today. The radical undergrounds of the 1970s were fighting state violence and racism; the [insurrectionists at the Capitol](#) acted on the orders of a sitting authoritarian president, while literally waving the flag of white nationalism. One side attempted to resist state power and real systems of oppression; the other is fighting *for* state power and injustice, often based on lies.

None of this means the ends justify the means, or that leftwing radicals should be let off the hook for their mistakes. During our many conversations, I pressed my parents and their friends about the morality of violence, and about what they might regret today. Even though Weather Underground bombings never killed anyone, three of their own members – including my dad’s girlfriend at the time, Diana Oughton – died in 1970, building explosives in New York’s Greenwich village. And most former revolutionaries now regret that turn towards a military strategy and disavow actions in which innocent people might be hurt or killed.

A member of the Black Panther Party told me that the word “radical” means seeking to understand root causes and the underlying nature of things. In this sense, it is radical to see racism as systemic, radical to understand the supreme court’s attempts to control the bodies of women and LGBTQ+ people as rooted in a history of religious patriarchy, and radical to resist unjust laws when they conflict with basic human rights.

More than anything, the members of the revolutionary undergrounds of the 1970s expressed hope that the next generation of activists will do better than they did – that young people today fighting for Black lives, abortion rights and climate justice will find new methods of radical resistance while avoiding the dangerous mistakes of the past.

Because, for my parents and their comrades in the Black underground, the struggle is not about any one strategy or tactic – not about violence or clandestine organisations – but about a long-term commitment to continue the fight for a better world. That's an inheritance that can be passed on, to their children and to generations still to come.

*Zayd Ayers Dohrn is a playwright and screenwriter, and a professor at Northwestern University. His 10-part audio series [Mother Country Radicals](#) is available on your podcast provider.*

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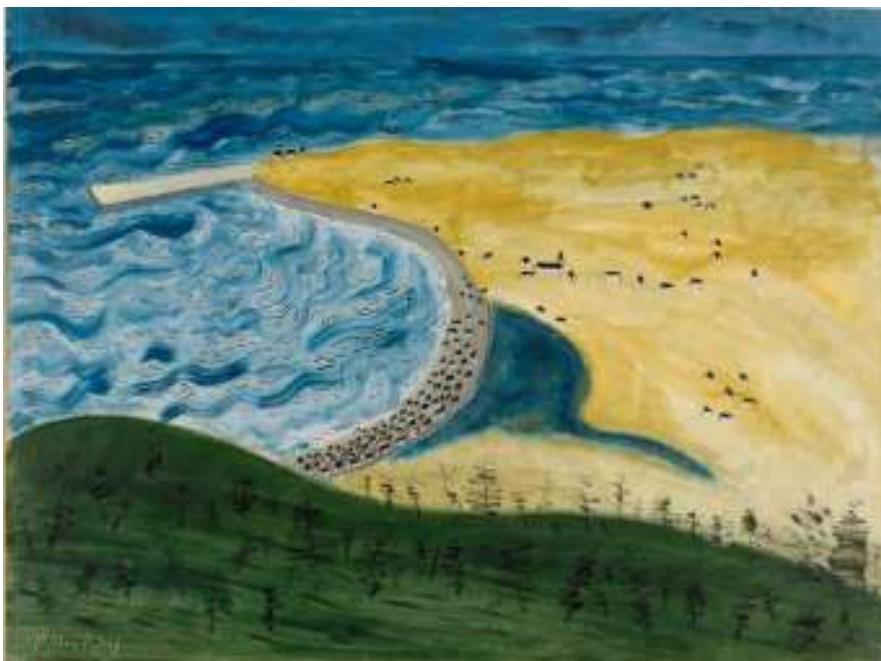
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[Exhibitions](#)

## **Wild waves, perfect pipes: Milton Avery, the original abstract expressionist – review**



The swell of the sea dwarfing the houses and church ... Little Fox River, 1942. Photograph: © 2022 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2022

## Royal Academy, London

As this brilliant exhibition shows, Avery was an experimental dreamer whose sublime landscapes and beach scenes paved the way for Rothko, Pollock and Newman



[Jonathan Jones](#)

Tue 12 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 12.46 EDT

It doesn't take long to start seeing the Rothkos hidden in Milton Avery's beach scenes and landscapes. They loom as eerie empty vistas of sea and sky, turning what seem to be figurative compositions into abstract masterpieces. *Man With a Pipe*, for instance, is a deliberately bizarre scene painted in 1935. But remove the people and you would have three layers of abstract colour: a blackish sky over a grey ocean over a yellow beach. Exactly the kind of sublime vertical stack of colours Rothko painted.

The resemblance is not accidental. [Mark Rothko](#) first met Avery in late-1920s New York and hugely admired the older man: Avery was born in 1885, Rothko in 1903. Rothko's generation would shake modern art and make New York the art capital of the world, painting huge canvases with no apparent subject matter, just colour, yet whose intense expressiveness got them named the abstract *expressionists*. Avery never made the same leap as Rothko, Barnett Newman or Jackson Pollock into pure abstraction but this

brilliant exhibition proves he didn't need to. This idiosyncratic, experimental American dreamer was already anticipating their poetic use of colour years earlier, in canvases that find abstraction hidden inside nature itself.

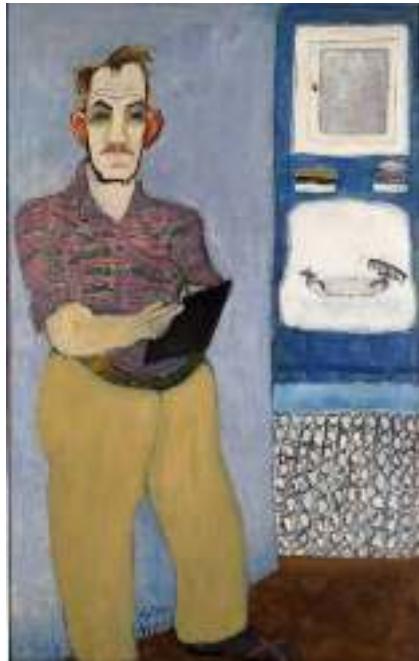
American nature may actually be more abstract than the cosy fields and little hills we have in Europe. The sheer scale of the North American continent was even more daunting because it didn't have a long history of landscape painters like [Claude](#) to familiarise it. When Avery started painting New England, where he grew up in a working-class family, it was still possible to see its sea and woods as new to art, a terra incognita.



Colour fields ... Husband and Wife, 1945. Photograph: © 2022 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2022

Anyway that might explain the moving freshness of his early landscapes. Even in his first canvases, hugely influenced by European art, there is an American romantic vastness: Big Sky, painted in 1918, has impressionistic trees but they are dwarfed by a glowing void of blue and gold air. It is the big sky of a big country but there's nothing triumphal about Avery's America. It is a place of troubling mystery where even the fun of a day at the beach is dwarfed by intimations of the abyss.

Speedboat's Wake, painted four decades after that apprentice landscape, depicts a small white boat and the line of spume behind it swallowed by a vast dark ocean. The minute figure in the boat may feel like a hero, but Avery shows how small human endeavour is against the Atlantic ocean. A Rothko-esque strip of deep blue sky hangs obliviously over the little sailor.



New vistas ... Self-Portrait, 1941. Photograph: © 2022 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2022

Avery is sometimes hyped as an American Matisse but he is much stranger, and better, than that. Far from simply emulating Matisse, he translates the pleasures of beach life and summer days the French *fauve* painted into the brooding land and seascapes of America with wild results. Little Fox River, from 1942, seems joyous and summery at first sight, with its butter-yellow landscape surrounded by blue waves, but then you notice how big and inhuman the waves are, how tiny the swell of the sea makes the frail houses and church look. Avery sees the sublime everywhere in nature: his depictions of birds, such as his 1940s paintings Oyster Catcher and Sooty Terns, are modernist reckonings with America's first great artist John James Audubon, capturing birds on the wing just as accurately as this 19th-century avian painter but seeing them as mythical and foreboding.

To see this art so closely related to abstract expressionism yet rooted in nature opens a new vista on American art itself. Avery is a missing link between landscape and abstraction. It isn't just Rothko's rectangles of moody colour you see in his scenes: take the memento mori objects out of his 1946 painting Still Life with Skull and you see the vertical lines that Barnett Newman made his trademark.

Abstract expressionist art always hints at realities hidden within its walls of colour. That's what makes it feel so meaningful. "I choose to veil the imagery," said Pollock. This exhibition makes it apparent that Avery was not merely a predecessor of this great art movement, or even its godparent. He is a true abstract expressionist who happens not to "veil" the imagery. That makes this exhibition much more than a celebration of an American artist you may not have heard of before. You'll never be able to see a Rothko again without picturing a seashore at dusk where the red blazing sky is layered above the wine dark sea, in an apocalyptic revelation.

- Milton Avery: American Colourist is at the [Royal Academy, London](#), 15 July to 16 October.
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## 2022.07.12 - Opinion

- [Being poor in the UK is an expensive business](#)
- [Why the Labour party is praying for the Tories not to vote for Rishi Sunak](#)
- [Uber's privileged access to politicians shows the lobby system urgently needs to change](#)
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## OpinionUK cost of living crisis

# Being poor in the UK is an expensive business

[Francisco Garcia](#)

The cost of living crisis is nothing new for millions of people who have lived in fear of hunger and homelessness for 12 years



‘Food banks became a shameful fact of life and access to even halfway affordable housing has become increasingly chimerical.’ A volunteer at Loaves and Fishes food bank, East Kilbride, Glasgow, October 2021. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

Tue 12 Jul 2022 05.10 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 12.34 EDT

Things really began to turn for PJ when his mother died a couple of years ago. He’d been her carer, he explained to me when we spoke in early July, though she’d spent the last few months of her life in a nursing home. After her death, with no money and nowhere to go, the south Londoner rapidly found himself slipping into homelessness.

As he approached his 60th birthday, life was tough. Work was and remains hard to come by and it was difficult to see how or when circumstances might improve. After a month or so, he was rehoused in a north London studio flat. That was around the same time that he started visiting Margins, a drop-in centre based out of Union Chapel, a cultural venue and homelessness charity in Islington. With the help of their support workers, things gradually began to turn. He received help navigating the welfare system and has settled into something like a routine, however fragile.

For millions like PJ, the cost of living crisis didn't suddenly materialise in 2022. The poor, so it runs, have always been with us, though the last 12 years of Conservative rule has witnessed poverty accelerate sharply across the UK. It's well understood that this was part of a carefully developed political programme. From 2010, a [decade of austerity](#) saw £37bn slashed from the welfare system. Food banks became a shameful fact of life. Wages have continued to stagnate and access to stable, even halfway affordable housing has become increasingly chimerical. The most up-to-date figures [show](#) that 13 million people were living in relative poverty in 2020-21, with another seven million living in a state of perpetual "financial fear", according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Fear, that is, of having to choose between which basic need to jettison, on any given week. For [2 million families](#), it's not even a choice between food and heating. Instead, they are regularly going without either.

After all, [poverty is an expensive business](#): the less you have, the more things just somehow seem to set you back. It might mean a lack of access to stable credit, or even a bank account. It might mean being forced into predatory loans to make increasingly frayed ends meet, or living in a home with a more costly pre-payment energy meter. It's the hidden tax costing some of the poorest people an estimated additional [£430 a year](#) (in one Birmingham constituency, the gap sits at £541). Some areas are even harder hit. At 15%, the north-east contains the highest proportion of households incurring poverty premiums, with London, Yorkshire and Wales also particularly badly affected.

These are not small sums. As everyday costs continue to detach from reality, pressure has ratcheted up to new extremes. Even the proposed solutions have

their own built-in traps and inadequacies. The cost of living payments grudgingly offered to some of the most vulnerable households might be better than nothing, but hardly correspond to the scale of the crisis at hand. The proposed £650 payment is actually split into two payments, with the first due this month ([though delays have been mooted](#)) and the second at an unspecified time in the autumn, after another round of energy price hikes.

When I spoke to Union Chapel's CEO, Michael Chandler, he was keen to explain how the one-off payments, though welcome, weren't close to being enough. For those like PJ who use their services, it might have been better simply persisting with the £20 universal credit uplift. Cash windfalls can be tough to manage. If budgeting was torturous before, then it is becoming borderline impossible in the current climate. This is doubly true for those with existing debts or substance misuse issues. It's not difficult to see how the proposed payments will simply be swallowed up on arrival. How are you supposed to plan against the future when ends never quite seem to meet? It's just another consequence and hidden cost of poverty: the sense of time never quite being your own.

It's hardly news that life in the UK is becoming untenable, for ever more people. The "safety net", imperfect as it was, long ago frayed into a trapeze wire. For millions like PJ, poverty and its attendant costs are only ever an accidental single slip away. This was true long before this year and its increasing levels of sheer economic derangement.

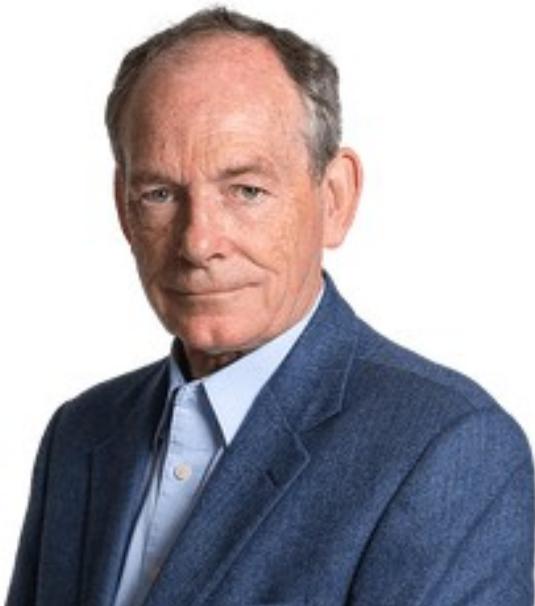
- Francisco Garcia is a London-based writer and journalist
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[\*\*Opinion\*\*](#)[\*\*Conservative leadership\*\*](#)

## **Why the Labour party is praying for the Tories not to vote for Rishi Sunak**

[Simon Jenkins](#)



In the race for the top job there's the alumni of Academy Boris – and then there's the former chancellor, Keir Starmer's biggest headache



‘Rishi Sunak was thrust into sudden prominence at the Treasury.’  
Photograph: Alastair Grant/AP

Tue 12 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 15.00 EDT

There is no grimmer epitaph for Boris Johnson’s Tory leadership than the parade now eager to succeed him. On coming to power three years ago, he decapitated his party of talent. Like a new emperor fearful of rivals, he threw out the Hammonds, Rudds, Gaukes, Clarks and Greenings – anyone who offered an ounce of competence and dignity to his administration. Instead, the path to Downing Street has been crowded with a jostling rabble of second-raters. The party should narrow down its choices as swiftly as voting allows. Then Johnson must go.

[The current auction of tax-cutting promises](#) by the various candidates illustrates the evils of the Conservatives’ “primary election” approach to party democracy. It is Johnsonism without Johnson. Lower taxes are the crudest way to secure votes, with consequences horribly visible now in Sri Lanka. No matter that you sat in a cabinet that raised them. No matter that you have no idea how to cut spending – though George Osborne could tell you how. No matter that you may have no intention of honouring the pledge. You are alumni of the Boris academy of populist rule. You can say what you like, what looks good in a headline. You are the new politics.

Almost all of these aspiring prime ministers have some responsibility for the state of the NHS and schools, the staffing chaos at airports, the collapse of the justice system and the impoverishing of local government. Crippled by Brexit, blasted by Covid and torpedoed by sanctions on Russia, they have struggled to sustain their party's reputation for responsible economics. It has been undeniably tough. But as Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies [has remarked](#) of economic policy over the past three years: "Pretty much everything we could have got wrong, we got wrong." He sees the current crises of inflation and living costs as a result of this.

This might be thought a suitable moment for ministerial self-doubt and humility. Tax cuts, whether on incomes or businesses, have been a matter for intensive debate within the cabinet and government over the past year. Most of the candidates have been parties to that debate. They know well that tax cuts must be part of any considered package of measures to promote growth, bring down inflation and ease the cost of living. Instead they have turned the cuts into a mindless slogan of appeal to the party's right wing. It mimics 2019's "Get Brexit done", and is just as stupid.

One candidate alone has stood firm against this nonsense, beyond [the mildest possible commitment](#) to reduce taxes in the future. Rishi Sunak, until recently the chancellor of the exchequer, was an inexperienced unknown four years ago. Thrust into sudden prominence at the Treasury, his rise has been mixed and bruised by misjudgments. [His wife's offshore tax status](#) was a mistake, as has been his vain publicity machine – apparently taking after Johnson's. Early ambition saw him lurch into foolishly supporting hard Brexit and tough imprisonment.

These matters are now past. The raw fact of this election is that Sunak remains the only candidate, with the possible exception of Jeremy Hunt, with a record of sustained competence in one of the toughest offices of state. His straight talking and lack of evasive cliche in public forums have been a breath of fresh air. His final days at the Treasury saw him adamant in seeking to balance the needs of public spending against the dangers of a budget deficit and soaring indebtedness. In particular he is known to have fought Johnson's plea for tax cuts to aid his personal survival, a fight that reportedly precipitated the chancellor's resignation.

Sunak's election video, presumably from the same team as produced his publicity material, was cringingly embarrassing and seemingly out of character. It is not his common touch or love of country that the nation needs. It needs a calm intelligence applied to the task of steering it through its most intensive period of disruption of the century so far. It needs dogged courage, not histrionics.

The Tory electoral system now under way encourages Tory MPs to emphasise difference and to darken the names and records of their rivals. It leads to blatant bargains on future preferment, and offers no incentive to promote concord or party unity, but every incentive to rubbish one another. The remarkable expertise of all the candidates in macro-economics is wondrous to see. It is a mystery that they can all have loyally voted for Sunak's budgets and other measures in recent months. There is a Johnson lurking in every one.

Of Sunak's rivals, both Hunt and Penny Mordaunt have failed to capture the political imagination of the country, while Liz Truss has shown herself startlingly lightweight in her public pronouncements. Her attempt to portray herself as a new Thatcher and as the beacon of the party's right wing is ludicrous. It is hard to recall her making a thoughtful speech in her life. She lives and breathes cliche. Most of the other candidates lack the experience and gravitas so clearly needed by the country at present. Tom Tugendhat and Kemi Badenoch have never even sat round a cabinet table.

This is not a party election. On the strength of a vote three years ago, for a now discredited prime minister, the Conservative party is taking upon itself the choice of a new prime minister. He or she may be validated in a future election, but for the time being about 200,000 party members must stand proxy for the electorate as a whole. They must be asked to choose a leader for an emergency, a leader for the time being, a leader to bring the nation together.

Polling is as yet fluid. Most polls have shown Sunak favoured both by his party and by the wider British public. This could answer any doubts Conservative members might have as to whether the wider electorate will favour a member of an Asian immigrant family. Indeed it suggests that the nation is eager for precisely the maturity of judgment it urgently needs.

Sunak remains young and a political ingénue. His Brexit past is a shadow on his horizon. The man's position on the political spectrum is unclear. But he is the right choice now. For the [Conservatives](#) the safest maxim must be that of the warrior general, to ask what the enemy most wants him to do – and try not to do it. Labour is praying for the Tories not to vote for Sunak. Enough said.

Simon Jenkins is a Guardian columnist

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## OpinionUber

# Uber's privileged access to politicians shows the lobby system urgently needs to change

[Vicky Cann](#)

The European Commission has long been complacent about its revolving-door problem. It's time to tackle corporate capture

- [What are the Uber files?](#) A guide to cab-hailing firm's ruthless expansion tactics



'Data from LobbyFacts shows that Uber has spent more than €1m since 2013 on paying lobby and law firms to lobby on its behalf.' Photograph: David Swanson/Reuters

Mon 11 Jul 2022 13.30 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 05.14 EDT

The Uber files are extraordinarily revealing about the ride-hailing app's lobbying operations across Europe. The company's extensive and ruthless tactics were exposed this week after the [career lobbyist Mark MacGann](#), who led Uber's efforts to win over governments, leaked thousands of documents to the Guardian. They look like a prime example of corporate capture. Corporate or regulatory capture happens when corporations dominate decision-making and are able to influence outcomes to suit their interests. And, from Paris to London to Brussels, far too many politicians seem to have fallen under [Uber's spell](#).

Easy access to decision-makers, whether face to face, by email or by text message, has clearly been at the heart of Uber's lobby strategy. The company has cultivated relationships and merrily schmoozed political leaders and ministers across the world.

## Q&A

### **What are the Uber files?**

#### Show

The Uber files is a global investigation based on a trove of 124,000 documents that were [leaked to the Guardian by Mark MacGann](#), Uber's former chief lobbyist in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The data consist of emails, iMessages and WhatsApp exchanges between the Silicon Valley giant's most senior executives, as well as memos, presentations, notebooks, briefing papers and invoices.

The leaked records cover 40 countries and span 2013 to 2017, the period in which Uber was aggressively expanding across the world. They reveal how the company broke the law, duped police and regulators, exploited violence against drivers and secretly lobbied governments across the world.

To facilitate a global investigation in the public interest, the Guardian shared the data with 180 journalists in 29 countries via the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). The investigation was managed and led by the Guardian with the ICIJ.

[In a statement](#), Uber said: "We have not and will not make excuses for past behaviour that is clearly not in line with our present values. Instead, we ask the public to judge us by what we've done over the last five years and what we will do in the years to come."

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

At the EU level, Uber has had 70 meetings with the highest levels in the European Commission, including 24 with commissioners since late November 2014. And these are just the meetings that we know about. Alongside the contact the then French economy minister, [Emmanuel Macron](#), and his team made with Uber and the off-the-book meetings the company had with various UK ministers, Uber has enjoyed privileged and often private access to decision-makers for far too long.

Uber has never been one of the highest spenders in the EU's big tech lobby. Its lobby spending, which is declared through the EU's voluntary lobby register, has grown [14-fold since 2013](#), but from a low base. And it has not had its own army of lobbyists either.

Instead, [data from LobbyFacts](#) shows that Uber has spent more than €1m since 2013 on paying lobby and law firms to lobby on its behalf. Beyond this, Uber is a member of various industry lobby groups in Brussels that help to both amplify its lobby demands and act as cover when it wants to operate under the radar. This is a tried and tested tactic of the [big tech lobby](#).

And let's not forget thinktanks. In the Brussels bubble it is almost de rigueur for big corporations to join thinktanks and to fund their work in the hope of gaining support for lobby demands and, crucially, for the political framing of an issue. Uber is affiliated to [several thinktanks](#), according to our research.

Back in 2014, Uber was worried that its [fulsome supporter Neelie Kroes](#), the EU commissioner for the digital agenda from 2010 until 2014, was due to leave office. So the company set out to bring her onboard, surely aware of the insider knowhow and extensive contact books that such appointments can bring.

The European Commission has long been complacent about its revolving-door problem. Despite warnings before Kroes and others were due to leave office in 2014, it resisted demands to tighten the rules.

But even these lobby tactics can't fully explain why Uber was able to enjoy political access and influence among so many politicians. For that, we need to recognise the wave of enthusiasm within EU policymaking circles for so-called "innovation" and big tech "disruptors". Policymakers have viewed platforms such as Uber, Airbnb and others as the titans of "growth and innovation" – granting them privileged access.

It's time to tackle this kind of corporate capture. Full lobby transparency is a prerequisite, but it's not enough on its own. We need tough rules to tackle privileged access and an end to the revolving door. And we need a real debate about the power that corporations exercise over our political discourse. Without this, we have no hope for tackling the climate emergency, the cost of living crisis or the power of big tech.

At the end of the day, the reason Uber lobbies governments is in order to protect its business model. This model relies on privatising profit and socialising risks – and those "risks" include responsibility for its workers' employment rights. Already, there have been attempts to regulate this business model. Last year, the UK supreme court ruled that Uber's drivers were "workers" rather than "self-employed". In the coming months, members of the European parliament will look at a proposal to regulate the rights of workers for Uber and other similar platforms.

Politicians now need to heed the lessons of the Uber files and break the spell.

- Vicky Cann is a campaigner at Corporate Europe Observatory, a Brussels NGO that exposes corporate lobbying

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## OpinionShinzo Abe

# Shinzo Abe is gone, but his controversial vision for Japan lives on

[Jeff Kingston](#)

Sunday's elections delivered a landslide victory for Abe's party. Years after he left office, the late former prime minister's dream of amending Japan's constitution is getting closer



A memorial to Shinzo Abe at Zojoji temple, Toyko, Japan, 11 July 2022.  
Photograph: Kimimasa Mayama/EPA

Tue 12 Jul 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 15.31 EDT

The assassination of Shinzo Abe still hasn't really sunk in, but the tremors are rippling across Japan and the world. He was shot from behind in a nation where firearm-related homicides are rare: in 2021, there was [just one](#), compared with [more than 20,000](#) in the US. It was an assault on democracy and an act of barbarism.

The Japanese media coverage has been wall-to-wall and generally fawning, reframing the legacy of a man who left office in 2020 under the [shadow of scandals](#), with low public support. The reverential tone and self-censorship is reminiscent of [declining press freedoms](#) during Abe's tenure in office, when critical news outlets such as the Asahi were subdued and the press corps was in thrall to power. It's worth noting that much of the international media has also been overly respectful and restrained, veering towards hagiography.

So what was Abe's real legacy – and might the landslide victory of his party in Sunday's elections allow his vision to be realised more fully in the years to come?

Abe's legacy is felt most keenly in foreign policy – and the contentious question of Japan's status as an officially pacifist nation. The prime minister, Fumio Kishida, often consulted with his mentor, Abe, on international affairs. Abe was a powerful advocate of doubling Japan's defence spending to 2% of GDP and, unbound by the protocols of office, became an outspoken critic of China and Russia and supporter of Taiwan, [boldly declaring](#) last December that Beijing should have no doubts about Japan's response if China pursued military action against Taiwan. In drawing this red line, Abe was suggesting that the US and Japan would respond militarily, the first time since 1945 that a leading Japanese figure had threatened to take military action.

Abe transformed Japan's security posture like no Japanese postwar prime minister before him. He created a national security council to coordinate government policies and responses, embraced new defence guidelines with the US, and passed [major security legislation](#) in 2015 that greatly expanded what Japan could do militarily in support of the US. Critically, this legislation enabled Japan's prime ministers [to sidestep the constitutional constraints](#) on its formidable military forces embodied in article 9 of the 1947 peace constitution – written by occupying US forces.

The public has been wary of this more assertive security policy, although the mood may be shifting due to Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and

growing recognition of the threats posed by China, North Korea and Russia in east Asia. Recent joint Russian-Chinese [bomber and naval patrols](#) around the Japanese archipelago have highlighted the changing risk environment.

In terms of a domestic agenda, Abe was best known for “[Abenomics](#)” (massive monetary easing, fiscal stimuli and structural reforms), his bold programme to revive the Japanese economy – but it has proven to be a meagre legacy. By 2017, it referred to little more than a [branding strategy](#) to generate a buzz rather than a blueprint for economic revitalisation. Indeed, when running to head the conservative Liberal Democratic party (LDP) last autumn, Kishida lambasted Abenomics as an [abject failure](#).

An even less flattering legacy is the allegations of [cronyism and a lack of transparency](#). Important and potentially embarrassing documents were reported to have been altered, hidden and sometimes shredded, impeding accountability. Abe’s effort at labour market reform was a potential gamechanger, but after it was revealed that he used [questionable data](#) to make his case in the Diet, he had to settle for very modest changes. There is also the subject of his denialism and [downplaying of Japan’s historic misdeeds](#), especially regarding “comfort women” and forced labour, which inflamed grievances in nations that had suffered from Japan’s wartime and colonial exploits, making it difficult to pursue reconciliation and cooperation.

Paradoxically, despite his enormous stature and power, Abe left office without making much headway on Japan’s gathering challenges, especially the [demographic timebomb](#) of a rapidly ageing society. Critics such as Tobias Harris, in his biography *The Iconoclast*, [accused Abe of squandering political capital](#) on constitutional revision while ignoring the climate crisis.

No doubt Abe was proud that he presided over a rightward shift in Japan’s political centre of gravity – and it’s a shift that may well have accelerated over the weekend. Elections for the upper house of Japan’s parliament on 10 July gave Abe’s LDP a landslide victory – turnout was boosted by the shock assassination. Kishida now has the votes he needs to increase defence spending and, perhaps, also push ahead with Abe’s holy grail: revising Japan’s pacifist constitution.

Voters don't regard constitutional revision as a priority, and hence Kishida campaigned on bread-and-butter issues such as how to help households cope with inflation. But Abe's death, and the fact that Kishida won't face elections again until 2025, clearly offer an opportunity for him to realise the dream.

Revision has always been about article 9, the clause in the constitution that bans war and maintaining military forces – one that leaves Japan's self-defence forces' position awkwardly ambiguous. Abe sought to insert wording to clarify the self-defence forces's status and when he left office stated that his [greatest regret](#) was not being able to muster public support for revision. Abe was his own worst enemy, as the more he pressed ahead to whittle down constitutional pacifism the greater the public's resistance became in response to his hawkishness.

Kishida is a moderate and so encounters far less backlash when he advocates Abe's policy wishlist. Now he may be able to honour his mentor's death. In this sense, the story of Shinzo Abe's legacy – in Japan and across a fractious, divided world – may be far from over.

- Jeff Kingston is director of Asian studies at Temple University, Japan
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## 2022.07.12 - Around the world

- [January 6 violence Capitol attack panel to examine role of far-right groups](#)
- [Steve Bannon Judge rejects delaying contempt trial](#)
- [Maria Ressa Amal Clooney condemns court after Nobel laureate's conviction upheld](#)
- [Shinzo Abe Family and friends of former Japan PM attend private funeral in Tokyo](#)

## January 6 hearings

# Capitol attack panel examines Trump's 'summoning a mob' on January 6

In the seventh public hearing, the committee is focusing on extremists such as Proud Boys and Oath Keepers



Members of Proud Boys in front of the US Capitol protesting against the certification of Joe Biden. Photograph: Jim Urquhart/Reuters

*Lauren Gambino in Washington*

[@laurenegambino](#)

Tue 12 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Wed 13 Jul 2022 05.41 EDT

The House committee investigating the January 6 attack accused [Donald Trump](#) of inciting the “American carnage” he once warned against when he summoned a mob to Washington in a last-gasp attempt to stay in power.

The session, the seventh in a series of public hearings to present the findings of the committee’s yearlong investigation, concluded with a shocking

disclosure from the Republican committee vice-chair, Liz Cheney.

Trump had [attempted to contact a witness](#) cooperating with the investigation, Cheney said, adding that the witness did not answer and the committee had alerted the justice department.

“We will take any efforts to influence witness testimony very seriously,” Cheney warned.

Over the course of three hours on Tuesday, the committee presented evidence that Trump, increasingly desperate after the states confirmed Joe Biden’s victory on 14 December 2020, sought to seize a second term. Ignoring advice to concede, he began fixating on 6 January, when Congress would meet to certify the election results.

A presentation led by two Democrats, Jamie Raskin of Maryland and Stephanie Murphy of Florida, argued that Trump’s tweet inviting his supporters to attend a Save America rally in Washington on 6 January 2021 was a “call to action” that violent extremist groups including the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers readily answered. Members of both groups are facing rare charges of seditious conspiracy over the Capitol attack.

The message set off an “explosive chain reaction among [Trump’s] followers”, Raskin said.

The Democratic committee chair, Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, said: “Donald Trump summoned a mob to Washington DC and ultimately spurred that mob to wage a violent attack on our democracy.”

In its presentation, the committee disclosed a draft tweet in which Trump planned to direct supporters to “March to the Capitol after Stop the Steal!!”

The message, obtained from the National Archives, was undated but stamped with the words “president has seen”.

Murphy also presented evidence that Trump “edited and ad-libbed” in his speech at the Save America rally at the Ellipse on 6 January, further inflaming his supporters and directing them to march to the Capitol.

“The evidence confirms this was not a spontaneous call to action but rather was a deliberate strategy decided upon in advance by the president,” Murphy said.

The presentation pulled heavily from a taped deposition by Pat Cipollone, the former White House counsel who agreed to sit for an interview after last month’s explosive testimony from Cassidy Hutchinson, a former top aide to Trump’s chief of staff, Mark Meadows.

The committee delved into an “unhinged” six-hour meeting on the evening of 18 December that began in the Oval Office and ended in the president’s private residence, during which Trump allies discussed increasingly radical ways to keep him in power, including a proposal to seize voting machines.

The meeting was characterized as a “heated and profane clash” between those who believed Trump should concede the election and a group of outsiders who some advisers referred to as “Team Crazy”. They included Trump’s personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, a lawyer for his campaign team, Sidney Powell, and retired general Michael Flynn, a former national security adviser.

Using testimony from participants and witnesses, the committee reconstructed the late-night confrontation in vivid, at times almost-comical detail, describing how argument erupted over a plan to appoint Powell as a special counsel with the power to seize machines.

“You’re a bunch of pussies,” Giuliani described telling White House officials. A bewildered Cipollone said he “vehemently opposed” the Trump allies’ plan.

Cipollone told investigators Powell, who embraced conspiracy theories involving a deceased Venezuelan leader and the Chinese government, to be wholly unqualified.

“I didn’t think she should be appointed to anything,” he said.

Hours after the meeting, Trump [sent a tweet](#) that Murphy said was a “call to action and, in some cases, as a call to arms”. Trump’s supporters saw the

tweet as an invitation to come to Washington and disrupt the electoral count, the committee argued, showing clips of far-right groups using the message to mobilize members.

One Trump supporter threatened a “red wedding” on 6 January, a reference to a massacre in the TV hit Game of Thrones. Another message said: “Is the 6th D-Day? Is that why Trump wants everyone there.”

Wielding Trump’s inaugural speech against him, Raskin said: “American carnage: that’s Donald Trump’s true legacy. His desire to overthrow the people’s election and seize the presidency … nearly toppled the constitutional order.”

The next hearing will detail Trump’s “supreme dereliction” during the assault on the Capitol, Cheney said.

She noted Trump was told repeatedly that he lost the election but refused to accept the results and said: “No rational or sane man in his position could disregard that information and reach the opposite conclusion. And Donald Trump cannot escape responsibility by being willfully blind.”

In live testimony, Jason Van Tatenhove, a former Oath Keepers spokesperson, said the insurrectionists planned “an armed revolution” and could have sparked “a new civil war”.

The committee also heard from Stephen Ayres, a former Trump supporter who recently pleaded guilty to a federal charge over the riot.

Trump’s lie of a stolen election drew him to Washington, he testified, saying it “felt like I had horse-blinders on”. If he had known Trump had no evidence the election was stolen, he said, he may never have come to the Capitol.

Ayres offered his own experience as a cautionary tale: “It changed my life – not for the good, definitely not for the better.”

After the hearing, he approached police officers who defended the Capitol. It was an emotional exchange.

The committee also disclosed a striking text exchange between Brad Parscale, Trump's former campaign manager, and Katrina Pierson, an adviser who sought to raise the alarm about dangerous individuals involved in January 6 planning.

In texts sent in the aftermath of the riot, Parscale expressed remorse for working to elect Trump and blamed the former president for inciting violence.

“It wasn’t the rhetoric,” Pierson wrote.

Parscale said: “Yes it was.”

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## Steve Bannon

# Bannon suffers setback as judge rejects delaying contempt of Congress trial

Federal judge also rejects claim by former Trump strategist that he thought his non-compliance was excused by executive privilege



Steve Bannon arrives at US district court in Washington, on 15 June.  
Photograph: Elizabeth Frantz/Reuters

### Hugo Lowell in Washington

Mon 11 Jul 2022 18.27 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 13.20 EDT

Donald Trump's former top strategist, [Steve Bannon](#), suffered heavy setbacks in his contempt of Congress case on Monday after a federal judge dismissed his motion to delay his trial, scheduled for next week, and ruled he could not make two of his principal defences to a jury.

The flurry of adverse rulings from District of Columbia district judge Carl Nichols – a [Trump](#) appointee – marked a significant knock back for Bannon, who was charged with criminal contempt after he ignored a subpoena last year from the House January 6 select committee investigating the [attack on the US Capitol](#) by extremist Trump supporters in 2021.

Nichols refused in federal court in Washington DC to delay Bannon’s trial date, set for next Monday, saying that he saw no reason to push back proceedings after he severely limited the defences that the former Trump aide’s lawyers could present to a jury.

The defeats for Bannon stunned his lead lawyer, David Schoen, who asked, aghast: “What’s the point of going to trial if we don’t have any defences?”

