

Welcome to The Rest is Politics with me, Rory Stewart.

And with me, Alistair Campbell.

I can see that you're in France.

Have you just, have you been on your bicycle the next last couple of days?

No, I have, but the mistral has been blowing, so it's been very, very windy.

I actually did a little minor fall, but I quite enjoy those in a weird sort of way.

Makes you feel alive when you get up and get back on the bike.

Yeah, yeah.

So no, it's going to be very, very hot in the next few days.

So I am, I am doing a fair bit on the bike, but I've been sort of, you know, keeping in touch with everything going on.

I think we should, well, I think we've tried to ignore Donald Trump for a while, but I think we have to talk about Trump.

We have to talk about the indictment and the sort of big dramas that have been happening in Washington.

But I think we should maybe make it part of a broader theme on politics and the law because we've got Imran Khan just being jailed in Pakistan.

We've got Navalny in Russia, who's just had another 19 years banged on him.

And then I think you and I both want to talk again about the politics of net zero and the difficulties that people are having on that.

So I think that will, I think I'll cover most of the programme, to be honest.

Yeah, well, I think, yeah, let's kick off with the fact

that I think you've managed to make yourself read through the whole indictment.

Is that right? It didn't say that long.

It's only 45 pages.

It is definitely worth reading.

I strongly recommend to you.

You know, I'm always saying, you know, read speeches rather than the media coverage of them.

I think this is worth reading and full as well.

It's very nicely written.

Let me just give you the first couple of sentences.

You know the facts here, but it's just to give you a flavour.

The defendant, Donald J.

Trump was the 45th president of the United States and a candidate of a re-election in 2020.

The defendant lost the 2020 presidential election.

Despite having lost, the defendant was determined to remain in power.

So for more than two months following election day, November 3rd, 2020, the defendant spread lies that there had been outcome determinative fraud in the election and that actually he had won.

These claims were false and the defendant knew that they were false.

But the defendant repeated and widely disseminated them anyway to make his knowingly false claims appeal legitimate, create an intense national atmosphere of mistrust and anger and erode public faith in the administration of the election.

Now isn't that just a nice introduction?

It's beautiful.

And it points immediately to quite an interesting legal point,
which is that your First Amendment right under free speech apparently allows you to lie.
Yeah.

So if he had simply been delusional and genuinely believed
that the election had been stolen when it hadn't been,
he would be protected under a First Amendment right for saying that.
So the whole case is going to swing on whether they can prove that he was knowingly lying,
that he actually knew that he'd lost the election
and was deliberately spreading falsehoods rather than being delusional.

Exactly.

And to go into the next session, this links to the fact that it's a conspiracy.

Now, obviously, you can't conspire on your own.

And so this is why these other characters become important.

So it goes on.

The defendant's knowingly false statements, key phrase, I think, knowingly false statements,
were integral to his criminal plans to defeat the federal government function,
obstruct the certification and interfere with others' right to vote and have their votes counted.

Lies about election fraud included dozens of specific claims
that there had been substantial fraud in certain states,
such as that large numbers of dead, non-resident, non-citizen,
otherwise ineligible voters had cast ballots
or that voting machines had changed votes for the defendants to votes for Joe Biden.

These claims were false and the defendant knew that they were false.

And that's why the co-conspirators are quite important to all this.

Now, needless to say, co-conspirator one, he doesn't...

I don't know why he hasn't named the co-conspirators,
whether that's because they are also going to at some point be charged
or whether there are continuing investigations into them
or whether some of them are doing a bit of plea bargaining.

I just don't know.

But co-conspirator one, it is easy to work out who it is.

It is none other than the one time 9-11 hero, Rudy Giuliani.

And he was, quotes, an attorney willing to spread knowingly false claims
and pursue strategies.

I think this is also important that Trump's 2020 re-election campaign would not pursue.

In other words, people who'd been working with Trump as his campaign advisors
were basically saying, listen, for God's sake, the game's up, just get on with it.

And Giuliani was the guy who would take these strategies and take them forward.

Number two is John Eastman.

Again, this is all just sort of piecing it together.

John Eastman, he was the guy who basically
divides the legal strategy that involved creating slates of pro-Trump electors

for the Electoral College in states that Biden had actually won.
And he's the guy who got going this myth that Georgia was lost to Trump because 66,000 underage people and two and a half thousand convicted felons voted in that state.
The only woman co-conspirator is somebody called Sidney Powell.
Now, even Donald Trump dismissed her as crazy.
And yet she went on to Fox Television and started going on about these ballot machines that were being rigged and so forth.
And Trump needless to say, spread all that.
The one that really is worrying, I think, is this guy, Jeffrey Clark, who's the co-conspirator for, who's a Justice Department official, who was basically it would seem in seeing Trump against his contract of employment as a, you know, not very not that senior Justice Department employee.
And eventually, frankly, could have been made into an acting attorney general.
Had it not been for virtue of the entire Justice Department, top brass said that if that happens, we're all out of here.
And then the other one to number five is another attorney.
And this was all about he had the plan to submit fraudulent slates of electors to stop Mike Pence doing the certification.
And then the sixth one, I don't know, this could be me, Rory, is described is described purely as a political consultant.
But we don't have we don't have the name I can I can say definitively, it is not me.
I mean, I'm obviously the world's least expert person on US law, but I did see a relatively good piece on National Public Radio on this, which we'll share in our newsletter, where an expert suggested that the reason that the co-conspirators are not named is to try to streamline and accelerate the trial.
So one of the key things here is that obviously the trial is going to happen next year and the election is happening at the end of next year.
So there is a hope that they can make sufficient progress in this trial that it will reduce the chance of a indicted individual running again to be present in the United States.
Now, I guess we'll move on to whether that's realistic or not.
But I think one of the ideas is by not getting bogged down and fighting six co-defendants at the same time, you might be able to move the trial on more quickly was a suggestion on MPR.
Yeah, that's interesting.
Yeah, I hadn't thought about that.
I mean, honestly, reading it, Rory, is like you just, you know, I can remember the kind of Nixon era and, you know, you think about what he went for.
And this is just it's page after page of lies of different theories being brought forward of different conspiracies.
There's a very good piece that a guy called Daniel Dale did on CNN, which we should also put in the newsletter where he went through the 21 biggest lies that are exposed, Trump lies that are exposed in this.

