

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 177. Question Time: A new centrist party, mafia politics in New Jersey, and was Jesus a socialist?

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And me, Alistair Campbell.

And Alistair, I want to start you off with, because you often talk about Sweden, Nicholas Lemon. Please, can you discuss the situation in Sweden right now, the military is being deployed to help the police with a stark increase in gang violence?

It's incredible, isn't it? We think of Sweden as a really stable and attractive country where everything kind of works. And that image probably will survive this, but it's very, very difficult. I mean, the Prime Minister, Ulf Christensen, he did a TV address to the nation where he said that no country in Europe has ever seen anything like this. And the situation is they've had 11 gangland murders in the month of September. They've already had a record number of shootings. They've got small bomb attacks going on. And so he's basically said they've had a crisis meeting with all the police chiefs and the military. And they're saying they may need to bring in the military for this.

It's pretty terrifying, isn't it? Because, I mean, this was something that Slavoj Zizik, who we were talking to as an interview for Leading, which will come out in a few weeks time. But he was saying that when he was in Sweden as a young man, he remembers that famously you never locked your door in any of these towns because it was so peaceful. And he very much says that this is being read certainly in Sweden. And he reads it as part of the struggle with immigration, that many of these gangs are Albanian gangs, the Syrian Turkish gangs. There are some African gangs. And it's experienced, obviously, by the right wing in Sweden as being about immigration policy. And that's going to really fuel populism in Sweden and elsewhere. And of course, the other side of this is it's not about immigration at all. But I think that's really important for the framing of this, to understand that's the way certainly that a certain voter in Sweden and a lot of the right wing press in Sweden is going to play this, is that this is about too much immigration. Well, the Prime Minister said this has been about sort of naivety and carelessness in the handling of immigration. But just on the the Albanians, I know always get roped into this, but the specific these 11 murders, these 11 killings in September appear to be linked to a particular gang situation. It's two gangs that used to be one called the Foxtrot gang. And one is led by a Swedish Turkish dual national who is now lives in Turkey. And the other is led by his former right hand man. And it's a huge struggle over access to drugs and weapons. So far this year, there've been 261 shootings, 36 deaths, 73 injuries related to this. As of mid September, 124 explosions. And the highest ever was 2019, which was just 133. So we're talking about a pretty serious level of violence. And of course, Christus and the Prime Minister, he's a fairly right wing leader, whose coalition is propped up by the Sweden Democrats that we've talked about before who are hard right. So they've come in on a message to sort immigration. And this is becoming the biggest issue that they're facing. This lady that you're talking about, the man called Rauer Majid, known as the Kurdish Fox. But as you say, he's been in Sweden since he was a month old, his parents are Iraqi Kurds, he was born in Iran, fleeing from the Iran-Iraq war in the 80s. But it's become a huge international issue because you say he's returned to Turkey and the Swedish government's been threatening the

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Turkish government with sanctions unless he's returned and all this kind of stuff.

Now, another pretty grim political situation you want to talk about,

this is corruption in America. Bobby Cifaretto, have you been keeping up the story of the Democrat Bob Menendez in New Jersey? My relative there was telling me about the gold bars and hundreds of thousands of dollars found at his home. Some stitched into the lining of his jacket. Is this a case of life imitating art just up the road from Tony Soprano's newer ganglands? So what do you know about this? This is the subject. I'm totally fascinated by it. And sadly, it is the story about corruption in the Democratic Party, not the Republican Party. New Jersey is a big Democratic sort of bastion. The two senators there are this man Bob Menendez and actually Cory Booker, who's this rather wonderful African-American senator. Anybody who'd like to learn more about

the politics in New Jersey, there is a just mesmerizing documentary called Street Fight, which is about Cory Booker's run to be mayor of New York against another figure from the African-American Democratic community called Sharp James. And boy, do you see American corruption