Nichols stripped Bannon of [two of his main defences](#) for defying the select committee’s subpoena, ruling he could not present evidence to the jury that he had relied on the advice of counsel, and could not rely on entrapment by estoppel, the argument that a defendant was advised erroneously by an official that certain conduct was legal.

The decision, Nichols said, came in large part because he was bound by the controlling case law at the DC circuit level, which ruled in [Licavoli v United States 1961](#), that advice of counsel was no defence against contempt of Congress charges.

Nichols also rejected Bannon’s claims that he thought his non-compliance was excused by executive privilege, and narrowed the arguments Bannon could present mainly to whether he was aware of the deadlines for testimony and producing documents established by the select committee.

The decision not to allow Bannon to pursue executive privilege arguments came after the US prosecutors said in a filing that Trump’s own attorney, Justin Clark, told the FBI last month that Trump never invoked privilege for specific materials compelled in the subpoena.

But Nichols went further and said Bannon could not make an executive privilege claim because none of the justice department’s internal guidelines he supposedly relied on to determine he was immune from the congressional

inquiry applied to non-White House officials, such as Bannon was at that time.

The judge, in refusing to delay the trial date, ruled in favour of prosecutors, who urged him to look past Bannon’s “sudden wish to testify” to the House select committee – a development [first reported by the Guardian](#) – as nothing more than a last-ditch move to avoid trial.

It was not clear whether Bannon still intended to testify and produce documents to the select committee after Nichols’ rulings.

Nichols handed down additional defeats for Bannon, rejecting the interpretation by Bannon’s lawyers of “willful non-compliance”, which they took to include an element of intent. Nichols said prosecutors needed only to show his default was deliberate and intentional.

He quashed Bannon’s [motion to subpoena top Democrats](#) – including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi – and select committee members, and denied a motion to introduce evidence about the justice department’s decision not to charge other Trump White House officials referred for contempt.

The judge, who served in George W Bush’s justice department, also reaffirmed that the select committee was properly constituted and served a legitimate legislative function, in a significant signal undercutting claims by some House Republicans.

While some Republican congress members have complained that the panel was illegitimate, Nichols said the House voting on contempt referrals from the panel meant it had been repeatedly ratified, and he would defer to the House to interpret its own rules.

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## [Maria Ressa](#)

# **Maria Ressa: Amal Clooney condemns court after Nobel laureate's conviction upheld**

Human rights lawyer's team calls on new Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos Jr to 'stop the rot' and allow a free press



Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney is jointly leading the international legal team representing Maria Ressa. Photograph: David Dee Delgado/Reuters

*[Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) South-east Asia correspondent*

Tue 12 Jul 2022 02.12 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 12.46 EDT

Human rights lawyer [Amal Clooney](#) has condemned a decision by a court in the Philippines to uphold the conviction of Nobel prize-winner Maria Ressa in a cyber libel case and her legal team has said the world is watching to see if newly elected president Ferdinand Marcos Jr will "stop the rot" or continue attacks on journalists.

Maria Ressa, co-founder of the website Rappler, [lost her appeal last week](#) against a conviction for cyber libel – just one of an onslaught of legal cases and investigations the journalist is battling.

Ressa and her former colleague Rey Santos Jr, who face jail over the conviction, plan to appeal again, including to the supreme court.

Clooney, who jointly leads the international counsel team acting for Ressa, said the journalist “should be celebrated – not thrown in jail” for her work. Ressa had been “considered guilty until proven innocent – and then prevented from proving her innocence”, she said.

Clooney added that she hoped the Marcos Jr administration would “show the world that it is strong enough to withstand scrutiny and allow a free press”.

Independent media came under intense pressure under his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte. Just days before he left office, the Philippine authorities [ordered Rappler to shut down](#) over an allegation that the outlet violated restrictions on foreign ownership in media – a claim that Rappler denies.

Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, who leads Ressa’s international counsel team with Clooney, said the [Philippines](#) was at a pivotal moment. “Duterte leaves behind a country in which press freedom, human rights and the rule of law have been severely weakened,” Gallagher said. “The world is watching how the new president responds. Will President Ferdinand Marcos Jr stop the rot, or will he double down on his predecessor’s attacks on journalists and civil society?”

It is feared that conditions for journalists may not improve under Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of the former dictator. His father is notorious for imposing martial law and closing down all independent media outlets, and he too has been criticised for seeking to dodge media perceived as critical during election campaigning.

The cyberlibel case relates to a story published on Rappler in 2012 that alleged ties between a Philippine businessman, Wilfredo D Keng, and a high court judge.

Ressa's lawyers point out that the cyberlibel law did not exist at the time of publication and that Ressa was not an author of the article. They also argue that the report was on a matter of public interest and written in good faith, and so should be protected free speech in Philippine law.

However, last week the court of appeals upheld her conviction and increased her maximum prison sentence to more than six years.

Ressa – who was [awarded the Nobel peace prize](#) last year for her work to “safeguard freedom of expression” – said the court decision followed alarming developments for press freedom over the past three weeks. This included, she said, the blocking of news websites, the shutdown order against Rappler, the killing of a media worker, and increased online attacks against journalists and activists.

“Despite these sustained attacks from all sides, we will continue to do our jobs. Independent journalism in the Philippines is needed now more than ever,” Ressa said.

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**Shinzo Abe**

## Family and friends of Shinzo Abe attend private funeral in Tokyo

Members of the public pay their respects to former prime minister outside Buddhist temple



The hearse carrying the body of Shinzo Abe leaves Zojoji temple in Tokyo after the funeral. Photograph: Issei Kato/Reuters

*[Justin McCurry](#) in Tokyo and agencies*

Tue 12 Jul 2022 03.35 EDT Last modified on Wed 13 Jul 2022 09.40 EDT

Family and friends of Japan's former prime minister, [Shinzo Abe](#), have attended his funeral at a Buddhist temple in Tokyo while members of the public paid their respects outside, four days after he was [shot dead](#) while making a campaign speech.

Mourners in black suits and dresses gathered at Zojoji temple for the private funeral service, while police officers monitored onlookers, some holding

bunches of flowers, who had braved the early afternoon heat.

Hundreds of people had filed into the temple the previous evening to pay their respects to Abe, who was [Japan](#)'s longest-serving prime minister – a conservative who inspired unwavering loyalty among his supporters and loathing among his critics.

The ceremony was closed to the media and limited to family and close friends, with his widow, Akie, as chief mourner.

After the service, a hearse carrying Abe's body was due to make its way through central Tokyo, including the political nerve centre of Nagatacho, the Diet building he first entered in 1993 and the office where he spent a [turbulent year](#) as prime minister from 2006 and then almost eight years after his [political comeback](#) in 2012.



Mourners near Zojoji temple carrying photographs of Abe. Photograph: Christopher Jue/EPA

Keiko Noumi, a teacher, was among the mourners who had come to offer prayers and flowers in front of a large photograph of Abe set up inside the temple grounds, showing him in a white shirt, laughing, with his hands on his hips.

“There was a sense of security when he was in charge of the country,” she said. “I really supported him, so this is very unfortunate.”

Yuko Takehisa, an assistant nurse who lives near Tokyo, described Abe’s death as “despicable”.

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“More could have been done to prevent it,” she said, complaining that “no one reported” the suspect, [Tetsuya Yamagami](#), to police, despite reports he had test fired a handmade gun before the attack.

Satoshi Ninoyu, the chairman of the National Public Safety Commission, said there would be a full review of the security arrangements on the day of Abe’s assassination. “We take this incident extremely seriously,” he was quoted by the Nikkei newspaper as saying.

Other mourners queued in front of the headquarters of the ruling Liberal Democratic party (LDP), which Abe led for almost a decade, to leave offerings at a makeshift shrine while party employees handed out cups of cold tea.

The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, [offered his condolences](#) during a brief stop in Tokyo on Monday, and the US treasury secretary, Janet Yellen, and the vice-president of Taiwan, William Lai, were among the overseas dignitaries who attended Abe’s wake on Monday.

The Kyodo news agency said almost 2,000 messages of condolence had arrived from around the world.

In comments posted on the Élysée’s Twitter account, the French president, [Emmanuel Macron, said](#): “I remember all our meetings and work together, especially during my visit [to Japan] in 2019 … I’ve lost a friend. He served his country with great courage, and audacity.”

Public memorials, possibly involving foreign political leaders, are expected to be held at a later date, but no details have been announced.

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- [Housing UK property prices rise at the fastest rate for 18 years](#)
- [Live Russia-Ukraine war: Snake Island and Odesa hit by rockets; row over ‘stolen’ Ukrainian grain grows](#)
- [Edinburgh festival 2022 Fringe tries to quell revolt after criticism of 2022 event](#)

[Skip to key events](#)

[Business live](#)[Business](#)

# UK's public finances on 'unsustainable' long-term path; house prices surge despite squeeze – as it happened

Office for Budget Responsibility warns the world is becoming a riskier place, as UK faces cost of aging population and loss of fuel duty

Updated 7 Jul 2022

[\*Graeme Wearden\*](#)

Thu 7 Jul 2022 11.49 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 02.37 EDT

Key events:

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[UK property prices rise at the fastest rate for 18 years - full story](#)
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## Pound rises as Boris Johnson agrees to resign

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[Jet2 blasts UK airports over 'inexcusable' failures](#)
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[Introduction: UK property prices up 1.8% in June despite squeeze](#)



Soaring energy prices and inflation threaten to tip the UK into recession, fiscal watchdog warns. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

*[Graeme Wearden](#)*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 11.49 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 02.37 EDT

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# Live feed

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## Introduction: UK property prices up 1.8% in June despite squeeze

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7 Jul 2022 11.49

## Closing post

Time to wrap up..... here's today's main stories:

And our rolling coverage of Boris Johnson's resignation is here:

*Goodnight. GW*

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7 Jul 2022 11.45

The UK-focused **FTSE 250** share index has gained 1.5% today, closing 281 points higher at 18875 points, a one-week high.

That outpaces the blue-chip **FTSE 100**, dominated by international firms, which has closed 81 points higher at 7189, up 1.15%.

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7 Jul 2022 11.35

**It's been a decent day for sterling, and the London stock market.**

The pound is holding its gains this afternoon after Boris Johnson said he would quit as prime minister, up three quarters of a cent at \$1.20.

**David Madden**, market analyst at **Equiti Capital**, says the easing of political uncertainty helped sterling recover from Wednesday's two-year lows.

The British pound rallied today on the news that Prime Minister Johnson will resign. Mr Johnson's premiership suffered a series of knocks recently, and that sparked a flurry of resignations from cabinet members – which hurt the pound.

Now that Boris Johnson has declared his intention to step aside, sterling has rebounded as a certain amount of political uncertainty has been put to bed. The Conservative party will begin the search for a Prime Minister but that is another day's matter.

Sterling and UK stocks all strengthened after news broke that Boris Johnson will quit as leader of the Conservative Party.

The pound slid to a two-year low against the US dollar yesterday.

However, it moved 0.88% higher against the dollar today.  
[pic.twitter.com/I7Hi2uEovp](https://pic.twitter.com/I7Hi2uEovp)

— London Live (@LondonLive) [July 7, 2022](#)

**Philip Shaw** of **Investec** pointed out that the resignation of a government leader would usually cause a sharp sell-off in the country's currency, but not this time.

One could argue that Mr Johnson's departure removes, or at least lessens, some of the downside risks facing the pound. In its discussions over the Northern Ireland protocol, Boris Johnson's government has become increasingly hostile towards the EU in recent months, running the risk of increasing trade frictions with the EU. In addition, as public

dissatisfaction with the UK government grew, Scottish independence may have seemed more appealing to Scottish voters.

The SNP's request for a second referendum has been rejected, but Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said that the next general election will become a 'de facto' referendum if no second vote is permitted. A change at No. 10 may help to douse Scottish appetite for separatism.

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[7 Jul 2022 11.15](#)



Joanna Partridge

**Dairy farmers are warning that a chronic shortage of workers is hitting milk production and further fuelling food price inflation, and are calling for urgent action to stop the situation getting worse.**

Eight in 10 farm owners looking for workers said they had received very few or zero applications from people with the right experience or qualifications, in response to a survey by Arla Foods, the UK's largest dairy co-operative.

Farmers are blaming Brexit and Covid for their recruitment problems, saying that the combination of the end of free movement for EU workers and the aftermath of the pandemic, along with other economic factors, is making it harder to find suitable staff.

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7 Jul 2022 09.46

# **Sainsbury's shareholders vote against committing to pay real Living Wage**

Sainsbury's shareholders have rejected a motion directing the company to become a Living Wage accredited employer, at today's AGM.

Only around 17% of votes were cast in favour:

The results are in! Approximately 17% of investors voted in support of our resolution calling Sainsbury's to accredit as a Living Wage employer [pic.twitter.com/iQTzOgMZLs](https://pic.twitter.com/iQTzOgMZLs)

— Rachel Hargreaves (@RachelHarg9613) [July 7, 2022](#)

If passed, the motion would have committed Sainsbury's to paying its contractors the real living wage, as well as its staff (as it currently does) -- and also to implement future rises in the .

**Martin Scicluna**, chairman of **Sainsbury's**, says:

“We are proud to have led the way on colleague pay in our industry for the past five years and to pay our colleagues the living wage regardless of where they work in the country.”

“We would like to thank our shareholders for their overwhelming votes of support and confidence in how Simon [CEO Simon Roberts] and his team are running the business.

We believe very strongly in paying people well for the excellent job they do for our customers every single day. We also believe that we need to make all business investment decisions independently and that these decisions should not be outsourced to a third party.”

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7 Jul 2022 09.41



Rob Davies

**The house always wins, except today when gambling stocks are dominating the list of biggest losers on the London stock market.**

The most obvious cause was a forecast downgrade from **Entain**, owner of Ladbrokes and Coral, which cut guidance for the full year, blaming soaring inflation for curtailing punters' spending power ([see earlier post](#)).

But political factors may well have been at play too.

[As the Guardian has reported](#), senior No10 advisers with ties to the gambling industry, as well as Jacob Rees-Mogg, were believed to be trying to water down tough regulatory reforms drafted by gambling minister Chris Philp. A white paper, due next week before the political chaos, was expected to be a lucky escape for bookies and online casinos.

Now the PM is headed for the exit, helped on his way by resignations including that of Philp himself, once a staunch Johnson loyalist. Philp parted

with a warning shot to the PM, to publish a “full and undiluted” version of the white paper.

I’m deeply saddened it has come to this, but the PM should step down given public and Parliamentary confidence has clearly gone, and given the importance of integrity in public life. I’m therefore stepping down as Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy now  
[pic.twitter.com/iXyd7inBQP](https://pic.twitter.com/iXyd7inBQP)

— Chris Philp (@CPhilpOfficial) [July 7, 2022](#)

With the power balance shifting fast, final publication of the white paper could be delayed, giving reformists such as Iain Duncan Smith the power and the time to get tougher reforms reinstated.

Gambling shares extended early losses as reports leaked out that the PM was preparing to address the nation.

**Entain**, which started the sell-off with its gloomy update, lost as much as 10% before recovering to be 6.75% down by early afternoon, the biggest faller on a rising FTSE100. **Flutter** lost 4.4%, while **888** was 4% lower.

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[7 Jul 2022 09.25](#)

**Economic news: The United States trade deficit with the rest of the world has fallen, due to a pick-up in exports.**

The trade deficit narrowed 1.3% in May to \$85.5 billion, [the Commerce Department reported](#), the smallest trade deficit since December’s \$78.9bn.

Exports rose 1.2% to a record \$255.9bn, the fourth straight monthly gain as rising energy prices pushed up the value of sales overseas.

Imports rose 0.6% to \$341.4bn, still below March's record high, with shipments of consumer goods dropping.

The US trade deficit shrunk in May to the lowest level of the year, reflecting a pickup in exports of goods and services  
<https://t.co/eVhUWQejtP>

— Bloomberg Asia (@BloombergAsia) [July 7, 2022](#)

The US trade deficit fell -1.3% MoM in May with exports up 1.2% MoM and imports up 0.6% MoM. Industrial supply exports up \$3.3 bil on a \$1.1 bil increase in crude oil exports. Consumer goods imports down. [#us #trade \(@BEA\\_News\)](#) <https://t.co/lZIzmrACLJ>  
<pic.twitter.com/cnblhN3V4E>

— MTS Insights (@MTSInsights) [July 7, 2022](#)

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Updated at 09.27 EDT

[7 Jul 2022 09.14](#)

**Stuart Rose, the veteran retailer and Conservative peer, has urged [Boris Johnson](#) to leave 10 Downing Street now, describing him as a “lame duck prime minister”.**

[Lord Rose, chair of supermarket chain Asda](#), warned the economy was being neglected amid the political crisis:

This has been too long in happening and it is unsustainable to continue with a hamstrung, lame duck prime minister into the autumn.

There doesn't seem to be anybody dealing with the serious issue of the economy. This political crisis has hamstrung everything.”

His comments came as a series of business leaders responded to Johnson's resignation and the appointment of an interim cabinet by calling for tax cuts to support the UK's deteriorating economy. [More here](#):

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[7 Jul 2022 09.10](#)

## Moody's Analytics: Johnson's resignation creates period of additional uncertainty

Britain's next leader needs to get to grips with the cost of living crisis, regional inequalities, and the risks from climate change, says **Moody's Analytics** senior economist, **David Muir**.

Boris Johnson's resignation creates a period of additional uncertainty for the UK which would ideally be quickly resolved.

Whoever takes over will need to re-focus policy on addressing the key risks to the economy, such as the cost of living squeeze, and also the UK's longer term challenges, in particular, measures to take forward the levelling up agenda and to mitigate risks from climate change."

You can catch up with all the latest dramatic political developments here:

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[7 Jul 2022 09.06](#)



Gwyn Topham

**The dispute that threatened a walkout of British Airways check-in staff at Heathrow airport during the summer holidays was suspended, after the airline made a “vastly improved” pay offer, *transport correspondent Gwyn Topham explains.***

After a day of talks on Wednesday a package was agreed with the Unite union that sources said in effect met its demand to restore the 10% pay cut introduced during the pandemic.

A one-off bonus payment for 2022 worth 10% of pay had earlier been rejected.

The offer will now be put to a ballot of Unite members but both parties hope that the agreement will resolve the immediate dispute.

A British Airways spokesperson said:

“We are very pleased that, following collaboration with the unions, they have decided not to issue dates for industrial action. This is great news for our customers and our people.”

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7 Jul 2022 08.33

**The FTSE 250 index of medium-sized firms is up around 1% today, at a one-week high,**

James Penny, chief investment officer at TAM Asset Management, says domestic firms could benefit from a new PM.

“Clear winners from Boris Johnson’s resignation might not be immediately apparent until a successor is found. Having said that, it’s likely his successor will have a softer stance on Europe and Brexit negotiations, boosting positivity for UK domestic businesses found in the mid and small cap space which have been battered as of late. This could be further boosted if the successor manages to right the UK ship and thus stabilise the pound, which would boost domestic businesses in the FTSE 250 and AIM.

“The UK economy will always respond positively to a firm hand on the tiller of the country, so this is only a benefit for the economy and its prospects as we head into a time of economic contraction. The crossroads of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis are also likely to be more clearly managed going forward.

Both should boost the pound and boost domestic asset prices. The overarching caveat is the UK is ostensibly a lot closer to an economic recession than many other developed nations, so the storm clouds on the UK market are far from dissipating. However, this development is undoubtedly positive for the UK market, the UK economy and its voters.

Market reactions after [#BorisJohnson](#) resigns as UK PM:

FTSE 250  $\uparrow$  to a 1-week high

FTSE 100 index eased slightly,  $\uparrow 1\%$ .

Sterling  $\uparrow$  to \$1.1994, 0.6% at the day's high, from \$1.1938 before the news broke - [@reuters \\$GBP \\$FTSE #stocks #UK #markets](#)

— Global Markets Forum (@ReutersGMF) [July 7, 2022](#)

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[7 Jul 2022](#)[08.09](#)

Shares in British Airways parent company rose after the industrial dispute affecting its check-in staff at London's Heathrow airport was suspended

IAG shares are now up 3.5%, adding to earlier gains, after Unite reported the two sides have reached a deal over pay.

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[7 Jul 2022](#)[07.52](#)

## **Heathrow check-in staff dispute suspended as BA makes improved pay offer**

**The industrial dispute affecting British Airways' check-in staff at Heathrow airport has been suspended after the company made a "vastly improved" pay offer, the Unite union says.**

Unite has announced that BA has made an increased pay offer for check-in staff, following talks yesterday.

Unite will now ballot members involved in the dispute on the proposed offer, with the dispute suspended.

Unite general secretary **Sharon Graham** said:

We welcome that BA has finally listened to the voice of its check-in staff.

Unite has repeatedly warned that pay disputes at BA were inevitable unless the company took our members' legitimate grievances seriously. I pay tribute to, and stand with, our members who have fought hard to protect their pay."

Those strikes were expected to cause disruption over the summer holiday period:

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[7 Jul 2022](#) [07.44](#)

A simple reading of post-war UK fiscal history suggests that the “inevitable periodic shocks” to come could push the national debt to nearly 320% of GDP in 50 years -- over triple current levels.

So warns the **Office for Budget Responsibility** in today's report, as it explains why it believes Britain faces an unsustainable debt burden unless future governments raise taxes.

It's tweeted the key charts:

Looking at spending and receipts over the next 50 years:

- Receipts fall slightly due to loss of motoring taxes
- The low birth rate reduces spending on education
- An ageing population and other cost pressures raise health, pensions, and social care spending [pic.twitter.com/IPL0RkTpDF](#)

— Office for Budget Responsibility (@OBR\_UK) [July 7, 2022](#)

The net result is a primary deficit that is lower in the near term (due to a better fiscal starting position & lower education spending) but higher in the long term (due to the rising cost of ageing & loss of motoring taxes) relative to our previous long-term projection  
[pic.twitter.com/d39OsZFQjH](#)

— Office for Budget Responsibility (@OBR\_UK) [July 7, 2022](#)

The overall ageing of the population, rising cost of health and other age-related services, and loss of motoring taxes see the government's stock of debt more than double to over 250% of GDP by the early 2070s if no further fiscal action is taken [pic.twitter.com/LoEZm48TFQ](#)

— Office for Budget Responsibility (@OBR\_UK) [July 7, 2022](#)

Factoring in the ratchet effect from periodic economic shocks could cause debt to almost quadruple to 320% of GDP by the 2070s, while the fiscal implications of the specific risks explored in this report would also worsen the long-term outlook [pic.twitter.com/jquNgkTEbJ](#)

— Office for Budget Responsibility (@OBR\_UK) [July 7, 2022](#)

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[7 Jul 2022 07.14](#)

## UK's public finances on 'unsustainable' path, as inflation threatens recession

**The UK's public finances are on an 'unsustainable' long-term path, the UK's independent fiscal watchdog has warned today.**

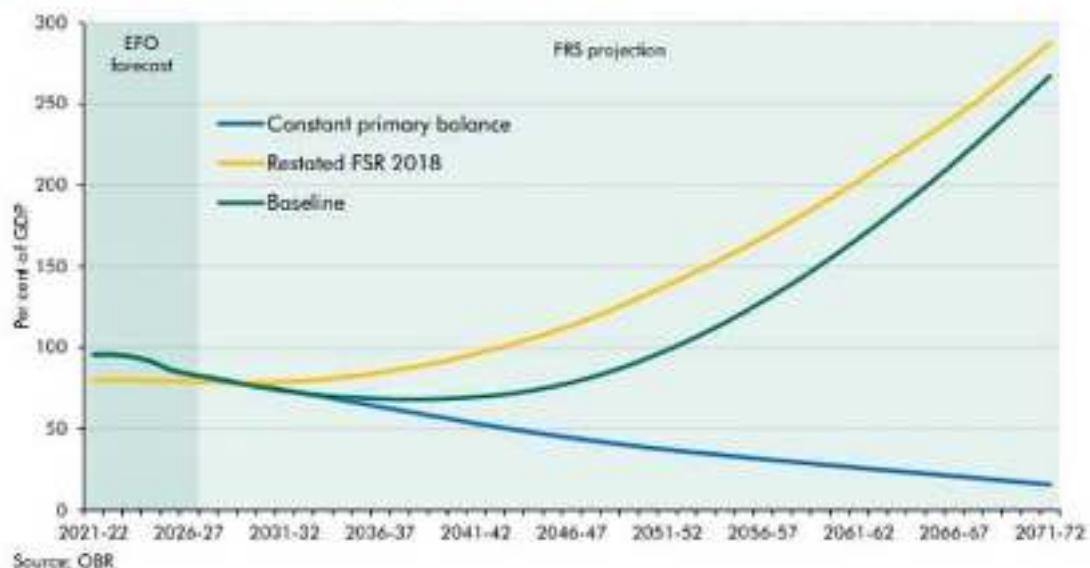
In its latest assessment, **The Office for Budget Responsibility** says the public finances will come under more strain from an aging population, and the loss of existing motoring taxes as petrol and diesel cars are phased out.

The report is a timely warning of the challenge that current government, and future administrations, face as they steer the public finances through inevitable future shocks, while managing multiple slow-building pressures.

The OBR warns that government debt levels could rise to more than double GDP unless there are tax rises or spending cuts.

That could dampen talk of tax cuts from those keen to become the next prime minister.

Chart 4.13: Projections of public sector net debt



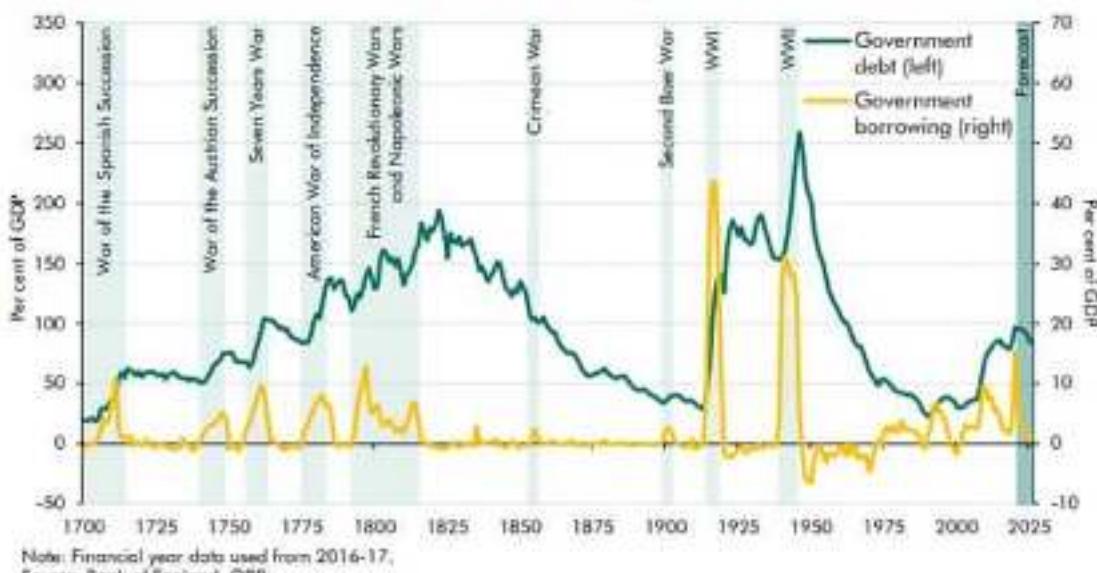
OBR long-term projections of UK public sector net debt Photograph: OBR

The OBR says:

Our long-term projections show debt rising to over 100 per cent of GDP by 2052-53 and reaching 267 per cent of GDP in 50 years if upward pressures on health, pensions and social care spending, and the loss of motoring taxes, are accommodated.

Bringing debt back to 75% of GDP – the level at which it stabilised in the Government's pre-pandemic March 2020 Budget – would need taxes to rise, spending to fall, or a combination of both, amounting to a 1.5% of GDP additional tightening (£37 billion a year in today's terms) at the beginning of each decade over the next 50 years.

Chart 2: Government borrowing and debt during periods of conflict and peace



Photograph: OBR

**The shorter term outlook is worrying too, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine intensifying geopolitical tensions and driving energy prices up, and fuelling worries about cyberwarfare.**

The OBR warns that soaring energy prices and inflation threaten to tip the UK into recession:

Many threats remain, with rising inflation potentially tipping the economy into recession, continued uncertainty about our future trading relationship with the EU, a resurgence in Covid cases, a changing global climate, and rising interest rates all continuing to hang over the fiscal outlook.

The fiscal watchdog also cites surging energy costs as a threat:

The recent more than doubling of gas and oil prices and the rise in inflation to rates not seen since the energy crises of the 1970s have underscored the economic and fiscal risks associated with the UK's continued dependence on fossil fuel imports.

And it adds that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted a reappraisal of levels of defence spending across Western countries, and highlighted fears of

a cyberwarfare.

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[7 Jul 2022](#)[06.40](#)

Jet2 says it has awarded all its staff a pay increase of 8%, which should help them through the cost of living squeeze.

The airline will also pay all colleagues an extra £1,000 at the end of the summer.

Jet2 results out today. They awarded staff an 8% pay increase

They're also not cancelling thousands of flights - funny that

[They are excoriating airports for being "woefully ill-prepared and poorly resourced for the volume of customers they could reasonably expect" though]

— Jonathan Eley (@JonathanEley) [July 7, 2022](#)

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## Real estate

# UK house prices rise at the fastest rate for 18 years

Imbalance between supply and demand continues to drive up prices despite cost of living crisis



The average house price for the UK now stands at £294,845. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

*[Julia Kollewe](#)*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 10.46 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 03.21 EDT

House prices in the UK rose at the fastest annual rate in 18 years last month as demand – especially for larger homes – continued to outstrip the number of properties on the market.

Halifax, one of the country's biggest mortgage lenders and part of [Lloyds Banking Group](#), said the market “defied any expectations of a slowdown”, with prices rising year on year in June by 13%, the highest since late 2004.

Prices rose 1.8% compared with May, which was the biggest monthly rise since early 2007.

A typical property now costs £294,845, another record high, as prices continue to rise despite the cost of living crisis. House prices have risen every month over the past year and have climbed by 6.8% so far this year, or £18,849 in cash terms.

Russell Galley, the managing director of Halifax, said: “The supply-demand imbalance continues to be the reason house prices are rising so sharply. Demand is still strong – though activity levels have slowed to be in line with pre-Covid averages – while the stock of available properties for sale remains extremely low.

“Property prices so far appear to have been largely insulated from the cost of living squeeze. This is partly because, right now, the rise in the cost of living is being felt most by people on lower incomes, who are typically less active in buying and selling houses. In contrast, higher earners are likely to be able to use extra funds saved during the pandemic.”

He said the housing market would not remain immune from the economic slowdown. But for now it was being supported by a “huge shift” in demand towards bigger properties, with average prices for detached houses rising by almost twice the rate of flats over the past year (13.9% versus 7.6%).

“In time, though, increased pressure on household budgets from inflation and higher interest rates should weigh more heavily on the housing market, given the impact this has on affordability,” Galley added. He said the house price-to-income ratio had reached a record level.

“So while it may come later than previously anticipated, a slowing of house price growth should still be expected in the months ahead.”

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Two senior Bank of England officials said on Wednesday the central bank would “do whatever is necessary” to prevent the rocketing cost of living

from becoming a lasting inflation problem, hinting at further, and possibly bigger, rate hikes. The Bank has raised interest rates five times since December to 1.25%.

Northern Ireland continues to post the strongest annual growth in house prices, up by 15.2% to an average property price of £187,833, Halifax said. Wales is close behind with 14.3% annual growth to an average price of £219,281.

A Scottish home now costs an average of £201,549, breaking through £200,000 for the first time in history, and up 9.9% on June last year.

London continues to lag behind other regions with annual price gains of 7.1%, though with an average property price of £547,031 it remains by far the most expensive place in the UK to buy a home.

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[Skip to key events](#)  
[Ukraine war live](#)[Ukraine](#)

# Putin says Russia is only just getting started in Ukraine – as it happened

This live blog is now closed, you can find our [latest coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war here](#)

Updated 8 Jul 2022

*Samantha Lock (now); [Maya Yang](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#) and [Martin Belam](#) (earlier)*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 20.12 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 01.21 EDT

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Snake Island: Ukrainian soldiers hoist national flag after regaining control – video

[Samantha Lock \(now\); Maya Yang, Léonie Chao-Fong and Martin Belam \(earlier\)](#)

Thu 7 Jul 2022 20.12 EDTFirst published on Thu 7 Jul 2022 01.21 EDT

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## Live feed

From 7 Jul 2022

[13.14](#)

# **Putin warns Russia is just getting started in Ukraine**

**Vladimir Putin has said “everyone should know that” Russia was just getting started in [Ukraine](#) and has not “started anything yet in earnest”.**

Any prospects for peace negotiations will grow dimmer the longer the conflict dragged on, the Russian leader said in a hawkish speech to parliamentary leaders.

He said if the west wanted to defeat Russia on the battlefield, it was welcome to try.

Putin said:

Today we hear that they want to defeat us on the battlefield. What can you say, let them try. We have heard many times that the West wants to fight us to the last Ukrainian.

This is a tragedy for the Ukrainian people, but it seems that everything is heading towards this.

He added:

Everyone should know that, by and large, we haven’t started anything yet in earnest. At the same time, we don’t reject peace talks. But those who reject them should know that the further it goes, the harder it will be for them to negotiate with us.

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Updated at 13.36 EDT

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[8 Jul 2022](#)[20.12](#)

# Summary

Thank you for joining us for today's live coverage of the war in [Ukraine](#).

We will be pausing our live reporting overnight and returning in the morning.

In the meantime, you can read our comprehensive summary of the day's events below.

- **Russian president, Vladimir Putin, warned Moscow has [barely started its campaign in Ukraine](#) and dared the west to try to defeat it on the battlefield.** Putin said the prospects for any negotiation would grow dimmer the longer the conflict dragged on during a speech to parliamentary leaders. “Everyone should know that, by and large, we haven’t started anything yet in earnest,” he said. “The further it goes, the harder it will be for them to negotiate with us.”
- **Three people were killed and another five wounded after Russian forces fired rockets at Kharkiv, officials said.** Regional governor, Oleh Synyehubov, said a district in the north-eastern Ukrainian city was shelled on Thursday.
- **At least one person was been killed and six injured by a missile strike on Kramatorsk which hit a residential area, according to Ukraine’s regional governor of Donetsk.** [“This is a deliberate attack on civilians,” Pavlo Kyrylenko said,](#) adding that this will not stop until the Russians are stopped.

- The mayor of Sloviansk said his city near Kramatorsk has come under Russian fire. Some residents were injured, said Vadym Lyakh, without providing further details. Ukraine's military said pressure is intensifying with heavy shelling on Sloviansk and nearby populated areas.
- Russia's defence ministry has said it killed Ukrainian servicemen who were trying to raise Ukraine's flag on the recently retaken Snake Island. Authorities in Odesa appeared to confirm that missiles had struck the island, and that Russians had also destroyed two grain hangars in the region which contained "about 35 tonnes of grain". Ukraine has denied reports any of its servicemen were killed.
- Foreign analysts say Russia may be temporarily easing its offensive in eastern Ukraine in an "operational pause" as its forces attempt to reassemble for a new assault. Russian forces made no claimed or assessed territorial gains in Ukraine on Wednesday "for the first time in 133 days of war," according to the Institute for the Study of War.
- Ukraine has summoned the Turkish ambassador after it said Turkey had allowed a Russian-flagged ship carrying thousands of tonnes of allegedly stolen Ukrainian grain to leave the port of Karasu. Turkish customs officials had seized the vessel at Ukraine's request on Tuesday, after Kyiv said the cargo was illegally transporting 7,000 tonnes of grain out of Russian-occupied Berdiansk, a port in the south-east of Ukraine.
- The UN warns of a "looming hunger catastrophe" due to Russia's blockade on Ukrainian grain. Patrick Beasley, director of the UN World Food Programme, said a hunger catastrophe is set to explode

over the next two years and called for an urgent lifting of the blockade on 25m tonnes of Ukrainian grain trapped by a Russian blockade.