And of course, the other thing, though, that is that is sort of I find completely mind blowing. The real Rory, my son, who follows these things quite closely with regard to the betting markets, said that on the back of this, of this indictment being published and all the who are there after, Trump's price for reelection, not just as a nominee for the Republican Party, but reelection to the White House did not move.

In other words, it's all now priced in.

Trump is a liar.

Trump is going to be causing scandal wherever he goes.

It's just priced in.

It didn't move at all.

And just before we go into the pricing, which I think is probably the biggest you rather than the micro details, but just to remind people, President Trump now faces five upcoming trials.

So he's got this trial, then he's got another one for mishandling of classified documents, and he's got a third criminal trial for accounting fraud.

And then he's got two civil trials, one over his business practices and one over defamation of a woman who accused him of rape.

So it's a loss of stuff coming down the line.

But I think you've put your finger on the biggest suit, which is that Trump is now making public jokes about that, saying all he needs now to secure the presidency is to be indicted one more time.

That really, really mobilizes his base.

And I think quite an interesting op-ed by somebody from the right, trying to explain why it is that Trump supporters feel like this.

And these were some of the points he made.

I think one of them is that he said, you've got to imagine what would happen if George W. Bush's attorney general had decided to try to prosecute Biden before an election and how that would have felt to Democrats.

And I think there are the difference between the American and British system is important.

We struggle to really fully understand this because the Department of Justice or our Minister of Justice is not politicized in the way that the US DOJ is.

There are far fewer political appointees in the system.

And of course, our judges are not politically appointed in the same way.

And the entire US system, or most of the US system from one end to the other, is people being appointed by political parties, which gives an extra edge to this.

In the UK, obviously, when the Supreme Court ruled against Boris Johnson about the prerogation of parliament, there was huge outrage.

There was that, you know, you remember that the tabloid newspaper is going after the head of the Supreme Court and saying the whole thing was a stitch up by elite remainers. But at least they couldn't suggest these people had been appointed by another political party.

Here, the very, very close connections.

Alvin Bragg, who's the Manhattan District Attorney, is a very, very fervent, active partisan Democrat.

And so there is a very strong sense amongst Republican voters

that a lot of these cases are being driven to their absolute limit to prevent Trump running again.

Yeah, I think I mean, I get the difference between the systems.

But I think, for example, Arizona, one of the states where Trump was claiming that he'd been cheated.

The Speaker of the Arizona House is quoted in the indictment and he says he says this, I'm a conservative Republican.

I don't know the results of the presidential election.

I worked for President Trump and I worked hard to elect him.

But I cannot and will not entertain a suggestion that we violate law to change the outcome of a certified election.

And also you mentioned the Attorney General, Trump's Attorney General, the bagpipe playing William Barr.

He is basically, he's put out a thing over the weekend saying that he would happily testify against Trump.

You know, I think it would have been very hard to mount the kind of case that we're talking about in the Bush-Biden context.

And here's another one for you, Roy.

I just saw this one.

This is an email from one of Trump's senior campaign advisors.

I'll obviously hustle to help on all fronts,

but it's tough to own any of this when it's all just conspiracy shit beamed down from the mothership.

The other point in the thing that I think, reasonable opinion as opposed to those people that are part of the just, you know, Trump can do no wrong.

The passages on the impact that this had on the officials that Trump named and instigated a real kind of death threat pile on a really pretty harrowing.

So I look, how do you get a jury for this?

How do you get people who don't already have very, very strong views in this very polarized political situation?

But it is, honestly, if you read this, you just feel sick to the stomach that this guy isn't already, frankly, in jail.

One hundred percent.

And I obviously, I think Trump is a monster.

And I think he is a severe danger to not just the United States, but the world, if he takes over again, it will absolutely change so many assumptions about the world order.

We will see an immediate shift in Russia, Ukraine.

We'll see an immediate shift in China, Taiwan.

There will be a further hollowing out of commitments on climate change.

We don't really know where he's going to go on AI.

So he's a huge danger to the democracy in the United States, but he's a massive risk to the whole world order.

But let me just try again to do something which is obviously not very helpful, which is to try to understand why his polling rating jumped by 10 percent through this indictment.

I mean, essentially, he was in a relatively comparatively weak position until he was indicted.

And the first indictment shot him up in the polls and has basically destroyed the race for every other Republican candidate.