and intimidation. It's like you're looking the 1920s. I mean, Sharp James manages to go in and send in the health inspectors into every restaurant that dares to show a Cory Booker poster in his window. It's only a fight within the Democratic Party because no Republican can win this town to have it sent down. He mobilizes the police. And then, you know, I then got into this stuff and thought, can it really be true that American politics is that corrupt? And I started talking to American friends, they just sort of take it for granted. They don't sort of think it's weird or funny. So Bob Menendez was basically indicted. This is the other senator from New Jersey, was first indicted in 2015 for this stuff. And now, as you say, he's house full of gold bars, cash sewn into everything. It's extraordinary. What's going to happen to him? Nothing. Well, he was the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It's not a small thing, right? It's a very, very senior, senior US senator. I mean, this is a scale of stuff that we never see in Britain. I find it mesmerizing. And I try to teach it at Yale. And Americans can't quite understand why I'm so interested in it. They sort of take it for granted that senior senators are just sort of magnificently corrupt. But they can't all be corrupt. There must be some non-corrupt American politicians. No, no, I don't think Cory Booker's corrupt. I don't think Barack Obama was corrupt. I don't think John Kerry or Al Gore were. But there is a really corrupt, horrible former street politics famous. You know, Chicago used to be famous for this, Boston was famous for this. Rhode Island, there was an amazing guy called Buddy Cianci in Rhode Island who, get this, was not just imprisoned for corruption, but when he was released, ran again and managed to get reelected having come out from these corruption charges. And he used to, again, he was the Democrat. His mom, who was an old Italian lady, would sit there at a table and anyone coming in would just pile cash on the table. And he let educational property, which was owned by the Rhode Island government, to his friend, who I'm going to get his name wrong, but had an amazing Italian mafia name who ran a car workshop for stolen cars to be refitted inside this thing. So it is in answer to Bobby Sifrato's question. It is Tony Soprano's New York Ganglans. It is. And some of these investigations, particularly some of the ones in the 70s and 80s before the FBI were stopped from doing these full investigations because they were accused of leading senators on, I mean, exposed incredible things. I mean,

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they sent in fake shakes who got senators from Florida to agree, basically, one of the senators from Florida said to an FBI agent something like, you don't need to bribe me. I'm as crooked as they come. Oh, my Lord. Well, listen, talking of corrupt people who come back, Matthew, Slovakia election, can you please talk about the result in the Slovakia election? And we talked about this a couple of weeks ago. This is this guy, yet another populace, Robert Fiskel, F-I-C-O, but I think you pronounce it visco. And I was rather encouraged on Saturday night because the exit polls looked like he was going to lose. But it turns out, no, the exit polls were wrong. He's come out on top and he's waiting to be called by the president to try to form a government.

You know, this is another guy, proputen, not a supporter of the Ukrainians and a member of NATO. This is the first NATO member that now, I think we can say, is broadly sympathetic to deputed. And that's the problem. Sort of models himself on Trump as being prime minister before, but got sort of, you know, got ousted because of corruption. And here he is back.

No, it's very, very worrying. And there's also been some very worrying recent data on opinions amongst the French police and security services who seem to be very, very right-wing and, of course,

have a reputation for kind of violence and brutality, which is going to tie into a possible marine-the-pen run against Macron. I mean, I do think we're going to have to keep coming back to this. There was a moment with Biden's victory in the midterms and the Teal independence in Australia and the Slovenian victory. Shultz. Shultz and Macron against the pen where we all felt maybe this populist tide was receding. But it doesn't feel really like that now, does it?

No. And this is a guy, Fisco, who's sort of, you know, he's echoed the whole thing about Ukrainians. Ukraine has been run by a bunch of Nazis, ethnic Russians in the East need protection, mildly overlooking the fact that Zelensky is Jewish and lost relatives in the Holocaust.

And the other thing that they, you know, like a lot of these far-right populists, LGBTQ stuff, absolutely, you know, no interest and so forth. So it's one to watch. It's a very, very small country, but it's a member of the European Union. So definitely one to keep our eyes on. Well, okay, now here's another, before we get on to other questions, here's a kind of serious one from Roger Wade, who's quite a successful British businessman. He says, people are increasingly frustrated with the populist politics of both the conservatives and labor. There's a need for a political party that prioritizes the country over the party. Is the importance of issues like Brexit and rejoining the single market more pivotal in elections and supporting the labor or the conservative party? If so, is the establishment for a new centrist party to counter the prevailing political establishment necessary? If it's not necessary, what are the underlying reasons? And if it is, would both you and Anastasia consider joining such a party? So there we are. So Roger Wade clearly feels passionately that Brexit was a mistake, that we should be rejoining the single market and wants a centrist party to do it. So before we get on to whether you'd ever join that party, do you think he's right? And would it have legs? I think he's right to feel incredibly frustrated at the stance of both the main parties and the Liberal Democrats on Brexit.