- Investigators in Ukraine said they had foiled a criminal gang who forced women into sex work abroad after luring them with false adverts for legitimate employment. Authorities in Kyiv arrested the suspected leader of the gang [after months of surveillance resulted in them stopping a woman](#) as she was about to cross the border.
- Russian prosecutors have called for prison sentences for a prominent opposition activist and for a Moscow city council member who opposes the invasion of Ukraine. Alexei Gorinov faces up to 15 years in prison for spreading “knowingly false information” about the Russian army. Gorinov criticised Moscow’s military actions in Ukraine at a city council meeting in March.
- US basketball player Brittney Griner has pleaded guilty to drugs charges in a Russian court, but said she had not deliberately broken the law. [Griner faces up to 10 years in prison under the charge](#). Russia’s deputy foreign minister, [Sergei Ryabkov, said “hype” around Griner’s case does not help](#) and suggested Washington be silent about her fate.
- Russia’s foreign minister has flown into the Indonesian island of Bali for a gathering of G20 foreign ministers. The gathering, [which is likely to be overshadowed by Moscow’s war in Ukraine](#) and deep divisions within the bloc over how to respond to the crisis, will mark the first time that Sergei Lavrov has met counterparts from nations that are strongly critical of the war.
- Boris Johnson spoke with Volodymyr Zelenskiy “to reiterate the United Kingdom’s steadfast support” in light of his resignation,

**Downing Street said.** In his resignation speech outside No 10, Johnson addressed the people of Ukraine directly and promised that “the UK will continue to back your fight for freedom for as long as it takes”.

- **Johnson’s resignation has been met with sadness in Kyiv, most notably by Volodymyr Zelenskiy who said the PM has been a “true friend of Ukraine”.** Ukraine expects Britain’s support to continue despite Johnson’s resignation, Zelenskiy’s office said. Mikhail Podolyak, a key adviser to Zelenskiy, thanked Johnson for “always being at the forefront of supporting Ukraine”.
- **Johnson’s downfall has been met with delight and ridicule in Moscow, with Kremlin spokesperson saying: “He doesn’t like us. We don’t like him either.”** Russia’s ambassador to Britain, Andrei Kelin, said Moscow would prefer someone “not so antagonistic” to lead the UK.
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7 Jul 2022 19.51

## **Russia taking 'operational pause', analysts say**

Foreign analysts say Russia may be temporarily easing its offensive in eastern [Ukraine](#) as the Russian military attempts to reassemble its forces for a new assault.

Russian forces made no claimed or assessed territorial gains in Ukraine on Wednesday “for the first time in 133 days of war,” according to the Institute for the Study of War.

The Washington-based think tank suggested Moscow may be taking an “operational pause,” but said that does not entail “the complete cessation of active hostilities.”

Russian forces will likely confine themselves to relatively small-scale offensive actions as they attempt to set conditions for more significant offensive operations” and rebuild the necessary combat power, the institute said.

Russia’s Defence Ministry seemed to confirm that assessment, saying in a statement Thursday that Russian soldiers had been given time to rest.

“The units that performed combat missions … are taking measures to recover their combat capabilities. The servicemen are given the opportunity to rest, receive letters and parcels from home,” read the statement, quoted by Russian state news agency Tass.

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[7 Jul 2022 19.29](#)

## **UN warns of ‘looming hunger catastrophe’ due to Russian blockade**



Patrick Wintour

A looming hunger catastrophe is set to explode over the next two years, creating the risk of unprecedented global political pressure, the director of the UN World Food Programme has warned.

Calling for short- and long-term reforms – including an urgent lifting of the blockade on 25m tonnes of Ukrainian grain trapped by a Russian blockade – Patrick Beasley said the [current food affordability crisis](#) is likely to turn into an even more dangerous food availability crisis next year unless solutions are found.

The number of people classed as “acutely food insecure” by the UN before the Covid crisis was 130 million, but after Covid this number rose to 276 million.

Writing a preface to a new pamphlet from the Blair Institute on the looming hunger crisis, Beasley says: “This number has increased to 345 million due to the [Ukraine](#) crisis. And a staggering 50 million people in 45 countries are now just one step from famine.

“The international community must act to stop this looming hunger catastrophe in its tracks – or these numbers will explode.

“Global food markets have been plunged into turmoil, with soaring prices, export bans and shortages of basic foodstuffs spreading far from Ukraine’s borders. Nations across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and even Latin America are feeling the heat from this conflict.”

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[7 Jul 2022 19.13](#)

**Russian prosecutors have called for prison sentences for a prominent opposition activist and for a Moscow city council member who opposes the invasion of Ukraine.**

Prosecutors asked that **Andrei Pivovarov**, former head of the Open [Russia](#) organisation, be given a five-year sentence for “directing an undesirable organisation,” according to his lawyer, Sergei Badamshin, as reported by the Associated Press.

Pivovarov was pulled off a Warsaw-bound plane at St. Petersburg’s airport just before takeoff in May 2021. He was taken to the southern city of Krasnodar, where he was accused of supporting a local candidate on behalf of an “undesirable” organisation. The criminal charge is based on his social media posts supporting independent candidates in Krasnodar’s municipal elections, according to AP.

A Russian prosecutor has also asked for a seven-year sentence for a Moscow city council member who spoke up against Russia’s actions in Ukraine.

**Alexei Gorinov**, who was detained in April, is the first Russian elected representative to face prison for spreading “knowingly false information” about the Russian army, a charge that carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

Gorinov criticised Moscow’s military actions in Ukraine at a city council meeting in March, a recording of which is now available on YouTube. The video shows him voicing skepticism over a planned children’s art

competition in his constituency while “every day children are dying” in Ukraine.

At a court hearing last month, Gorinov was photographed holding up a sign saying “I am against the war” as he sat in the defendant’s cage.

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[7 Jul 2022 18.33](#)

**Brazilian President, Jair Bolsonaro, has said the economic sanctions imposed by the west against [Russia](#) have not worked.**

“The economic barriers that the United States and [Europe](#) imposed against Russia did not work,” Bolsonaro told supporters on Thursday, adding that his position towards Putin and the war “was one of balance.”

Bolsonaro said that stance had allowed him to acquire fertilisers, a key input for Brazil’s vast agricultural sector, from Russia. He also said Russia shared Brazil’s concerns over “sovereignty” of the Amazon.

Earlier on Thursday, Putin said it was obvious that western sanctions were creating difficulties, “but not at all what the initiators of the economic blitzkrieg against Russia were counting on.”

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[7 Jul 2022 18.02](#)

## **Summary of the day so far**

It’s 1am in Kyiv. Here’s where things stand:

- A Reuters exclusive report has revealed that Ukraine opposes Canada's handing over a turbine to Russia's Gazprom that Moscow says is critical for supplying natural gas to Germany. According to a Ukrainian energy ministry source, Ukraine believes that doing so would defy sanctions against Russia.
- **Images have emerged of fields of grain in Ukraine set on fire allegedly by Russian forces.** According to Ukrainian serviceman Ihor Lutsenko, the "flame sometimes reaches a height of 5 metres, a strip of hundreds of metres in width. Black smoke flies up and spreads across the sky for many kilometers." The dry stalks of grain are set ablaze "like matches" from incendiary munitions, he added.
- **Canada will send 39 General Dynamics-made armored vehicles to Ukraine later this summer in attempts to assist the war-torn country in its fight against Russian forces.** On Thursday, Canadian defense minister Anita Anand said that the armored vehicles deal is on top of a separate multi-billion dollar contract for 260 vehicles for the Canadian armed forces which was negotiated with General Dynamics Land Systems in 2019.
- **A Russian prosecutor on Thursday requested a seven-year prison term for a Moscow city councillor accused of criticising Russia's military intervention in Ukraine.** Alexei Gorinov, a 60-year-old lawyer by training, was arrested in late April for spreading "knowingly false information" about the Russian army and is now on trial. Gorinov is the first elected member of the opposition to face jail for criticising Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine.
- **Andriy Zagorodnyuk - Ukraine's former defence minister - says Russian claims that Ukrainian servicemen were killed on Snake Island are untrue.** Russia's defence ministry said on Thursday it had eliminated Ukrainian troops who installed a huge national flag on the island after regaining control.
- **The European parliament has endorsed a proposal that allows Ukrainian refugees to continue using their driver's license without needing to switch it out for a European driver's license.** The European Union council will now formally adopt the draft rules.

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Updated at 18.05 EDT

7 Jul 2022 17.41

**A Reuters exclusive report has revealed that [Ukraine](#) opposes Canada's handing over a turbine to Russia's Gazprom that Moscow says is critical for supplying natural gas to Germany.**

According to a Ukrainian energy ministry source, Ukraine believes that doing so would defy sanctions against [Russia](#).

A senior Ukrainian energy ministry source told Reuters that Ukraine opposed the move and that its energy minister had lobbied Canada in June not to hand over the turbine being serviced by Germany's Siemens Energy in Canada.

"The sanctions forbid the transfer of any equipment related to gas," the energy ministry source said.

"If, God forbid, this decision is approved, we will undoubtedly appeal to our European colleagues that their approach must be reassessed. Because if countries do not follow decisions they have agreed about sanctions, how can we talk about solidarity?"

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7 Jul 2022 17.19

**Images have emerged of fields of grain in [Ukraine](#) set on fire allegedly by Russian forces, Euromaidan Press reports.**

According to Ukrainian serviceman Ihor Lutsenko, the "flame sometimes reaches a height of 5 meters, a strip of hundreds of meters in width. Black smoke flies up and spreads across the sky for many kilometers."

The dry stalks of grain are set ablaze "like matches" from incendiary munitions, he added.

Russians purposefully burn Ukrainian grain

The dry stalks go up in fire "like matches" from incendiary munitions

The fire advances like a wall, as a single front; sometimes it reaches 5 m in height, 100's of meters in length.

□ Serviceman Ihor Lutsenko <https://t.co/o4XQNLpCd2>  
<pic.twitter.com/oxuqhPi697>

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [July 7, 2022](#)

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[7 Jul 2022 16.44](#)

**Canada will send 39 General Dynamics-made armored vehicles to Ukraine later this summer in attempts to assist the war-torn country in its fight against Russian forces.**

On Thursday, **Canadian defense minister Anita Anand** said that the armored vehicles deal is on top of a separate multi-billion dollar contract for 260 vehicles for the Canadian armed forces which was negotiated with General Dynamics Land Systems in 2019.

"Those 39 vehicles will begin to ship this summer, and the remaining 360 will continue to be delivered over the next number of months as well," she said.

The vehicles can be used as ambulances, maintenance and recovery vehicles, in addition to carrying troops.

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7 Jul 2022 15.57

**A Russian prosecutor on Thursday requested a seven-year prison term for a Moscow city councillor accused of criticising Russia's military intervention in Ukraine.**

Agence France-Presse reports:

*Alexei Gorinov, a 60-year-old lawyer by training, was arrested in late April for spreading “knowingly false information” about the Russian army and is now on trial. Gorinov is the first elected member of the opposition to face jail for criticising Moscow’s military campaign in Ukraine.*

*The charges come under new legislation that allows prison time for discrediting the Russian military and is part of Moscow’s increasing efforts to snuff out the last vestiges of dissent.*

*Speaking in Moscow’s Meshchansky District Court, the prosecutor accused Gorinov of undermining the “authority of the armed forces” and being guided by “political hatred,” an AFP journalist said.*

*Gorinov spoke up against Moscow’s military intervention in Ukraine during a work meeting in March that was recorded on video and is available on YouTube. During his speech, he questioned plans for an art competition for children in his constituency while “every day children are dying” in Ukraine.*

*On Thursday, he once again spoke out against what the Kremlin has termed a “special military operation”.*

*“No matter what you call it, war is the dirtiest, vilest thing there is,” he said. “Why are many of my compatriots feeling ashamed and guilty? Why did so many leave?” he added, referring to an exodus of liberal-minded Russians from the country.*

*Several dozen people came out to support Gorinov, including his wife and sister. Dmitry Fyodorov, a 50-year-old programmer, said that the charges*

*against Gorinov were “unlawful” and described him as a “kind man and a good lawyer”.*

*Russian society is reeling from a historic crackdown on dissent which has intensified since President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine on February 24.*

*Criticism of Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine has essentially been banned in the country. In March, Russia passed into law prison sentences of up to 15 years for spreading false information aimed at discrediting its military forces.*

*On Wednesday, parliament introduced harsh prison terms for calls to act against national security and criminal liability for maintaining “confidential” cooperation with foreigners.*

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7 Jul 202215.15



Luke Harding

**Andriy Zagorodnyuk – Ukraine’s former defence minister – says Russian claims that Ukrainian servicemen were killed on Snake Island are untrue. Russia’s defence ministry said on Thursday it had eliminated Ukrainian troops who installed a huge national flag on the island after regaining control.**

“I spoke to these guys. They say they all came back intact,” Zagorodnyuk told the Guardian. According to a [report](#) by Ukrainskaya Pravda, combat swimmers from the 73rd marine centre of Ukraine’s special forces took part in the operation.

They set off for the island during the night using underwater vehicles. An advance team surveyed the coastal zone for mines and gave a signal for boats from the main group to approach, the newspaper said.

Engineers clambered on the island, also known as Zmiiny, and swept for mine barriers and other traps. They logged abandoned Russian equipment and weapons, and raised Ukrainian flags in several areas.

The report added: “While our soldiers were performing their tasks, Russian ships began maneuvering in the direction of Zmiiny. Having completed the task, the combined group left the island.

“After that, the Russians launched a missile attack on Snake Island, hitting the pier. The group of Ukrainian soldiers returned unscathed in its entirety to the base.”

Russia’s defence ministry has said it killed Ukrainian servicemen who were trying to raise Ukraine’s flag on the recently retaken island. Authorities in Odesa appeared to confirm [that missiles had struck the island](#), and that [Russians had also destroyed two grain hangars in the region](#) which contained “about 35 tonnes of grain”. Ukrainian military [released footage showing troops installing a huge national flag on Snake Island](#) after regaining control.

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Updated at 17.15 EDT

7 Jul 2022 **14.20**

**The European parliament has endorsed a proposal that allows Ukrainian refugees to continue using their driver's license without needing to switch it out for a European driver's license, the Kyiv Independent reports.**

The European Union council will now formally adopt the draft rules.

Wir haben heute im [@Europarl\\_DE](#) eine Übergangsregelung für ukrainische Führerscheine verabschiedet. Damit können Ukrainer, die vorübergehenden Schutz in der EU suchen, ihren ukrainischen Führerschein unbürokratisch weiter benutzen.[#StandWithUkraine](#)[#WeStandWithUkraine](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/oGeLdfgrl6](https://pic.twitter.com/oGeLdfgrl6)

— CDU/CSU in Europa (@CDU\_CSU\_EP) [July 7, 2022](#)

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Updated at 14.59 EDT

7 Jul 2022 **14.00**

## **Summary of the day so far**

It's 9pm in Kyiv. Here's where we stand:

- **The Russian president has warned Russia has not started its campaign in Ukraine “in earnest”.** In a hawkish speech to parliamentary leaders, Vladimir Putin said the prospects for any negotiation would grow dimmer the longer the conflict dragged on.

- Three people were killed and another five were wounded after Russian forces fired rockets at a district in the north-eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, the regional governor, Oleh Synyehubov, said. [It has not been possible to independently verify this claim.](#)
- At least one person has been killed and six injured by a missile strike on Kramatorsk which hit a residential area, according to Ukraine's regional governor of Donetsk. [“This is a deliberate attack on civilians,” Pavlo Kyrylenko said](#), adding that this will not stop until the Russians are stopped. The claims have not been independently verified.
- The mayor of Sloviansk said his city near Kramatorsk has come under Russian fire. [Some residents were injured, said Vadym Lyakh](#), without providing further details. Ukraine's military [said pressure is intensifying with heavy shelling on Sloviansk](#) and nearby populated areas.
- Russia's defence ministry has said it killed Ukrainian servicemen who were trying to raise Ukraine's flag on the recently retaken Snake Island. Authorities in Odesa appeared to confirm [that missiles had struck the island](#), and that [Russians had also destroyed two grain hangars in the region](#) which contained “about 35 tonnes of grain”. Ukrainian military [released footage showing troops installing a huge national flag on Snake Island](#) after regaining control.
- Ukrainian forces are finally seeing the impact of western weapons on the frontlines of the war with Russia, Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said. During his nightly TV address, Zelenskiy [said Ukrainian forces were advancing in two directions in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia](#)

regions on Ukraine's southern front and dealing blows to Russia by hitting some of its logistics warehouses.

- The capture of the city of Lysychansk in eastern Ukraine has given Russia's forces "genuine headway", while its forces in the south have shown signs of "better cooperation", analysts say. Western officials said the sustainability of Russia's attacks on Ukraine was "challenging", but described the impact on their munitions and morale as "remarkable".
- Resistance remains ongoing in villages around Lysychansk, where 15,000 civilians remain, according to Luhansk's governor, Serhiy Haidai. On Telegram, Haidai said: "Today's videos from Lysychansk are painful to watch." He accused Putin's troops of engaging in a scorched earth policy, "burning down and destroying everything on their way".
- The evacuation of civilians from Sloviansk continued on Wednesday as Russian troops pressed towards the eastern Ukrainian city in their campaign to control the Donbas region. Mayor Vadym Lyakh said that about 23,000 people out of 110,000 were still in Sloviansk. The governor of Donetsk has also urged the region's 350,000 people to flee.
- A Russian missile has hit a tanker carrying 500 tonnes of diesel drifting in the Black Sea, according to the Ukrainian military. Two KH-31 missiles were fired and one hit the Moldovan-flagged Millennial Spirit, Ukraine's operational command south said. It is the second time the ship has now been struck since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

- Ukraine has summoned the Turkish ambassador after it said Turkey had allowed a Russian-flagged ship carrying what it has claimed was thousands of tonnes of stolen Ukrainian grain to leave the port of Karasu. [Turkish customs officials had seized the vessel](#) at Ukraine's request on Tuesday, [after Kyiv said the cargo was illegally transporting 7,000 tonnes of grain](#) out of Russian-occupied Berdiansk, a port in the south-east of Ukraine.
- Investigators in Ukraine said they had foiled a criminal gang who forced women into sex work abroad after luring them with false adverts for legitimate employment. Authorities in Kyiv arrested the suspected leader of the gang [after months of surveillance resulted in them stopping a woman](#) as she was about to cross the border.
- US basketball player Brittney Griner has pleaded guilty to drugs charges in a Russian court, but said she had not deliberately broken the law. The next court hearing is scheduled for 14 July. [Griner faces up to 10 years in prison under the charge](#). Russia's deputy foreign minister, [Sergei Ryabkov, said “hype” around Griner’s case does not help](#) and suggested Washington be silent about her fate.
- Russian foreign minister has flown into the Indonesian island of Bali for a gathering of G20 foreign ministers. The gathering, [which is likely to be overshadowed by Moscow’s war in Ukraine](#) and deep divisions within the bloc over how to respond to the crisis, will mark the first time that Sergei Lavrov has met counterparts from nations that are strongly critical of the war.

- Boris Johnson, who earlier resigned as the leader of Britain's Conservative party, has spoken with Volodymyr Zelenskiy "to reiterate the United Kingdom's steadfast support", Downing Street said. In his resignation speech outside No 10, [Johnson addressed the people of Ukraine directly](#) and promised that "the UK will continue to back your fight for freedom for as long as it takes".
- Johnson's resignation has been met with sadness in Kyiv, most notably by Volodymyr Zelenskiy who said the PM has been a "true friend of Ukraine". [Ukraine expects Britain's support to continue](#) despite Johnson's resignation, Zelenskiy's office said. Mikhail Podolyak, a key adviser to Zelenskiy, [thanked Johnson for "always being at the forefront of supporting Ukraine"](#).
- Johnson's downfall has been met with delight and ridicule in Moscow, with Kremlin spokesperson saying: "[He doesn't like us. We don't like him either.](#)" Russia's ambassador to Britain, Andrei Kelin, [said Moscow would prefer someone "not so antagonistic" to lead the UK.](#)
- The Irish taoiseach has described his visit to Ukraine as "very emotional" and said it was "difficult to comprehend" the level of cruelty that the country has suffered. Micheál Martin returned to Dublin today [after spending a day witnessing the devastation inflicted by invading Russian forces](#) in the conflict-scarred suburbs of Bucha, Borodanka and Irpin on the outskirts of Kyiv.
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Updated at 14.57 EDT



Dan Sabbagh

**Britain's shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, has used an urgent question in the Commons to ask if [Alexander Lebedev](#) sought to arrange a private phone call between Boris Johnson and the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, during a weekend party in April 2018.**

A day after Johnson admitted for the first time that when foreign secretary he had [met former KGB agent Lebedev without officials present](#), Cooper told the Commons there were further questions raised by the trip to the party at an Italian palazzo owned by Lebedev's son.

“There are also rumours that Alexander Lebedev was trying to arrange a phone call from the meeting with the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, is that true? Did that phone call happen?” Cooper asked from the dispatch box.

In reply, Vicky Ford, a junior Foreign Office minister, said: “I take national security issues seriously” but failed to address the question substantively. She said ministers had introduced “world-leading sanctions packages” since Russia’s invasion of [Ukraine](#).

Last month the [Tortoise website](#) reported that Lebedev had sought to set up an unmonitored line between Johnson, the then foreign secretary, and Lavrov to discuss the [Salisbury poisonings](#) that had happened nearly two months earlier. But the call never took place because Johnson overslept.

Later on Thursday, Lebedev denied he had sought to set up a call between the two politicians. “Both were utterly capable of calling each other at those time, and they surely did. Why would they need a phone operator?”

But he confirmed that met Johnson at the party, saying they had shaken hands. “Maybe we uttered a few words to each other at the table with the other guests, but who cares about truth in those times, especially as regards someone who is Russian,” Lebedev added.

[\*\*Read the full story by Dan Sabbagh.\*\*](#)

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[7 Jul 2022 13.18](#)

**Three people were killed and another five were wounded after Russian forces fired rockets at a district in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, the regional governor said.**

Writing on Telegram, Oleh Synyehubov said:

Three civilians were killed and five were wounded as a result of shelling of the Nemyshlyan district.

It has not been possible to independently verify this claim.

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Updated at 14.39 EDT

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## [Edinburgh festival 2022](#)

# Edinburgh fringe tries to quell revolt after criticism of 2022 event

More than 1,600 comedians, agents and producers sign open letter that accuses festival of mismanagement



The comedian Joe Lycett is among signatories of the letter coordinated by the Live Comedy Association. Photograph: Wenn Rights Ltd/Alamy

*[Severin Carrell](#) Scotland editor*

*[@severincarrell](#)*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 04.26 EDT

The Edinburgh fringe festival is attempting to quell a rebellion by hundreds of comedians and producers who accuse organisers of mismanaging this year's event.

More than 1,600 people, including comedians such as Joe Lycett and Jo Caulfield and some of the UK's most senior theatre producers and agents,

signed an [open letter](#) criticising the fringe for scrapping its ticketing app, a lack of transparency, and failing to help with soaring accommodation costs and cuts in train services.

The unprecedented revolt overshadowed the launch on Wednesday of the programme for this year's festival.

The fringe celebrates its 75th anniversary in August after being largely shut down by the Covid crisis, and will feature stars such as Sir Ian McKellen, Stewart Lee, Nina Conti and Nish Kumar.

Pax Lowey, the chair of the Live [Comedy](#) Association (LCA), which coordinated the letter, said performers felt the fringe had mis-sold this year's event. The organisers only revealed there would be no app and no half-price ticketing huts a few days ago, Lowey said, despite producers being charged the full £300 registration fee.

“Until this week, the messaging was this year would be [back to] a big normal fringe, and then all of a sudden we learn of the lack of an app and the half-price huts,” Lowey said. “It really does feel like it will be a 50% year.”

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Shona McCarthy, the chief executive of the Fringe Society, said she was frustrated the LCA had not talked to her first before publicising its concerns. Lowey said the LCA was now arranging a conference call with McCarthy.

McCarthy said: “Normally, you would expect people to talk to you first, to reach out and to kind of ask the questions before going into that sort of nuclear mode. [Our] modus operandi is to collaborate, be collective, collegiate with people, to get the best results.”

She defended the fringe's planning, saying it had been trying to manage an unprecedented industry-wide crisis, which had left the event destitute and understaffed, and that she had to make difficult decisions on what to prioritise.

Despite the impacts of Covid, Brexit and the financial crisis triggered by the Ukrainian war, this year's programme would deliver nearly 3,200 shows, 80% of the productions staged in 2019, McCarthy added.

She said fringe-goers needed to enjoy "the sheer wow of this extraordinary festival" on its 75th birthday: "I genuinely think it's nothing short of a minor miracle that it's here, that we've got to this point, and it should be a day of celebration."

The app, McCarthy said, was used by about 7% of those attending the fringe and that it needed a total overhaul the festival could not yet afford, while the £300 registration fee had not been increased for 15 years.

The fringe had never been responsible for organising performers' accommodation or running trains, but after hearing of their complaints had arranged for the University of Edinburgh and student halls' owners to set aside 1,200 rooms capped at £250 a week for festival professionals.

McCarthy said the fringe was constantly lobbying Scottish government ministers and ScotRail to improve train services to Glasgow, where many performers stayed during the festival as rent was much lower there than in Edinburgh.

Lyndsey Jackson, her deputy, said the best solution to the crisis was to produce a successful festival: "I think some of this is just exposed because we've had two years of no fringe. I'm quite hopeful that the fringe will be quite cathartic and healing, that we sort of need. We haven't had any celebration or joy."

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## 2022.07.07 - Spotlight

- [A hawk-eye on Centre Court! A day with Wimbledon's star pigeon-chaser](#)
- [Secret world of tennis umpires ‘You can’t be the player’s friend’](#)
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## A hawk-eye on Centre Court! A day with Wimbledon's star pigeon-chaser



Winging it ... Rufus the Hawk, used by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club to keep pigeons away. Photograph: Philip Toscano/PA

Wayne Davis and his hawks have been scaring birds at the tennis championships and Canary Wharf for 15 years. But is his profession now

under threat?



Sirin Kale

Thu 7 Jul 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 06.32 EDT

If humans thought like hawks, we would only be thinking of our next kill. If we could see like hawks, we would have eyes the size of tennis balls, scanning the Earth for a rabbit or a slow-moving pigeon. If we could fly like hawks, we would swoop close to the ground, barely skimming buildings in a muscular sprint. If we could live like hawks, there would be no worry or despair, just the pleasurable fatigue of a successful hunt, digestion in a quiet copse, rising hunger and the hunt once again.

But humans cannot think like hawks, so instead we project on to them our own characteristics. Which is how I come to find myself asking Wayne Davis of the Corby-based firm [Avian Environmental Consultants](#) whether he thinks he has a special bond with Rufus, his 15-year-old male Harris's hawk. The 59-year-old Davis gives a creaky laugh at the thought. "The bond is just food, basically," he says. "I'm beneficial to him. If he doesn't actually catch anything, he still gets rewarded with food from me. He's not coming back to me because he loves me or anything like that. It's purely food."

So, how does he think Rufus sees him, his partner of more than 15 years? “As an ally to assist his hunting,” Davis says. “Without being derogatory,” says Davis, with the infinite patience that has defined his 48-year career as a falconer, “it’s quite basic, really. All he wants to do is hunt and kill things. Same as a lion or a tiger. If he ever caught a pigeon and I couldn’t find him, he’d eat it, and I wouldn’t be able to get him back for two days. He’d go and sit in a tree and ignore me. Because if he finds his own food, he doesn’t need me.” A hawk is a hawk is a hawk. And what a fine hawk Rufus is.

As soon as they see him, the pigeons recognise he’s a threat to their existence, and move away

*Wayne Davis*

I meet him at 7am on day five of the The Championships, [Wimbledon](#). Ground staff are jet-washing the stands, while a man judders a lawn-mower across the famously lush grass of the All England Lawn Tennis Club’s Centre Court. Outside, yawning ballboys and girls swipe their passes through security turnstiles. Dapper men in straw boaters queue alongside women in floral dresses and cork heels, waiting for the gates to open at 10am.

In contrast, Davis wears frayed cords, worn boots and a khaki shoulder bag. His pocket is full of freshly defrosted quail. He scans Centre Court for Rufus and eventually spots him lurking in the gloom of the cheap seats, facing the royal box. “HAI!!” he roars, meat held loosely in his green suede hawking glove, and Rufus announces himself in a rush of air and the beating of wings. He is a walnut brown that glimmers russet under the cloudless sky. When he approaches, swooping low over empty leather seats, the bells attached to his talons jangle like a Christmas sleigh.



Masters at work ... Wayne Davis and Rufus the Harris's hawk. Photograph: Aaron Chown/PA

Davis has arrived with his hawk at 5am to begin their day's work – as he has done every Wimbledon for the past 15 years. Davis calls it "environmental control": the all-important practice of scaring away pigeons and gulls that might otherwise disrupt play or foul the court or the spectators' seats. "It's the natural way to do it," says Davis. "All you're doing is utilising the food chain. Pigeons can't get used to a predator, otherwise it's the end of their DNA line, because they get eaten. As soon as they see him, they recognise he's a threat to their existence, and move away." But professional falconers such as Davis appear to be part of a dying trade. Drones are increasingly being used to [scare away birds at vineyards](#) and [airports](#). Ultrasonic bird repellers pipe out noise at council recycling sites. Other innovations include mechanical devices or so-called frightkites, which are designed to move in the wind like a [peregrine falcon](#).

At this time of the morning, the sky is orange and pink. Rufus and Wayne take up a vantage point on the astroturfed roof of the broadcasting centre, where later, broadcasters will deliver slick pieces to camera as players grunt and thwack beneath them on Wimbledon's 18 grass courts. This is Davis's favourite time of day, before he gets swarmed by well-wishing members of the public, all keen for a photograph with Wimbledon's famous hawk. (For a

while, officials even gave Rufus his own photocard pass: job title, bird scarer.) “It’s lovely to go up on the roof and watch the sunrise,” he says.

Rufus swoops low over the near-silent club. He watches for pigeons atop Centre Court’s retractable roof, unveiled in 2015 at a reported cost of £70m. Hawks skim low over the ground in search of a quick kill, unlike falcons, which circle from up on high, chase prey for miles and wait for their moment. Rufus is sleek and lightweight, a fleet-winged killer at 1lb 6oz (624g). Davis weighs him daily. “If his weight goes up too much,” he says, “he doesn’t need to hunt, because he’s very energy conscious.”

But Davis has kept Rufus’s weight low to keep the edge on his hunger, and so Rufus swings over the courts, retreating out of sight to take up a position on this court, or in this tree, or on the roof of an adjacent housing estate. Davis monitors him on a GPS tracker, but if Rufus wanted to vanish into the clear London sky, he could. Sometimes he does. “Three days is the longest he’s disappeared,” says Davis. “He goes out and catches one rabbit, and then another rabbit, and he just carries on. You have to wait and follow and try to intervene at a point when he’s hungry.” When this happens at Wimbledon, Davis sleeps in his van, and hopes that Rufus will tire.

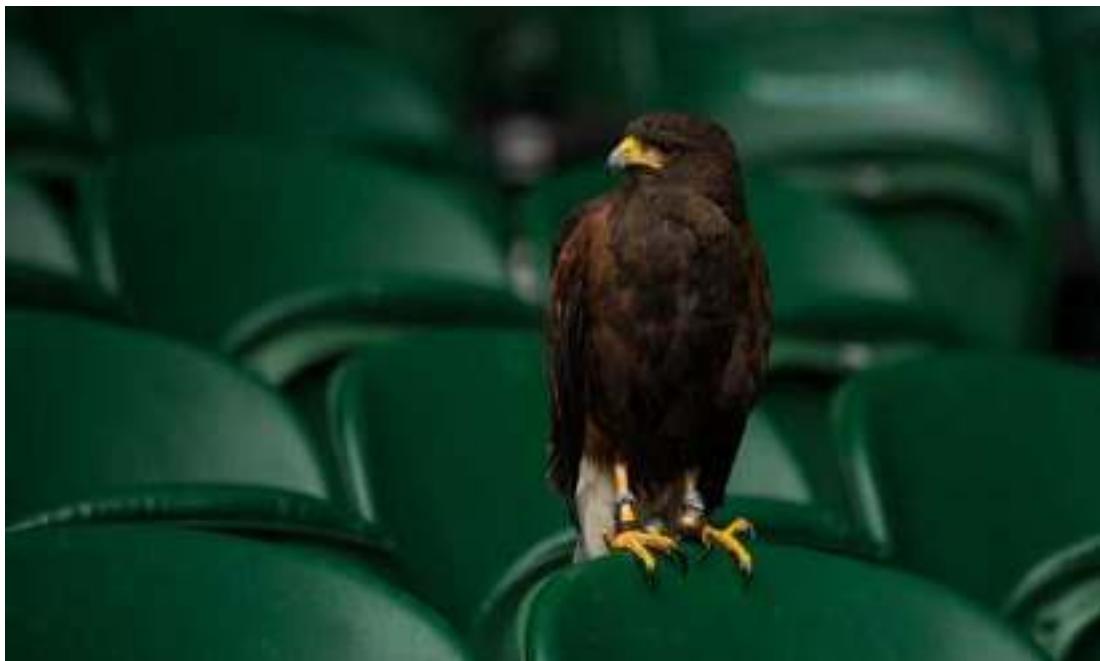
Hawks are the most perfectly designed creatures. Just absolutely sublime

### *Wayne Davis*

When I first approached Davis for an interview, his daughter Imogen described her father as “like a real-life Kes, but without the sad ending”. (In the 1969 Ken Loach film, 15-year-old working-class schoolboy Billy Casper trains a wild kestrel, before his abusive half-brother kills the bird in a fit of pique.) Davis grew up in a working-class family in Corby, the son of a steelworker turned canal-boat builder. His childhood was spent roaming the ancient woodlands that surround the Northamptonshire industrial town. “I didn’t really fit in at school,” says Davis, “because I didn’t want to be tied down to a desk. I wanted to be out doing things. I found it claustrophobic.”

Instead, Davis would go birdwatching and search for snakes. Once he brought home what he thought was a water vole, but turned out to be a rat.

(His mother screamed.) He was 11 when he found a baby kestrel, which he named Finnigan. Finnigan slept on the end of Davis's bed. He took *Falconry*, by Gilbert Blaine, out of his local library so many times, he had to ask the librarian for permission.



Best seat in the house ... Rufus keeps an eye on Centre Court. Photograph: David Ramos/Getty Images

The falconer, writes Blaine, "must have patience, diligence, and even temper, and other similar virtues. He must acquire a curious skill in practice, be light of hand and foot – no heavy-fisted lout could ever make a falconer – but when all is said and done, the true falconer is born, not made ... ask any keen and proficient falconer what first made him take up the sport. He will probably reply that he does not know, but that he was always, as far back as he can remember, fond of hawks." When asked what drew him to Finnigan, Davis thinks for a long time. "The thing that got me," he says, "ever since I was a child, is that they are the most perfectly designed creatures. Just absolutely sublime."

Davis trained Finnigan in his bedroom, using a hood. The hood has a dampening effect, inhibiting the bird's stress responses. Slowly, he reduced Finnigan's time under the hood, until the kestrel learned not to fear him. Then he introduced him to the lure, a length of string attached to an

imitation of a prey bird, that the falconer swings about, to stimulate the hawk. “I was so enthralled by the whole process,” Davis says. “I loved being with him. It’s not just the bond I had with him. With all predators, you have a degree of respect for them, whether they’re a lion or a tiger or a black panther. They have a majesty about them, being head of the food chain.”

You can’t train a hawk, not really. “You work with them. A hawk isn’t like a dog. You can’t dominate it. It’s the most unique relationship. I’ve never known a bond between animals and humans like it.” The hawk learns to tolerate the human, and not to be fearful; the human learns to think more like a hawk. When Rufus absconds, for example, Davis needs to think about where he will be. He looks up at the sky; at adjacent buildings. A hawk will shelter out of the wind, in the sunlight, up on high. That is his most likely bet.

When Finnigan was free-flying, they would go down to the school playing fields before lessons began, and spend hours together. His classmates began to call him Casper. Their first job together was at a medieval banquet: Davis walked around with Finnigan on his shoulder. Later, Davis set up his own business, aged 22, after successfully using his cast of peregrine falcons to get rid of a pigeon outbreak at a local flour mill. Finnigan lived for 15 years. Towards the end, he stopped being able to hunt. His eyes started to close. Davis buried him at Rockingham Castle, near where he was born. “When Finnigan died,” he says, “it was a wrench.”

If you consistently fly a drone at a bird, and it doesn’t actually attack it, the bird just dismisses it. It’s so basic

### *Wayne Davis*

Now Davis has four birds that he regularly flies. There is Socrates, a peregrine falcon; Seth, a prairie falcon; Rufus; and Horace, also a Harris’s hawk. They are busy all year round: in addition to working at Wimbledon, Davis scares away birds from Lord’s cricket ground, Canary Wharf, football stadiums and British airports. (His work at airports in particular can be lifesaving: bird strikes are a leading cause of fatal aviation crashes internationally.) Davis was there for the Queen’s jubilee celebrations, watching the great and good step out of their vehicles at St Paul’s.