This is the nomination polls or the national polls.

The polls within the Republican Party, his chance of winning the primaries, massively helped by by the indictment.

And there are things that we talk about less.

One of them is that there was huge attempts to try to pin a conspiracy connecting him to Russia by the Department of Justice, in which he appears to have been legally vindicated.

And this ties into the narrative of his Republican supporters that the guy is just being prosecuted.

And of course, that's why they talk a lot about Hunter Biden, because their perception is that Hunter Biden was up to dubious stuff in his business relations with Ukraine.

And that this was not investigated in the same way that Trump was investigated.

And Trump was investigated and everyone thought he was guilty and he was actually vindicated under law.

So I think that's one thing.

I think the second thing is that he is a populist and his basic message, as we said again and again, is that the whole establishment and the elite is out to get him.

And in so far as his popular supporters believe that this stuff is not going to influence them at all.

And that there's been a big learning curve here.

I think people thought a lot of my friends in the US thought a few months ago that if you could bring an indictment against him, that would finish him, which is why people were very, very excited about these indictments.

And whatever else they've done, they may have exposed horribly what a completely unsuitable person he is to be present and that he's actually a criminal.

But what they're not likely to do is make him less likely to win the election.

Paradoxically, they make him more likely to win an election.

He's currently neck and neck in most of the polls, isn't he?

With Joe Biden.

With Joe Biden. Yeah.

I mean, I think the thing about the actual election, the presidential election as opposed to the nomination,

I think he's home and dry in the nomination.

I mean, I actually think even if he were in jail now,

I think he'd win the Republican nomination partly because

a little bit like some of the people in your old party
who really didn't stand up properly to Johnson
when he was taking the conservative party down the route it went down.
The Republican Party as an institution and its leading figures have been utterly craven.
And they're now in a position where the one guy who stood up and said something critical
at the recent meeting that they had when all the contenders were in the same room,
got booed off the stage.
So Trump, I think, is home and dry in that.
The thing I think is interesting about the general election.
And obviously, you, I know, have a very strong view.
And I know a lot of Americans do that Joe Biden is too old.
He'll be 86 by the end of a second term.
He's clearly, you know, gets a bit muddled from time to time and so forth.
But if you imagine that there's a sort of a block of about a third
that is part of this movement that just think Trump can do no wrong,
they're going to vote for Trump, whatever.
Let's say there's about a third that is, you know,
pretty much in the same place for Biden and or whoever represents the Democrats.
You see, you've got within the middle,
you've still got quite a lot of kind of independence,
not quite sure as to play for.
And admittedly, they're in a small number of states,
the ones that you've really got to go for.
But I find it hard to imagine why somebody has found a fresh reason
to vote for Donald Trump in the next election,
that they didn't have the last time and they had four years to decide,
you know, do we really want more of this?
And I think the whole craziness, although it sort of helps him with his base
and it feeds the conspiracies and so forth,
I just I still am confident enough that there are enough people out there.
I think this is just so bad for us.
It's so bad for us as a country.
And then the other thing I do actually think Biden has got a pretty good record
to point to the question is whether he can get that over to the public,
to the this part of the public that he needs to get over.
100% on your, I think, the central observation,
which is because it's a rerun, everybody has made up their minds
about Trump and Biden, made their minds up long ago.
And nobody's going to change their minds now about Trump and Biden.
So I think that's the first thing.
And last time they ran, Biden beat Trump.
And there's no reason to think that that's going to be different next time,
except if something goes wrong with turnout.
And that's why the Democrats are going to have to do a really good job

mobilizing their base and in particular, different sectors.

So one sector that the Democrats are worried about is non-college

educated voters who seem to be less keen on Biden than college educated voters.

Another section that they're concerned about is African American and Latino voters.

And in particular, a sense from African American voters

that Biden has not yet delivered on many of the things

that were central to the African American community.

And those include issues such as reform of the police,

criminal justice reform coming out of the back of the Black Lives Matter movement.

And the George Floyd killing.

So they are going to have to turn out in large numbers for Biden to be able to win.

And the two things that could undo that, I think, are a downturn in the US economy,

which now seems less likely, or Biden suddenly seeming very frail

as we go into the fall of next year, which may put off not just the voters

that are less likely to turn off, but I think many other Democrat voters as well

may stay at home.

Yeah. And listen, we talked in previous podcasts about the role of

this kind of technological revolution that's taking place and deep fakes and all that stuff.

And you can just imagine what Trump is thinking about trying to do with with that stuff.

I think we should.

You know, this is probably something that neither of us ever thought we would do.

I think it's worth saying a few words about Mike Pence, because he and one or two others

do emerge as I think it's hard to call them heroic.

But the pressure that he was under, that comes through very much in the indictment,

the pressure that he was under, essentially, to just go along with one or more of these

conspiracies and to use his ceremonial role to alter the election results or to stop the certification.

And, you know, one of the 21 lies that was called out in this CNN report was that this is one of the big ones where Trump literally has a conversation with Pence about whether Pence has the authority to do this. And Pence is very, very clear.

And it seems that Pence was taking contemporaneous notes, which always help in a courtroom.

And he was absolutely clear.

He did not have the right.

This would be going beyond his powers and he was not prepared to do it.

And then Trump goes straight out and says that Mike Pence is in complete agreement that he

can go up to the ceremony and he can reverse it.