I share that frustration. I don't think that laborer is populist in their approach to politics as the conservatives. I think they're a long way apart on that. But I do really wish that they would at least call out the damage that Brexit is being done, because as you keep saying in relation to your assessment of politics being broken, unless you are honest about the scale of the problem,

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it's very, very, very hard to fix it. My worries about a new centrist party is that, you know, we talked about this on the main podcast about people left the Labour Party for the STP. I want the Labour Party to be the main centrist party and I think it can be. And my worry is that if you set up a third party, a new centrist party now, that all you do is split the progressive vote and that plays into the hands of the conservatives. And I know that's not a great argument, but that's the argument that makes me worry about it. I thought about it a lot during Corbyn's leadership, but ultimately, when that new party started with Chakramana and Chris Leslie and Luke Chianneburger and all those guys, I in the end, I thought, no, I can't support it because what it's going to do is help the Tories.

Abigail Newman. I'm a 13-year-old who's an elected member of the Youth Parliament for Nottingham Show. And in November, so congratulations, Abigail, obviously, November, I'll be going to the Youth Parliament annual sitting in the House of Commons. So this is rather a nice thing that happens in November, which the Youth Parliament actually meets in the House of Commons. I think it was introduced by Speaker Birka, I think. Someone correct if I'm wrong.

Theresa May is a great friend.

I think Theresa May is correct to complain about John Birka. It's pretty shocking, actually.

My God, does she complain?

I must say, I mean, to be serious for a moment, the actual reports into his bullying are sort of mind-numbing.

Her complaint was much more about his handling of Brexit. Anyway, let's get back to the children.

Okay, now, to Alistair, what suggestions did you give Tony Blair when he stood at the dispatch box so she's leading a debate? And to Rory, how did you overcome your nerves the first time you spoke in the House of Commons? Over to you. What suggestions did Tony Blair when he stood at the dispatch box?

Just on the subject, by the way, of young people and politics, I was in Leeds yesterday at a conference of headteachers. And I met a woman called Hannah who works for the Council in Leeds. And she was telling me about this thing called Leeds Children's Mayor. If you Google Leeds Children's Mayor, it's absolutely fantastic. So, kids in Leeds elect their own children's mayor. And I was reading some of the manifestos on the train home. And honestly, if I were the parties, there's bloody good ideas in there. So, you know, Tony Blair is a very, very good speaker, but he did get very, very nervous. He wore the same shoes, every single time he asked questions that he ever did. He traveled everywhere when we were traveling the world with a red ribbon in his pocket. It was given to him by Len McCluskey at a funeral.

And that's like a sort of lucky rabbit foot.

It's just a kind of, it's a way of dealing with nerves. I mean, I have loads of things like that for speaking. I don't get nervous, but sometimes I do get nervous. And when I do, I have this thing that I'm doing now where I rub my forefinger and my thumbs together. And it just sort of calms me down. I have another thing where I always, always, always, always tie my shoelaces, right shoe first, then the left shoe before I go to do a speech. I mean, it's just, these are crazy things, but they just calm you down there. I guess the answer is you find those things that help you to calm down. Yeah, here's a couple of things I did. I mean, one of them is I speak with, generally without a written speech. So, I'm usually speaking without notes. And I would arrange the points of my speech around the wooden molding that you'll see,

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Abigail, when you stand at that dispatch box across from you, you'll see some wooden molding. And it's sort of little wooden boxes. And I'd put one point in each box. And as I spoke, I'd move my eye from one box to another to follow the different stages of my argument to make sure I'd, I've made it through all of them. Yeah, had you written down the points that you would do? I've written down the points in the library before I came in, and I'd memorize them. And then some I'd have to have in my pocket and I'd look at them. And then I'd sort of attach them mentally to these boxes so I could stand up and make sure I hit all the points I wanted. One of the things I've got to be very careful of though, which always threw me off balance is the speaker will suddenly spontaneously change the amount of time you've been allocated. So, you start with unlimited

time. I don't know whether this will happen in your debate. And I'd prepare a big speech on Syria or Afghanistan. I'd been to Libya just after Gaddafi fell. I knew quite a lot about Syria. So, I'd had a lot to say, or Afghanistan, which I've been working on for about 10 years. And then, just as you're hoping to stand up, you're bobbing up and down, hoping to be chosen. And suddenly, it will say, speech is limited to eight minutes. So, you think, oh no, I've got to reduce my speech to eight minutes. Then it'll say six minutes. And then it'll finally say, you know, speech is limited to four minutes. So, by the time I get to my feet, I'm having to condense 10 years of stuff in Afghanistan