He maintains this thriving practice, despite the encroachment of technological solutions, set on eradicating a millennia-old art – falconry is believed to have originated in ancient Mesopotamia, now modern-day Iraq, around 2000BC – and replacing it with cheap drones, or flapping kites. Davis is scathing about such innovations. “Bottom line is that they don’t work,” he says from the roof of the broadcasting terrace, as beside us crews rig up cameras and lights and anchors rehearse their pieces-to-camera. “If you consistently fly a drone at a bird, and it doesn’t actually attack it, the bird just dismisses it. It’s so basic, and fundamental. If it’s not a threat to them, they just ignore it.”



All in a morning's work ... Rufus admires the clear skies over Wimbledon.  
Photograph: Aaron Chown/PA

As the morning wears on, Rufus grows weary. He stops responding to Davis's commands, and spends more time lurking in the shadows of Centre Court. His head snaps about in 180-degree rotations like a sprinkler on a suburban lawn, but his wings remain immobile. When quail will not summon him any more, Davis returns Rufus to his van, where Seth squawks belligerently in the driver's seat, besides an open window. It doesn't matter, anyhow: their work is done for the day.

They drive away past lines of punters, some of whom have been queueing since before dawn to watch Novak Djokovic take to Centre Court that afternoon. Later that day, the current men's champion throws the ball up in a graceful, soaring arc. A thwack, a thud and a roar from the crowd. Up high, the pigeons stay away. They know better, and so play can begin.

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# ‘You can’t be the player’s friend’: inside the secret world of tennis umpires

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## Grab your leopard print, neck a prosecco, take a holibob! How ‘hun culture’ conquered the world



Alpha huns ... from left, Natalie Cassidy, Denise Welch, Alison Hammond and Kim Woodburn. Illustration: Guardian Design/GC Images/Shutterstock/Alamy

Did someone say beveragino? From Denise Welch to Alison Hammond, the matriarchs of British TV are storming the internet, worshipped for their camp combination of glam, grit and driftwood decor. All hail the huns! x

### Michael Cragg

Thu 7 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 04.27 EDT

What links [Alison Hammond](#), Chanel the [lost African grey parrot](#), Nigella Lawson's electric oven, a woman on a shed roof asking "Did someone say beveragino?", [Natalie Cassidy](#), "OK dot com", and Kat Slater? If you're rereading that question for the 10th time, chances are you've yet to fully immerse yourself in the leopard print and prosecco world of the hun, a very British subculture that's sweeping the internet quicker than you can calligraph "It's wine o'clock somewhere" on to a piece of driftwood. Resonating chiefly with women and gay men, celebrating the naff and deifying soap actors, reality TV icons and female pop stars, hun culture mixes nostalgia, camp humour and irony-laced national pride. If US social media influencers are preened, puckered and always on sponsored holidays, huns are sloppy, sarcastic and off on their "holibobs".

A huge source of lockdown escapism, hun culture's biggest exponents are Instagram accounts such as [Loveofhuns](#) (650k followers) and [Hunsnet](#) (205k followers), while its famous acolytes range from Joe Lycett to Lily Allen to Katy Perry. Rather than using memes that feel malicious, or rely on twisted black humour, in a world on fire, a hun meme is playful, riffing on the yassification of the everyday (celebrating a pack of prosecco-flavoured Pasta'n'Sauce, for example), or showcasing a niche celebrity doing something instantly relatable. As the phenomenon has spread, its subjects have started to revel in their hun status, warming to its inclusive sense of humour. "It's laughing with rather than laughing at," explains Hunsnet founder Gareth Howells who, as well as diversifying his brand with merchandise, brunch events and a podcast, has also written a beginners' guide to hun. "It's a safe space between straight culture and LGBTQ+ culture. If the straights get banter, then the huns get this."

That 'beveragino' moment...

Hun culture can be traced back to late 2012 and a parody Twitter account called @uokhun. This handle was a play on the deliciously disingenuous phrase utilised by everyone's aunt on Facebook and usually sealed with an “x”. (Sample musing: “Im not attention seeking am I? #hatersgonnahate”.) It inspired Howells to start Hunsnet in 2017 (“It was exactly my humour”), and was a catalyst in the success of one of the first Instagram hun accounts, the now-defunct Hunofficial. (Launched in 2014, the account closed two years later following a misguided post defending music producer Dr Luke.)

Denise Welch isn't clear what makes her a hun, then mentions a WhatsApp manicure group she uses called Nails and Nibbles

“I started Hunofficial as a way to promote my queer pop club night Hi Hun,” explains James Kingsley-Scott. He thinks the account’s rapid success was all down to timing, with the uokhun Twitter account slowly trickling into the mainstream via former Radio 1 DJ Nick Grimshaw, who would often use the phrase on his show. The result? “An avalanche of hun.”



Primary hun ... EastEnders actor Natalie Cassidy. Photograph: Nils Jorgensen/Shutterstock

The “primary huns” Kingsley-Scott posted about early on remain popular today: actor Natalie Cassidy, singer [Kerry Katona](#), and broadcasters [Vanessa](#)

[Feltz](#) and [Anthea Turner](#). “You can narrow down the definition of a hun to a trier,” he says. “She’s going to put on the little black dress and do it up with all the glitz and glam. It’s a ‘Feel the fear but hun it anyway’ attitude.” Howells agrees, citing his personal top-tier huns as musician [Lisa Scott-Lee](#), broadcaster [Ruth Langsford](#) and reality TV star [Gemma Collins](#). “We root for the underdog,” he says. “If people have put the effort in and it hasn’t paid off, we’ll still support you and make it work in a different way.”

All the women featured on the various hun accounts have huge gay followings, with most of them post-ironically elevated to “icon” status thanks to their mix of glitz, glamour and grit. “It’s about living boldly,” says Kingsley-Scott. “It’s truly like, ‘Fuck you, I’m going to hun.’ That’s a very gay sensibility – being out, loud and proud.” For Howell, Hunsnet is about putting women on a pedestal and “celebrating them unashamedly”. So while actor and Loose Women panellist [Denise Welch](#), who features across Loveofhuns and Hunsnet on a regular basis, isn’t entirely clear about what makes her a hun (though during our interview she mentions a WhatsApp friend group she uses to organise group manicures called Nails and Nibbles, which is peak hun), she is certain of one thing. “If I was trying to explain hun culture, I would say: ‘Well, the gays love it.’” She laughs. “And they love me. I’ve always been a bit of a gay icon.”

If I’m a hun person, I’m not aware of it. But if I am, I am

*Kim Woodburn*

It’s the same with [Kim Woodburn](#), whose somewhat testy appearances on hun culture mainstays Celebrity Big Brother and I’m a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here have elevated her to problematic hun status. “I am a total gay icon, my dear,” she tells me during a somewhat baffling 10-minute phone conversation. “I think [gay people] are remarkable. If you fancy making love to someone from the same sex there’s nothing you can do about it.” How does she feel about being hailed as a hun? “If I’m a hun person, I’m not aware of it. But if I am, then I am.”

Has she been on any of the sites? “If you’re asking: do I use social media where I let people know all my business? I don’t do that. ‘I’m going to the hairdresser, I’ve had my nails done’ – who cares? They’ll moan when people

are nasty to them, but no wonder when you put rubbish like that on the internet. They need to get a life. Most people are a bunch of scum today. They're ill-mannered and ignorant."

'My hairstyle plays a big part in my career' ... Kim Woodburn in the Celebrity jungle.

Woodburn's forthright attitude, mixed with collective nostalgia for her *How Clean Is Your House?* TV reality show heyday, puts her at the heart of hun culture. Repurposed and recontextualised early 00s clips from *Big Brother* or *EastEnders* abound across its Instagram accounts, while very niche, very gay-friendly cultural reference points such as Nadine Coyle lying about her age on *Irish Popstars* in 2001 are valorised.

"It's the stuff we were all tapping into at the start of social media," explains hun stan [Jack Rooke](#), whose excellent Channel 4 sitcom *Big Boys*, set in 2013, is full of nods to the culture, including a pet goldfish named after his favourite presenter, Alison Hammond. "It focuses on a more innocent time when we were all just tweeting about [Alexandra Burke snotting on Beyoncé](#) [on *The X Factor* in 2008]." For Rooke, the retro playfulness of hun culture stands in contrast to the seriousness of Twitter, and life, in 2022. "I think a lot of hun culture is like, 'Lol, look at this.' But we're laughing with you. You just don't need to take it that seriously – it's coming from a position of love and camaraderie. It's an extension of friendship." Welch agrees: "I always take my work very seriously, but I don't take myself very seriously. If you do, you can never be a proper hun."

Welch, 64, is one of a number of older women to feature in the wider huniverse, where [experience, durability and well-earned wisdom](#) is currency. "These feel like women who have popped round for a cup of tea," Rooke says. "They feel accessible. But I actually think [what these sites are doing] is cooler than that, because for a long time we have had an industry that has ignored women of a certain age. That has literally removed them from television, or removed them from popular culture, in this very strange belief that they are no longer relevant. I like the fact that hun culture is like, 'No, we're still celebrating these women – they're not past it, they're not invisible.' My mum would always say that she wasn't represented on telly apart from on *Loose Women*."



Hun magnet ... the ITV daytime chatshow Loose Women. Photograph: Ken McKay/ITV/Rex/Shutterstock

These are often women, or soap characters, who have endured highs and lows. “I think if you’re older and a survivor and still remaining relevant in whatever way, that makes you a hun,” says Welch, who first became aware of Loveofhuns via her rockstar son, the 1975’s [Matty Healy](#). “Especially those like me who have had a journey with alcoholism and drugs.” Just as attitudes towards tabloid culture shifted in the aftermath of such things as the phone-hacking scandal, the past treatment of female celebrities is now being seen in a new light. “I support hun culture,” says Rooke, “because it’s like, ‘No, we’re going to celebrate these women that 15 years ago would just be constantly slagged off in the press.’”

As hun culture grows, its parameters are also evolving. So, while it’s still built around what Rooke calls “good time girls”, he also believes there’s room for some straight men, too. “I firmly believe [Martin Lewis](#) is a hun,” he says. “I sometimes see Ben Shephard as a hun, because you have to be to present a show like Tipping Point.” Perhaps it’s the spray tan, I suggest. “Ben Shephard is a definite hun,” agrees Howells. “David Dickinson is a hun. [Peter Andre](#). Duncan James from Blue. Me.”

Perhaps the purest thing about the best hunns, be they famous or not, is their lack of awareness vis-a-vis their hunn prowess. The danger now, of course, is that as the phenomenon bleeds further into the mainstream like a spilled glass of [Kylie Minogue's own-brand rosé](#) on a [B&M](#) rug, that purity will be sullied. It's a concern that's troubled Rooke, too. "There are degrees of hunn to me, and the true hunns are the ones that don't know that they are," he says. "If you're the next tier down, you probably do know and you'll play to the fans. But if you really want to be a hunn, then you fall down the scale because that's not chic."

Rooke, like everyone associated with the world of hunns, is keen to see the culture expand and adapt. Allowing its disciples the space to live, to laugh and to love. But there's one pervasive, drink-based element he feels needs changing in order to become that bit more inclusive. "I think to reduce hunns down to prosecco eliminates a lot of the older generation that are still brandy, voddy, gin girls," he says earnestly. "There are an awful lot of people not doing prosecco because for them it means heartburn and acid reflux." Making sure everyone is OK? That's top-tier hun right there x.

*The Hundamental Guide to Life: Learn to Live, Love & Laugh Like a True Hun by Gareth Howells is out on 18 August, published by Welbeck.*

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## **‘I don’t want to live in a society where people are kidnapped from their homes’: the neighbours fighting immigration raids**



The Home Office was forced to release two men after its van was surrounded in Kenmure Street, Glasgow in May 2021. Photograph: Andrew

Milligan/PA

Across the country Home Office detentions have been thwarted by local people and activists forcing the release of detainees. What's behind the grassroots backlash?



[Zoe Williams](#)

[@zoesqwilliams](#)

Thu 7 Jul 2022 03.39 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 04.30 EDT

It was 9am on 13 May 2021, when Nick, 63, and Ishbel, 62, got a text to say there was about to be a [Home Office](#) raid in Kenmure Street, which lies in the Glasgow district of Pollokshields. Both retired, and living just a 10-minute drive away, they were there before the enforcement van had found a place to park. Ishbel ran to the front door of the tenement; Nick, a bit slower walking with a stick, made for the front of the van. As Ishbel observed: “They’ll not be able to move as long as we’re standing there.” Meanwhile, another man had slipped underneath the van and was lying there.

Two men were detained in the van. Immigration officers, with a man jammed against the wheels of their vehicle, had very little room to manoeuvre – but this was just the beginning. A steady trickle of people joined the trio, growing when Eid prayers ended at the mosque on the corner

of the road. “After that, it basically just exploded,” Ishbel says. “People could see it on social media, they could see it from their windows,” says Nick. “You could see folk from all the local shops bringing trays of food, neighbours bringing fruit.” Nick went to fetch a blanket for the man under the van, and when he got back, there were refreshments being handed out.

[Aamer Anwar](#), a leading campaigning lawyer in Scotland, who fought the detention of women and children at the notorious prison-turned-detention centre, Dungavel, in 2003, arrived with his son, 13, and two daughters aged nine and six. He describes doing this all very matter-of-factly, as though it is the most obvious place to take your children on Eid.

“When I got into the van and was negotiating with police, what I asked for was 24 hours,” says Anwar. “Release the men into my custody, and the crowd – which is peaceful, which is community-based – will disperse.” By this time, Roza Salih was also there; she’s a local councillor, but is also a founder member of the [Glasgow](#) Girls, schoolkid activists who, in 2005, successfully and famously fought the detention of their Kosovan classmate, Agnesa, and her family.

These are our streets. My kids will remember that day for a very long time

*Aamer Anwar*

The mood at the hundreds-strong protest was celebratory. “I told the police that their second option was to send in 40 riot vans, but you’ll be sending them into what?” Anwar says. “Men and women, black and white, one of the most diverse communities in the whole of [Scotland](#). On the day of Eid. You will be picking up the pieces for years to come.”

Finally, at about 5.30pm, the two men were released and given sanctuary in the mosque. After that, Nick says, “the police formed a phalanx. They started basically marching. In front of them were people with bicycles, disabled people, parents with buggies and small children. That was the scariest point of the whole thing; we were aware then that we could have

been arrested but what was at the front of our minds was: Don't be coming to our communities and taking people away who live here."

Nearly a year later, another raid also had to be abandoned after community protests – this time in Nicholson Square, Edinburgh; then in June came a further successful anti-raid action in Queen's Road, Peckham, London.

Tactically, such protests are clearly a conundrum for the authorities: they can't immediately bring in a large number of officers, because they're "going into communities, this isn't a football stadium", Anwar says. That leaves them scrambling for backup as the demonstration gathers strength. Add social media, and "within hours, you could be hitting millions of people, so it's a super-fast response time. The Home Office and the police can't actually compete with that."

These events are such an unfamiliar phenomenon – direct action with an immediate, non-symbolic goal, successful in the moment – that they throw up a lot of questions: how did the movement start and how widespread is it? What does it mean for the hostile environment? What motivates people to gather round a van in such numbers and stay until the job's done, which often takes hours? Could it be that despite the rhetoric in politics and some quarters of the media, not everyone wants migrants to be grabbed, detained and removed from their communities.



The protest in Peckham, London in June 2022. Photograph: Thabo Jaiyesimi/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock

“It’s not like there’s a core group that always go to every single one,” says Reginald Papoola, 27, part of a new crop of leftwing councillors who just got elected (in Queen’s Road, Peckham). “It’s something that organically occurs. I’ve lived here all my life. When I was alerted to this man being taken away, it was instinctive to help him, not just because I’m a councillor, but because he’s part of my community.” From every protest, people describe an almost utopian togetherness and generosity – they talk about what cakes people brought, the singing, the buggies. Often, of course, the protesters know the detainees personally, especially the first responders. It’s friendship, or friend-of-friendship, along with political solidarity. There is also tremendous pride, in the moment and long after, about being from an area that, in Papoola’s words, is “not afraid to fight”, that guards its own values. “These are our streets, this is our community,” Anwar remembers telling his kids. “They’ll remember that day for a very long time.”

Haringey Anti-Raids is known as the oldest group currently running, established in 2016, but they stress (they speak anonymously, as a group) that they built on the foundations of other groups – a network came together in 2012 after a spate of raids, culminating in the raid on the Coronet venue in south [London](#), which targeted the Latin American community. But there are now groups in Hackney, Waltham Forest, Newham, Tower Hamlets and west London, as well as Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle.

Zoe Gardner, who has just left the policy team of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, says anti-raid groups started as “offshoots of other political groups, especially anarchists, going back years”. Certainly, Nick and Ishbel have been involved in direct action since the “lock change evictions” in the noughties. This is when asylum seekers who had had their initial claim rejected, but were appealing against the decision, couldn’t be raided by the Home Office, but the contractor-landlord, who didn’t want to keep them on as tenants, would “sit in an unmarked van outside, just waiting for the tenant to go to the doctor”, so they could evict them. Grassroots groups would gather. “We’d be in the stairway, just chatting,” says Nick,

“and when they saw we were there, they’d just say: ‘We’ll come back another day.’”



Councillor Reginald Popoola. Photograph: Supplied image

Typically, there wasn’t much crossover between anti-raid groups and local party politics, but that is changing, too. Papoola wasn’t the only Labour councillor in the Peckham protest of 13 June. “I spoke to loads of people during and afterwards, who said that this was their boiling point. It was definitely a snapshot of the area, it’s not like people were bused in from north London.”

While the groups are a mix of activists and neighbours, mostly local and spontaneously mustered, they’re nevertheless organised. Maya (not her real name), 29, describes, in the aftermath of the Kenmure street raid, attending a training day run by Haringey Anti-Raids: they learned what a raid looks like (immigration officers, with Border Force on their lapels, often, but not always, accompanied by the police, sometimes, but not always, holding warrants); what are your rights as a detainee, as a protester, how do you protest peacefully, what questions do you not have to answer?

She was at the Peckham protest, as was Benny Hunter, 29, who lives in New Cross Gate (about a mile from Queen’s Road). It was, again, a loose

collection, mobilised by a lot of different networks, not all activists, a lot of neighbours, including the parents' WhatsApp from a local primary school. That slight sense of randomness, combined with an atmosphere that was, once more, pretty festive, may have lulled authorities into thinking people would be easier to shift than they were. "There was only one van of them, they couldn't arrest everyone," says Hunter. In a proper, Dad's Army moment, the police called for back-up. "We could hear their colleagues on the radio saying: 'There's no one available to come help you,'" Hunter says. "Maybe they were busy with actual crime."

As happened in Glasgow, the atmosphere was at its sourest when the protesters won, and the detainee had been released. "The situation changed really quickly," Hunter says, "The police formed a barricade to push people backwards, grabbed people by their rucksacks, people fell on the ground. But it was very short, like five minutes."

The chairman of Migration Watch UK, Alp Mehmet, describes these anti-raid protesters as "vigilantes", saying: "There can be no excuse for preventing the police or immigration authorities from enforcing the law."

The Home Office responded in a written statement: "The government is tackling illegal immigration and the harm it causes, often to the most vulnerable people, by removing those with no right to be in the UK. Preventing immigration enforcement teams from doing their job is unacceptable. Blocking or obstructing them will not deter us from undertaking the duties that the British people rightly expect to be carried out."

The neutral language might throw you off the scent, but these failed detention raids, "cause a real problem for the Home Office," Gardner says. "What we know about how they conduct raids is that they have very little hard intelligence to base them on. They claim to only run intelligence-based missions, and they won't share their intelligence. But if you look at the data, they seem to be based far more on prejudice – Indian and Chinese takeaways are a constant target. Plus, there's a 24-hour tipoff line for the public. There's no way of measuring the quality of the information coming in from that, but there's no way it can be called intelligence." To re-raid a business or home after a botched attempt would put them under much more scrutiny.

Furthermore, this whole element of the hostile environment policy relies, deliberately or not, on a galloping timeline, people taken into custody and deported within days or weeks. “It makes it extremely difficult to be able to intervene,” Anwar says. “First, has that person exhausted all legal avenues? Does that person even have a lawyer? If their lawyer has hit a blank, have they had the opportunity to instruct another lawyer?”

Once someone is in a detention centre, however, it can be difficult for them to challenge their position – have they got access to a phone? Will a solicitor come and see them? In short, there’s nothing gestural about these raid preventions; they’re not just delaying tactics.

Hunter has some worries about the consequences of the action – “that police tactics will escalate” – but says he would not hesitate to repeat it. “Of course, I want to continue to stand by people that live in my area. I don’t want to live in a society where people are kidnapped from their homes.”

As the Policing bill passed into law last May, protesters have to be aware of increasingly draconian measures against them. You can now face six months in prison, or an unlimited fine, for the wilful obstruction of a highway.

But those considerations, especially given the precariousness of the government that brought them in, seem a bit abstract. “Let’s be blunt,” Anwar says. “People living in diverse communities hate the antics of Priti Patel, hate the Home Office, whom they regard as a racist Home Office.”

“We’re not heroes in any shape or form,” Nick says. “People just believe in what’s right, and think what the Home Office is doing is wrong.” “It’s that little nudge of confidence,” Ishbel says, “from making a difference. That sense of control.”

## 2022.07.07 - Opinion

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# **Johnson is going – but he won’t leave until he’s dragged everyone down with him**

[Zoe Williams](#)



The prime minister’s destructive experiment in clowning has torn up the normal rulebook and turned politics into a farce



‘Any new Conservative leader would want to put some blue water between themselves and Johnson and carve out a space in the nation’s psyche.’  
Photograph: Toby Melville/PA

Thu 7 Jul 2022 05.36 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 23.22 EDT

Had Boris Johnson’s dramatic disgrace occurred in a normal world, it would have pushed the expectation of a general election back a bit, perhaps to the last possible moment in 2024. The prime minister has [finally agreed to resign](#) – ludicrously, he wants to stay in post until the autumn, as ex-ministers beg him to leave (it’s possible he only said this because humiliating climbdowns are perversely his happy place). Any new Conservative leader would want to put some blue water between themselves and Johnson and carve out a space in the nation’s psyche. Hell, if they were really old-school, they’d want to put together a political programme of their own ideas, hammered into household use through sheer repetition.

That previously modest road map is a fantasy. There is no possible blue water between anyone and Johnson, who won’t sink until everyone’s lapels are splashed in his carnage. It’s hard to imagine the Tory leader with any personalities or philosophies left to try on and harder still to think of the party united enough that it could devise a long-range strategy.

Arguably, all this turmoil makes a snap election more likely; unarguably, whenever this dishevelled event falls, it will have the feel of a general election they just decided to call five minutes ago. It will be fought on slogans that are tailored to answer the other side's buzzphrases rather than speak to voters.

“[Chaos with Ed Miliband](#)” has ascended to the level of punchline, the grim, ironic mic drop whenever anything so turbulent happens that the Today programme is forced to remain on air after 9am. David Cameron’s attack on Labour was that progressive parties were predisposed towards mismanagement. Couple that with the instability of even an informal pact with the SNP, and some ineffable quality they found in Ed (looking back, it was most likely his chaotic habit of sometimes thinking before he spoke), and you had a recipe for disaster.

It would be really hard to make disorder stick as a charge against Labour now. Failing “to [fix the roof](#) while the sun shines” was unfair: “this country’s [on the brink](#) of becoming Greece” was unfair and a bit irresponsible. There is quite a high tolerance for completely unjustified accusations at election time. Yet no Conservative will want to conjure the promise of order during the next campaign. Even their own voters know that politics doesn’t have to be like this. To describe out loud the ideal of calm and constructive government fosters this sense of bottomless and crucifying what-ifs.

More likely, and already essayed in the rightwing tabloids, is a rerun of 2019, with a twist: not “Labour wants to stop Brexit”; rather “they want to take your Brexit away”. Keir Starmer sought to [pre-empt this](#) in his speech on Monday night about how there was no going back, not into the EU, not into the single market, not into the customs union. Labour is now the party of hard Brexit, since the Tory proponents for leaving the EU are simply too busy falling apart to make a case one way or the other. The Conservatives, even the worst of them, are so much more agile than Labour that it would be no surprise at all to see them throw up their hands and select a Jeremy Hunt-like figure as leader, becoming a Rejoin party on the hoof.

Sloganeering might not be as easy as it looks for Labour; the target is almost too wide, and they too have their formulations, phrases and lores that they think are surefire because they unaccountably still heed the wisdom of Peter

Mandelson. They talk about “Tory sleaze” and it recalls the absolutely trivial, even romantic scandals of the John Major era; “Tory corruption”, and it’s a brown envelope with a couple of thousand quid in it.

It is simply not possible to describe how bad this experiment in clowning has been using any normal playbook. The world as it is has turned to farce, yet when Labour is called upon to describe the world as it should be, they still get the cocked-head, deeply sceptical, “How are you going to pay for that, then?”, treatment, as if they’re trying to wrest the reins from sensible fiscal conservatives. If I were Labour’s version of Lynton Crosby, I’d be counselling everyone to go full tonto, as Martin Amis used to say, to scream: “How dare you ask me that, can’t you see what’s all around you, everywhere?”

This is the truly impossible point of the story arc. We’re heading towards an election whose slogans will be less fair than 2010’s, more preposterous than 2015’s, more infantile than 2019’s. But the only thing worse than this coming election would be no election. So please God, make it soon.

- Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist
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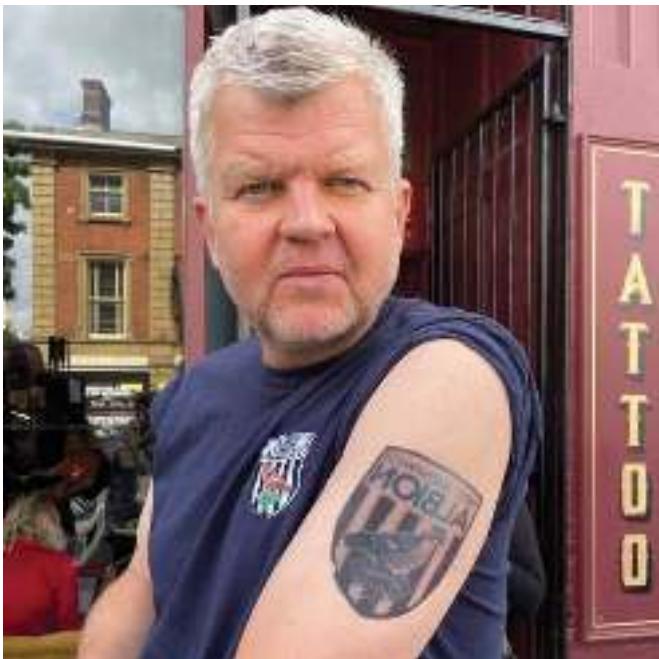
OpinionTattoos

## I got a back-to-front West Brom tattoo - and I love it

Adrian Chiles



For my role in a sitcom a make-up artist gave me a temporary tattoo, but was mortified to find she had it the wrong way round. But I like it so much I'm thinking of making it permanent



Showing his colours ... Adrian displays his temporary tattoo.

Thu 7 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 08.42 EDT

On Ocean Drive, Miami, I once met a chap called Chad from South Yorkshire. He was clenching a crushed Coke can, his ankle wrapped in clingfilm. I asked him if he was OK. “Had a tattoo,” he explained. “Bloody agony.” He peeled back the cellophane to show me a word in Russian: “Фрикли”. I asked him what it meant and he told me it was where he was from. I asked him where he was from. “Frickley,” he said. I inquired as to why he would want Frickley tattooed on his leg in Cyrillic. He didn’t have an answer for me.

Chad was a football fan, in Miami for England’s warm-up game ahead of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. Incredibly, four years later, I bumped into him on Nikolskaya Street, Moscow, during the 2018 World Cup in Russia. I told him that if England won it, I’d pay for him to get “ENGLAND”, or rather “Англия”, tattooed on a bum cheek of his choosing. Sadly, neither event came to pass.

In a similar way, I have long said that if [West Bromwich Albion](#) won anything I would get myself tattooed with our club crest. That has not happened, either. This week, however, in South Yorkshire as it happens, I

had to get a (temporary) West Brom tattoo for a part in the sitcom, Meet the Richardsons. I was very excited. Unfortunately, the makeup artist put it on back to front. The poor woman was mortified, but I identified at least two positives: first, it made the words look a bit Cyrillic, so put me in mind of my mate Chad from Frickley; second, in the mirror it looked bloody marvellous. If and when West Brom do win anything, my real tattoo will be going on back to front, just like this one. That way, I'll be able to stop and admire it properly in every mirror, shop window or shiny saucepan that I chance upon.

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**Nils Pratley on financeBusiness**

## **Nadhim Zahawi's corporation tax review raises more questions than answers**

[Nils Pratley](#)



The UK suffers from poor productivity and lacks investment, something Rishi Sunak's planned tax rise aimed to address



Production facilities at Leyland Trucks in Lancashire, an area with one of the highest productivity rates in the UK. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

Wed 6 Jul 2022 14.09 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 00.14 EDT

Nadhim Zahawi's musings on business taxes may become irrelevant at any moment, but this week's chancellor of the exchequer arrived [with an idea to kick around](#): delay, reform or simply cancel his predecessor's hike in corporation tax from 19% to 25%, due to take effect from next April.

That, at least, seemed to be the meaning of Zahawi's many references to the tax in his day-one interviews. "I know that boards around the world, when they make investment decisions, they're long term, and the one tax they can compare globally is corporation tax," he told Sky News.

Well, yes, it is true that comparisons are easy when one looks at only one number. The point about Rishi Sunak's approach, however, was that it was based on an analysis that the business taxation game is more complicated if the aim is to boost investment by companies, where the UK's performance has been dire since 2016.

“It is unclear that cutting the headline corporation tax rate did lead to a step change in business investment; we need our future tax policy to be targeted and strategic,” said Sunak in a speech in March – virtually the only speech in his Covid-battered chancellorship that attempted to sketch a long-term economic plan for the UK.

Thus a major thrust of the Treasury’s thinking on business taxes, until now, has been how to design a successor to the “super deductions” – effectively big tax breaks on spending on equipment – that Sunak introduced as a two-year emergency measure in his spring 2021 budget. The CBI, for one, wants the deductions to be made permanent, seeing them as the surest way to lift the UK off the bottom of the G7 league table for business investment.

Data on the effectiveness of the deductions is mixed, it should be said: there has been little sign of a meaningful pick-up in business investment so far. But, if there is anything close to consensus in FTSE 100 boardrooms, it is that Sunak had at least identified the correct problem: the UK’s yawning productivity gap versus European peers, especially France and Germany.

A key question for Zahawi, then, is whether the “super deduction” plan would survive a cancellation of the hike in corporation tax. Given the state of the public finances, it would be hard to have both. An increase in the rate to 25% was projected to raise an extra £17bn annually, of which maybe £11bn would be returned via investment incentives. If you’re waving goodbye to the £17bn, your room for specific pro-investment giveaways is severely limited.

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Zahawi stressed he was merely in “review” mode, but the hint on corporation tax was heavy. Business leaders are hard-wired to cheer a cut – or a freeze in this case – but, if the new chancellor takes this route, their second question may be about how a low headline rate is supposed to boost business investment. Sunak looked for the evidence and didn’t find it.

## **AO World does much-needed housekeeping**

Welcome to the 90% club, [AO World](#). Or, at least, honorary membership of the group of companies whose share prices have crashed by nine-tenths from their peak. AO's high, seen as recently as January 2021, was 429p. Now the online retailer of fridges and freezers is printing shares at 43p, which is as near to 90% lower as makes no difference.

John Roberts, founder and chief executive, called the £40m fundraising "a sensible piece of financial housekeeping given the short-term macroeconomic uncertainty", a breezy way to describe a cash-call that is needed because the balance sheet is stretched and last year's optimism has been punctured.

Investors who climbed aboard at the top – when Roberts was proclaiming that the pandemic had permanently improved AO's prospects and pan-European expansion was ready for liftoff – may not be amused.

AO ditched its seven-year-old experiment in Germany last month and took a vow to concentrate solely on the UK again. That is sensible given that the UK operation is well-established with a strong reputation for customer service. But Roberts could help himself by reining in his instinctive bullishness.

As recently as Monday, the company, in response to a Sunday Times report about a credit insurer reducing cover for suppliers, declared that its liquidity position was unaltered from April.

Two days later, it tapped investors in a fundraising that expands the number of shares in issue by 20%. That is more than a modest bit of housekeeping.

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**OpinionConservatives**

## **Don't waste all your anger on Boris Johnson — save some for his enablers**

[Aditya Chakrabortty](#)



The prime minister and his wrecking crew already smashed our democracy – now they are just turning the ire on themselves



Sajid Javid, Rishi Sunak and Boris Johnson in Downing Street in September 2021. Photograph: Toby Melville/PA

Thu 7 Jul 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 05.33 EDT

In 2019 the now-departed chancellor, Rishi Sunak, played a vital role in boosting Boris Johnson's chances of becoming Tory leader. He [co-wrote](#) a statement declaring: "Boris Johnson is one of life's optimists and can help us recapture a sense of excitement and hope about what we Conservatives can do for Britain." On Tuesday night, he [changed his mind](#). It had apparently taken him three years to discover what everyone already knew – indeed, what Johnson had blatantly advertised all along, dangling from a zipwire, standing beside the Vote Leave bus, filing fibbing copy to the Telegraph.

What's more, Sunak was meant to have spent this week hailing "[the biggest personal tax cut in over a decade](#)", a giveaway precision-targeted at those tabloids that once purred approval at the government but now only hiss and spit. It was the start of yet another relaunch: the Treasury and the Tory press office lined up all their ducks, and Sunak and Johnson were gearing up for an event next week. Instead the prime minister looks like toast and almost every other story is lost in the noise – even the ones about Britons getting a bit more cash.

Ah well, that's another £6bn tipped down the drain.

Here is what the end of the Tory show looks like: costly policies that splash about public money with the sole aim of currying favour for a leadership contest. Your taxes spent to prop up their poll ratings.

Whoever takes up residence in No 10 after Johnson, there is talk of slashing VAT, or U-turning on corporation tax rises – more billions sprayed around with the wantonness of a Formula One driver wielding a magnum of champagne. Never, you note, a policy that might direct help where it is most needed: to keep benefits in line with food prices, or invest in schoolkids, or even to build [those 40 hospitals](#). They don't figure on the laundry list of any newspaper baron or member of the tiny Tory selectorate.

Those ministers and bag-carriers who have resigned this week in the name of “integrity” and “decency” display only their lack of either quality. They are, as Keir Starmer jibed in parliament, “the sinking ship fleeing the rat”. Today, parents are worrying about what they will feed their kids, workers are wondering if they can afford to drive to the office, and pensioners are already in dread of a winter of record-high fuel bills. Meanwhile, the Tory MPs handed a landslide have spent the past few weeks and months not governing but plotting the right time to depose their leader, and whom they fancy as a replacement. A vast tableau of national immiseration serves only as the backdrop to their squalid careerism.

Though on one big thing Johnson was quite correct: a man in late middle age cannot change his nature, and he never offered to do so. All that has changed is his value to the politicians, funders and journalists who put him there. His electoral currency was once pure gold. Now it is the most debased metal in Westminster.

That is why his departure will be most greatly celebrated by his own side. But the prime minister who handed out plum jobs to a man accused of sexual harassment (as deputy chief whip, Chris Pincher's total salary would have been some £115,000), who attended lockdown parties then lied and lied about it, and who tried to defend a chum who broke the lobbying rules, is by no means the cause of the rot in Westminster. Johnson is instead the most obvious and serious symptom of a deep crisis in our democracy.

Consider who might replace him. Sunak and [Sajid Javid](#) have together spent 32 years working in high finance. Liz Truss is Nigel Farage without the pint glass. Matt Hancock is Matt Hancock. That is today's Tory party: a vacant-eyed coalition of bankers, bounders and Brexiteers. They have no ideas, save the most parodic form of Thatcherism. Hand huge home loans to people on housing benefit who can barely afford to eat. Allow mortgages to be passed down from parent to child, like some 21st-century remake of debt serfdom. When all else fails, attack the BBC for not showing more flags.