You know, there'll be many phrases that could go on the tombstones of either Trump or Pence.

But I think Trump's saying to Pence, you're too honest.

I think that's quite good on the Pence.

Too honest, Donald J. Trump.

Let's just also just do a little recap of some of the themes we've talked about in previous podcasts, because a lot of them are coming together around this issue.

And these are issues around the relationship between judges and populist politicians.

So we talked a lot, and I hope people have had a chance to listen to them on leading with

Yovuel Noaharari about the incredible standoffs in Israel about the relationship

between the super-inquartment politicians.

Would you say the second part of that interview is out on Monday?

Second part of Monday.

And do listen to the second part actually, because it's fascinating, because he gets into much, much bigger global issues, including AI.

But there again, it's a classic demand from a particular type of populist voter that this is the rule of the people, and we will not be challenged by the judiciary, by other constitutional forces. We get to do what we want.

A similar case, which we talked about a great deal of detail, of course, is the way in which Jacob Rees-Mogg and others began to refer to the parliamentary committees that were meeting against Boris Johnson as kangaroo courts and attempts to subvert the democratic will of the people. And that then brings us to what's happening in other countries.

So Latin American countries, there have been many cases of politicians being ruled out of running by courts. In the Turkish election, the mayor of Istanbul, who had a pretty good chance of defeating Erdogan, was not allowed to run because the courts ruled against him.

And now in Pakistan, in Ranhan, and now finds himself facing three to five years in prison, thus disqualifying whatever one thinks of him. I mean, he's another populist, a classic populist, despite his reputation as being the sort of good-looking sort of gentlemanly cricketer.

I mean, he's been a really tough, hard-fighting, populist street politician.

A very good fast bowler, Roy. You'd agree with him. Very good fast bowler.

I know nothing about whether he's a fast bowler, a swing bowler, or a bat. What kind of cricketer was he? He was a very, very, very good fast bowler, and he was pretty nifty with the bat as well. Very good. And he was a good captain. Very good. So anyway, he was due to win the next election, would have been very, very difficult to prevent him winning the next election. And now he's been put in prison so that he can't run. Do you... Listen, we don't know. And this is one of the problems, of course. You know, Trump says the whole thing is a political conspiracy against him, Imran Khan says the whole thing is a political conspiracy against him.

Navalny in Russia, who a little bit like Khan would be... If Russia was a genuine democracy, Navalny would be running against Putin. He's just had 19 years added to his sentence.

Now, I think of the three, I would say that Navalny is probably the most obviously political sentence. I think Trump, to my mind, much less so. With Imran Khan, I think it's hard to work out.

The truth is, we've known this through the years, I can remember when Musharraf was president of Pakistan, you were always very, very conscious of the fact that you might have been talking to the leader of the country, but you were also basically talking to the military.

Imran Khan at one point had reasonably good relations with the military. They become very, very bad. The military's decided we're not having him. Now, that being said, did he sell all these gifts that were given? We talked before about the whole nonsense of gifts in international diplomacy. You know, Joss Spahn once gave Tony Blair a horse, where you can't use that to keep a horse in the flattened downing streets. What do you do with it? You apparently have these incredible watches from Mohammed bin Salman. So, we don't know. All we know is that he's been tried in court. But what's really interesting about this is the last time that the authorities took him to court, he was able to whip up public opinion sufficient for the thing to be called off. This time, he's tried the same tactic and the people have just not responded. So, he's now in some lowly, very unpleasant jail and the public are not coming

out in the streets. And of course, there's a huge history of this because, I mean, being a Pakistani politician is incredible high stakes thing. Many of them have been imprisoned on different types of charges. So, it's a long history of this and of course, assassinations and executions going back to, if you go back to the late 70s. I think the lesson in all these prosecutions is the importance of choosing a really big issue to go after the politician on. I think it was a mistake actually for the prosecutors to begin by going after Trump on the payments to Stormy Daniels and the classified documents because people don't really care fundamentally that he paid hush money to a woman and they don't care in the same way about classified documents, partly because

it's muddled by the fact that Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and others have had classified documents breaches. What does matter, of course, in the indictment about trying to completely subvert the US Constitution and steal an election is central to his whole life. The same, I think, is probably true with what happens with, for example, Aung San Suu Kyi, the Dorsu, the Nobel Peace Prize winning leader in Myanmar, who was prosecuted for possession of two walkie-talkies. So, the question I think with Imran Khan is, are people going to feel listened? He got gifts from his foreign visits and he sort of bought them from the state and then he sold them again as a profit. Is that something that people will feel is as fundamental as stealing an election or are they going to feel that these are the sort of things that many politicians do, but it just suits their opponents to throw them in jail for them?

I think you're muddling a few judgments there because I think what you're doing there is essentially sort of judging this as though this were, if you're like a British justice situation, if it is true that the system is being used simply to get him off the electoral battlefield, then it kind of doesn't matter. Now, I'm not saying that's right or wrong, but it's, in fact, it's wrong. And likewise, when you talk about people in America, they care more about this one than they do about Stormy Daniels and others, that leans into the idea that there's some sort of central justice master plan against Donald Trump, whereas, in fact, all you've got is a series of different cases going against him. The fundamental question for Imran Khan and Pakistan is, have the Pakistani authorities and in particular the military simply decided to use whatever power they have, whether that power be legitimate or not, to get Imran Khan into a court and then to get him into jail so as that he can't fight the election? Because it's another thing. In America, you could be a candidate in jail in Pakistan, you can't.