into four minutes. So, having a speech that's flexible enough to compress and above all the mistake I always made, which is don't try to say all the things that you were going to say in your eight minutes speech in four minutes. The other thing, Abigail, if you're at the front bench, and this is something it took us a while to work out, and I don't know whether the youth parliament, I'm sure it doesn't get as noisy and as rude as the comms when they're debating really sort of intense stuff or when it's Prime Minister's questions. But if it gets very, very noisy, then just understand that you will be heard through that microphone. I think you can be confident that even if the noise is there, if you're at the front bench, just lean into the microphone, and they will hear you. And in terms of anybody watching outside, that's more important than all the noise. And you look sort of serious and sensible and grown up because you're talking to the microphone, while all these kind of yahoo's are just, you know, belly shouting.

If they're really yahooping, you can just simply stop speaking. And if that doesn't work, just sit down. And the speaker will bring them to order and you can get up again.

All right, great. More questions to come. Let's have a quick break.

Very good.

Okay, from Gerald or Gerard, I don't know whether he's Austrian or British, what do you think of UEFA allowing Russian youth teams back into competitions? Is that a slippery slope to the senior team coming in from the cold? What do you think about that, eh? Well, I don't think a lot of it to be quite frank. And I do think it's a bit of a slippery slope. I know quite a lot of people in football and there's a big debate that, well, there's, there has been a very big debate going inside UEFA about whether this should have been done. So just to explain to people, the under 17 Russian team is coming back into UEFA competition. Now FIFA, as I understand it, is still holding out. Now FIFA is normally the bad guy in football. And you're not talking, you know, they, they, they, when they announced it, they talked about letting children back. They made it sound like this is a real nice thing,

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letting children, we're talking about under 17s. And when you talk about under 17s at that level, you're talking about elite athletes, basically. Right. So I do think it is a bit of a slippery slope. And I think it's a mistake. And also UEFA didn't really cover themselves in glory with the handling of the Luis Rubiales guy, the Spanish kisser. Because he was a big figure within UEFA. And you've got the sense that UEFA didn't really want to see him pushed out in the way that he has been. Dan Han, will the cancellation of HS2 alienate voters? So I've been looking a little bit at HS2. It is the most interesting story. I mean, you've pointed out, Alastair, before that it's something that was under consideration when you went, when was HS2 first raised with you? Was it 2009 that it first sort of was kicked into life? Gordon Brown signed off on it and initially said 20 billion in 2009. But were they talking about it? Do you remember them talking about it 10 years earlier? I don't know how long before, but certainly been around, you know, and of course, when Andrew Adonis was Transport Secretary, he was absolute devotee of high-speed railway. Let's say it's 2009, Gordon Brown, 20 billion.

That's certainly when the go-ahead was given. So initially scheduled to open in 2026, right, which was obviously 17 years after that, then being delayed to between 2029 and 2033.

I'll be dead. And the Birmingham and Old Oak Commons stuff, the Houston stuff, talk about it being delayed until at least the 2040s. So, I mean, that's, you know, nearly 30 years. That's quite, quite a long time. And the costs went from 20 billion under Gordon Brown to 32.7 billion under Justin Greening. Then by 2015, up to 52 billion, where the government was claiming benefits of 100 billion, by February 2020 had hit 106 billion. So it was going to exceed the benefits that the government had been claiming back in 2015. One of the things that I thought about with it is it was an interesting example of partly, you know, turnover, which we complain about in ministers, but also an inability to manage the costs in a really rigorous way.

One of the reasons the costs went up is in order to get it through, because the train line ran through beautiful areas, the Chilterns and Cotswolds where wrecked landscapes for no benefit, the people living there, because the train didn't stop in those areas.

And a lot of those were safe, Tory seats. They spent more and more money on trying to dig tunnels and do new changes to accommodate those constituencies. They should have said, I think, listen, this only makes sense if we can build it for whatever Gordon Brown saw 20 billion pounds.