Consider, too, the media enablers of Johnson. The BBC's *Have I Got News For You*, which turned a hard-right politician into a TV star. The newspapers that laughed off all his lies and petty corruption until it was clear their readers weren't going to stomach it any more. In its main editorial on Wednesday, the Times demanded Johnson step down: "No one in Britain or abroad can any longer trust a word this government says." In December 2019, the same paper [endorsed him as prime minister](#) to keep "close links with European partners and pave the way for a return to pragmatic, responsible government".

This wasn't naivety. The Times and most of Fleet Street signed up as cheerleaders for the most flawed political leader in living memory purely to stave off Jeremy Corbyn. Labour, the same editorial warned, would take the country down "a path of radical socialism that would lead to economic chaos" and "turn the clock back 40 years". It was the crudest attempt to portray German-style social democracy as tantamount to collectivised farms and Siberian salt mines. It was intended to nullify democratic choice. The result is the law-breaking regime now in charge of the country, who see nothing wrong in handing out PPE contracts to mates, outsourcing functions to expensive consultants, and running a Covid-loan scheme subject to incredible fraud – and with no serious ideas to stave off a looming recession.

Boris Johnson is the leader of this mess, and trailing behind him is an entire wrecking crew of shameless MPs, craven newspapers and sharp-eyed donors. They have destroyed much, grabbed what they could and built nothing. For all his own faults, the man in No 10 is also paying the price for years of rule by the [Right Honourable Member for Greensill](#) and [Lord Osborne of BlackRock](#). Together, they have taken fistfuls and left only small change.

I have written it before but it bears repeating: these people are bad at government because they believe government is bad. For them, levelling up is a pretty slogan. Their real goal looks like self advancement. And when they finally leave, their only punishment is higher fees on the after-dinner circuit, a ludicrous book advance and their pick of City directorships.

The UK does not need a new manager: it is crying out for an entirely different form of management that hands power and wealth to those who have been deprived of it for decades. It deserves radically devolved government and an economic system that values the everyday needs of its people while actively shrinking the finance sector. And it absolutely must get shot of this wrecking crew in their pinstripe suits. The end of [Boris Johnson](#) calls for celebrations, to be followed by the real job of seeing off the rest of them.

- Aditya Chakrabortty is a Guardian columnist
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## 2022.07.07 - Around the world

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- ['The world is bloody messy' Jacinda Ardern urges end to 'black-and-white' view of global conflict](#)
- [January 6 hearings Trump's possible ties to far-right militias to be focus of next panel meeting](#)
- [January 6 hearings Trump White House counsel to cooperate with committee](#)

## Espionage

# FBI and MI5 leaders give unprecedented joint warning on Chinese spying

Christopher Wray joins Ken McCallum in London, calling Beijing the 'biggest long-term threat to economic security'



Ken McCallum, left, and Christopher Wray at a joint press conference at MI5 headquarters. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/PA

*Guardian staff and agencies*

Thu 7 Jul 2022 08.21 EDTFirst published on Wed 6 Jul 2022 19.00 EDT

The head of the [FBI](#) and the leader of Britain's domestic intelligence agency have delivered an unprecedented joint address raising fresh alarm about the Chinese government, warning business leaders that Beijing is determined to steal their technology for competitive gain.

In a speech at MI5's London headquarters intended as a show of western solidarity, Christopher Wray, the FBI director, stood alongside the MI5 director general, Ken McCallum. Wray reaffirmed longstanding concerns about economic espionage and hacking operations by [China](#), as well as the Chinese government's efforts to stifle dissent abroad.

"We consistently see that it's the Chinese government that poses the biggest long-term threat to our economic and national security, and by 'our', I mean both of our nations, along with our allies in Europe and elsewhere," Wray said.

He told the audience the Chinese government was "set on stealing your technology, whatever it is that makes your industry tick, and using it to undercut your business and dominate your market".

Ken McCallum said [MI5](#) was running seven times as many investigations into China as it had been four years ago and planned to "grow as much again" to tackle the widespread attempts at inference which pervade "so many aspects of our national life".

"Today is the first time the heads of the FBI and MI5 have shared a public platform," McCallum said. "We're doing so to send the clearest signal we can on a massive shared challenge: China."

McCallum said the Chinese government and its "covert pressure across the globe" amounted to "the most game-changing challenge we face.

"This might feel abstract. But it's real and it's pressing," he said. "We need to talk about it. We need to act."

A spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Washington, Liu Pengyu, rejected the allegations from the western leaders, saying in an emailed statement to the Associated Press that China "firmly opposes and combats all forms of cyber-attacks" and calling the accusations groundless.

"We will never encourage, support or condone cyber-attacks," the statement said.

Asked about Wray's comments at a briefing on Thursday, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters: "The relevant US politician has been playing up the so-called China threat to smear and attack China. Facts have fully proven that the US is the biggest threat to world peace, stability and development. We urge this US official to have the right perspective, see China's developments in an objective and reasonable manner and stop spreading lies and stop making irresponsible remarks."

In a nod to current tensions between China and Taiwan, Wray also said during his speech that any forcible takeover of Taipei by Beijing "would represent one of the most horrific business disruptions the world has ever seen".

Last week, the US government's director of national intelligence, Avril Haines, said at an event in Washington that there were no indications that Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, was poised to take Taiwan by military force. But she that did say Xi appeared to be "pursuing the potential" for such an action as part of a broader Chinese government goal of reunification with Taiwan.

After the appearance, Wray said he would leave to others the question of whether an invasion of Taiwan was more or less likely after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But, he said, "I don't have any reason to think their interest in Taiwan has abated in any fashion" and added that he hoped China had learned what happens "when you overplay your hand", as he said Russia had.

Joe Biden said in May that the US would respond militarily if China invaded Taiwan, offering one of the most forceful White House statements in support of Taiwan's self-governing in decades. The White House later tried to soften the impact of the statement, saying Biden was not outlining a change in US policy toward Taiwan, a self-governing island that China views as a breakaway province that should be reunified with the mainland.

The embassy spokesman said the Taiwan issue was "purely China's internal affair" and said when it came to questions of China's territory and sovereignty, the country has "no room for compromise or concession."

“We will strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification with utmost sincerity and efforts,” the statement said, though it noted that China would “reserve the option of taking all necessary measures in response to the interference of foreign forces”.

*The Associated Press and Press Association contributed reporting*

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## New Zealand

# ‘The world is bloody messy’: Jacinda Ardern urges end to ‘black-and-white’ view of global conflict

New Zealand PM says Russia’s war in Ukraine is morally bankrupt but should not be seen as a conflict of democracy versus autocracy

‘Morally bankrupt’: Jacinda Ardern says UN failed in Ukraine war response – video

*Tess McClure in Auckland*

*@tessairini*

Wed 6 Jul 2022 23.24 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 00.19 EDT

The world is “bloody messy” but must take a step back from polarisation and black-and-white approaches to conflict, [Jacinda Ardern](#) has said in a wide-ranging speech in which she addressed the war in Ukraine and rising tensions with China.

In a speech to foreign policy thinktank the Lowy Institute in Sydney, the [New Zealand](#) prime minister decried Russia’s “morally bankrupt” war in Ukraine – but also argued against the hardening of alliances, saying that the war should not be presented as a conflict of “democracy v autocracy” or be seen as an inevitable direction for other tensions between competing nations.

“In taking every possible action to respond to Russia’s aggression and to hold it to account, we must remember that fundamentally this is Russia’s war,” she said.

“And while there are those who have shown overt and direct support … who must also see consequences for their role, let us not otherwise characterise

this as a war of the west vs Russia. Or democracy v autocracy. It is not.

“Nor should we naturally assume it is a demonstration of the inevitable trajectory in other areas of geostrategic contest.”

While Ardern cited Belarus as an example of a country that had shown Russia support, her comments also gestured at China’s failure to condemn Russian aggression, and the prime minister dedicated much of her speech to the question of China’s role in the Indo-Pacific, again arguing against hardening alliances, and calling for dialogue and cooperation.

“In the wake of the tensions we see rising, including in our Indo-Pacific region, diplomacy must become the strongest tool and de-escalation the loudest call. That won’t succeed, however, if those parties we endeavour to seek to engage with are increasingly isolated and the region we inhabit becomes increasingly divided and polarised,” Ardern said.

Over the past year, New Zealand has come under pressure to clarify its position on China’s increasingly muscular presence in the Pacific, particularly after Beijing signed a secretive bilateral security pact with Solomon Islands, and sought a regional agreement with other Pacific nations.

New Zealand has made some incremental shifts toward its harder-line western partners, including joining the US-driven Blue Pacific pact, and joining UK military exercises in the South China Sea. But New Zealand – which is heavily reliant on China for trade – is still trying to walk a middle road, with Ardern saying it would seek to cooperate with Beijing on shared interests, and emphasising Pacific nations’ right to make autonomous decisions on their partners and allies.

“Even as China becomes more assertive in the pursuit of its interests, there are still shared interests in which we can and should seek to cooperate,” she said.

“The honest reality is that the world is bloody messy. And yet, amongst all the complexity, we still often see issues portrayed in a black and white way,”

she said. “We must not allow the risk of a self-fulfilling prophecy to become an inevitable outcome for our region.”

She also called for countries not to become myopically focused on military security, and miss the major threat that climate change and economic fragility posed to the Pacific.

“While we all have a concern – and rightly so – about any moves towards militarisation of our region, that must surely be matched by concern for those who experienced the violence of climate change,” she said.

“What happens in the Indo-Pacific Region impacts our entire neighbourhood. It follows that we must strengthen the resilience of the Indo-Pacific through relationships, and importantly, economic architecture.”

As she charted New Zealand’s approach to trying to pursue “independent foreign policy” as a small player in an intensely pressured environment, Ardern re-articulated the country’s commitment to multilateral institutions – but also reflected on their recent failures. There was “no better example of that than the failure of the UN to appropriately respond to the war in Ukraine because of the position taken by Russia in the security council”, she said, describing it as “a morally bankrupt position on their part, in the wake of a morally bankrupt and illegal war”.

Ardern is visiting Australia on the tail end of a trip to Europe, where she spoke at the Nato summit, finalised a free trade agreement with the EU and held a series of bilateral talks with leaders including Boris Johnson. In Australia, she will hold further talks with her counterpart Anthony Albanese that are expected to include conversations about China, the challenge of climate change in the Pacific, trade between the two countries and the rights of New Zealand citizens residing in Australia.

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[January 6 hearings](#)

## Trump's possible ties to far-right militias examined by January 6 committee



Trump supporters clash with police and security forces as they try to storm the US Capitol on 6 January 2021. Photograph: Joseph Prezioso/AFP/Getty Images

Capitol attack panel expected to study links between Trump and the extremist groups in closer detail at seventh public hearing

Hugo Lowell

Thu 7 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 7 Jul 2022 10.02 EDT

Towards the end of her testimony to the House January 6 select committee, former Trump aide Cassidy Hutchinson raised for the first time the prospect that [Donald Trump](#) might have had a line of communication to the leaders of the extremist groups that stormed the Capitol.

The potential connection from the former US president to the extremist right-wing groups came through [her account of Trump's order](#) to his White House chief of staff Mark Meadows to call Roger Stone and Mike Flynn – which Meadows did – the evening before the Capitol attack.

Trump's order to Meadows, even though Hutchinson said she did not know what was discussed, is significant because it shows the former president seeking to have a channel to two figures with close ties to the leaders of the far-right Proud Boys and Oath Keepers groups.

The directive is doubly notable since it was Trump himself who initiated the outreach to Stone and Flynn, suggesting it was not an instance of far-right political operatives freelancing, for instance, potential strategies to overturn the 2020 election results.

All of this is important because unresolved questions for January 6 investigators remain whether Trump knew that Proud Boys and Oath Keepers would storm the Capitol, and whether Trump was in contact with their leaders who have since been indicted for seditious conspiracy.

The sworn testimony from Hutchinson about Trump's order to Meadows raised the spectre that Trump wanted to learn what plans had been drawn up for the extremist groups regarding January 6 and wanted his aide - rather than doing it himself - to connect with Stone and Flynn.

Now next Tuesday, at its seventh public hearing led by congressman Jamie Raskin, the select committee is expected to examine the connections

between Trump and the extremist groups in closer detail, according to a source familiar with the investigation. There seems to be a lot to go after.

The account of Trump's order was not the only link from the White House to the extremist groups. Hutchinson also testified that she recalled hearing the terms "Oath Keepers" and "Proud Boys" whenever former Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani was around at the White House.

The Trump "war room" that Hutchinson referred to in her testimony appears to have been the one set up by Giuliani and Eastman, and staffed by other pro-Trump figures including lawyer Boris Epshteyn, Trump's former strategist Steve Bannon, and Giuliani's aide Bernie Kerik.

That "war room" had specific goals: to help pressure then vice-president Mike Pence to refuse to certify Biden's election win and send it to the House of Representatives in a contingent election, or failing that, delay the joint session beyond 6 January 2021.

While Stone also had a mid-size suite at the Willard hotel on 5 January and 6 January, it was a different room that was totally separate to the "war room" put together by Giuliani and Eastman. Flynn was also briefly at the Willard, but again, did not lead the "war room".

By the evening before the Capitol attack, Trump knew that Pence was resisting that plan to unilaterally reject Biden's election win and that Pence was unlikely to do anything to stop the certification – what Trump thought was the only way left to somehow get a second term.

It was against that backdrop, Hutchinson testified, that Trump wanted Meadows to call Stone and Flynn, a directive that the panel believes could amount to him trying to figure out if any other avenues remained to stop Biden's certification, say sources close to the inquiry.

The select committee, the sources said, is for the same reason also examining whether Meadows initially expressed an interest in going to the Trump "war room" at the Willard the night before the Capitol attack before being talked out of the idea by Hutchinson.

## Stone and Flynn

Stone has repeatedly denied he had anything to do with the Capitol attack, but he would have been a natural choice for Trump to try to reach on 5 January 2021 had he sought to get a sense of what extremist groups might have been planning for the next morning.

The far-right political operative based in Florida, for instance, had close ties to the Proud Boys and its ex-national chairman, Enrique Tarrio, who lived in Miami [before his arrest for seditious conspiracy](#), well before Trump lost the 2020 election to Biden.

When Stone travelled to Washington DC before 6 January 2021, he was accompanied by a man named Jacob Engels, a member of the Proud Boys from Florida who served as something of a lieutenant for him on the day before and the day of the Capitol attack.

Through Engels in particular, Stone appeared to maintain his ties to the Proud Boys, even though during his stay at the Willard hotel on those two days, it was a small group of the Oath Keepers who acted as his personal security detail, pictures and court records show.

The people that guarded Stone included Joshua James, an Oath Keepers member indicted for seditious conspiracy and is cooperating with the government, and Michael Simmons, codenamed “Whip”, who served as [the “operations leader” for the Oath Keepers](#) for January 6.

Meanwhile, Trump’s former national security adviser Michael Flynn would have been another natural choice for the former president to try and reach in order to learn what extremist groups interested in stopping Joe Biden’s election win certification might be planning.

Flynn was also connected to the Oath Keepers through his own security detail called the 1st Amendment Praetorian, after the two groups guarded him as early as 12 December 2020, when Flynn took part in a Women for America First-affiliated march and rally.

The 1st Amendment Praetorian, though, appeared to serve both a security function and an intelligence-gathering function for Flynn – a former director for the Defense Intelligence Agency – according to multiple people who worked directly with the group.

Flynn's operatives were involved in election fraud conspiracies from the outset, 1AP's leader Robert Patrick Lewis and others have said, including working to gather intelligence about the claims cited in lawsuits filed by former Trump campaign lawyer Sidney Powell.

The members of the 1st Amendment Praetorian do not appear to have stormed the Capitol like the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, but at least one of its operatives, Geoffrey Flohr, circled the Capitol as the attack was underway talking covertly with an earpiece.

While Flohr walked around the Capitol seemingly relaying information, another member of the 1st Amendment Praetorian, Philip Luelsdorff, was observing proceedings in the Trump “war room” led by Giuliani and then Trump lawyer John Eastman at the Willard hotel.

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## January 6 hearings

# Trump White House counsel to cooperate with January 6 committee

Source says testimony from Pat Cipollone is expected to be a transcribed interview and recorded on camera



Pat Cipollone, bottom left in the red tie, sits with Jay Sekulow, Donald Trump's personal lawyer, in the East Room of the White House in February 2020. Photograph: Patrick Semansky/AP

*[Hugo Lowell](#) in Washington*

Wed 6 Jul 2022 11.50 EDT Last modified on Wed 6 Jul 2022 13.47 EDT

The former Trump White House counsel Pat Cipollone is expected to testify to the House January 6 select committee on Friday after reaching an agreement over the scope of his cooperation with a subpoena compelling his testimony, according to a source familiar with the matter.

The testimony from Cipollone is expected to be a transcribed interview and recorded on camera, the source said, and the former top White House lawyer is expected to only answer questions on a narrow subset of topics and conversations with the former president.

Among the topics Cipollone could discuss include how he told [Donald Trump](#) that pressuring Mike Pence, the vice-president, to refuse to certify Joe Biden's election win was unlawful, and Trump's plot to coerce the justice department into falsely saying the 2020 election was corrupt.

The closed-door deposition, to that end, could amount to a chance for the panel to corroborate testimony by the former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson, who testified that Cipollone repeatedly warned that Trump's ideas to overturn the 2020 election violated the law.

Hutchinson, [according to her public testimony](#) at a special hearing last week, was told by Cipollone that "we're going to be charged with every crime imaginable" if Trump went to the Capitol that day as he pressured Congress to not certify Biden's win.

It was not immediately clear on Wednesday why the scope of his testimony had to be limited, given Biden and the current White House counsel has previously waived privilege concerns for other former administration witnesses.

Cipollone's agreement comes days after the select committee finally [issued a subpoena](#) following weeks of unsuccessful negotiations, with the order compelling his testimony about at least three parts of Trump's efforts to reverse his election defeat to Biden.

The subpoena marked a dramatic escalation for the panel and showed its resolve in seeking to obtain inside information about how the former president sought to return himself to office from the unique perspective of the White House counsel's office.

"Mr Cipollone repeatedly raised legal and other concerns about President Trump's activities on January 6 and in the days that preceded," the chairman

of the select committee, Bennie Thompson, said in a statement accompanying the subpoena.

“The committee needs to hear from him on the record, as other former White House counsels have done in other congressional investigations. Concerns Mr Cipollone has about the prerogatives of the office he previously held are clearly outweighed by the need for his testimony.”

Cipollone was a key witness to [some of Trump's most brazen schemes](#) to overturn the 2020 election results, which, the select committee has said in its hearings, was part of a sprawling and probably illegal multi-pronged strategy that culminated in the Capitol attack.

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[\*\*The ObserverSri Lanka\*\*](#)

## **Sri Lanka: president agrees to resign amid unrest**

Beleaguered Gotabaya Rajapaksa says he will step down on 13 July, following turmoil in Colombo

Sri Lanka: thousands of protesters storm president's official residence – video report

*[Hannah Ellis-Petersen](#) in Delhi and [Devana Senanayake](#) in Colombo*

Sat 9 Jul 2022 13.11 EDTFirst published on Sat 9 Jul 2022 04.24 EDT

The Sri Lankan president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, has agreed to resign after a dramatic day during which his house and offices were stormed by protesters and the home of the prime minister set on fire.

In a late-night message conveyed through the parliamentary speaker, Mahinda Yapa, the beleaguered president said he would step down from power on 13 July to “ensure a peaceful transition of power”.

It was an historic victory for the protesters who have been calling for him to resign for months and gathered on the streets of Colombo in their tens of thousands on Saturday, as the country continues to struggle through its worst economic crisis since independence.

Earlier prime minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, had told a meeting of party leaders that he too would resign as soon as a new all-party government was formed.

In extraordinary scenes on Saturday, protesters broke through police barriers and charged into the president’s official residence. Images and witness

accounts showed people flooding up the grand staircase of the colonial-era building, with chants calling for the president to go.

As protesters poured into the bedrooms and kitchen and rifled through the president's possessions, many took full advantage of the president's luxury amenities which had been denied to them in recent weeks due to rampant food and fuel shortages. Protesters were seen cooking up curries in the kitchen, lying down on beds and sofas, lifting weights and jogging in his private gym and jumping into the outdoor pool.

The president was not at home, having fled the night before under military protection, and he remained in hiding as Saturday's events unfolded.

Rajith, 50, said he had come to take part in the protests as he had two young children and "there's no food to eat". He spoke of his shock at entering the president's home and seeing that, while Sri Lankans were suffering, "they didn't lack anything. We saw their luxury rooms, their AC, their cooking gas. They even have so many pedigree pets."

Dhanu was also among those who stormed into the president's residence, having cycled for more than six hours from the city of Galle to attend the protest. "I came because there's something terribly wrong happening here," she said. "I saw at the president's house how he enjoyed his life using taxpayers' money and now he is hiding like a coward dog. The president has fled because he's a thief."

Much of the anger and blame for Sri Lanka's economic crisis has been directed at the president and the Rajapaksa family, who are Sri Lanka's most powerful political dynasty and held the positions of president, prime minister, finance minister and several other senior cabinet posts in the government.

### [Location map](#)

The Rajapaksas, who pushed a fiercely ultranationalist agenda, are accused of corruption, mismanaging the economy and pushing the nation to bankruptcy. Since March, there have been widespread protests calling for the Rajapaksas, in particular the president, to be removed from power and held

accountable for the dire economic circumstances the country's 22 million people are now grappling with.

Rajapaksa, a former military man who was accused of war crimes when he was defence secretary, had refused to step down for months, and was the last Rajapaksa left standing. His resignation next week will mark the end of a two-decade hold that the Rajapaksa family have had over Sri Lankan politics.

On Saturday evening, the mood on Colombo's streets turned tense as protesters breached security barriers and set alight the house of Wickremesinghe, who was appointed as a caretaker prime minister after Mahinda Rajapaksa, the president's older brother and a former president, was forced to step down in May. He had also been facing calls to resign over allegations that he was propping up the Rajapaksa regime.

Sri Lanka protesters jump into president's pool after storming palace in Colombo – video

The arson attack followed an hours-long standoff between protesters and police outside Wickremesigne's house, with police firing several rounds of teargas into the crowds. Several journalists were violently beaten by police and taken to hospital, prompting a statement from Amnesty International South Asia condemning the "shocking assault", which was "gravely concerning and blatantly violates press freedom".

Despite fuel shortages, tens of thousands of people travelled into the centre of Colombo on Saturday morning, many commandeering trucks and buses, to attend what became the biggest protest yet against the president. As the crowds swelled and pushed against the barriers, police began firing teargas.

But they failed to hold back the angry protesters, who moved towards the president's home, first breaking down police barriers, and then storming into the palatial property, many carrying Sri Lankan flags and shouting slogans.

The president's office in the Galle Face neighbourhood of Colombo was also taken over by thousands of protesters, who breached the security and

barricades and stormed the building, with celebrations continuing inside into the early hours of the morning. For months Galle Face has been the site of an anti-government protest camp, where people have been living in tents and refusing to move until Rajapaksa resigns.

Ruki Fernando, an activist, said he had travelled almost 100 miles from the city of Kandy to be at the Colombo protest. On the way he had seen people walking along highways, clutching on to the back of cargo trucks, crushed into lorries and on bicycles, in order to get to the protest despite the lack of transport due to the fuel crisis.

“I have never experienced such a widespread people’s uprising,” said Fernando. “There was such a sense of achievement when people entered the president’s house, and his secretariat. These are all places maintained in luxury by people’s money at a time when the government claims that there isn’t enough money to give medicine, to give food, to give fuel. It’s very politically significant they have been reclaimed by the public.”

At least 40 people, including several officers, were injured and hospitalised in Saturday’s protests.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Sri Lanka is continuing to struggle through a devastating crisis in which the [economy has completely collapsed](#) and the government is unable to afford to import food, fuel and medicines.

All sales of petrol have been suspended, schools have shut and medical procedures and surgeries are being delayed or cancelled over a [shortage of drugs and equipment](#), with the UN recently warning that the country is facing a humanitarian crisis.

Inflation is a record-breaking 54.6% and food prices have gone up fivefold, meaning two-thirds of the country are struggling to feed themselves. Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign debts in May, which total over \$51bn, and is in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund for a \$3bn bailout.

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[Ukraine war live](#)[Ukraine](#)

# UN says both sides share blame for nursing home attack; Russian shelling reported in east – as it happened

Ruling on an attack on a nursing home early in the conflict, UN says no war crimes committed but both sides partially responsible

- [See all our Ukraine war coverage](#)

Updated 9 Jul 2022

*Richard Luscombe* (now) ; *Nadeem Badshah* and *Geneva Abdul* (earlier)  
Sat 9 Jul 2022 19.19 EDTFirst published on Sat 9 Jul 2022 02.15 EDT

Key events:

- [9 Jul 2022](#)  
[Canada to return seized Russian gas turbine to Germany](#)
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[At least five killed in Russian shelling of Donetsk: Ukraine officials](#)
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[Ukrainian soldiers arrive in UK for training](#)
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[Summary](#)



A destroyed Russian helicopter near Kyiv Photograph: Maxym Marusenko/NurPhoto/REX/Shutterstock

[Richard Luscombe](#) (now) ; [Nadeem Badshah](#) and [Geneva Abdul](#) (earlier)  
Sat 9 Jul 2022 19.19 EDTFirst published on Sat 9 Jul 2022 02.15 EDT

Show key events only

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## Live feed

From 9 Jul 2022

[08.28](#)

# **UN says Ukraine bears share of blame for nursing home attack**

**The United Nations has said Ukraine's armed forces bear a large, and perhaps equal, share of the blame for an assault that took place at a nursing home in Luhansk, where dozens of elderly and disabled patients were trapped inside without water or electricity, two weeks after Russia launched its invasion.**

According to AP, Ukrainian authorities placed the fault on Russian forces, accusing them of killing more than 50 civilians in an unprovoked attack. At least 22 of the 71 patients survived the assault, but the exact number of people killed remains unknown, according to the UN.

However, the United Nations has now said Ukraine's armed forces bear a large, and perhaps equal, share of the blame for what happened in the village of Stara Krasnyanka.

The report by the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights did not conclude that either side committed war crimes, but said the battle at the nursing home was an example of concerns over the potential use of "human shields" to prevent military operations in certain areas.

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Updated at 09.21 EDT

Key events:

- [9 Jul 2022](#)  
[Canada to return seized Russian gas turbine to Germany](#)
- [9 Jul 2022](#)  
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[At least five killed in Russian shelling of Donetsk: Ukraine officials](#)

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Show key events only

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[9 Jul 2022 19.19](#)

This liveblog is closing now. You can continue to see all our coverage of the war in Ukraine [here](#). Thank you for reading.

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[9 Jul 2022 18.32](#)

## **Canada to return seized Russian gas turbine to Germany**

**Canada is risking Ukraine's ire by returning to Germany a repaired giant turbine that will speed the flow of Russian gas through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline**, Reuters reports.

Canada announced its decision Saturday after originally seizing the damaged turbine, owned by Russian gas and oil giant Gazprom, last month while it was undergoing repair in the workshops of Siemens Energy Canada.

⚡ Reuters: Canada will deliver turbine needed for maintenance of Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline to Germany.

Despite Ukraine opposing it, Canada will hand over the turbine to Russia's Gazprom, Reuters reported, citing anonymous sources.

— The Kyiv Independent (@KyivIndependent) [July 8, 2022](#)

Kyiv urged the Canadian government not to return it to Germany, stating that such a decision would breach the integrity of sanctions against Russia. But Germany, which is [facing severe gas shortages](#), is being threatened with a further squeeze on Russian gas by Moscow if the turbine isn't returned, and pleaded with Canada to send it back.

Its return will support “Europe’s ability to access reliable and affordable energy as they continue to transition away from Russian oil and gas,” Canada’s energy ministry said in a statement.

In an apparent attempt at appeasement of Ukraine, Canada announced new sanctions against Russia’s energy sector. The sanctions “will apply to land and pipeline transport and the manufacturing of metals and of transport, computer, electronic and electrical equipment, as well as of machinery,” the statement said.

Here’s a [handy explainer from CBC](#) about the wrangling over the turbine.

And you can read more about Germany’s reliance on Russian energy here:

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[9 Jul 2022 17.20](#)

# Summary

**It's past midnight Sunday in Kyiv and Moscow. Here's what we've been following as the conflict in [Ukraine](#) reaches its 138th day:**

- At least five people were killed Saturday, and seven others injured, by renewed Russian shelling in the eastern region of Donetsk, Ukraine officials said. A missile attack in Druzkivka, northern Donetsk, tore apart a supermarket and gouged a crater into the ground.
- US secretary of state Antony Blinken said his country's "commitment to the people of [Ukraine](#) is resolute" while announcing more than \$360m in additional aid.
- The United Nations said Ukraine's armed forces bore a large, and perhaps equal, share of the blame for an assault at a nursing home in Luhansk, where dozens of elderly and disabled patients were trapped inside without water or electricity. At least 22 of the 71 patients survived, but the exact number killed remains unknown.
- Kira Rudik, a Ukrainian MP with the centrist Golos party, said rockets struck central Kharkiv, injuring and hospitalising four civilians, including a child.
- Serhiy Bratchuk, a spokesperson for the Odesa regional military administration, said [Russia](#) forces were "purposefully" destroying crops in the Kherson region. He said fires occur in the fields every day from shelling, and added: "Russian troops do not allow locals to put out fires, destroying granaries and equipment."
- The governor of the Luhansk region said Russian forces were creating "hell" in shelling the Donetsk region. Serhiy Haidai said Russian forces fired eight artillery shells, three mortar shells and launched nine rocket strikes overnight.
- Russia is moving forces across the country and assembling them near [Ukraine](#) for future offensive operations, according to the ministry of defence. The latest intelligence update said a large proportion of the new infantry units were "probably" deploying with MT-LB armoured vehicles taken from long-term storage.
- The first cohort of Ukrainian soldiers arrived in the UK to be trained in combat by British forces. The programme will train up to

10,000 Ukrainians over the coming months to give volunteer recruits with little to no military experience the skills to be effective in frontline combat.

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9 Jul 2022 16.29

World Central Kitchen, the global, rapid response non-profit founded by celebrity chef **José Andrés** to provide meals to victims and first responders at the site of disasters, has posted to Twitter video of the aftermath of today's Russian missile attack on **Drujkivka**, Donetsk.

UPDATE from WCK's Artem who is on the scene of a big missile attack in the city center of Drujkivka in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine. Our WCK team from Kramatorsk arrived with food & water for residents and everyone helping clear the rubble. [#ChefsForUkraine](#)  
 [pic.twitter.com/rzmwRpz5KD](https://pic.twitter.com/rzmwRpz5KD)

— World Central Kitchen (@WCKitchen) [July 9, 2022](#)

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9 Jul 2022 14.39

Here are some more images from [Ukraine](#), sent to us over the news wires on Saturday.



A woman rides bicycle past remains of a destroyed Russian armoured personnel carrier in the village of Teterivske, Kyiv region. Photograph: Sergei Chuzavkov/AFP/Getty Images



A statue is damaged after a Russian airstrike in Druzhkivka, Donetsk. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images



A wounded dog lies in a yard in Kostiantynivka following a Russian airstrike that killed its owner, Alla Sochenko, 75. Photograph: Gleb Garanich/Reuters



A Ukrainian sniper puts on a balaclava in a cellar in Siversk on Friday. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

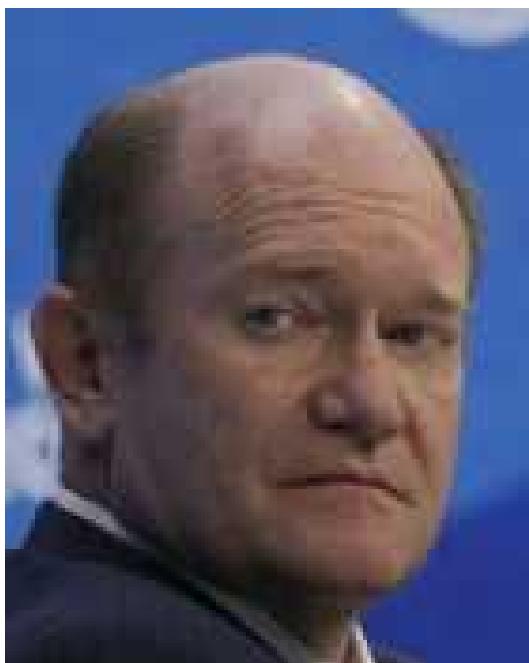
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9 Jul 2022 13.53

The New York Times on Saturday published an [in-depth news analysis](#) predicting the conflict in Ukraine could devolve into a long-lasting war of attrition, with Russian president Vladimir Putin “gambling that he can outlast a fickle, impatient West”.

The outcome, the newspaper says, is “likely to be shaped by whether the US and its allies can maintain their military, political and financial commitments to holding off Russia”.

It notes the US has committed \$54bn (£45bn) in military and other aid to [Ukraine](#), which is expected to last into next year, but states there is unlikely to be much appetite for pledging anywhere near as much again when stocks of weapons from the US and European allies begin to run low.



Senator Chris Coons. Photograph: Markus Schreiber/AP

Democratic senator for Delaware **Chris Coons**, a close ally of President **Joe Biden**, told the newspaper that the allies needed to be “determined” in continuing to support Ukraine:

*I worry about the fatigue factor of the public in a wide range of countries because of the economic costs and because there are other*

*pressing concerns.*

*Exactly how long this will go, exactly what the trajectory will be, we don't know right now.*

*But we know if we don't continue to support Ukraine, the outcome for the US will be much worse.*

The Guardian is committed to occasionally sharing with readers other media outlets' coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. You can [read the New York Times analysis here](#).

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[9 Jul 2022 13.19](#)

## At least five killed in Russian shelling of Donetsk: Ukraine officials

*It's Richard Luscombe in the US picking up the blog from my colleague Nadeem Badshah. I'll be guiding you through the next few hours. Thanks for joining me.*

**Officials in Ukraine say at least five people were killed in renewed Russian shelling Saturday of the country's eastern Donetsk region, AFP reports.**

A missile attack in **Druzkhivka**, northern Donetsk, tore apart a supermarket and gouged a crater into the ground, the news agency said.

At least five people were killed in the Donetsk region in the past 24 hours, and seven injured, Ukrainian officials said in a Saturday afternoon update.

**Oleksandr Vilkul**, mayor of **Kryvyi Rih** in central Ukraine, said **Russia** attacked the city with cluster munitions, killing at least one person and

injuring two.

Russia's defence ministry said it inflicted heavy losses in the **Mykolaiv** and **Dnepropetrovsk** regions, in southern and central Ukraine respectively, and claimed strikes on Donetsk and the Kharkiv region.

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[9 Jul 2022 12.35](#)

Russia is unlikely to withdraw from a swathe of land across Ukraine's southern coast and will defeat Ukrainian forces in the whole of the eastern Donbas region, Russia's ambassador to the UK has said.

When asked how the conflict might end, Andrei Kelin said it was difficult to see Russian and Russian-backed forces withdrawing from the south of Ukraine, and that Ukraine's soldiers would be pushed back from all of Donbas.

“We are going to liberate all of the Donbas,” Kelin told Reuters.

“Of course, it is difficult to predict the withdrawal of our forces from the southern part of Ukraine because we have already experience that after withdrawal, provocations start and all the people are being shot and all that.”

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Updated at 12.46 EDT

[9 Jul 2022 12.07](#)

**Zelenskiy dismisses several Ukrainian ambassadors**

The Ukrainian president, [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#), has dismissed Kyiv's ambassador to Germany on Saturday as well as several other top foreign envoys, the presidential website said.

In a decree that gave no reason for the move, he announced the sacking of Ukraine's ambassadors to Germany, India, the Czech Republic, Norway and Hungary, Reuters reports.

It was not immediately clear whether the envoys would be handed new jobs.

Kyiv's relations with Germany, which is heavily reliant on Russian energy supplies and is also Europe's biggest economy, have been a particularly sensitive matter.

The two countries are at odds over a German-made turbine undergoing maintenance in Canada.

Germany wants Ottawa to return the turbine to the Russian natural gas giant Gazprom to pump gas to Europe.

Kyiv has urged Canada to keep the turbine, saying that shipping it to Russia would be a violation of sanctions imposed on Moscow.

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Updated at 12.45 EDT

[9 Jul 2022 11.47](#)

Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, has said sanctions against Russia are working, and repeated calls for more deliveries of high-precision western weapons, Reuters reports.

“Russians desperately try to lift those sanctions which proves that they do hurt them. Therefore, sanctions must be stepped up until Putin drops his aggressive plans,” Kuleba told a forum in Dubrovnik, Croatia by video link.