Yeah. Yeah. And that's the same true in Turkey. The final thing just made before as we go to the break is also a reminder of the Nicola Sturgeon story. I think one has to be very thoughtful about how one approaches politicians and Police Scotland has got to be pretty nervous at the moment, because if they cannot find good evidence that Nicola Sturgeon and her husband have actually committed criminal offenses, going after them in the way they did, taking them in for questioning, setting up tents in their backyard and digging almost as though they were trying to dig up bodies in the back garden is very, very explosive stuff and has a huge political impact on not just their personal lives, but on the future politics of Scotland. And so it's a reminder that in a more muted sense, even in Britain, these questions of how prosecutions, police, judges work with politicians, incredibly important. Well, especially if I may say, when every day I asked myself why we've never seen anything remotely like media coverage of police activity in relation to some of the corruption that seems to have happened during the COVID period. I'll just leave it at that. Shall we take a break? Let's take a break.

Welcome back to the Restless Politics with me, Alistair Campbell.

And me, Rory Stewart, and just a quick plug for Anthony Joshua. So tell us a little bit about Anthony Joshua, Alistair, and why you were keen to get him on leading.

Because he's a very, very well-known boxer. He's a big figure within the sport, but I also think he's kind of broadening out into something bigger than that. And it's interesting, the sort of reaction that we had, lots of people listening to it for sure. But for example, our favorite Never Misses in episode Prime Minister, Eddie Rahman Albania, sent me a message saying that was one of the best

yet. And Peter Kyle, who we both like, he said, just finished listening to the Anthony Joshua episode, definitely the best for me because it was so unexpectedly brilliant, wise way beyond his years. And my, that optimism would love a bit of what he has in our politics. So there you go.

I think Peter also made the point that he actually liked his directness in terms of saying, there's nothing wrong with making a lot of money, but it's what you do with it that counts.

And, you know, the point we talked about saying that, yes, I would find Russia, but I'd do it for these reasons. And so I thought he came over really, really well. And I, and apparently he is going to get a replacement fight. So I'm hearing. And what happened with that fight? So just, just because we were doing it in the lead up to a fight, right? And then suddenly the fight got called off, going to happen at the O2 arena. What happened there?

Dillion White, his opponent had an adverse drug test finding.

Oh, okay. So he wasn't able to fight.

So they're not fighting, but it looks like they're going to find somebody else to sort of just, you know, so that the people who pay their money to be there on the night can see a fight.

And we can reveal it's neither you nor I.

Well, we can't, we can reveal it's not you, Rory, because you're definitely not heavyweight.

I think I'm, I think I'm sort of, I'm not far off 15 stone, which is, I think that's just about, just about qualify.

I must say he does look in pretty good shape, honestly. I think you'd have to put a bit of training in.

I would, I would. The only time I got near to having a, a good fight was the weekend that COVID, the, I think it was the first lockdown. And the last thing I did before the first sort of, you know, when it all went a bit haywire was sport relief in Manchester.

And one of the big ticket events was meant to be a fight between me in the ring, between me and Piers Morgan. And I said yes. And I had Frank Warren.

I'd lined me up with some really good coaches, some trainers. And I was totally up for it.

And of course, when Piers was, you know, on television talking about it, he was totally up for it. But then he decided as the day got nearer, he said, decided it was not the right thing for two. I think he put it to flabby middle aged men. I said, speak for yourself.

Well, we've, we've, we've the, the big fight, of course, that everyone's very excited about the moment is the fight between Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, which is going to happen in Vegas.

But to my fury, they are not putting the proceeds of the fight into give directly the incredible charity, which gives money directly to the extreme poor instead of putting it into a veterans charity in the United States.

I don't even complain about that.

Well, it's, it's actually, it's a fascinating fight. So I think Elon Musk may have bitten off more than he can chew, because it seems as I hadn't realized, but Mark Zuckerberg is a sort of extreme kind of Iron Man athlete who keeps breaking amateur records. So I think it's, I think Musk may be, may be in trouble.

Who would you want to win that fight? I mean, it's like, you know, it's a hard one, isn't it? You'd like to see them both go down, wouldn't you really? But I think on balance, Musk to lose, I think.

Shall we talk about something more serious?