So either we do it or we don't do it. But it's complete nonsense to make so many concessions in every single direction that the cost ends up being more than what the initial anticipated benefits were. There must be. I mean, look, if you go back to 2009, if anyone had said, by the way, this HS2 thing, it's only going to go from Birmingham to Old Oak Common, nobody would have built it. No. And actually, there's quite a good review that I've been reading, which was written in 2020, which we can share, which basically says HS2 only works if the full scheme is built. Yeah. There's sums of money involved. You talked earlier about people taking corruption for granted in America. You can't have these sums of money without the thing being delivered. So where the hell is all the money gone? Where is it going? Who has benefited from this? Which are the companies that have not done the job that they were supposed to do for the price they were supposed to do for? There's got to be some sort of public inquiry into this. One of the questions around it, maybe this is my prejudice because I was a Cumberland MP, but I've always felt a priority was to sort out the Leeds Manchester line.

Of course it is.

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Not to sort out this line from London.

Have you ever tried to get to a Burnley game, Rory?

No.

We're not going to talk about how Burnley are doing at the moment. We'll try to try to keep, we don't want to talk about it on the spot. But no, I mean, one of the problems at the moment is that even if you were very, very clear-minded about it, there have been 9 billion pounds of existing costs at least. People say you don't want to fall into the sunk cost fallacy, the money's gone, the money's gone, still make the decision on whether it's the right thing to do. But my goodness, it's hard to say goodbye to 9 billion, even if you could claw back 2 or 3 billion by reselling some of the land that you bought.

And also, I mean, I walked past the, when you walked down past Houston at the moment, you see all these signs all over the place about HS2, we're going places, HS2 connecting the country.

I mean, the whole thing is just an, I think it's a kind of national embarrassment this now, really is. Now, Rory, you've got to do, I'm sorry about this, but thanks to Olly Hughes, you've got to do an impression of Pretty Patel. And we talk about Rory's talent for impressions. I've been reading the audiobook of Politics on the Edge. One of the surprising highlights is the effort Rory puts into narrating various characters, such as Truss, Johnson, Gove, my favorite says Olly is Pretty Patel. So come on.

And no, my accents are so terrible. I mean, one of the things that very kindly people have been buying my book, but the consistent comment made by everybody is just how rubbish my accents are. Can I just give you a little glimpse of just some of the insults that I'm currently getting on my accents. Go on. I insist on hearing. I mean, we can't upset Olly Hughes. He wants to hear your Pretty Patel. And he says it's excellent. No, it's not excellent. So Russell Gowers, I thought your accents were part of your attempt to obfuscate the identities of some characters by giving them Norwegian accents. Pat Tessionington, it does take a while to get used to your attempts at accents, which are hilariously bad. Oh dear. So is Olly trying to get you to sound bad? Is that the plan? I got the audiobook. Well worth it for your talented accents and impressions.

Yeah. No, it's unbelievably difficult. Go on. Do one. Just do one. Well, I think you have to ask her to be honest. That's about as good as I can be. No, the one that you've got to do the IG, they're not pronouncing the G's. And Siddy Khan doesn't pronounce his G's either. And Beth Rigby, the lovely Beth Rigby on Sky News, she doesn't pronounce her G's. It's an estuary thing, isn't it? I thought it was half-fair, six-half. So to be honest, we've got to roll the pitch.

And the tones are very odd. The emphasis is often very odd. And then there's these sort of strange pauses and then words run together. It's mesmerizing. I mean, she was my boss for a year. I was very

lucky with my bosses. I had Liz Truss, Pretty Battalion, Boris Johnson, and people wonder why I left government. Did you ever dance with her? I never danced with her. No. Did she ever look you in the eyes and say, you're just too good to be true? Go on, give us a bit of that, because that's what they dance to, right? Pretty Patel at the conference with Nigel Frosch. You're gone then. Try to sing it for us in a Pretty Patel accent, then. You're just too good to be true. Can't take my eyes off of you. Very good. You're just like heaven to touch. I want to hold you so much, Nigel. How's that? Well, beautiful. That was very brave of you. Thank you. I think I should have got you

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to do the accents. Okay. Do you think Nick Hardaker, do you think Labour or Tory will open up Narcotics

Reform as part of their 2024 manifesto? There we are. Where are you on Narcotics Reform?

Oh, I'm up for it. I'm up for it.