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Updated at 12.41 EDT

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## Shinzo Abe

# Shinzo Abe's body arrives in Tokyo as election campaign resumes in shadow of killing

Politicians vow not to let assassination stop democratic process, amid reports that gunman had gripe with unnamed religious group he linked to Abe



A motorcade believed to be transporting the body of killed former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe leaves Nara Medical University Hospital in Kashihara on Saturday. Photograph: Issei Kato/Reuters

*[Justin McCurry](#) in Nara, and agencies*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 22.36 EDT Last modified on Wed 13 Jul 2022 09.40 EDT

The body of [Shinzo Abe](#) has returned to Tokyo as politicians prepared to resume campaigning for Sunday's upper house elections in the shadow of the assassination of Japan's longest-serving prime minister.

On Saturday morning, a hearse carrying the body of Abe accompanied by his wife, Akie, left the hospital in Kashihara where the former prime minister was treated after being shot from behind by a gunman during a campaign speech in the western city of Nara. The hearse was later seen arriving at his residence in the Tokyo suburb of Shibuya, as senior members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), dressed in black, lined up to pay their respects.

The LDP – the party that Abe once led – and other parties said they would resume campaigning on Saturday ahead of Sunday’s vote, in which they and coalition partner Komeito are expected to cement their majority in parliament. Politicians said they were determined to show the assassination could not stop democracy.

Meanwhile, police are scrambling to establish a motive for the killing, amid shock and anger that a politician could be gunned down in broad daylight in one of the world’s safest societies.

The suspect arrested at the scene of Friday’s shooting, Tetsuya Yamagami, told police that he initially planned to attack the leader of a religious group to which his mother had donated money, causing her to go bankrupt, the Kyodo news agency said, quoting investigative sources.

Yamagami, a 41-year old resident of Nara, said he was also “dissatisfied” with Abe, whom he accused of promoting the group, adding that he had not targeted the politician because he disagreed with his politics.

The suspect had earlier said he bore a grudge against a “specific organisation” and believed Abe was part of it, although police have declined to name the group and it is not clear if it exists.

Yamagami worked at a manufacturing plant in the Kansai region of western [Japan](#) from around the autumn of 2020 until May this year, Kyodo quoted an employment agency as saying. He had previously been a member of the maritime self-defence forces – Japan’s version of the navy – for three years until August 2005.

Police are investigating whether the suspect acted alone.

Nara prefectural police said they would look into whether security at Abe's event – where he had been calling on voters to re-elect his LDP colleague Kei Sato – was sufficient amid criticism that it should have been stronger.

Officials said no threats had been made against Abe, whose death will almost certainly prompt a rethink of the tradition of bringing politicians into close contact with voters.

Japanese media said a wake for Abe would be held on Monday, and a funeral for close relatives would take place the following day.

Meanwhile, tributes have continued to pour in for the leader. On Saturday, three member states of the Quad grouping that includes Japan hailed Abe as a “transformative leader for Japan and for Japanese relations with each one of our countries”.



People offer prayers on Saturday at the site where Shinzo Abe was shot dead in Nara, western Japan. Photograph: Jiji Press/EPA

“He also played a formative role in the founding of the Quad partnership, and worked tirelessly to advance a shared vision for a free and open Indo-

Pacific,” said Joe Biden, Anthony Albanese and Narendra Modi in a joint statement from the US, Australian and Indian leaders.

“Our hearts are with the people of Japan – and prime minister Kishida – in this moment of grief. We will honour prime minister Abe’s memory by redoubling our work towards a peaceful and prosperous region.”

Even regional powers with whom Abe had clashed expressed their sympathies. China’s president, Xi Jinping, on Saturday sent a message of condolence to Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida, Chinese state media reported, and the Chinese embassy in Japan praised Abe’s “contribution to the improvement and development” of ties. South Korea’s president, Yoon Suk-yeol, called the killing an “unacceptable act”.

Separately, Albanese said landmarks across Australia would be lit up in red and white in recognition of Japan’s loss. Biden – who earlier said he was “stunned, outraged and deeply saddened” – has ordered flags on US government buildings to fly at half-mast.

The UN secretary general, António Guterres, said he was deeply saddened by a killing that “has profoundly shocked Japanese society”.

“[Abe] will be remembered as a staunch defender of multilateralism, respected leader, and supporter of the United Nations,” he said.

On Saturday in Nara, an ancient capital in the west known for its Buddhist temples and free-roaming deer, a steady stream of mourners came to remember their former leader, a man who was easily the country’s most recognisable politician.



Though a divisive leader politically, Shinzo Abe was easily Japan's most recognisable politician.

Photograph: Issei Kato/Reuters

Alone and in pairs, they stepped forward to lay flowers, bottles of sports drink, slices of watermelon wrapped in cellophane, and bags of sweets. They bowed and clasped their hands in prayer; some shed tears and lowered their heads again as they turned towards banks of TV cameras.

"I just couldn't sit back and do nothing. I had to come," said Nara resident Sachie Nagafuji, 54, visiting the scene with his son.

Abe was a divisive leader, adored by conservatives who had tired of decades of official soul-searching over Japan's wartime conduct but loathed by progressives who watched on with horror as he used his party's comfortable majority in parliament to loosen some of the legal shackles on the military, known as the self-defence forces.

Among his admirers were Rami Miyamoto, a 23-year-old company employee who had stopped to watch Abe's speech on the way to a work meeting. "I'm in a state of shock," she said. "I followed Abe's career as prime minister and admired what he was trying to do for Japan. I'll

remember him as someone who faced huge challenges but always came back and carried on. I will never forgive the person who did this.”

*With Reuters and Agence France-Presse*

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## Ukraine

# **Ukrainian soldiers arrive in UK for training with British forces**

Up to 10,000 new recruits will train for several weeks to help in their country's fight against Russia

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



Some of the Ukrainian soldiers undergoing training at a military base near Manchester. Photograph: Louis Wood/The Sun/PA

*[Anna MacSwan](#)*

Sat 9 Jul 2022 05.21 EDT Last modified on Mon 11 Jul 2022 03.23 EDT

British forces have begun training Ukrainian soldiers in a new programme to help in their fight against [Russia](#).

Up to 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers will arrive in the UK for specialist military training lasting several weeks. The first cohort met the defence secretary, Ben Wallace, on Thursday, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed.

Wallace, widely expected to launch a campaign to replace Boris Johnson as leader of the Conservative party, described the programme as the next phase of Britain's support to the Ukrainian army.

"Using the world-class expertise of the [British army](#) we will help Ukraine to rebuild its forces and scale up its resistance as they defend their country's sovereignty and their right to choose their own future," he said.

Ben Wallace visits Ukrainian soldiers training at British military camp – video

Ukraine is losing up to 200 soldiers every day, meaning that training reinforcements away from the threat of Russian attacks is critical to the country's war effort.

About 1,050 British service personnel are being deployed to run the programme, which will take place at four undisclosed MoD sites across the north-west, south-west and south-east of the UK.

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The training will give volunteer recruits with little to no military experience the skills to be effective in frontline combat. Based on the UK's basic soldier training, the course covers weapons handling, battlefield first aid, fieldcraft, patrol tactics and the law of armed conflict.

The government, which has so far invested £2.3bn in military aid to Ukraine, has also procured AK variant assault rifles for the training, so Ukrainian soldiers can train with the weapons they will be using on the frontline.

The US has also been providing training to the Ukrainian military, with senior officers studying at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.

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## Elon Musk

# Elon Musk withdraws \$44bn bid to buy Twitter after weeks of high drama

Walking away will not be easy for the world's richest man, as Twitter says it will sue to keep deal alive



With the deal, Musk stood to take control of a social media network with more than 200 million users. Photograph: Chesnot/Getty Images

*Kari Paul* in San Francisco and *Johana Bhuiyan* and *Edward Helmore* in New York

Fri 8 Jul 2022 21.37 EDTFirst published on Fri 8 Jul 2022 17.40 EDT

Elon Musk has withdrawn his [\\$44bn bid](#) to buy Twitter after a dramatic few weeks of speculation that his deal to take over the company was falling apart.

“Mr Musk is terminating the merger agreement because Twitter is in material breach of multiple provisions of that agreement, appears to have

made false and misleading representations upon which Mr Musk relied when entering into the merger agreement, and is likely to suffer a Company Material Adverse Effect,” [wrote](#) lawyers for Musk to Twitter.

But walking away from the deal will not be straightforward. According to the [95-page acquisition agreement](#) filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, Musk will have to prove that Twitter breached the original agreement or risk being [sued for a \\$1bn breakup fee](#). NEW Twitter also has the option of seeking “specific performance”, a clause in the deal that allows the board to ask a court to compel Musk to complete the deal under the agreed terms. END NEW

Twitter said on Friday that it planned to sue Musk to complete the \$44bn merger and that it was “confident” it would prevail.

“The Twitter board is committed to closing the transaction on the price and terms agreed upon with Mr Musk and plans to pursue legal action to enforce the merger agreement,” said Bret Taylor, the chair of the board at Twitter, in a [tweet](#).

The likely unraveling of the acquisition was just the latest twist in a saga between the billionaire businessman and one of the most influential social media platforms, and it may portend a titanic legal battle ahead.

The Tesla CEO and richest man on earth had reached a deal to buy Twitter on 25 April, with Musk offering to purchase all of the company’s shares for \$54.20 each.

But things took a sour turn when Musk and his lawyers accused Twitter of withholding information about the number of “spam” accounts on the platform. This week, the company [revealed](#) that it was suspending more than 1m spam accounts a day.

In the Friday filing, lawyers for Musk wrote that Twitter had not provided information on its “process for auditing the inclusion of spam and fake accounts” in spite of repeated requests.

“Twitter has failed or refused to provide this information. Sometimes Twitter has ignored Mr Musk’s requests, sometimes it has rejected them for reasons that appear to be unjustified, and sometimes it has claimed to comply while giving Mr Musk incomplete or unusable information,” the letter said.

Musk also said the information is fundamental to Twitter’s business and financial performance, and is needed to finish the merger.

The company said it was “confident we will prevail in the Delaware court of chancery”, the court where any legal showdown would take place.

Musk declared his takeover bid [on 14 April](#), and Twitter’s board agreed after Musk [confirmed a funding package](#) for the deal that included \$21bn of his own money.

With the deal, Musk stood to take control of a social media network with more than 200 million users. An avid, but critical user of the platform, he had vowed to push through various reforms, including relaxing its content restrictions, ridding the platform of fake and automated accounts and shifting away from its advertising-based revenue model.

Musk announced on 13 May that the deal was “on hold” while he awaited details supporting Twitter’s assertion that fewer than 5% of its users were spam or fake accounts. He asserted the figure was 20% and said Twitter would need to show proof of the lower number for the purchase to go through.

Twitter chief executive, Parag Agrawal, attempted to address Musk’s concerns in a lengthy tweet thread but his efforts to explain the problem “with the benefit of data, facts, and context” were met with a poo emoji from the world’s richest person.



Elon Musk is officially trying to pull out of his \$44bn agreement to purchase Twitter. Photograph: Maja Hitij/Getty Images

Musk later suggested he [could seek to pay a lower price](#) for Twitter because of the fake accounts issue. Speaking virtually at a conference in Miami, he said reducing his agreed \$54.20 a share offer would not be “out of the question”. However, the terms of Musk’s takeover agreement with Twitter gave him only limited room for manoeuvre, legal experts said.

The Musk takeover had been [controversial](#) among Twitter employees, with consternation among staff growing after Musk engaged with tweets criticizing Twitter staff following the announcement of the agreement.

Analysts said the break-up, with or without a court battle, would probably be damaging to Twitter’s valuation and its ability to seek a new buyer.

“This is a disaster scenario for Twitter and its board as now the company will battle Musk in an elongated court battle to recoup the deal and/or the breakup fee of \$1bn at a minimum,” said Dan Ives, a Wedbush analyst.

Twitter’s stock, which was trading at about \$38 per share on Friday and far below the \$54 per share Musk had offered, “will now likely trade in the \$25-\$30 range when the stock opens on Monday with no deal likely”, Ives said.

“From the beginning, this was always a head scratcher, to go after Twitter at a \$44bn price tag for Musk, and never made much sense to the Street. Now it ends (for now) in a Twilight Zone ending with Twitter’s board back against the wall and many on the street scratching their head around what is next,” Ives added.

The dispute between Musk and Twitter could be fast tracked to court, but before it gets there Musk and Agrawal will likely meet up, however awkwardly, on Saturday at Allen & Co’s Sun Valley Conference in Idaho that both are attending and where Musk is scheduled to speak.

Charles Elson, a professor of corporate governance at the University of Delaware, said the Musk break up filing “is part of classic negotiating strategy”.

“Litigation is not the end of the story but a bargaining chip in an ongoing process,” Elson says. “Even if there aren’t the number of users there he thought there were, Twitter is still a franchise and still has value.”

Musk, Elson points, has claimed his desire to buy the company had to do with freedom of speech and that has not changed.

“This is an economical dispute, not a philosophical dispute. An economical dispute is resolved economically – either you pay less or you pay to leave. In the end, he may owe them something and at that point they’ll renegotiate the price. It’s a litigation step in a very long dance.”

In after-hours trading on Friday, shares of Twitter fell 7% to \$34, well below the \$54.20 that Musk had offered to pay. Shares of Tesla, meanwhile, climbed 2.5% to \$752.29.

Others remained skeptical the deal could be revived at all, even if Twitter takes Musk to court.

“It seems very difficult to imagine exactly how this deal could be salvaged, especially in light of the deteriorating relationship of the parties involved and what apparently lies ahead in litigation,” said Carl Tobias, the Williams chair in law at the University of Richmond.

“I think that Musk has had buyer’s remorse since shortly after he entered the deal, which has spiraled downward until today,” Tobias added.

*The Associated Press contributed reporting*

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## 2022.07.09 - Spotlight

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## **They were on a luxury cruise, then the coughing began – the ship that became a global Covid pariah**



The Zaandam off the coast of Panama on 28 March 2020. Photograph: Erick Marciscano/Reuters

When passengers boarded the MS Zaandam in March 2020, they were preparing for the holiday of a lifetime. Within days they would be confined to their rooms on a liner that no country would let dock. How long would their ordeal last?

*[Jonathan Franklin](#) and Michael Smith*

*[@FranklinBlog](#)*

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On the five-hour drive to the docks of Buenos Aires, Claudia Osiani thought hard: do I board the cruise ship or cancel my birthday voyage? With her husband, Juan, she discussed the recent spate of deadly virus outbreaks on cruise ships in Japan and California. “This cruise is different; it will be packed with locals,” Juan reassured her, and it made them feel safer. He had sacrificed so much to provide Claudia with this fantasy of a 14-day voyage through the wilds of South America, and she loved him too much to let on that she was petrified at the thought of embarking.

It was early March 2020, and the first wave of the Covid-19 virus was spreading not only in Wuhan, China, but Italy and Spain. In the UK, cases totalled 273; in Argentina there were fewer than a dozen and it felt like a northern hemisphere issue. “We’re going so far south,” Claudia told Juan in the car. “It’s going to be a bunch of Argentinians on that ship, maybe some Chileans.”

At the docks they spotted their ship, the MS Zaandam. Christened in May 2000, the Dutch-flagged vessel had the feel of an ocean liner of a bygone age. She was steeped in the nearly 150-year history of the Holland America Line, for decades the industry leader in service and style, and known in its marketing materials as “the Spotless Fleet”.

Claudia and Juan had been together for 42 years. Claudia was a stickler for detail and liked to swim and cycle. She was an experienced psychologist, and gregarious, open to speaking her mind, making grand gestures. Juan, a soft-spoken accountant, was in many ways her opposite. His mother was an immigrant from Bath, England; his father was from the Netherlands. But

they'd made it work, raising three children who'd given them nine grandchildren.

As the couple boarded, they found that almost none of the passengers came from Argentina or South America. Their hopes of cruising with people from countries spared by this new deadly virus vanished. Aboard the Zaandam were 305 Americans, 295 Canadians, 105 French, 131 Australians and 229 UK citizens.

As more than 1,200 guests and almost 600 crew settled in, the Zaandam became a buzzing community that included 10 decks, eight bars, two pools, a casino, a mini tennis court, an art gallery, a library and a performance hall with a capacity for 500. As last-minute preparations to leave were made, dancers limbered up, magicians rehearsed, members of an a cappella choir belted out tunes and a team of massage therapists were busy kneading away knots from the stress of life onshore. Few passengers were monitoring the news channels that would have alerted them that on 8 March 2020, just 48 minutes before the Zaandam's departure, the US state department posted a warning that was as unambiguous as it was unprecedented: "American citizens, especially with underlying conditions, should not travel by cruise ship."

Aboard the Zaandam, the musicians tuned their instruments.

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The cruise was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to visit the strait of Magellan, navigate the Beagle Channel, follow Darwin's route, and then cruise up the west coast of South America for an excursion to relive the excitement of Hiram Bingham's 1911 "[discovery](#)" of Machu Picchu, high in the Peruvian Andes. They would end with a passage through the Panama Canal, island hop in the Caribbean and then disembark at Fort Lauderdale.

Down in the holds, the quartermasters went over the stores for the long trip. To feed all passengers and crew on a ship like the Zaandam for a long cruise typically required 60,000 kilos of vegetables, 40,000 eggs, 20,000 steaks, 16,000 cans of beer and soda, and hundreds of cases of wine. In addition to these carefully itemised supplies, another traveller was aboard the ship – a

deadly stowaway probably hiding in the lungs of a passenger or a crew member.

In the run-up to the Zaandam's departure from Buenos Aires, Holland America medical experts had dispatched advice on how to protect against coronavirus. Dr Grant Tarling delivered updates in cheery three- to five-minute videos posted on corporate websites. "Given recent events and general inquiries we have received about travellers' health," said Tarling, looking into the camera in one video released in late February, a map of the world behind him, "you may want to bring your own thermometer." Tarling, the company's lead medic, also demonstrated the correct position to sneeze, bringing his bent arm close to his nose. "If you cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue or your bent elbow." His third piece of advice was: "Buy travel insurance." The doctor suggested passengers read the insurance coverage closely to "make sure it is the kind 'cancel for any reason' and covers many unexpected travel situations, such as medical care and evacuation".

Soon after boarding, Claudia noticed the coughs. Anybody can see these people are sick, she thought

Back at corporate headquarters, Holland America and its owner, Carnival Corporation – the world's largest travel and leisure conglomerate with [more than 100,000 employees](#) and a stock valuation in the billions – had already dealt with the virus on several other ships. Two Carnival ships – the [Grand Princess](#) and the [Ruby Princess](#) – were suffering severe Covid outbreaks off the Pacific coasts of the US and Australia, respectively. The [Diamond Princess](#) had been hit hard in Japan a few weeks earlier, when hundreds were infected and at least nine people died.

Soon after boarding, Claudia noticed the first coughs. Once she tuned into the sound, it seemed to be everywhere. I can see these people are sick – anybody can, she thought.

Nine days into the cruise, as the world was locking down, Claudia marched down to the front desk, by the huge pipe organ. "How can the captain allow this? Allow people to gather in groups, so close to each other, if there is a pandemic all around?" she asked. Claudia urged the staff to take precautions,

to protect the ship from Covid. She walked the ship, unnerved by all the older Europeans, Americans and Canadians gathering, seemingly oblivious to the threat. The gym, spa and hair salon were open, packed with people. This makes no sense, Claudia thought. Everywhere she glanced, she saw evidence of Carnival Corporation's efforts to fulfil its brand slogan, Choose Fun.

In the tight crew quarters far closer to the waterline, workers began to succumb. Some told their supervisors; others soldiered on. Wiwit Widarto, the boat's laundry supervisor, felt tired, his muscles aching. He assumed it must be his workload, or maybe a common cold. He and the rest of his crew were working nonstop, 10-12 hours a day, in the sweltering confines of the ship's cramped laundry rooms, trying to keep up. More passengers and crew were spending more and more time in their cabins, which translated into piles of soiled sheets, towels and napkins.

Crew members made valiant attempts to limit the outbreak. They seemed to be everywhere, politely suggesting that passengers wash their hands or make use of the hand sanitiser stations. The self-serve buffets were shielded by Plexiglas, and servers were posted every few feet to ladle out the portions and minimise passengers' contact with food. Even the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) and the World Health Organization were confused – was the virus able to live on surfaces? How long did it survive?

As the cruise entered the second week, fear was ruining the voyage for Claudia and Juan. Near the strait of Magellan, nervous locals had protested over the ship's arrival, worried they might bring the virus to the remote Chilean city of Punta Arenas. Along with friends from Argentina, they drank tea in the dining room and avoided crowds. They were sitting near the sweeping main staircase – the one that always reminded Claudia of the one aboard the Titanic – when an announcement startled them.

“Good afternoon. This is your captain speaking from the bridge with an important announcement,” Captain Ane Smit began, addressing the entire ship. “I ask that everyone please listen closely.” The news was grim. An influenza-like respiratory virus had sickened many passengers. “Out of an abundance of caution, we must ask that you return to your staterooms as

soon as you are done with lunch,” the captain continued, “where, regrettably, we are going to have to ask you to remain.”

Many cabins had less space than a one-car garage. Dozens of rooms were windowless. Claudia sat in the cabin with Juan, nervously staring out of a salt-streaked porthole, or watching television. Relying on her experience as a psychologist, she knew that anxiety, fear and depression were all rising. The uncertainty ate away at her.



Claudia Osiani at home in Argentina. Photograph: Alejandro Kirchuk/The Guardian

Instead of a comfortable crash pad for naps between happy hours and city tours, the cabin now felt like a cell for two. Meals, once a highlight, were now cloaked in anxiety. Lunch arrived via a disturbing, invisible operation. Claudia heard the sudden cry “Fooooooooood!”, then the clanking of a delivery cart as it was wheeled down the hall. Then at the next cabin, the cry “Foooooooood!”, and the next.

Opening the door, she found a tray on the floor. With bath soap, she washed every fork, knife and plate. When the soap ran out, she switched to shower gel for the glasses and edges of the tray, which she gingerly brought to the side of the bed. Claudia and Juan eyed the food with suspicion. They

chewed cautiously, enjoying not a bite, nor a sip of the complimentary red wine. Juan and Claudia were supposed to be disembarking in three days – their original itinerary was nearly over – but now all schedules had been shredded.

Panicked by the outbreak, passengers rang and insisted on special services; Widarto made a point of going to their cabins to personally change their sheets or exchange towels. Some guests were clearly sick, but he helped them as best he could. Adding to the workload, one after another of Widarto's staff members fell ill. He ordered them to bed, which meant he and the remaining members of staff had to work even harder. After three decades on cruise ships, Widarto was a perfectionist, and that drove him to work harder at times like these. When he called his wife, Anny, back in Indonesia, she noticed his voice was different. "You have to go to medical, to the pharmacy," Anny said, growing more concerned. "You have to get some help."

Widarto explained that he'd gone to the medical centre, but all they had to offer him was paracetamol. Anny was shocked. "You need to stay strong, focus on yourself, get better," she said, attempting to raise his spirits. Widarto told her he'd do his best, but just before hanging up, he shocked his wife.

"Anny," he said, "please pray for me."

Widarto wore a mask and gloves when he could, but was that enough to protect against any virus left on sheets and pillowcases? Rumours flew about that Widarto had removed sheets from the bed of a guest so sickened that he was unable to walk and was transported to the medical centre in a wheelchair. Word was that the passenger had died, but no one could be sure.

Widarto faced more immediate challenges. He was losing staff at an alarming rate. Over the previous three days, they had kept getting sicker. Their cramped, sweltering workspace seemed to amplify the coughs. The two doctors aboard weren't much help. A couple of housekeeping staff had reported to the sick bay, and returned with no more than a paracetamol and a bottle of cough syrup. Widarto was subdued as he confessed to a friend: "I can't taste anything."

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As the Zaandam steamed north up the west coast of South America, country after country announced ever more strict precautions to protect their populations. None would take the chance of letting a cruise ship dock, despite intense efforts by the cruise line and diplomats to gain safe harbour. The crisis was growing by the day; an international pandemic – the first in a century – was declared, and airline travel was shutting down. Instead of their fantasy escape, the crew and passengers aboard the Zaandam were shunned. No one knew much about the new Covid virus, but cruise ships were assumed to be giant incubators.

Warren Hall, a South African gynaecologist who was the chief medic on the Zaandam, oversaw a sparse medical staff in the bow end of one of the lower decks. At the entrance, there was a reception and two examination rooms. The medical centre had surgical tools and medicine at the ready for emergency procedures. Down a hallway, there were four inpatient rooms, outfitted like those in a hospital.

Medical staff were experienced in treating life-threatening illnesses far from land: fatal heart attacks and falls were common among the older passengers. But when patients were in a grave condition, the ship would typically rush to port and unload the stricken individual. Now, the infirmary was awash with coughing passengers and ill crew members who lined up in the corridor, waiting their turn. Some looked as if they might topple over at any moment. Passengers and crew also crowded inside the tiny reception area. And in each of the examination rooms, a patient lay supine. The coughing was incessant. The two doctors and four nurses worked valiantly but were overwhelmed.

As the outbreak spread through the locked-down ship, family members of those trapped aboard launched social media campaigns to rescue their loved ones. They created a [Facebook page](#) and hundreds joined to share what they knew. Reporters began to interview passengers, and timelines were flooded with pleas for help. A newlywed Mexican couple on their honeymoon created a WhatsApp group. They named it Zaandam Prisoners.

They ploughed the seas, destination unknown, in some kind of surreal, vaguely luxurious floating prison

With no chance to escape, Claudia returned to a familiar role: caretaking. She rang her friends on board and cheerfully chatted about the sun, the sea and the wind. Her top priority was an elderly couple who were relying on sleeping pills to cope with the stress of lockdown. She knew that in situations of extreme, prolonged stress or trauma, people tended to self-medicate with whatever was at hand: booze or, in this case, sedatives. Claudia was able to help put their minds at ease by calling over the ship's phone with soothing, detailed descriptions of scenes outside the cabin window in what she dubbed "weather therapy".

A TV channel featured a live camera shot from the bow of the Zaandam, displaying the open ocean in a wide-angle panorama. Rather than bringing calm and tranquillity, the live feed further emphasised to Claudia that they were ploughing the seas, destination unknown. She felt as if she were incarcerated in some kind of surreal, vaguely luxurious floating prison.

In the medical centre, the patients got sicker and sicker. John Carter, a 75-year-old from north Devon, was among the most gravely ill. For hours, he was in a critical condition. Dr Hall diagnosed bacterial pneumonia brought on by an unknown viral infection. As Carter's breathing worsened, Hall threaded a tube into his lungs and connected him to a ventilator.

Hall had just 11 tanks of oxygen on board, and the ventilator was going through the supply rapidly. Hall knew that a flood of elderly patients with respiratory issues would necessitate far more oxygen. Without it, they might die. There was no doubt that Carter had to have it. But it wasn't enough, and Carter died. His grieving widow was then left alone, only able to speak by phone with family. They issued a plea on her behalf: "She is obviously distressed and extremely frightened ... she is struggling ... and feeling unwell."



Wiwit Widarto, the boat's laundry supervisor, who fell ill while working onboard. Photograph: courtesy of Anny Doko

Below decks, Widarto was trying to find the strength to call Anny at their home in Batam, Indonesia. He now felt too sick to work in the stifling heat. But, as always, guests called and called, requesting fresh sheets, or just needing to talk. Widarto felt obliged to go to their aid. He put on the best face he could for Anny as he called via WhatsApp. They exchanged hellos, and Widarto tried to calm Anny down, set her mind at ease. "Please don't be sad," he said. "You need to be a strong mom. For the kids."

Anny pressed him, trying to find out what was wrong. Finally, Widarto confessed that his fever was rising, and the coughing was worse than ever. He thought the limited stocks of medicine were reserved for the ill passengers and was relying on home remedies, like hot tea with lemon. Then he interrupted the conversation: he had to go. A passenger had called, requesting a fresh blanket.

Anny was shocked. Why was Widarto insisting on working? He seemed distant, taking his time before answering.

"Please, please rest," Anny pleaded. "Please. Don't work while you're feeling unwell."

“I can’t. I can’t afford to do that,” Widarto finally responded. His voice trailed off. “Lots of my staff are falling ill. Someone’s got to work.”

“Please, stay strong,” Anny said; she was crying.

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Entering the third week of its odyssey, the Zaandam sailed further north up the coast of South America; a flurry of diplomatic notes whizzed back and forth as US, Canadian, French and British diplomats pressed the government of Ecuador to let the passengers get off. Thanks to a policy of hiring former navy admirals and coastguard commanders, the Holland America leadership worked smoothly with the diplomats – on many issues they spoke the same language, fought for the same goals.

But even if the Zaandam obtained clearance to let passengers disembark, there was no assurance that Holland America could win permission to fly them home. “I’ll ask our team in Quito, but early signals are bad, as gov’t has shut down movement and borders,” wrote a US diplomat in an email. “The governor of Guayaquil has been very active in denying entry.”

Few options remained. Emergency medical flights were in short supply everywhere. Wealthy individuals around the world with the means to pay \$25,000 or \$200,000 for a private escape had booked jets, helicopters and yachts for a swift retreat from the virus. Holland America had the cash to secure these flights, but what would be the use if the plane couldn’t land?

Hundreds left the ship, but a cheerful receptionist told Claudia: ‘Sorry, you will not be disembarking’

Navigators aboard the Zaandam, helped by Holland America executives onshore, began charting multiple options – would they be allowed through the [Panama](#) Canal? Should they head to a US port in San Diego? But the reality was clear: they were on a voyage to nowhere. Passengers largely obeyed the lockdown orders. At times, small groups would be ushered out for 15 minutes of fresh air, but seeing crew members in masks just added to the sense of danger. No one knew how many were infected, but the number of little red stickers placed on the doors of those thought to have Covid marked the spread.

As the ship anchored off the coast of Panama, reinforcements finally arrived. Carnival Corporation had ordered the Zaandam's sister ship the Rotterdam to rush down from Mexico. It carried essential crew and was empty of passengers. The plan was to dilute the problem by moving healthy passengers off the Zaandam and on to the Rotterdam. Additional medical supplies and personnel and support crew could also be brought aboard what was now dubbed by the media "The Pariah Ship".

Claudia was praying that she and Juan would be allowed to transfer when she heard a knock. She opened the door and a crew member wearing a gown, gloves and a face mask delivered the good news: they were among the roughly 800 passengers cleared to leave. They gathered their suitcases and sat down in a small transfer boat known as a tender. Claudia was elated to be leaving; she knew she was lucky. Their early precautions had worked, as neither she nor Juan were infected. Now they were on a circuitous but hopeful path back to their home in Argentina.

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Back on the Zaandam, however, the raging outbreak had struck down scores of crew and passengers. Then on 27 March, Captain Smit took to the airwaves again – this time with the grim news that four passengers had died. One was John Carter. Another man had collapsed on his way to the bathroom and died on the floor. Another had suffocated, unable to breathe as his lungs were destroyed by Covid. Medical personnel were swamped by calls and overworked, forced to run from one cabin to another, yet still the patients waited hours, sometimes more, to be seen by a doctor.

As the Zaandam headed for [Florida](#), mixed signals from the Trump administration stymied attempts by Holland America to find a way to get several dozen people in desperate need of medical care off the ships. It took endless rounds of negotiations between the cruise line, CDC officials, Florida state health authorities, the White House and diplomats from a dozen countries to finally develop an evacuation protocol that was acceptable to all.



Baggage handlers unload suitcases from the Zaandam in Florida.  
Photograph: Abaca Press/Alamy

On 2 April 2020, nearly a month after leaving Buenos Aires, a fleet of buses lined up on the docks of Port Everglades in Florida, and most passengers from both the Zaandam and Rotterdam were allowed to disembark. A row of ambulances were ready as well. One of the first people evacuated from the Zaandam was Widarto, who was now fighting for his life. Hall had done what he could, but Widarto's condition had deteriorated, the virus destroying his lungs; he badly needed ICU care.

Within minutes, they moved Widarto down the gangway and into an ambulance. The ambulance sped off. A medical team at Broward [Health](#) Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale was waiting for him. But doctors were not optimistic: in a video call, they told Anny that her husband was losing the battle, that his lungs were filling with fluid, and that nothing they had done was stopping that deadly process. When that time came, the doctors could only revive him with the defibrillator, gambling that they could shock life back into his body. But that procedure could have devastating consequences, the doctor warned; he could end up paralysed. Anny had to make a choice: did she want him resuscitated? Or would it be kinder to let him die? She talked it over with her family and they agreed. "If he flatlines, let him die in peace," she said. "That's what God would want to happen. If

God wanted him alive, he would be alive.” Anny was only able to see him on a video call before he died.

Two dozen passengers were medically evacuated, but hundreds more were deemed fit for travel. Bundled on to buses and dumped at airport terminals, they then crisscrossed the country and the world, and some carried the virus.

Although hundreds of passengers had walked off both the Zaandam and the Rotterdam, Claudia and Juan were told they could not disembark. Claudia waited for a few hours and then called reception. It took a moment to unravel what was happening. “Oh – we’re so, so sorry, but you will not be disembarking,” the receptionist announced cheerfully.

“What do you mean?” Claudia asked.

“There was a problem with your flight to Argentina. We need you to stay on the ship a little while longer, while we work out a solution.”



Claudia Osiani and her husband, Juan, at their home in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Photograph: Alejandro Kirchuk/The Guardian

The Argentinians were stuck in bureaucratic gridlock. So, too, were the hundreds of crew, as the CDC had decided it was too dangerous to let potentially infected crew members into society. The Rotterdam and the

Zaandam left Florida and abandoned US territorial waters, docking instead near the Bahamas.

Day after day, the two ships sailed in what pilots call “doughnut patterns” as crew and approximately nine passengers remained locked down. With the help of the cruise line, Claudia was untangling the logistics of organising a flight back to Argentina when the captain’s voice sounded loudly over the ship’s public intercom. He appeared to be giving orders exclusively to the crew. To Claudia, it felt as if they didn’t exist; that they were ghosts on a ghost ship.

“Personnel will now move to deck two,” the captain declared. Or that’s what Claudia thought he had said. “Deck two, Juan? That’s us, right?”

Soon, a powerful chemical smell wafted into their cabin. A pungent disinfectant stench burned the back of her throat, making her wince. Claudia grabbed a face mask and burst out of the cabin, desperate to breathe fresh air. With Juan, she ran to an exit. Outside, the sun blinded them momentarily. Claudia fell to the deck, gasping for air.

Claudia spotted a surveillance camera and ran toward the tiny lens, screaming in Spanish for help. Soon, one of the ship’s officers arrived. Claudia scolded him for accidentally trying to poison them as they disinfected the ship. At first the officer didn’t understand her machine-gun Spanish, but eventually they were transferred to a new room with a private balcony. Despite the upgrade, they felt like orphans, forgotten on an empty cruise ship, with no sign of liberation.

As she entered her second month at sea, Claudia was still in lockdown, and as furious as ever. For another three weeks, they circled the Caribbean waiting for the plane to fly them home. Claudia knew that her years as a psychologist provided exactly the emotional toolkit she would need to endure this confinement. I can’t cry and throw a tantrum like a child, she thought. What surprised her, however, was how hard it was to apply her skills to a new patient: herself.

Help came in the form of her 80-year-old neighbour, a man named Tito from Uruguay, who, like clockwork every morning, strode out to his balcony, adjacent to Claudia and Juan's room, and bellowed to the ocean: "Toooooooday ... can be a goooooood daaaaaay! Let's nail it!" Sometimes Claudia joined in the screaming.

Finally, the Argentinian government resolved the logistics, and arranged for charters and sanitation "bubbles" that could safely bring Claudia and Juan, and the other citizens, back to Uruguay and Argentina. It was now late April 2020, seven weeks after Claudia and Juan boarded what was supposed to be a two-week celebratory cruise.

In a statement, a representative of Holland America Line said: "As the world's knowledge of Covid-19 evolved over time, Holland America Line aligned with guidelines from the CDC, the World Health Organization and other local health authorities." They said of the stories in this article: "While some claims do not match the recollection of our team members who were there, that should not diminish the importance of the story of Zaandam, its guests and crew, and people in all walks of life who dealt with the devastating first weeks of a mysterious virus. We mourn all who were lost to Covid-19, and we are thankful for those who helped bring our full fleet back to sailing today with a continued strong commitment to health and safety."

When Claudia arrived at the door to her seaside apartment in Mar del Plata, Argentina, the country was enduring the full brunt of the viral onslaught. Thousands were sick, a rigid lockdown in place. The official death toll stood at roughly 200.