Yeah, let's do it. Okay. So really big issue. And we began talking about this because the loss of the labor's failure to win the Uxbridge by-election, which was Boris Johnson's old seat, and the fact that they lost it largely because of environmental policy, and the fact that a lot of voters in Uxbridge seem to be very reluctant to pay the extra money for their polluting vehicles that were required by the Ultra-low emission Zone, made us get more into the question of, is this a crisis for environmental policy worldwide? And there's been an article in *Unheard* saying, you know, is this the day that net zero died, pointing out that we seem to have a sort of critical mass of different things coming together. Some of them to do with costs of certain types of renewable energy. Some of it to do with simply the direction the world's going in, that the world's burning more oil in 102.5 million barrels a day, the largest amount it's ever burnt, being burnt this week, coal is reaching record levels. And the polling in the UK, which I think you've been looking at too, what's your sense of where the polling is on this stuff? Well, it's mixed, is the truth. There was a very good piece on the conversation by, I think they were from Lancaster University. It was a team of people who work in, they track public opinion on these issues. And it's sort of really strange kind of paradox going on. The good news, I think, coming from a sort of, let's try and save the planet perspective, is a far greater awareness that there has to be change. We have to change the way that our economies work. We have to do it pretty quickly. And the numbers on that are very, very, very high. The general understanding that the climate crisis is real and that we have to make change. Where it gets then quite shaky is when you then start putting forward specifics that require people to make changes. So for example, 68% of people support the general idea of charging frequent flyers, I guess you and I might be in that, more for every additional flight that you take. So you take your first flight, normal price, second flight a bit more, third flight a bit more, et cetera. But when you then have a system and you explain to people, so that would mean this and then this and then this, and you spell out the financial costs, support then falls to 32%. And the opposition rises from 16% to 33%. So that's a classic example of where something in theory is fine, in practice is not. And there was a very big, big survey done by the German governments. This wasn't the sort of polling organization, just doing it for their newspapers. And the German government did a very big survey recently. And it found that 91% believed that there has to be significant change. But then again, when you start to spell out some of what those changes are, the figures go down quite substantially. But what this Lancaster University study showed is that this is why we talked about this last week. Leadership is so important here. And I'm afraid to say that I think what Rishi Sunak has been doing recently is unbelievably irresponsible. And it's almost like willful, you know, the thing about I love the motorist, I'm basically sort of Jeremy Clarkson without the weight. And I'm going to go and pose in Maggie Thatcher's car and I'm going to fly up to Scotland. And it's interesting,

people, if you have a prime minister, and it's the same for celebrities, you know, celebrities like Bill Gates, Leonardo Caprio, people who put themselves at the forefront, but then get photographed getting off private jets, people think, well, it's just all talk and that I don't have to do anything. And once the leadership stops, people start to give themselves excuses for not making the changes that we all know we need to make. So what are the things I've been thinking about? We'll come back to that in one second. But I think it's a bigger issue around how the world comes together around joint things. So climate change is probably the most obvious and urgent legislation around AI. But also the fight against global poverty is something that I really feel some of the energy has gone out of that 80s and 90s, we were making poverty history doing live eight concerts that stopped. And one of the elements is I'm afraid that we've lost the ability to mobilize people in the same way. And part of that is the celebrities, celebrities are actually increasingly reluctant. Do you remember in the past, obviously, Bono, Bob Geldof were leading the poverty drive. Celebrities are increasingly reluctant to get involved in causes because they're accused very, very quickly of hypocrisy. They're accused of getting on private jets, they're accused of tax dodging. And that means that many, many leading celebrities now just don't want to be associated with political causes at all. So they think just get some in trouble. But that's why you need political leadership. Absolutely. But you do also need people to commit. I mean, I think you need the popular political leadership, but the less than I think of a lot of the progress that was made on everything from civil rights through to work on social justice and poverty. And is you also need civil society at the same time. And there's also been a dropping away of international solidarity. So something Jamie Drummond, who's a very, very interesting guy who led a loss of the one campaign stuff on poverty is pointed out that a loss of that stuff was driven by international churches working together, World Federation Churches. That's much less powerful those movements. They were in the 80s or 90s. Trade union movements are much less powerful than they were in the 70s. Those would have been natural drivers for international solidarity and cooperation and messaging on that. So I think that there's a dangerous sense in which we are becoming more isolationist, less connected internationally. And that doesn't help the sort of public bit of the drive on climate change. Yeah, I think, I mean, campaigning is a really interesting area to discuss in this. So for example, we've talked before about just stop oil, who are pretty radical in the approach that they take and they disrupt people's lives. And that's the purpose of the protest is to draw attention to the issues through a strategy of disruption. And that's got a very, very strong history down the years. But I wonder whether part of the political impulse that is driving Rishi Sunak down this very strange route that he's taking at the moment is as a reaction to that. I'm not sure if I agree with you about the celebrity thing, although I guess the person who popped into my head when you said that was Greta Thunberg, and of course, she's not a celebrity in the way that Leonardo DiCaprio is, she's become a global figure by being such a resolute committed campaigner. And I actually do think she's, she's moved the dial considerably. But I think the other thing, Rory, is that too many people now think that campaigning is about going on social media. So actually, it's easy to get petitions going, it's easy to get people angry about stuff, but actually to get people motivated to obey the first three letters in the word activism, which is ACT, do stuff, I think we're becoming much more complacent. There's an amazing book by Martin Guri called Revolt of the Public, and he's an XCI analyst, and he says that one of the problems with social media is it creates these very rapid

coalitions of dissent, but they're very unstable and very difficult to sustain and very difficult to translate, as you say, into your ACT. Should we just quick recap on where we are in the UK? So the UK has a net zero commitment. It's something I was quite proud because I was in the cabinet, Theresa May's cabinet, when we passed this into law. So in June 2019, we passed a law saying that the UK would go net zero by 2050. That means 100% reduction on the 1990 levels, but it means also by 2050, the UK will be emitting the same amount or less carbon than it's actually taking out of the atmosphere. So net zero means that the UK will be a net in terms of its own domestic production of carbon, producing less than it's removing. And for that reason, at the time, the UK, which has used that phrase that the Richard Johnson used the whole time, was seen as, quote, leading the world. And God, Lord, a credit for that. I just wonder, looking back, whether in part because Theresa May and the government you were part of were utterly consumed with the attempt to make sense of what was happening in the Brexit debate, whether the part of the motivation for that was a political one to signal that there's this real change on something important coming down the track, that perhaps the really hard work working out what that meant in practice was not necessarily done. Is that unfair?