Done. What would you do? I don't know how far I'd go, but I think the... I was very... I've said before, I was hugely impressed by Yoann Harry's book on the drugs trade. And I just think we've got to face up to the fact that the so-called war on drugs has not been won. Interesting last week in Glasgow, did you see these treatment centres where people who are drug addicts go and take drugs under supervision as people try and sort of wean them off of them? It's weird there, because I was up in Glasgow spending some time with drugs charities. And it's very interesting, because the charities or the people that I met in them were very much insisting that heroin in and of itself is not damaging and that it's to do with other lifestyle choices that people make around heroin. I then went out and spent a bit of time out in the streets talking to addicts and it's pretty terrifying how people look. And it's difficult for me quite to believe it's as simple as saying the heroin isn't damaging them, it's just the other lifestyle choices they're making around it. No, there's no doubt that it's a very, very damaging drug. The point is whether...

I mean, if you think about the whole kind of stuff they'd gone about, stop the boats, they're about breaking the business model. Well, I wonder what they were doing to think about breaking the business model of drug dealers. You know, you do look at the Portugal experiment and it hasn't had the catastrophic consequences that people feared that it might. Portugal basically liberalised everything, not just cannabis, they've gone on heroin.

Yeah, pretty much. And they haven't had the disaster that people... I among them, by the way, I remember when they first announced they were doing it, I thought, that is insane.

So I think the sort of, you know, the de-glamourising, the breaking of the model, the taking it away from organised crime, I don't know, it's a tricky one, but all I know is what we're doing is not working. Yeah, okay. Toby Embling, I was listening to your conversation on leading the Theresa May and was struck by Alistair's comment with regard to Jesus being a socialist. I study ancient history at university and early Christianity has always intrigued me as where it starts. And the message taught seemed to be at odds, he clearly agrees with me that Jesus was basically a socialist, seemed to be at odds with a lot of our modern conceptions of religion, considering that modern Christians tend to form more on the hard right side of the political spectrum. Do you feel the message has been twisted and corrupted like so many things by men who wish to take power?

Did you see Donald Trump, by the way, yesterday posted an image of himself in court and he was sitting alongside Jesus? It's unbelievable. I mean, Trump, who is the most sort of scandalously irreligious, just person imaginable, managing to mobilise the American Christian right. How has that happened? I mean, obviously Theresa May didn't agree with me

at all when I said, but do you think that the kind of basic philosophy of Jesus is more socialist than it is conservative? Surely it is. I think it's a big deeper problem, goes beyond socialism conservatism. I mean, his message really in many ways is far more radical than anyone can possibly digest. I mean, it's not just it's harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's also that young man who comes and says, you know, what should I do? And he says, well, you know, follow the 10

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commandments

and the guy says, well, I've done that all my life. And then he says, well, then go home, sell all that you have and come and follow me. And the young man goes away feeling sad. And Jesus says what he says repeatedly, you know, unless people are prepared to miss their father's funeral, leave their wives and families, give up everything they have and follow me, it's not going to work. I mean, his message is so far beyond any kind of political party we've got operating at the moment. Well, here's one. Maybe this is my last question. Ask one question to any person from history. This is from James Breimer. You can ask any question to any person living or dead. Who is that person? What is that question? So my person is Jesus Christ. Jesus, are you a socialist? I want to know what he says. I don't care what you or Teresa may say, I want to know what Jesus says. Okay, very good. Okay. Question I got to ask.

Well, who would you ask? Really good. I want to know, I guess, what one of my sort of political heroes, someone like Gladstone would make of the current age or Tacitus. I'm really, really excited by Tacitus at the moment. There's a lovely line from Tacitus that maybe we can end on. After the Battle of Actium, right, that was the moment at which basically Augustus, the Roman emperor, takes over and crushes the Roman Senate and democracy. After the Battle of Actium, truth suffered in a variety of ways. Firstly, thanks to a growing ignorance of politics, which now lay outside public control, soon people developed either a passion for flattery or else a hatred of all authority. And among these two extremes, subservient or hostile, neither cared about posterity. I got a credit this, this is the guy called Gareth Haney, who's been tweeting out now about the Roman Empire.

Well, that was, did you see that thing recently about, you know, men think about the Roman Empire several times a day? I must admit, I'm not sure that I do, but you clearly do.

I am afraid I'm one of those people. And for others like me, I would like to recommend our sister podcast, The Rest is History, because certainly my friend Tom Holland thinks about the Roman Empire many, many times a day. So shout out to Jolien Drew, who asked us, how often do you think about the Roman Empire to conclude?

Thank you. All the best.

Bye-bye.