Inside her home, instead of relief, Claudia felt vulnerable. Nothing was normal. Her favourite routines were prohibited under lockdown. No more swimming with her girlfriends. No more rehearsals with the theatre group. Even the smell of her house had changed. Or had she?

Before the Zaandam odyssey, before Covid, Claudia and Juan had carefully selected an apartment with an ocean view. Their living-room windows framed a wide slice of the Atlantic. Her panorama now felt like a mocking reminder, as if she was still trapped at sea. When Claudia looked out her window, she couldn't escape the sensation that she was on the balcony of a

cruise ship. After one brief glance into the expanse of the waves, Claudia drew the curtain and told herself: “That’s enough ocean view for the moment.”

Cabin Fever by Michael Smith and Jonathan Franklin is out on 14 July (Octopus Publishing Group). To support The Guardian and Observer, order your copy at [guardianbookshop.com](https://guardianbookshop.com).

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## Passport Office

# UK passport delays: ‘We drove 377 miles to join the queue in Glasgow’

Processing delays and high demand leave people in UK going to great lengths to salvage holidays



Groups where people share their tales about waiting for a passport to arrive have sprung up on social media. Photograph: David Burton/Alamy



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@zoewoodguardian

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When Angie Tindle applied for her son's passport in March she did not imagine that three months later she would be setting off with her husband on a 754-mile round trip to Scotland in a fraught attempt to save their family summer holiday in Spain.

But desperate times call for desperate measures. Tindle is one of more than 14,000 members of the Facebook group [passport chaos 2022](#), where people share daily updates, or lack of, on anguished waits for a document that holds the key to a longed-for summer break or post-Covid family reunion.

“My husband and I drove the 377 miles to Glasgow, stayed in a cheap hotel and got up at 5am to join the queue at Glasgow passport office,” says Tindle, adding that her calls and emails over several months had gone unanswered, resulting in “sleepless nights, stress and tears”.

With just over a fortnight to go until their flight – a trip that would, along with many British families, be their first abroad in three years – Tindle was determined to make it happen. Despite applying for her two sons’ passports

at the same time, using the same countersignatory, it was queried on her seven-year-old's application but not her baby's first passport, which she had been able to collect from the Peterborough office the previous week.



A Glasgow scene. After finding out her eldest son's passport was in Glasgow, Angie Tindle and her husband set off to Scotland from Northamptonshire. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

After finding out her eldest son's passport was in Glasgow, she and her husband set off for Scotland last Sunday, despite the official guidance that "face-to-face passport services are only available by appointment". Tindle was determined not to take no for an answer, although initially that was what she was told by "super lovely" officials who were prioritising people in the queue whose trips were more imminent.

"They started to say that as it wasn't 48 hours before travel we wouldn't get the passport that day and I was beside myself," she says. But her emotional account of the 14-week wait swayed a manager to intervene and by lunchtime they had the prized document and were back on the road, driving six hours home to Northamptonshire.

The daily feed of worry and disappointment on groups such as passport chaos 2022 and passport appointment help, which has almost 26,000

members, is usually interspersed with a picture of someone grinning from ear to ear or a disembodied hand clutching the blue passport many never knew they wanted so much – and announcing happily they are leaving the group.

As a parting gift, they share the phone numbers, emails and offices that helped them to penetrate the bureaucracy of a [Passport Office](#) that has been dealing with unprecedented demand after millions of people put off their applications during the pandemic.

However, as the school holidays get under way, time is of the essence. Some members of the groups have thrown in the towel and accepted their holidays are off, while others are making last-ditch trips, as Tindle did, to beg for help at passport offices around the country – or booking dummy flights to get the attention of officials.

I sent off two passports at the same time. One came back within three weeks and the other one just seemed to get stuck

### *Annabel Cook*

Annabel Cook is one of them. She booked a £9 flight to Milan for only her teenage daughter this week because she feared their family holiday in Cyprus, delayed from 2020, was in jeopardy. Although she applied for her two children's passports at the same time in April, only one had come back and she would be unable to recover the £5,000 cost of the rearranged holiday as her travel insurance would not pay out in the circumstances.

“I sent off two passports, both at the same time,” she says. “One came back within three weeks and the other one just seemed to get stuck.” She filled in the [online form](#) multiple times to get information about the application and on hearing nothing back became increasingly fraught as her 18-year-old couldn't even prove her right to work in the UK without the old passport, which had been sent in.

“I contacted the [Passport Office](#) and was told I could pay extra to get the passport fast-tracked after six weeks,” Cook says. “However, to my surprise, they were taking their timeline from when they say the old passport arrived,

on 11 May – although it was delivered on 22 April. I waited and rang back. After an hour and a half on hold I was told the 10 weeks started on 25 May, the date they started processing it. I was given an email address, which I sent the appropriate details to, but I got no response.”

“It’s just a nightmare,” she says. “Anytime you do actually speak to someone, they give you different information. It was just going on and on and on. One said: ‘You’re not in the category of urgent’ even though we’d exceeded the 10 weeks … so I just thought, well, what is going to make me urgent?

“It was 2am and I thought ‘I’m going to find a flight that doesn’t cost me the earth because it will be cheaper than losing our holiday.’”

Cook called the Passport Office the next day with the Milan flight details and had a breakthrough as the official she spoke to referred the application for an urgent phone call. By midweek her daughter’s passport had arrived.



Tourists in Ayia Napa. Annabel Cook feared a family holiday in Cyprus, delayed from 2020, was in jeopardy. Photograph: Petros Karadjias/AP

Last month, Matthew Rycroft, the permanent secretary at the Home Office, offered little hope that the passport turnaround would shrink back from 10

weeks to the three weeks enjoyed before the pandemic, as he was anticipating another wave of applications.

“We’re on track for 9.5m [passports] this year compared with a normal year of 7m,” he told MPs on the home affairs committee. “So there is still more to come out of the system and it would be wrong to go back to anything less than 10 weeks at this stage.”

Passport applications have soared, with overseas travel resuming after the hiatus caused by the pandemic. In a normal year there are 7m applications but in 2020 and 2021 the number of applications dropped to 4m and 5m respectively.

While the social media feeds filled with talestelling of cancelled holidays suggest otherwise, the Passport Office says that between March and May 98.5% of applications were completed within 10 weeks. An expedited service is available at no additional cost to people whose applications take longer than 10 weeks, it says, and those who need help should call the passport advice line on 0300 222 0000.

If you have not started the application process, a more expensive one-week fast-track service is available. It costs £142 for an adult passport, compared with £75.50 for a standard online application.

With officials currently processing 250,000 applications a week, extra staff have been drafted in to help with the push. The Passport Office says it has hired an extra 850 staff since last April and another 350 are being recruited. There are more than 4,000 staff in passport production roles, it adds.

A number of EU nationals who have been granted British citizenship after Brexit have also contacted Guardian Money to report long waits for their first UK passports – and because the process involves sending in their original passport, they are concerned at having being left in limbo without their official ID.

Maria, a London-based translator from Italy, applied for her first British passport in April after receiving her naturalisation certificate in November 2021. “I thought it would be easier to get a British passport considering

Brexit and everything. I know on paper that I'm a British citizen but I thought if I have the passport, I have that extra document.”

My main concern at the moment is the fact that I am a European citizen in a non-EU country with no valid ID

*Maria, a London-based translator from Italy*

However, after 13 weeks and two missed trips that should have been possible based on the 10-week guidance, in desperation she sought the return of her Italian passport. “I have called the dedicated helpline at least 20 times over the last three weeks trying to explain my situation and get advice, and it was, in most cases, a machine replying, and a long waiting time, on average more than an hour per call,” she says.

“When you get in touch with an actual person, they either transfer you to the customer management team, which turns out to be a registered voice saying they’re very busy, or an adviser that gives you contradictory information.”

She has since been told her British passport has been printed and her Italian one is in the post – but neither is in her hands yet. “At this point in time I just would like to have my Italian passport back,” she says. “My main concern at the moment is the fact that I am a European citizen in a non-EU country with no valid ID.”

A spokesperson for the Passport Office says: “Since April 2021, we’ve clearly stated that people should allow up to 10 weeks when applying for their passport to factor in the increased demand, which has seen 5 million people delay their passport application due to the pandemic. Face-to-face passport services are only available by appointment.”

## Twitter bot could help

If you have not applied for your passport yet and are willing to pay more for the fast-track or premium application, which for adults cost £142 and £177 respectively, one thing can still stand in your way: getting one of the appointments when they are released, without spending hours refreshing your computer screen.

However, [Dr Michael Hodge](#), a data scientist, has created [a Twitter bot that tweets from @ukpassportcheck](#) when new appointments are available. He initially made it to help his mother after she found her passport was too close to its expiry date before a big family holiday in the Algarve, and then decided to share it for free with others.

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## Property

# ‘They got rid of our oak doors!’ – the story of Britain’s national property obsession in one housing chain

Four families, three houses, one bathtub in the skip ... moving up the ladder throws you at the mercy of a group of strangers. Can the links in one chain trust each other to seal the deal?



The links in the chain: Emma Lowe, the Capes, James Rutherford and Meghan Beesley, and Charlotte Savory. All photographs: Fabio De Paola/The Guardian



[Tom Lamont](#)

Sat 9 Jul 2022 02.00 EDT

The first link in the chain was forged when Alf Thompson, an elderly widower, felt short of breath. It was October 2021 and a district nurse happened to be visiting Alf at his home on a cul-de-sac in Shepshed, Leicestershire. Paramedics and family members were summoned. Alf's daughter Emma Lowe, 51, arrived just in time to follow the ambulance to a hospital in Loughborough, about five miles east across the M1. Alf did not say goodbye to the home he had lived in for 35 years – its rooms laid with shag carpets, a beloved portrait of HMS Warrior above the fireplace – because, that day in the autumn, it did not feel like a final departure.

In Britain, [around 350,000 homes are on sale](#) at any one time. Between 1.2m and 1.5m are traded annually. The country is thickly, invisibly crisscrossed by chains of sellers and buyers, some eager to move, some dragging their feet; some wealthy, some very stretched – all tethered together by half-made deals, waiting on a conclusive word from an agent or a solicitor before their hands can close around an unfamiliar set of keys.

Ever since the Covid pandemic briefly froze and then adrenalised the UK property market, headlines about the industry have been giddy. “UK

housebuying in 2021 poised to be busiest since 2006,” [boomed this newspaper](#) last December, around the time that Alf Thompson, by now moved on from his hospital bed in Loughborough, took up residence in a Shepshed care home. He was too ill to return to the cul-de-sac.

Buying a home is a big life event, often prompted by another one: a promotion, expanding a family, or mourning a loved one

The bean-counting and bombast tend to obscure the human realities that underpin our housing market, those billion-odd instances of health woes, inching ambition, deepening romance or plummeting personal contentment that fuel the frantic trading. Buying a home, for those fortunate enough to be able to do so, is a big life event, and one that has most likely been prompted by a bigger life event, whether that is getting a promotion, losing a job, expanding a family, or mourning a loved one. When Alf Thompson died in December 2021, he had already been making plans to sell his home to cover the cost of his care. Now his daughter Emma had to juggle her grieving and the funeral arrangements with a decision about what to do with the house.

She spoke to family members. She contacted a few estate agents. It was agreed they would carry on with Alf’s plans and put the family home up for sale, with Emma as the seller. When it went live on the market this January, Emma became the top link in a housing chain – only selling, not buying, and, as such, waiting for other people in different circumstances to join together in a sequence of deals beneath her. There were countless other housing chains jangling around the UK that month, but this is the story of one of them.

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Liam Cape, 31, a community nurse, grew up riding his bike on the narrow green-belt path that ran behind Alf Thompson’s garden. His parents continued to live nearby. Liam is a busy, financially conscientious father of three, someone who kept up several paper rounds when he was a teenager and heeded his own father’s advice to put aside a chunk of his earnings for the future. “When you’re a kid, you wanna spend all your money on clothes and cigs and booze, right?” Liam said. “*Not* saving for a house. But looking back, I’m glad I did that.” At 19, Liam was working in a Shepshed care

home when he met Alysia, two years his junior, who had taken a job making sandwiches for residents. She remembered him telling her that he had enough money saved up for a mortgage deposit. Who says that, at 19? A few years later, the couple bought their first home together.

They got married, started their family and began a steady uphill journey through ever more expensive Shepshed properties, taking on better paid and more time-consuming jobs within the NHS in order to cover their ever larger mortgage repayments. By the late 2010s, Liam was working nights and days in nursing. Alysia had two jobs: as a health administrator and a teaching assistant. They lived in a spacious four-bedroom home that backed on to a huge, grassy park in Shepshed. You could have put the Capes in an advert, emblematic of Britain's beloved image of itself as a place full of sensible, frugal, happy homeowners. Except for one thing. The Capes weren't sure they were happy.

Kids don't care if a house is detached or semi-detached. Home is where their toys are

In order to stay on top of childcare *and* their jobs *and* the monthly mortgage payments, Liam and Alysia barely saw each other. “One day a week as a family?” Alysia guessed. In mid-2021, as Alf Thompson was spending his last summer in the home on the cul-de-sac, one of the Capes’ children became critically ill. Although their child recovered, there were dreadful weeks in hospital, and Liam and Alysia were irrationally guilt-stricken afterwards. They felt that as trained healthcare workers, they should never have been caught off their guard like that. “We decided: no more.” Their four-bed by the park was put up for sale in January 2022, at the same time as Alf’s. The Capes wanted somewhere smaller and cheaper. They wanted to work fewer hours and reclaim a sense of themselves as a family.

“Kids don’t care if a house is detached or semi-detached,” Liam said one day, when the couple were at Alf’s house for a viewing. “Home is where their toys are.”

“Yeah,” Alysia agreed, “they care because it’s where they can make their memories. They care cos it’s where they can … where they can throw their

biscuits.”

She said this distractedly, chasing across Alf’s shag carpet after their youngest child, who had just launched a half-eaten Rich Tea biscuit. Alf’s daughter Emma was present, apparently enjoying the spectacle of young children running around her old home, leaving crumbs, making a racket. With her family’s help, she had spent Christmas gutting the property, storing or destroying furniture, and taking internet-friendly photographs of the emptied rooms. An agent with the online estate agency Purplebricks, Chris Ball, came and had a look around. Ball, a pleasant 30-year-old who has a romantic way with words, summoned the sort of tempting descriptions (and cloaked admissions) that could be used to lure buyers. Many possibilities, thought Ball, of Alf’s old place. Requires modernisation. Fantastic potential.



Emma Lowe sold her father’s home in Shepshed, Leicestershire, for £206,000 to ...



... Alyria and Liam Cape, who were downsizing to spend more time with their children

Ball doesn't see himself as an estate agent long term; he is training at nights to be a surveyor. But he was glad to have been a part of the housing industry during such a frenetic, spiky era. He spoke of an explosion of sales on his Leicestershire patch, all through 2021 and into 2022, mirroring the much-reported national boom. Activity was starting to plateau and Ball had a theory about the boom. "As early as 2020, when the government was warning people to stay inside, we saw these mini slumps and spikes," he told me, between viewings. "At first, with lockdowns and furloughs, everybody feeling uncertain about the future, nobody wanted to buy or sell. But then we were all stuck indoors for months." As lives were curtailed, Ball speculated, people felt hungry for change. Desires sharpened. "And people spent a *lot* of time on their computers. They had a look at what was out there."

Ball priced Alf's house by eye, telling Emma that, given its many possibilities, it might fetch as much as £210,000. Along with other agents who visited the property, Ball advised Emma to put it on for slightly less – say £200,000. That way they might lure in dozens of interested parties and prompt a bidding war. Liam and Alyria Cape had decided to price their house by the park at £290,000 – Ball thought of this one as a charming family home. A few miles away in Loughborough, sitting in the kitchen of

what Ball was calling a well-executed modern take on the classic two-up, two-down terrace house, a woman called Meghan Beesley looked online at pictures of the Cape residence. She liked what she saw and arranged to visit, bringing her tape measure.

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It is one of those big, unexamined rules of modern Britishness. Queues are sacred. Milk must go in tea. And a home is better off bought, not rented. Margaret Thatcher started all this when she pulled government levers through the 1980s to make mass home-ownership not only feasible but, in the Tory worldview, something tantamount to a citizen's moral duty. Over time, the housing market was fed and fattened by the generous economic legislation of successive governments, Labour and Conservative. Banks played their part, offering 100% mortgages until chastened by the 2008 financial crash. (*Briefly chastened*, with [similar mortgage packages](#) being offered once more in recent years.)

At the start of the 00s, just as “location, location, location” entered the lexicon via a popular TV show, property websites began to make it easier to scour farther, wider. Later, social media did its thing, adding a sense of competition and inadequacy to the mix, heightening tendencies already in place. By the time the current government introduced a stamp duty holiday, setting off the [market surge](#) in 2020, we were a nation of bricks-and-mortar obsessives, trusting our savings to it without hesitation, unapologetic when checking on Zoopla to see how much the neighbours got for their place, daydreaming of dormer extensions and knocked-through side returns. Not for nothing is the British Olympic team now [sponsored by an estate agent](#).

Meghan Beesley represented England and Great Britain for many years, competing as a [400m hurdler](#) in international competitions. A 32-year-old with a brisk, positive attitude, Meghan returned from the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 with several clear intentions. She wanted to retire from sport, get a tattoo of the Olympic rings, get a more stable job (she ended up a business controller at Rolls-Royce) and get a bigger mortgage in order to buy a better home. “I’m goals-based. If I see something I want, I make a plan and I go for it,” Meghan told me. When she visited Liam and Alysia Cape’s house by the park, she knew it was the one. She hustled around the bedrooms and open-plan kitchen-diner, making plans – poking a head with some distaste

into the couple's blue ombre-painted bathrooms, thinking of better colours, stepping through to the conservatory and making a quick decision to tear it down. Those old radiators? She had their number. That ugly boiler? It would be gone soon.



To reduce their mortgage, the Capes sold their old four-bed home for £285,000 to ...



... Meghan Beesley, a Team GB Olympian who wanted a better home after retiring

Meghan was doing that thing a lot of us do when visiting someone else's home. She was mentally napalming it, ridding it of personality, all the better to refit it to her taste. Moving home for whatever reason excites us and unsettles us at a lizard level. Often it will mean leaving an established nest because that nest is now in the wrong spot, or it's too cramped, too costly, it's no longer habitable, available, or viable – because something has fundamentally upset the fit between person and place. Moving home almost always asks of us a frightening leap, voluntary or otherwise. So no wonder we go in hard with tape measures, notebooks, kneejerk redecoration plans. These things act as safety nets. They stop us from chickening out entirely.

Meghan wanted more room. The Capes would take less for a different sort of life. Emma hoped for a fair price on her late father's house and, beyond that, to come away from any deal with a sense of having passed her inheritance on to worthwhile custodians. All were active players in the property market that January, so they could afford to make choices in the interests of their circumstances and sensibilities. The property market is not a meritocracy, though. Not everybody gets to play.

Wages have been in aspic since the 2008 crash. The cost of a home is now so high – [about £274,000 on average](#), up more than 170% in two decades – that swathes of society are priced out completely, prevented from buying a home of their own by historical and economic influences far beyond their control. As well as class, ownership rates also [vary dramatically by race](#). Young people used to be told: “Be ambitious: buy if you can.” Now we may as well tell them: “Be realistic: buy if you’re jammy, if you can wangle it, if Mum and Dad will assist, if you can find some other ruse to upset the forces ranged against you.”

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Charlotte Savory, a 28-year-old from Leicestershire, took a job as a zookeeper when she finished university in the mid-2010s. She was renting a place in Plymouth with her boyfriend at the time. Most of their wages went to an anonymous landlord. By her own calculations, Charlotte might have stayed a renter for the rest of her life unless she dramatically altered course.

At the start of 2020, she and her partner decided to stay together (romantically) but to separate (geographically), each moving back to different parts of England to live with their parents again. Record numbers of young adults have been doing this recently, something in the region of 3.5 [million people in their 20s and 30s boomeranging back to their childhood homes](#). Charlotte, back in her old bedroom, took a job as a veterinary nurse. She was at home with Mum and Dad at the age of 26 – “a big shock,” she recalled, “after years of independence”.

But after two years with adulthood on hold, Charlotte and her partner were able to save £30,000 from their wages as a deposit. Now their bank would lend them enough for a home worth £210,000. Charlotte browsed the Leicestershire area. Meghan’s terrace house in Loughborough was available for £200,000. Should Charlotte offer that? Or less? Or more? A property is the most expensive purchase most of us will ever make. By a mile. The sums involved can turn foggy, Monopoly-like, and although everybody has their own private threshold – a line after which the total sum of money brings on cold sweats – I think a lot of people entering the property market do so while quietly asking themselves: is this the decision that will sink me? It is hard to back out. It is hard to admit a mistake when it’s made. Putting in an offer can be heady, exciting, but in a casino-like way, an abyss clearly in view.



Meghan Beesley sold her two-bed terrace house in Loughborough for £200,000 to ...



... first-time buyer Charlotte Savory and her partner, who had saved a £30,000 deposit

Somebody with an interesting perspective on all this is Meghan Beesley's boyfriend, a metalworker called James Rutherford. A little older than her, a little more hesitant and knocked about by the topsy-turvy experiences of his early 30s, James told me he was proud of Meghan for the speed and efficiency with which she had swapped her life as an athlete for that of a salaried employee, on the brink of a move to a dream home. But James doesn't see home ownership in itself as a purely bettering or worthwhile thing. Like Liam Cape, he had grown up being told: "Buy if you can." So he did, climbing on to the property ladder with a former partner. When that relationship ended, he fell behind on payments and wound up in financial straits so severe, it took him years to regain his economic footing and confidence.

Since then, James said: "I've learned that I like to go to work. I like to work hard when I'm there. And I like to forget about work." The model of working to pay a debt to own a house did not suit him. He was trying a different model. "One where I try to feel proud of myself for who I am, not because of what I own."

He was helping Meghan cook a Sunday night risotto in January when her phone buzzed. Charlotte Savory had just made an offer on Meghan's house. Others had come in with lower bids, including someone who promised to pay in cash. Charlotte matched the asking price of £200,000 and included a note to boot: "I could see myself living here!" It was enough for Meghan. She clicked a button on the Purplebricks app to agree to the deal. The risotto rice hadn't even finished cooking.

Housing chains can feel like actual chains. People back out, or succumb to side offers. They tell outright fibs or lie by omission

Before she went to bed that night, by now too shaky to sleep, Meghan wondered how much to bid for Liam and Alysia Cape's charming family home beside the park in Shepshed. James went to bed listening to Meghan swear that she wouldn't offer them more than £280,000 ... But by the time he woke, she confessed she had upped the bid to £285,000 overnight. This offer was accepted by the Capes. The next morning, it was their turn to strategise. After frantic texts with Liam, who had gone off to work, Alysia sat cross-legged in a playgroup with their youngest son, trying to concentrate on the nursery rhymes while also trying to put in a winning bid on Alf's home with fantastic potential on the cul-de-sac.

They had an offer of £285,000 from Meghan. In order to enact their plan to live more or less mortgage-free, they had agreed not to offer more than £205,000. In playgroup, unable to get through to Liam, Alysia went rogue. She offered £1,000 more than the couple's theoretical limit, and that bid of £206,000 was accepted by Emma. Kerplunk. A housing chain was in place: Emma at the top, Liam and Alysia next, then Meghan, then Charlotte. Not all of them had met, but immediately they had to trust that everybody else in the chain would stay financially liquid, stay punctual and keep to their word.

This lot, yoked together by their accepted offers, would end up being well behaved, their estate agent, Chris Ball, told me. [Housing](#) chains can quickly come to feel like actual chains, should you happen to get unlucky with your fellow chainees. People back out, spooked, or they succumb to side offers. They tell outright fibs or else lie by omission about damp, sinkage, noisy neighbours. Some refuse to take offers from buyers already in chains. Some

did so well from the recent stamp duty freeze that they can freelance on the sidelines, darting in with seductive cash offers, collapsing dozens of codependent moves in the process. People who would never otherwise jump a queue, or keep a wallet someone had dropped on a pavement, find themselves behaving with almost criminal self-interest.

Is it any wonder, though? Over decades, we have been encouraged to find magic moral weight in home ownership. What is [a gazumping](#), what is a broken promise, what is a suitcase of cash, if the final goal of ownership is such a pure one?

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Moving day! Meghan, a doer, was up at dawn. The house she had lived in since her mid-20s had felt less and less like hers ever since she had pressed that button on the app to accept Charlotte's offer. Weird, but it can be a feature of changing address: we think our great sentimental farewell will come when we shut the front door, but in fact we watch the rooms turn neutral and soulless as soon as we take down photos, fillet shelves, box up the PlayStation or the lamp inherited from Gran. In Alf's old lounge, his beloved painting of HMS Warrior had been removed from above the fireplace – and that was when it started to feel like a space-in-waiting to Emma, a lounge in limbo. At the Capes', the hot tub had been unplumbed and covered with a tarpaulin, ready for transit. Meghan unstuck her collection of novelty magnets from the fridge.

These magnets gestured to the places she had travelled to in her former life as a hurdler. The World Championships in Beijing where she ran a personal best. The European Championships in Berlin where she won bronze. Unboxing her possessions in her new house, Meghan noticed that the fridge was hidden behind wooden cabinets. Crisis! In the end she compromised, sticking her magnets one by one on the metallic casing of the extractor fan. There were explosions of personal taste. With James's help, she painted the fireplace black. Sensitive to the lingering smell of the Cape family's labradors, Meghan tore up the carpets and let her own dog – a more aromatic breed altogether, in her view – run around on the bare floors. Quickly, she got someone round to smash up the conservatory. She threw out the Capes' bathtub, leaving it in a skip on the drive. She replaced all the doors.

You have a relationship with a property. You're its custodian. But it's not yours. Not for ever

When Liam and Alysia heard about the doors, they were shocked. They were living at Alysia's dad's place at the time, the only people in the chain left homeless, caught out by other people's timetables. Their nerves were frayed. Heard about from a distance, the removal of the doors felt like a personal slight. They were oak! Brand new! Even as the Capes made return visits to Alf's empty house, imagining changes to the property that would soon be theirs, they couldn't help but be appalled by the changes Meghan was rendering in their own vacated home. "Don't get me wrong, she can do what she wants," Alysia said. "But those were *solid oak doors*."

One day she said to Liam: "Shall we go and have a nosy?" and they drove over, inching the car as close as they dared to see if the doors had been chucked in the skip along with the bathtub and everything else ...

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That same weekend I spoke to Emma about the strangeness of our attachment to homes, their setups, their contents. I had noted how sanguine she was, watching on as Alysia and Liam rushed around making ambitious noises about renovations, brightenings, enlargings. "Oh, I'll drive down and have a nosy myself," she admitted, "once this lot are in, once they've put their stamp on it. You have a relationship with a property. You're its custodian. But it's not yours. Not for ever."

Maybe it is a necessary part of the process of moving on, not only adapting the next lair to suit us, but seeing the old lair changed to suit strangers. Maybe it helps us surrender a piece of our past. Liam and Alysia had been proprietorial about the house on the park; and why not, they had raised children there. But driving over for that illicit snoop in the skip seemed to cure them. Seeing that Meghan had even replaced the front door, a spell broke. "I feel nothing," Alysia admitted to Liam in the car.

“It’s not our house any more, is it?” he said.

“And all because of some doors.”

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By May, Charlotte and her partner were settled in the well-executed house, the one at the bottom of the chain. Well, they were settled as much as any young couple can be, while eating meals on borrowed garden furniture and sleeping on a mattress on the floor. A pregnant stray had recently been brought into the veterinary surgery where she worked. So two new kittens roamed their lounge. One link up the chain, in her charming family home by the park, Meghan spent a contented weekend painting, peeling and plotting her next changes. A bedroom that once belonged to the Cape girls, and that would become Meghan’s study, was for today a makeshift tile-cutting workshop. She and her boyfriend, James, had discovered that if they sat low enough in their chairs at the kitchen table and looked out the back windows, the iron fence that marked the start of the park was completely obscured. It made it look as if this new garden of Meghan’s rolled on and on for acres.

Only Liam and Alysia remained in limbo. Because Alf Thompson had died when the process of selling his house was under way, there were probate hurdles to clear before the sale was official. (It would be another three weeks before they finally moved.) Looking tired after weeks as campers, the Cape family gathered one morning with Emma on the shag carpet. Cups of takeaway coffee were passed around Alf’s former front room. Legally, the place still belonged to Emma and her family. Emotionally speaking, Liam and Alysia were already in residence. It took a lot of rapid, cheerful chatter to mask this unusual social dynamic, and when Alysia made too giddy a reference to knocking down a wall, she turned and said to Emma: “No offence?” Any awkwardness was smoothed over when a toast was proposed, several coffee containers raised: “To Alf, who loved this house.”

“To Alf.”

After that, Alysia went upstairs to poke around in the eaves. Liam took the kids to the room that would become a play area, considering the feasibility of excavating a tunnel back through to the lounge. A swing set was already in the garden, beside the tarpaulin-covered hot tub. Alysia had driven over a

black bin from their old house, a good, big bin that, in the manner of all inexplicably hoarded objects, she could not bear to leave behind. Liam shouted from one room to another that one of the kids needed the loo. Emma reminded everybody that the water had been switched off for weeks, so Alyria shouted back: “Take them into the garden for a wild wee.” She glanced apologetically at Emma and added: “It *is* nearly ours.”

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Interview

## **‘If I’d not got help, I’d probably be dead’: Jason Kander on PTSD, politics and advice from Obama**

[David Smith](#), Washington bureau chief



Jason Kander Photograph: The Washington Post/Getty Images

He was a rising star in the Democratic party and ‘sorta ran for president’ but, as he recounts in his new book, haunted by his experiences in Afghanistan



[@smithinamerica](#)

Sat 9 Jul 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 12 Jul 2022 08.19 EDT

As luck had it, Jason Kander’s book tour in New York coincided with a family wedding. The star turn was his 95-year-old great-uncle, composer [John Kander](#), who performed Married from Cabaret, the revered musical he wrote with lyricist Fred Ebb.

“It was very cool,” smiles Kander, a day after breakfasting with his famous relative. “He’s still writing: he’s got a musical coming out next year. He is my life goal. People who meet him probably figure he’s in his late 70s. He always says if you just keep doing what you love, it will keep you young. There’s something to that.”

[Jason Kander](#) is only 41 but already well into his third act. His new, unflinchingly honest memoir tracks his journey from soldiering in Afghanistan to politicking in his native Missouri, from sitting in the Oval Office with Barack Obama to being put on suicide watch in a windowless cell.

Invisible Storm: A Soldier's Memoir of Politics and PTSD tells how Kander endured post-traumatic stress disorder for 11 years – and kept it secret from everyone. The more his political star shone, the darker his hinterland became. He tried to outrun his demons by seeking elected office, including the presidency, until an epiphany led him to finally confront his mental illness.

"I went to get help because, if I didn't go get help, I was probably going to kill myself," says Kander, wearing a grey "army" T-shirt and speaking via Zoom from a functional New York hotel room.

"It's not like, 'Oh, man, if I'd hung around, maybe I'd be president!' If I'd hung around and not got help, I'd probably be dead. Instead I'm really enjoying my life and I wasn't before. It's not to say I'll never run. It's just to say, I'm glad I didn't then and, if I ever do choose to run, I'll be doing it as a person who has dealt with their shit. And maybe we need more of that."

Kander trained as a lawyer but, after [the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks](#) on New York and Washington, felt the compulsion to serve and be tested like his grandfather and other relatives. To his surprise, he loved the military with its sense of order and mission.

I was 25 years old and it was an exhilarating experience and that's why they don't send 41-year-old fathers of two to war

He spent four months in Afghanistan in 2006-07 and was not involved in firefights or direct combat (later a source of constant guilt that he somehow wasn't worthy of PTSD). His work as an intelligence officer involved going with an interpreter to meetings in remote locations with people who might be "bad guys" linked to the Taliban, terrorism or corruption. The prospect of being kidnapped and killed was real.

"I was 25 years old and it was an exhilarating experience and that's why they don't send 41-year-old fathers of two to war," he reflects. "If I went into those meetings now, I'd be very aware of everything I had to lose but also probably very aware of how much danger I was in."

When he got home to Kansas City, Kander turned to politics in search of the same sense of purpose and belonging to something bigger than himself. Knocking on thousands of doors, he outworked and outcampaigned rivals to win election to the Missouri state house of representatives and, later, [as secretary of state](#).



Jason Kander pets a dog belonging to Army veteran Charlie Robinson as he tours the Veteran's Community Project in Kansas City, Missouri in 2019.  
Photograph: Charlie Riedel/AP

In 2016 he ran for the US Senate against the Republican incumbent, Roy Blunt, and caught national attention with a campaign ad in which he assembled an AR-15 rifle while blindfolded and advocating for background checks on gun buyers. Kander still lost but [by a much narrower margin](#) than Hillary Clinton to Donald Trump in the same state.

[PTSD](#) trailed him like a shadow, however.

There was insomnia and night terrors: bad dreams in which he was back in Afghanistan with someone rushing into a room, taking him captive and lining him up for a beheading video on YouTube. Over time these evolved into fears about home invaders threatening his family.

There were nights when Kander patrolled the house with a loaded gun. He had symptoms such as back pain, a twitch in his left eyelid and an aversion to sitting in restaurants with his back to the door.

I had this idea that I hadn't done enough for my country, I was an irredeemable piece of shit personally

"It's exhausting to be on alert all the time and then, when you combine that with about 10 years without a good night's sleep, you just get worn out. When you get worn out enough and have all these other feelings of shame and guilt and then you're having these symptoms, eventually you get depressed. When you're depressed long enough, eventually you have suicidal thoughts."

His political career, he assesses now, was a quest for redemption. "I had this idea that I hadn't done enough for my country, I was an irredeemable piece of shit personally and, while I was achieving all these things politically, people didn't really know that I was completely undeserving of this praise or adulation."

The Hollywood version of redemption for Kander would have had him winning the presidency and casting PTSD aside on inauguration day. And for a while it seemed possible. When, in his final Oval Office interview, Obama was asked who gave him hope for the future of the country, Kander's was the first name on his lips. The pair had a private meeting in which Obama gave "mentorship-type advice".

Kander was exalted as the Democrats' new hope, a veteran from the heartland who could provide the antidote to forces that put Trump in the White House. He made frequent visits to early presidential nominating states; [his Twitter bio](#) says he "sorta ran for president".

But after a major speech in New Hampshire, things unravelled.

"Like any other addict who is not dealing with their own trauma, their own underlying stuff, I was addicted to the adulation, to the crowds, to performing and to the adrenaline that came with it. The only time I felt truly

present was when I was in front of a crowd or doing an interview that really mattered.



Jason Kander, then a mayoral candidate for Kansas City, in August 2018, shortly before he checked into a veterans medical center for treatment. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

“Those endorphin highs generally for a long time worked in the sense that they would hold me over until the next one. So when I had this moment that was the zenith of my career as a political performer and it lasted about 12 hours, I realised that was a real problem. This wasn’t working any more.”

When someone suggested that he lower his sights and [run for mayor of Kansas City](#) instead, Kander grabbed the chance to ease the pressure. He was comfortably ahead in the polls and in fundraising when, on 1 October 2018, he walked into the Kansas City Veterans Affairs medical center and acknowledged suicidal thoughts going back 10 years.

He was duly put in a windowless cell with pale-green walls and dressed in dark-green scrubs that were about five sizes too big. “So this was suicide watch,” he writes.

Most of the staff instantly recognised him but a young resident psychiatrist did not. For half an hour, Kander bared his soul about the night terrors and

his consuming fear of someone hurting himself and his family. Then the psychiatrist asked: “Do you have a particularly stressful job or something?”

Kander said he was in politics and explained: “I almost ran for president, but then decided to run for mayor instead, and tomorrow I’m planning on calling that off.”

Barack Obama told you that you could run for president? So how often would you say you hear voices?

Confused, the psychiatrist said: “You were going to run for president? Of what?”

Kander told him: “Of the United States.”

The psychiatrist asked: “Who told you that you could run for president?”

Now irritated, Kander said: “I don’t know what to tell you, man. I mean, I spent an hour and a half talking it over one on one with Obama in his office, and he seemed to think it was a pretty good idea.”

The psychiatrist sat back in his chair and remarked: “Barack Obama told you that you could run for president? So how often would you say you hear voices?”

Kander can laugh about the exchange now and [includes it in his book](#).