Well, I think the Treasury put a lot of work into it. And the Treasury was absolutely opposed to this. I think you'll remember that Philip Hammond signaled that he wasn't comfortable at all with this commitment. The Treasury produced an estimate that this was going to cost the UK economy many, many trillions and that we shouldn't do it. But actually, I think it's a big steep demand, but the Committee on Climate Change has done a lot of work on this.

And they've been very critical of lay, haven't they?

Yeah, they've done a great piece. Again, people want to be a little bit geeky. It's not a hard read. It's a really easy read. Beautifully written series of reports in their sixth carbon budget, where they lay out what the UK would have to do to meet this and what the costs were. And I think it's surprisingly reassuring. I think one of the things that's driving the public anxiety and driving the politics of this and the opportunistic way in which politicians, including it seems at the moment Rishi Sunak being tempted to signal this stuff, is because the public is being given the impression that they will be asked to basically return to the Stone Age in order to achieve these targets. And what the Committee on Climate Change points out very carefully is that it's absolutely not the case that if you signal quite clearly the kind of transitions you want to make, the private sector would be able to fund a loss of those transitions over time. And you would end up in a situation where by 2030, 2050, the impact on UK GDP is going to be perhaps 1% of GDP cost, not the sort of boomstay scenario that people are talking about. Well, I've been in advance of us, we've got coming up on leading in a few weeks, Mustafa Seliman, big in the AI world, and I've been reading his book in advance of that. And of course, he makes the point that a lot of these things that come on, the cost of them goes down the more that they get used. We've seen that in all sorts of ways in the recent technological revolution. But if you look, for example, let's just take one thing, and I think I'm reading this from one of the reports that you were talking about. This is the organization that's headed by John Gummer, is that right? Correct, exactly. This is the official body that is essentially marking the government's homework. Correct. And as recently, I've seen John Gummer recently becoming more and more exasperated and sounding very, very angry at the direction of travel. But if you look at heat pumps, okay, for us to reach net zero, this is the UK, we have to reach a target of 1 million a year by 2030. That would mean a rise from 2021, two years ago,

which was just 54,000. So that's a very, very big stretch, it seems to me. And if the direction of travel, as signaled recently by Sunak with his, I love the car, have another 100 oil and gas licenses, you know, all these terrible kind of woke people trying to, you know, stop you burning coal and gas and all the rest of it, then I don't see how we reach that kind of thing, because if you don't have government leadership and explanation, the other thing the public complained about the whole time, they agree with the overall approach, but everything feels very last minute. And I don't think they think they're going back to the Stone Age. I think it's that they think that this is going to cost them a lot. And that the moment people feel they just can't afford the sort of changes they imagine are necessary.

Yeah. So I think there are two ways from this. I mean, I think the changes are dramatic, but they are doable. And that's the difficult bit of communication. So you're quite right. There's got to be a huge expansion in heat pumps. The Committee on Climate Change's budget to make

2050 also involves an overall reduction from today and the number of miles traveled by cars of any sort, and would also involve a reduction in meat consumption and high carbon dairy consumption. So those are big things. But I mean, to take it even further, to get there, by early 2030, all cars, vans and boilers need to be low carbon, basically means electric, early 2030. So that's within sort of seven, eight years. That's a big change. By 2040, all trucks and by 2040, all electricity needs to be done by renewable, hydrogen or carbon capture. So that's within sort of 15 years. Well, if you think of the kind of national political spasm that the country seems to have gone into on the back of a few hundred people in Uxbridge, telling a few pollsters and TV reporters that they don't like the Zula's extension, I don't see how we get to that with the political climate as it is. I was very glad to see that we both criticized Kirsten for the reaction to the Uxbridge defeat. But I was glad to see he had an article, I think it was in the Times yesterday, really taking Sunak on over this sort of apparent gear change in the government's approach. Because if political leaders don't take this on, I don't honestly see how we get anywhere near meeting these targets. Yeah, partly because the achievements, I mean, the UK has made a lot of progress since 1990. Absolutely. But that was largely done on removing coal from our systems and

moving to gas, which you said lesson and doing quite a lot of investment in renewables. But the next stage is going to be much, much tougher. Currently, we do about 14, 13.9 gigawatts of offshore

wind. We're going to have to get up to 40 gigawatts by 2030 and 100 gigawatts by 2050. So that's a huge expansion in this stuff. But the good news is that, as you've just pointed out with Mustafa Cinnamon's book, and I'm looking forward to very much that interview, is that the cost of these technologies is getting lower. And so the Committee on Climate Change is pointing out that it's going

to be cheaper to achieve the targets than people projected back in 2019 when we did that vote. The Treasury estimate now will be more reasonable. The key thing, though, is that you need to get on

with it now and the public needs to be confident of the direction of travel. That's where your political leadership is absolutely right. So take one example, retrofitting a house, getting the moving to an electric boiler, putting the insulation in, probably cost a household 10,000 pounds over the 30-year period that you need to do it over. And you can get that money back on the

savings on your fuel costs. So if you get the predictability right, the proper financing packages, people know what the progress is, it's not going to cost people money, and it can be done. But you need to start doing it now, and people need to believe that the government's going to hold to these commitments. So let's take another obvious example. If everybody believes that by early 2030,

all cars, vans, and boilers have to be low-carbon, stroke electric. People buying cars in the next two, three years are going to buy electric vehicles, right? They're not going to buy diesel and petrol because they have to get rid of them. But if there is the slightest hint from either political party that these timelines are movable, then we're going to miss these targets by a country mile. Yeah. Well, Rory, you've been quite flattering about Rushi Sunak in recent weeks and months. I mean, what have you made of his recent postures? I sent you an absolutely scoriating piece that Giles Corrin wrote in The Times, and I also listened to our friends at the New European, their podcast, the two mats, Matthew Dancona, who I really like as a commentator.

Wait, hold on a second. You're promoting a rightful podcast?

No, but I think what I thought was interesting about what they said was that they just think the two mats are essentially saying that he's becoming a bit of a joke figure.

I mean, pulling a pint and talking about his love for the Great British Boozer, when we know that he's a T-totaler and probably doesn't really like going in pubs, driving Maggie's car. Is it a bit like me talking about my great love of football?

Yeah, it's similar. Or him saying, but at least what you do, we know it's a joke. He's being serious. You know, he did that thing about he can't wait to go to Disneyland. I mean, really?

Can he not really wait to go to Disneyland? I think that seems very inauthentic. And remember, William Hague famously got in trouble for claiming to be a great boozer. I mean, I think basically people can sense with Rishi Sunak, as I guess they sense with William Hague and probably with me, that we're slightly geeky figures who are not particularly beer drinking, sport loving, petrol loving people. So remaining authentic is completely central.

Well, I think one thing we should probably put in the show show notes, even though I don't like anything that encourages the booze culture in Britain. But my Rory, my son, was showing with his clip yesterday of somebody posted after Sunak was doing his My Love for the British Boozer and Pulling Pints at some beer festival. It's a clip of John Prescott back in the 1990s, doubting a pint of beer. I promise it's about one and a half seconds. I mean, it really, he really does look like he knows how to drink a pint of beer. And as you say, that is authentic. That is true, along with his, along with his left jab.

The exactly. Well, we all know that you're an absolute boxing fan to the death now, Rory.

We know that. Well, I think you noticed I didn't say right hook there. I said left jab. I got it right with John Prescott. By the way, just on the authenticity of this, this is the point.

When we interviewed Anthony Joshua, or when you and I talk about football, the point is you don't pretend. So when you were talking about Anthony Joshua, you prefaced virtually every question with, I'm not an expert. I don't know about this.

And I think people respect that much more than people who come along. And like David Cameron, for example, forgetting which football team he allegedly supported.

So I think we're coming to the end, but just, just to wrap up, I mean, the reason, of course, that politicians like Rishi Sunak attempted to do this is they're desperate to try to win elections.

And this is going to be repeated in many countries other than Britain. And when you get down into

that polling, you discover that although 70% of this is a YouGov poll, a strongly in favor of meeting the 2050 commitments, only 42% support ban on new petrol and diesel. And 55% of people say

they only support the transition if there are no costs for ordinary people. And if you break it down into Tory voters, the numbers are even more worrying. So only 25% of Tory voters support the ban on new petrol and diesel in the 2030s, whereas 58% of Labour voters do. So it's going to take real courage and leadership from Rishi Sunak not to feel that he's found a sort of chink of opportunity electorally around this issue, put the bigger issue forward. And I think, you don't want to be too defeatist, but I'd also say he's not very likely to win the next election anyway. So he might as well be as honorable as he could. I mean, remember, when Theresa May brought

in that legislation in June 2019, Theresa May, I and others didn't exactly feel that we had a great future in politics. And actually, that was a great moment for doing quite brave things. It was also the moment where David Gork and I were able to bring through a white paper on trying to get rid of short sentences and prisons. The thing that really worries me, if you think about, I said this last week, and I'm going to keep saying it, if you think about the people who led the campaign on Brexit, when deep down, I think quite a lot of them knew that this was ultimately not going to do as the good that they claimed at the time. And those same people now are the ones leading the campaign against net zero. That really, really worries me, because what it says to me is that they think they've found the new Brexit. We found the big wedge issue, and this is how we're going to really get the culture wars going, is by saying the elite want to do all these things we need to do to save the planet, but they're doing it your expense, so just ignore them. I think that's really dangerous. I think it is very dangerous. And I think it's very dangerous, not just for Britain, because in the end, Britain is a pretty small part of global emissions. It's the way in which this plays into things like US politics. And in fact, even in Canadian politics, whether this issue is very, very live with voters in Alberta.

Breaking news, Rory. While we've been talking, I was right that they were going to find a new opponent, and I was right that he was from Finland. It's good to have contacts. His name is Robert Helanias. Is he a guy that you had heard of? I mean, be honest, in the Palace of Truth?

Yes, I'd heard of him. I wouldn't be able to tell you what his fighting record is. I wouldn't be able to tell you whether he's any good or not. But I was aware of his existence, yes. But listen, he's not Dillian White and he's not the anti-wilder. But at least he'll give people something to go and see on Saturday night after they've listened to Anthony Joshua on leading. Very good. Thank you very much.