The therapy has worked wonders – “It’s getting a master’s in yourself,” is how his great-uncle John described it – and allowed him to rediscover the joys of marriage (his Ukrainian-born wife, Diana, contributes moving passages in the book), fatherhood (their children are eight and one) and baseball (he coaches a little league team).

“The difference is now I will frequently choose to sit facing the door but I can sit with my back to the door usually without fidgeting a great deal. I generally don’t get the twitch in my eye. I generally don’t have, most of the time, nightmares.



Jason Kander, then Missouri's secretary of state, meets troops at Fort Leonard Wood. Photograph: Alamy

“PTSD treatment is not about getting cured. It’s about getting to the point where the symptoms of PTSD don’t disrupt your life and that’s what I was able to achieve in therapy.”

Kander is also better equipped to deal with difficult ruptures such as last year’s chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan. He admits: “At first it was quite triggering and then I got very involved in evacuating people I care about from the country. That experience was newly traumatic and I had to go back and see my therapist again but I’m glad I did. It’s not simple but now I have the tools to navigate that.”

Kander is the president of national expansion at Veterans Community Project, a non-profit organisation to which he will donate all the book’s royalties, and host of Majority 54, a political podcast.

Kander has little time for the perennial moderates v progressives narrative dividing the Democratic party. “Everybody is engaged in this debate about whether the party needs to go further to the left or stay closer to the middle and they’re all completely missing the point. That’s not what’s going on in

the part of the country I live in. You don't get points for being less liberal; you get points for caring about what people are going through."

People are going to say we can't have a president who could end up stalking the White House at night because he's worried about intruders

Kander says he wrote Invisible Storm because it was [the book he would have wanted to read](#) 14 years ago. He hopes it will encourage people to confront their own problems and understand that recovery and post-PTSD growth are possible.

But given the bottomless cynicism in politics today, there will doubtless be somebody somewhere who theorises that the book is a calculated move towards resurrecting Kander's career, perhaps even his White House ambitions.

He finds that idea absurd.

"I wrote this book understanding that if I ever get the desire to run for president again, people are going to say we can't have a president who could end up stalking the White House at night because he's worried about intruders," he says. "If I ever run, it will be on me to be like, 'I don't have to do that any more because I got therapy.'

"Yeah, that's probably not the ideal debate to have in a presidential campaign. But I made the decision that if this book turns out to be something that precludes me from ever being able to run for president but, if it helps a lot of people and saves a lot of lives, that is absolutely a trade I'm willing to make."

*In the US, the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) is at 800-273-8255 and [online chat is also available](#). You can also text HOME to 741741 to connect with a crisis text line counselor. In the UK and Ireland, [Samaritans](#) can be contacted on 116 123, or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie). In Australia, the crisis support service [Lifeline](#) is 13 11 14. Other international helplines can be found at [befrienders.org](#)*

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## The good news: Johnson's on the way out. The bad news: look who's on the way in

[Marina Hyde](#)



One ridiculously graceless ‘resignation’ speech later, here are the top Tory gorgons competing to control the sunlit uplands



Boris Johnson chairing a cabinet meeting in 10 Downing Street, London, 7 July 2022. Photograph: Andrew Parsons/No10 Downing Street

Fri 8 Jul 2022 07.55 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.52 EDT

Boris Johnson is leaving office with the same dignity he brought to it: none. I've seen more elegant prolapses. Having spent 36 hours on the run from what other people know as consequences, Downing Street's Raoul Moat was finally smoked out of his storm drain on Thursday, having awoken that morning with what one aide described portentously as a "[moment of clarity](#)". I mean, he'd lost 57 ministers? And been booed everywhere from the steps of St Paul's to the cricket? Hard to know how much more clarity could have been offered to this big-brain, short of a plane flying over Downing Street trailing a banner reading U WANT PICKING UP IN THE MORNING PAL? This is the version of Jaws where the shark eats the mayor, and the entire beach is rooting for the shark.

They got Al Capone on tax evasion; they got Al Johnson on evasion. Character is fate, and the prime minister was undone by his lifelong pathological inability to tell the truth. Johnson's ridiculously graceless "[resignation speech](#)" ran the gamut from pettiness to miscast victimhood – a sort of [Bozzymandias](#), where the vainglory stood in painfully unfortunate contrast to the fact it was all lying in ruins around him. As the boos threatened to overwhelm his delivery, it was clear that what would satisfy

the crowds was him being made to do a [walk of shame](#), like some Blobby Cersei Lannister. (Same hairdo.) Failing that, he should have been wheeled out of Downing Street in the booze suitcase.

I saw that preposterous old tit David Mellor running towards a TV camera to claim Johnson's downfall was a tragedy "worthy of Shakespeare", which makes you realise the writer Shakespeare could have been if only he'd realised making Falstaff king would have been the banter option, and the best way not to Get Agincourt Done. Watching Johnson fail to play Henry V for the past three years has been like watching the lift-music version of Laurence Olivier have a crack at the role. The sort of prime minister that makes people leave reviews like "Amazon, why is it not possible to give zero stars?"

Still, Johnson always said he didn't want to be a one-term prime minister. He will now not be a one-term prime minister. We'll return to him later – but first, let's have a look at some of the runners and riders competing for control of the sunlit uplands. Remember: [make like Perseus](#), and only look at them in your rear-view shield.

**Ben Wallace:** Ben [once fumed](#) on Twitter that Michael Gove would be Theon Greyjoy "by the time I am finished with him". Then again, maybe it would actually be quite popular to run on a promise to relieve the Conservative party of its penises.

**Suella Braverman:** Literally might as well run for leadership of Starfleet. Or Mensa.

**Liz Truss:** The risk is that Liz looks quite sane next to Suella, in the way that Marilyn Manson would look like a 10 next to the Demogorgon.

**Rishi Sunak:** Along with Javid, once described The Rise of Skywalker as a "[great night out](#)", and therefore should be immediately disqualified on grounds of judgment. Failed to even persuade his own wife to pay him tax – though that's not mentioned in the campaign video he just dropped, which goes big on something called "paytriotism". Currently joint favourite, naturally.

**Penny Mordaunt:** The other current favourite, reinforcing the notion that the less you know about these people, the better they look.

**Sajid Javid:** How madly overvalued is British political commentary? Well, we elected a newspaper columnist to run the entire country, and [Javid's resignation speech](#) was routinely described by professionals who apparently watched it as “powerful” and “devastating”, when he fluffed his big lines and was more wooden than the Commons panelling. Still: a chance to give his [previous non-dom status](#) the attention Rishi Sunak’s wife’s non-dom status deprived it of when it emerged earlier this year.

**Tom Tugendhat:** Will be hoping the Conservative party could learn to be as pleased with him as he frequently appears with himself.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** One of three secretaries of state for education to have served under Johnson this week alone, Zahawi accepted his current position of chancellor with suspicious alacrity, considering it was like being promoted to ship’s purser on the Titanic 10 minutes after the ballroom had filled with water. I can’t wait to find out more about Zahawi’s business dealings – and feel we certainly shall do.

**Jeremy Hu:** Sorry, I got bored before I finished typing his name. Arguably an electoral problem.

**Grant Shapps:** The spreadsheet king of Welwyn Hatfield, but could split his vote with one of his [many aliases](#).

**Steve Baker:** Living testament to the ancient Conservative principle that they’ve always got a worse idea up their sleeve. Should wrestle with the question of how his just God can permit him.

**Priti Patel:** Somehow yet to realise it won’t take a wave machine to sink this boat.

Back to Johnson, though, whose farewell speech demanded a single facetious question: “Will you be having a leaving do, mate?” The answer, amazingly, is: yes. Apparently one of the reasons Johnson wants to cling on

as caretaker, taking no big decisions, is because he and his wife are having a [huge belated wedding party](#) at Chequers later this month. Liggers to the last.

The outcry has [forced them to seek a new venue](#) – but only because they were found out. It's like some especially grotesque version of the butterfly effect. How many Britons' lives will be affected, probably for the worse, by some dead duck's determination to hang around for his wedding party? In the worst economic crisis for generations, how might some struggling people's existences be made worse by this guy's attempt to sneak past Theresa May's number of days in office? What care, precisely, is being taken by this caretaker? Wedding parties, days-in-office here or there – what desperately small and pathetic ambitions these are. And how accurately they reflect the psychopathic political character of a man who never had a single belief in anything other than his own advancement.

If you want a mildly consoling glimpse of Johnson's long prime ministerial afterlife, once his memoirs have sold (and sold well), then picture him being slapped awake by his handlers in some six-star Malaysian spa hotel, then trundled down to the conference anteroom to sit with other speakers, like Al Gore and some sex case from the World Bank, before going on stage to do his 500th rendition of The Speech. £120,000 a pop; Raging Bull-style weight gain and gnawing despair come as standard.

Ultimately, though, the disappointments and desolation are all ours. It was Johnson's world; we now have to live in it. It's quite sweet that people still talk of a "realignment". I don't mean to cavil, but what the hell is "aligned" here? The UK will now have had four prime ministers in just over six years. It's a rolling mess, a joke to much of the world. The only thing you can really align yourself with is the view that it can always get even worse and even more chaotic. Send in the clowns. Ah, don't bother. They're here.

- Marina Hyde is a Guardian columnist

What Just Happened?! by Marina Hyde (Guardian Faber, £20). To support the Guardian and Observer, order your copy at [guardianbookshop.com](#). Delivery charges may apply

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**Guardian Opinion cartoon**

**Boris Johnson**

## **Martin Rowson on Boris Johnson's legacy – cartoon**

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## OpinionRishi Sunak

# Rishi Sunak's man-of-the-people narrative is going to need more work

[Esther Addley](#)

The former chancellor's campaign launch video seemed out of touch with the policies he was supporting up until Tuesday

Ex-chancellor Rishi Sunak launches Tory leadership campaign – video

Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.35 EDTLast modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 15.38 EDT

Twenty-eight hours after a vacancy finally arose, and surely months (years?) after he started brand-consulting it into earnestness and well beyond, [Rishi Sunak](#)'s campaign video for PM [slid on to Twitter](#) on Friday afternoon with an unctuous plop.

“Let me tell you a story,” opened Rishi, with a smile every bit [as warm and authentic as Gordon Brown's](#), “about a woman – almost a LIFETIME ago! – who boarded a plane armed with hope for a better life and the love of her family.”

“This young woman is now in [Brook House detention centre](#) awaiting removal to [Rwanda](#) – and there will be plenty more where that came from if you vote for ME!”

Well not quite. This young woman – you'll never guess what – was Rishi's GRANNY! But she wasn't one of those awful economic migrants we pay African nations to process for us, because of course she had a job and saved for a year for her husband and children to follow her (a year's savings, adjusted for modern prices, being enough to get you a packet of Wotsits).

It was a bold move, given all, for some expensively hired strategist or other to open hard on his migration history. “I got into politics to give everyone in

this country those same opportunities.” Um, had he skim-read what he was saying? Having contentedly propped up Boris Johnson’s government until (\*checks watch\*) [Tuesday evening](#), and shared responsibility for the Rwanda wheeze and so much else, this was quite some doublethink.

But there was more – “My family is EVERYTHING to me!” Including, presumably, his until very recently [non-domiciled multimillionaire wife](#), Akshata Murty, last spotted bringing cups of tea to journalists outside her home in [mugs costing £38 each](#). The man-of-the-people line is going to take some work yet.

One could beg for a proofreader (“The decisions we take today will decide”) or wonder which bright spark came up with the line condemning “comforting fairytales”, when just 90 seconds earlier he had been employing literal sepia tones while posing as [Harry Styles on CBeebies Bedtime Story](#).

But while plenty will mock (and 3,000+ quote tweets within 30 minutes were testament to how little work truly gets done on a sunny Friday afternoon), Sunak is well aware that it is 100,000 Tory members alone who will choose what he does next. Yes, [Saj may have his bus driver dad](#) and [Truss her tanks](#), Suella may have already [surged over the top in her war against “woke”](#) – but patriotism, fairness, hard work, elbow bumps, dammit, this was his pitch. Are we ready for Rishi?

- ***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](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)***

The politics sketch**Boris Johnson**

## **The Convict's resignation honours list – a sneak peek**

John Crace



Boris Johnson is preparing to decorate those without whom none of the last three years would have been possible



Boris Johnson ponders an MBE for Jacob Rees-Mogg: ‘He’ll want more than that but he’s desperate enough to take anything.’ Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP/Getty Images

Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.04 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 16.40 EDT

With nothing else to do with his time, [Boris Johnson](#) has spent the last 24 hours working on his hotly anticipated resignation honours list. We managed to obtain an exclusive preview.

**Stanley Johnson** A hereditary peerage in recognition of his work for violence against women and for his extraordinary versatility. He is an example to all of us of the importance of having no principles whatsoever. He taught me everything I know. And it just so happens that when he dies, I will end up with the title. Fancy that.

**Wilfred and Romy Johnson** Lady Carrie, as she will one day become, has just pointed out to me that neither Wilf nor Romy have to be awarded any trinkets and will not inherit a title. So in the meantime I confer on them the Honourable Order of the Drinks Trolley, which will entitle them to keep the £3,500 Nureyev trolley that belongs to the Downing Street flat.

**Any other Johnsons** It's possible that some of you may have the self-worth to turn down an honour from me but, assuming that you don't, there's plenty for all of you. Am not sure I can necessarily swing any more peerages, but a knighthood or a dame is no problem. And if you could all bung me a few grand, that would be a big help. I'm going to be a bit hard up for a while and have nowhere to live. Please PayPal whatever you can to [Bozza@gmail.com](mailto:Bozza@gmail.com).

**Paul Dacre** The best of the best. The man who embodies the very highest principles of a democratic free press. Polite at all times. Thank you for always answering the phone when I was in trouble and going the extra mile to provide helpful stories in the Daily Mail. For you, nothing less than a peerage is good enough. From now on you shall be known as Lord Fuck of Fuckshire.

**Durham police** Like the Met, only special measures is good enough for you. You had one job! For heaven's sake, there were 13 consecutive days of Daily Mail front page stories telling you that Keir Starmer was guilty of having a Covid party, and yet you still blindly carried on looking at the evidence and cleared him. Whatever happened to policing without fear or favour?

**Nadine Dorries** The most loyal and stupidest of colleagues. Supporting me even through the really tough times – mainly because she knew no one else but me would ever consider her for a cabinet post. For her the Order of Merit for her services to wrecking the BBC, Channel 4 and literature. Her books are unique. Thankfully.

**Jacob Rees-Mogg** I've never quite seen the appeal of the Moggster. He's some kind of homunculus in an oversized suit who has never really managed to grow up. But he'll do anything I say. So he gets an MBE for just breathing. He'll want more than that but he's desperate enough to take anything.

**Lord Brownlow** The walking chequebook no prime minister could do without. He was, quite simply, amazing. I would buy whatever I fancied, send him the bill and he would just pay it. No questions asked. And he has promised me he offers a discreet service for ex-prime ministers. So for him, a second peerage. Lord Lord Brownlow.

**Lulu Lytle** To be honest, I think Lulu has no taste whatsoever. The wallpaper was absolutely hideous and didn't even stay stuck to the walls. No wonder Dilyn pissed on it. But Carrie thinks Lulu is a genius, and anything for a quiet life. And to be fair she kept her mouth shut about some of the parties. So she gets an OBE on the proviso she offers us a 75% discount on doing up our next house. Wherever it may be.

**Martin Reynolds** Good old Party Marty. He may have been useless as a top civil servant in No 10 but he sure could organise some great parties for us all in Downing Street when we were all under the cosh with Covid. The fun we had. I'll never forget the bodies piled up in the flower beds. So he gets a K and becomes ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Love to see how he gets on in a dry country!

**Alexander Lebedev** If his son can get a peerage, then Alex must be in line for one. Hell, he's certainly earned it by not blabbing about that party in Italy. Christ, I must have been pissed for the whole weekend because I remember next to nothing. Hope I didn't leak anything to the KGB. Arise Lord Lebedev of Lubyanka.

**Chris Evans** There has to be a bauble for the editor of the Daily Telegraph. After all, I'll be needing my regular £350k a year gig for knocking off one badly written column a week. Or maybe we could round that up to an even £500k now. After all, inflation is above 10% now. Just wait till I find out who has been prime minister all this time. What's that you said, Chris? Absolutely old boy. Knight companion of the garter it is.

**Conor Burns** Some things, once seen, cannot be unseen. But you have done valiantly to contain your PTSD ... And for your silence, you get a K.

**Simon Case** I can't tell you how convenient it is to have a cabinet secretary who is so terminally dopey. Someone who notices almost nothing and does even less. He doesn't even react when he knows I'm lying. Superb. So if you're still awake, Simon, there's a knighthood waiting for you on your desk.

**Evgeny Lebedev** Yes, yes, I haven't forgotten you. Will a CBE do you this time? Usual terms. A million quid in used euros. Or a "[Prince Charles](#)", as

we call it now.

**The owner of Luxury Treehouses Ltd** I've no idea of your name, but there's an OBE in it for you if you can find your way into giving me a free £150k treehouse. I promise to promote it by being photographed in it while I'm writing my memoirs. Much like that fool David Cameron and the shepherd hut.

**Chris Pincher** You've had a rough time of it recently, old boy. Anyone of us could have caught out groping when we were pissed. So hopefully a K makes up for things a bit.

**Michael Gove** It's a stunning achievement to have been sacked by three different prime ministers for disloyalty. Not even I managed that. So I'm creating the Ancient Order of the Turncoat just for you. I look forward to you being fired a fourth time by whoever replaces me.

**Matt Hancock** I know how desperately you and Gina want to be Sir Matt and Lady Hancock. Which is why I'm not going to give it to you! Your neediness is just far too enjoyable. Dream on.

- The headline of this article was amended on Friday 8 July 2022 to correct a spelling error.
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## Roe v Wade

# Joe Biden signs executive order protecting access to abortion

Move by president signals start of White House fightback after supreme court struck down Roe v Wade



Abortion rights activists protest the supreme court ruling outside the White House in Washington DC. Photograph: Daniel Slim/AFP/Getty

*[David Smith](#) Washington bureau chief*

*[@smithinamerica](#)*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.17 EDTFirst published on Fri 8 Jul 2022 07.00 EDT

Joe Biden has signed an executive order offering protections to millions of American women denied the constitutional right to abortion.

The move signals the start of a White House fightback after the supreme court last month [struck down Roe v Wade](#), its landmark ruling that for half a century had legalised abortion nationwide.

In a White House address on Friday, the president condemned the court's decision as "terrible, extreme and I think so totally wrong-headed" and not a constitutional judgment but "an exercise in raw political power".

With multiple states already imposing harsh restrictions, Biden outlined an executive order that will safeguard access to reproductive healthcare services, including abortion and contraception. This includes access to medication abortions, also known as [abortion pills](#), approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

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Among the provisions is a plan for [Merrick Garland](#), the attorney general, and Dana Remus, the White House counsel, to convene private pro bono lawyers, bar associations and public interest organisations to encourage "robust legal representation of patients, providers and third parties lawfully seeking or offering reproductive health care services throughout the country".

Such representation could include protecting the right to travel out of state to seek an abortion. Biden and Garland have vowed to oppose any state or local official who attempts to interfere with women exercising that right.

In addition, the executive order is designed to promote "the safety and security of patients, providers and clinics". A how-to guide for consumers will explain steps to ensure they are protecting their personal data on mobile apps amid fears that [state officials could try to track](#) and prosecute them.

Biden said: "There's an increasing concern that extremist governors and others will try to get that data off of your phone which is out there in the ether to find what you're seeking, where you're going and what you're doing with regard to your healthcare. Talk about no privacy."

"This executive order asks the FTC [Federal Trade Commission] to crackdown on data brokers that sell private information to extreme groups."

An interagency taskforce will coordinate federal government efforts to protect reproductive rights. Garland will provide technical assistance to states affording legal protection to out-of-state patients as well as providers who offer legal reproductive health care.

The supreme court's decision to overturn Roe v Wade two weeks ago was a seismic shock to the political system that left elected officials [scrambling to respond](#). The president noted that abortion bans have taken effect in 13 states with 12 additional states likely to follow in the coming weeks. They will disproportionately affect women of colour, low-income women and rural women.

Flanked by vice president Kamala Harris and health secretary Xavier Becerra, Biden warned: "What we're witnessing is a giant step backwards in much of our country ... Some of these states don't allow for exceptions for rape or incest. This isn't some imagined horror. It's already happening."

The president became visibly angry as he [noted recent media reports](#) that a 10-year-old rape victim in Ohio who was six weeks pregnant and ineligible for an abortion in her own state was forced to travel to [Indiana](#) for the procedure.

"A 10-year old girl should be forced to give birth to a rapist's child? I can tell you what I know. I can't think of anything that's much more extreme. The court's decision has already been received by Republicans in Congress as a green light to go further and pass a national ban ... That would mean the right to choose will be illegal nationwide if, in fact they succeed. Let me tell you something. As long as I'm president, it won't happen because I'll veto it."

In Louisiana on Friday, a New Orleans judge let dissolve a 27 June order temporarily blocking the enforcement of laws banning virtually all abortions in the state after the reversal of Roe.

Biden has been criticised for failing to push back hard enough to defend abortion rights. Friday's executive order might buy him some time, but is necessarily limited in scope. He acknowledged as much in his remarks as he urged Congress to codify Roe as federal law – which in turns depends on

November's midterm elections, in which Democrats are widely expected to perform poorly.

"The court now practically dares the women of America to go to the ballot box and restore the very rights they've just taken away," Biden said. "I don't think the court or, for that matter, Republicans who for decades have pushed the extreme agenda have a clue about the power of American women. But they're about to find out."

A [Pew Research Center survey](#) published this week found that 57% of adults disapprove of the court's sweeping decision, while 41% approve. Public support for legal abortion remains largely unchanged [since before the decision](#), with 62% saying it should be legal in all or most cases.

Biden concluded: "We cannot allow an out-of-control supreme court, working in conjunction with extremist elements of the Republican party, to take away freedoms and our personal autonomy. The choice we face as a nation is between the mainstream and the extreme."

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[\*\*China\*\*](#)

## **Blinken voices concern to China over stance on Russia's war in Ukraine**

Beijing's 'alignment with Russia' is complicating relations, US secretary of state tells Wang Yi in talks aimed at defusing tensions



China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, and the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, met for five hours on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on Saturday. Photograph: Reuters

*Associated Press*

Sat 9 Jul 2022 06.14 EDTFirst published on Sat 9 Jul 2022 02.29 EDT

China's support for Russia's war in Ukraine is complicating US-Chinese relations at a time when they are already beset by rifts and enmity over numerous other issues, the US secretary of state has told his Chinese counterpart

In five hours of talks in their first face-to-face meeting since October, [Antony Blinken](#) said he expressed deep concern to the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, about Beijing's stance on Russia's actions in Ukraine and did not believe Beijing's protestations that it was neutral in the conflict.

The talks had been arranged in a new effort to try to rein in or at least manage the hostility that has come to define recent relations between Washington and Beijing.

"We are concerned about the PRC's alignment with Russia," Blinken told reporters after the meeting in the Indonesian resort of Bali. He said it was difficult to be "neutral" in a conflict in which there was a clear aggressor but that even if it were possible: "I don't believe China is acting in a way that is neutral."

The Biden administration had hoped that China, with its long history of opposing what it sees as interference in its own internal affairs, would take a similar position with Russia and Ukraine. It has not, however, choosing instead what US officials see as a hybrid position that is damaging the international rules-based order.

Blinken said every nation, China included, stands to lose if that order is eroded.

The two men met a day after they attended a gathering of top diplomats from the [G20](#) that ended without a joint call to end Russia's war in Ukraine or a plan for how to deal with its impacts on food and energy security.

However, Blinken said he believed Russia had come away isolated and alone from the meeting of rich and large developing countries as most participants expressed opposition to the Ukraine war. However, the ministers were unable to come to a unified G20 call for an end to the conflict.

"There was a strong consensus and Russia was left isolated," Blinken said of individual condemnations of Russia's actions from various ministers, some of whom shunned conversations with the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov.

He noted that [Lavrov had left the meeting early](#), possibly because he did not like what he was hearing from his counterparts.

“It was very important that he heard loudly and clearly from around the world condemnation of Russia’s aggression,” Blinken said. “We see no signs whatsoever that Russia at this point is prepared to engage in diplomacy.”

On China, Blinken said he and Wang discussed a range of contentious issues, from tariffs and trade and human rights to Taiwan and disputes in the South China Sea, that have all been complicated by the Chinese position on Ukraine.

Two days earlier, the countries’ top military officers had faced off over Taiwan during a virtual meeting. Blinken said the self-ruled island that Beijing claims as its territory was just one of a series of problematic issues.

He said he stressed US concerns over China’s “increasingly provocative rhetoric and activity near Taiwan and the vital importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan strait”. He added that he had also raised human rights concerns regarding minorities in Tibet and in the western Xinjiang region.

Going into the talks, Wang said it was “necessary for the two countries to maintain normal exchanges” and “to work together to ensure that this relationship will continue to move forward along the right track”.

Wang also echoed frequent Chinese lines about remaining committed to the principles of “mutual respect”, “peaceful coexistence” and “win-win cooperation”. That, he said, “serves the interests of the two countries and two peoples. It is also the shared aspiration of the international community.”

US officials had said they did not expect any breakthroughs from Blinken’s talks with Wang, but that they were hopeful the conversation could help keep lines of communication open and create “guardrails” to guide the world’s two largest economies as they navigate increasingly complex and potentially explosive matters.

“We’re committed to managing this relationship, this competition responsibly as the world expects us to do,” Blinken said.

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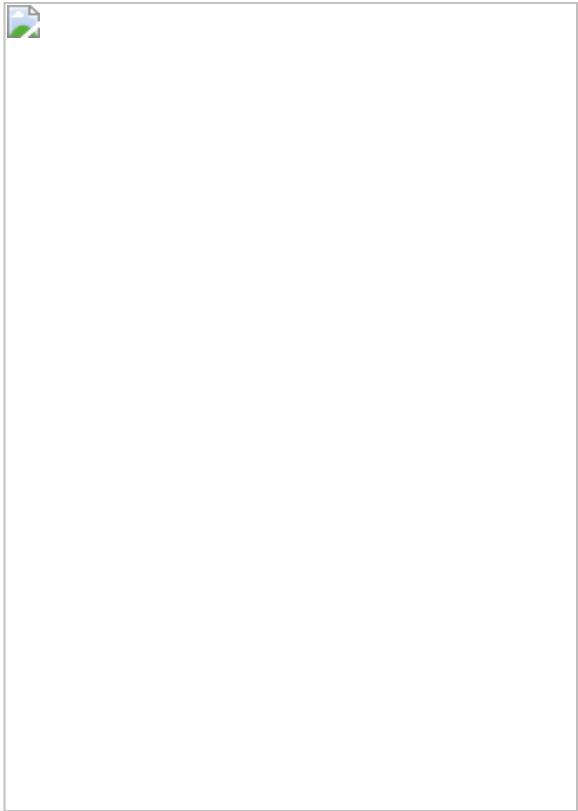
## **'Disturbing': weedkiller ingredient tied to cancer found in 80% of US urine samples**

CDC study finds glyphosate, controversial ingredient found in weedkillers including popular Roundup brand, present in samples



The CDC has only recently started examining the extent of human exposure to glyphosate in the US. Photograph: Benoît Tessier/Reuters

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[Carey Gillam](#)

Sat 9 Jul 2022 05.30 EDT Last modified on Sat 9 Jul 2022 12.31 EDT

More than 80% of urine samples drawn from children and adults in a US health study contained a weedkilling chemical linked to cancer, a finding scientists have called “disturbing” and “concerning”.

[The report](#) by a unit of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that out of 2,310 urine samples, taken from a group of Americans intended to be representative of the US population, 1,885 were laced with detectable traces of glyphosate. This is the active ingredient in

herbicides sold around the world, including the widely used Roundup brand. Almost a third of the participants were children ranging from six to 18.

Academics and private researchers have been noting high levels of the herbicide glyphosate in analyses of human urine samples for years. But the CDC has only recently started examining the extent of human exposure to glyphosate in the US, and its work comes at a time of mounting concerns and controversy over how pesticides in food and water impact human and environmental health.

“I expect that the realization that most of us have glyphosate in our urine will be disturbing to many people,” said Lianne Sheppard, professor at the University of Washington’s department of environmental and occupational health sciences. Thanks to the new research, “we know that a large fraction of the population has it in urine. Many people will be thinking about whether that includes them.”

Sheppard co-authored a 2019 [analysis](#) that found glyphosate exposure increases the risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and also co-authored [a 2019 scientific paper](#) that reviewed 19 studies documenting glyphosate in human urine.

Both the amount and prevalence of glyphosate found in human urine has been rising steadily since the 1990s when Monsanto Co. introduced genetically engineered crops designed to be sprayed directly with Roundup, [according to research](#) published in 2017 by University of California San Diego School of Medicine researchers.

Paul Mills, the lead researcher of that study, said at the time there was “an urgent need” for a thorough examination of the impact on human health from glyphosate in foods people commonly consume.

More than 200 million pounds of glyphosate are used annually by US [farmers on their fields](#). The weedkiller is sprayed directly over genetically engineered crops such as corn and soybeans, and also over non-genetically engineered crops such as wheat and oats as a desiccant to dry crops out prior to harvest. Many farmers also use it on fields before the growing season,

including spinach growers and almond producers. It is considered the most widely used herbicide in history.

Residues of glyphosate have been documented in an [array of popular foods](#) made with crops sprayed with glyphosate, including baby food. The primary route of exposure for children is through the diet.

Monsanto and the company that bought it in 2018, Bayer, have maintained that glyphosate and Roundup products are safe, and that residues in food and in human urine are not a health risk.

They are at odds with many researchers and the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a unit of the World Health Organization, which classified glyphosate as a probable human carcinogen in 2015.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has taken the opposite stance, classifying glyphosate as not likely to be carcinogenic. But last month a federal appeals court [issued an opinion](#) vacating the agency's safety determination and ordering the agency to give "further consideration" to evidence of glyphosate risks.

"People of all ages should be concerned, but I'm particularly concerned for children," said Phil Landrigan, who worked for years at the CDC and the EPA and now directs the Program for Global Public Health and the Common Good at Boston College.

"Children are more heavily exposed to pesticides than adults because pound-for-pound they drink more water, eat more food and breathe more air," Landrigan said. "Also, children have many years of future life when they can develop diseases with long incubation periods such as cancer. This is particularly a concern with the herbicide, glyphosate."

The new CDC data was released as part of the [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey](#) (NHANES), research that is typically highly valued by scientists.

Cynthia Curl, Boise State University assistant professor of community and environmental health, said it was "obviously concerning" that a large

percentage of the US population is exposed to glyphosate, but said it is still unclear how that translates to human health.

- This story is co-published with [The New Lede](#), a journalism project of the Environmental Working Group
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## Almost 1,000 firefighters tackle ‘mega-fire’ in southern France

Authorities say blaze brought under control but likely to take days to extinguish amid drought conditions, heat and strong winds



Crews fighting a fire near Bordezac in the Gard department in southern France. Photograph: AP

*Associated Press in Paris*

Sat 9 Jul 2022 01.56 EDTFirst published on Fri 8 Jul 2022 13.33 EDT

Nearly 1,000 firefighters backed by water-dropping planes have been deployed to battle a massive blaze in France’s southern Gard region that burned 600 hectares (1,500 acres) and forced the evacuation of residents.

Local authorities said on Friday the wildfire had been brought under control but would take days to extinguish.

“Right now the situation is improving,” Gard department prefect Marie-Francoise Lecaillon told BFM television on Friday evening. “The fire has been contained. We must remain vigilant.”

Lt Col Eric Agrinier, a senior member of the fire service, also said on Friday: “This fire is far from being done. There are fronts in hard-to-reach areas that we haven’t tackled and that are advancing freely.”

“It’s going to be a feat of endurance,” he added later, pointing to unfavourable weather conditions.

Working into the night after the blaze began late on Thursday, firefighters set backfires to protect inhabited areas.

“We burn some parts [of the forest] so when the fire spreads it reaches an already-burned zone and slows down, that makes it easier to stop its advance,” said Jacques Pages, standing in front of a line of flames lighting up the pitch-black forest.

Described by emergency responders as a “mega-fire”, the blaze started near the village of Bordezac and forced evacuations from nearby Bessèges and other settlements on Thursday night.

The local prefect’s office said about 100 people had to be put up in holiday homes and restaurants in the area, which is about 90km (55 miles) north of Montpellier and the Mediterranean coast.

“I’ve been finding rooms for people and all the holiday homes are doing the same,” said Regine Marchand, manager of a restaurant in nearby Aujac, on Thursday night.

“We’ve made them pasta, people left quickly without bringing anything, but they’re keeping their spirits up, there’s a good atmosphere.”

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By Friday, people's homes were no longer in danger, with only a garage and a small hut damaged.

The Gard region fire service said on Friday morning that 13 firefighters were slightly injured.

As well as personnel on the ground, two planes have been dumping water since the early morning. On Friday, the air deployment had stretched to 12 firefighting planes and two helicopters.

Roads were closed to traffic entering the Bessèges area, while hundreds of firefighters remained on the scene, some drawn from neighbouring regions.

Like large swathes of the country, southeast France has suffered from drought this year, increasing the risk of fires.

During an unseasonable heatwave last month, about 600 hectares were burned in a fire started by shelling on an army artillery training range near the Mediterranean port city Marseille.

Firefighters in that Bouches-du-Rhone region were called out to 35 outbreaks on Thursday, many of them close to inhabited areas.

Four houses were destroyed near southern city Arles and 250 firefighters were called out to a brushfire in Saint-Mitre-les-Remparts.

Although several other fires began in southern France on Thursday, most were put out before nightfall.

The fire service said thousands of hectares of heavily wooded land were under threat, as winds gusting at up to 50mph fanned the flames through the dried-out trees.

Wind is "the worst enemy" of firefighters, Agrinier said.

France's national meteorological service put several neighbouring areas on red alert on Friday for fire risks and France's environment ministry warned citizens in the area to beware fire risks.

Wildfires have also [hit other countries in Europe this summer](#), including Greece and Portugal. Scientists say climate change brings more drought and higher temperatures that make it easy for fires to start and spread.

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[Philippines](#)

## **Philippines' Nobel laureate Maria Ressa loses appeal against cyber libel conviction**

Veteran journalist and Philippines' first Nobel peace prize winner faces lengthy jail sentence



Maria Ressa's news website Rappler on Friday said the decision 'weakens the ability of journalists to hold power to account'. Photograph: Fabrice Coffrini/AFP/Getty Images

*Agence France-Presse in Manila*

Fri 8 Jul 2022 05.58 EDT Last modified on Fri 8 Jul 2022 14.48 EDT

The Filipino [Nobel peace prize](#) winner Maria Ressa has lost her appeal against a conviction for cyber libel, her news website, Rappler, has said, in the latest blow for the veteran journalist.

Ressa and her former colleague Rey Santos Jr face lengthy jail sentences, but the company said they would “avail of all legal remedies available to them”, including taking the case to the supreme court.

The ruling comes less than two weeks after the Philippine authorities [ordered Rappler to shut down](#) ahead of the former president Rodrigo Duterte’s last day in office.

Rappler on Friday described the decision to uphold the conviction as “unfortunate”, saying it “weakens the ability of journalists to hold power to account”.

“What is ultimately at stake is our democracy whose strength rests on a media that is not threatened by the state nor intimidated by forces out to silence critical voices,” Rappler said.

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Ressa has long been a vocal critic of Duterte and the [deadly drug war he launched in 2016](#), triggering what media advocates say is a grinding series of criminal charges, investigations and online attacks against her and Rappler.

She and the Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov were [awarded the Nobel peace prize in October](#) for their efforts to “safeguard freedom of expression”.

Ressa, who is also a US citizen, is fighting at least seven court cases, including the cyber libel case, for which she has been on bail and faces up to six years in prison.

Rappler, which is the subject of eight legal actions, had to fight for survival as Duterte’s government accused it of violating a constitutional ban on foreign ownership in securing funding, as well as tax evasion.

Days before Duterte left office, the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission ordered Rappler to shut down for violating “constitutional and

statutory restrictions on foreign ownership in mass media”.

Ressa vowed the company would continue to operate as it followed the legal process, but expressed hope the situation would improve under Duterte’s successor, Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

But the company’s future and its battle in the country’s highly politicised legal system under Marcos Jr’s presidency is uncertain.

Marcos Jr, who took over from Duterte on 30 June, has given few clues about his views on the website and the broader issue of freedom of speech. Activists fear he could worsen the situation for human rights and freedom of speech in the country.

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