

[Transcript] The News Agents / How could an innocent man spend 17 years in prison?

This is a Global Player Original Podcast.

I came to the police station in 2003 and told the officers I was innocent.

They didn't believe me.

I came to the Crown Court in Manchester in 2004 and told the jury I was innocent.

They didn't believe me.

I came to this appeal court in 2006 and told them I was innocent.

They didn't believe me.

I applied to the Criminal Cases Review Commission which is supposed to investigate miscarriages of justice and told them I was innocent.

They didn't investigate and they didn't believe me.

Today we told this court I was innocent and finally they listened.

But I have been innocent all along.

This is as close as we're ever going to get to a real-life Shawshank Redemption plotline because this is the story of an innocent man who spent 17 years in jail for a rape he did not commit.

He had the chance to lessen his sentence with a guilty plea.

He says that would have been unthinkable and despite his repeated insistence of his innocence or actually because of it, his seven-year sentence was lengthened by another decade.

Today we'll ask how the police got this so wrong, how the system allowed it to happen and what should happen now to help him.

Welcome to The Newsagents.

It's Emily in Newsagents HQ and a little bit later I'll be talking to Lewis and we'll be discussing Giorgio Maloney, the Italian Prime Minister's meeting with Joe Biden and just what a sort of strange relationship that is actually turning out to be.

But we start with the story of Andrew Markinson who is a 57-year-old man who spent 17 years of his life in jail convicted of attacking a young woman, a young mother in July of 2003 and he has become one of the longest-serving victims of miscarriage of justice in Britain because he was jailed with a minimum term of seven years.

But because he carried on pleading his innocence and would not in the parole board situation admit to his guilt because he wasn't guilty, his jail term was lengthened and lengthened up to another decade.

In total he served 17 years and today he is finally a free man.

His conviction has been quashed and he has been unflinching in his condemnation of the police, it was the Greater Manchester Police, who he says unlawfully concealed and destroyed evidence.

He believes that if they had not destroyed the evidence that would have proved his innocence, he would have been a free man as early as 2004.

He's a fundamental hard-won truth and this is, well, it was an institutional lie, a set-up.

But you could have got out if you just said, yeah, okay, I did it.

Yes.

I mean, you could have got out many, many years ago, couldn't you?

Yes, but it's kind of a hollow choice.

It was even more horrific than spending more time.

The idea of lying, I knew I'd been set up, the very idea of sitting there and pretending

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I've done something as horrific as that, I couldn't even contemplate it.

That is an awful, awful indictment of a system and we're going to be asking the former Director of Public Prosecutions, Ken MacDonald, about that in just a second, but to give you some sense of what happened, we're going to speak to Emily Bolton, the Director of Appeal, they advocated for many years to get Andy released and I asked her why it had taken so long for the police to see things that they could.

How had they done it?

I think that was happening simply because we've spent taking the time to review the evidence. I think what so often happens in wrongful conviction cases is those in the system with authority, those people who can do something about it are not paying attention.

We had to drag the evidence out of the authorities kicking and screaming.

We took the police to court twice in order to gain access to both the documentary evidence in the case.

We shouldn't have to do that.

The CCRC has the power to do that simply by using their statutory powers.

The CCRC can obtain the evidence by using their statutory powers and they should have done so.

The first opportunity they had to do that was back in 2012 when the case was first before them.

If they had simply done the testing that Andy asked them to do and checked that against the database, something that they also have authority to do, they would have been able to identify this ultimate suspect much sooner.

Let's talk now to Ken MacDonald, former director of public prosecutions, the man who was director of public prosecutions from 2003 to 2008, and he's now host of Double Jeopardy, which is a law and politics podcast.

Lou MacDonald, tell me your thoughts on this case and the place that we've got to right now.

Well, I mean, it's obviously a terrible case.

It's not the worst.

I did one some years ago representing a man who'd been in prison for 28 years for murdering a young girl, and he was released by the Court of Appeal after 28 years.

These cases do crop up from time to time, and almost always they are the result of disclosure failure, failure by the police to release material to the prosecution and the defense, which needs to be received by the prosecution and defense to ensure that the trial is fair.

That's largely what happened here, it seems, that police were in possession of information which they should have disclosed to the prosecutors, and if they had, the prosecutors would have disclosed it to the defense, and this man may very well not have been convicted.

In other words, his trial was unfair because of disclosure failures.

I think that's what the Court of Appeal is going to conclude.

That is appalling, isn't it?

Not just for Andrew Malkinson, but for everybody who wonders whether they can trust the Greater Manchester Police.

Yeah, well, I certainly agree with that.

I mean, the rule is that the prosecution is supposed to disclose to the defense all the

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material which they intend to rely on in the trial, obviously, but from the material they don't intend to rely on in the trial, the so-called unused material, they're supposed to disclose any of that which would seem to undermine their case or assist the defense, and obviously there was material they had which both undermined their case and would have assisted the defense, namely that one of the prime witnesses was a heroin addict. Both of the prime witnesses had multiple criminal convictions, and the prime witness only came forward once he'd been arrested for another offense, so this is all material which obviously the defense would have deployed to try and protect Andrew Malkinson from conviction,

but they were never told any of this, and it seems the prosecuting lawyers weren't told this either by the Greater Manchester Police, so it's a scandalous failure of duty and responsibility on the part of the police.

Is it more than scandalous?

I mean, is it criminal?

If you actually conceal and destroy evidence, why aren't they party to criminal behavior?

Well, it's a good question.

I mean, there are two potential offenses, and the main potential offense that would exist here would be something that's called misconduct in a public office, and that's when people who hold public office behave in such an atrocious way that their behavior and their behavior falls so far short of what's expected of people in that office that it becomes positively criminal, so that's one offense.

I mean, deliberately destroying evidence, if it was done in order to affect the trial, could amount to an attempt to divert the course of justice.

I'm not sure there's any evidence that it was destroyed without intent.

Well, he thinks that's what happened.

I mean, he spoke very clearly this morning and said he is absolutely convinced that they destroyed evidence to save, if you like, their own skins in this case.

Yeah, well, there obviously needs to be an investigation.

There clearly needs to be an investigation, and I would say an independent investigation.

We don't want an investigation by the Greater Manchester Police.

We need an independent investigation.

I would say an investigation independent of any police force into what happened here, and if there's any evidence that Andrew Malkinson's right about that, then of course, charges would be, criminal charges would be in prospect.

You were the director of public prosecutions around this time, from 2003 to 2008.

His trial was 2004.

Were you not aware that any of this was going on?

Well, obviously not, because the police didn't supply any of this information to prosecuting lawyers, so they weren't aware, as I understand it, that any of this material existed.

I mean, the way the system works is that police investigate a crime, gather material, and then send that material to the prosecutors for analysis and for decision as to whether there should be a charge.

The system depends on the police doing that honestly and competently.

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If they don't, and the prosecutors never get to hear about the material, then obviously, the system falls down at first base.

But the system can't be working properly, because if he was convicted for seven years, sentenced for seven years, and each time he refused to plead his guilt, obviously, because he was innocent, and that led to an extension of another 10 years, isn't there a point at which somebody in charge says, this can't be right?

This guy is literally prolonging a prison sentence just to carry on repeating his innocence. Don't you sort of stop what you're doing and say, there's something really odd about this? Maybe he's actually innocent.

Yeah, I think you're absolutely right.

I mean, it's notable that not only did the Court of Appeal turn down his appeal in 2006, but the Criminal Cases Review Commission, which is the body charged with examining potential miscarriages of justice, also declined to intervene twice.

I mean, this is a really problematic system that when people maintain their innocence, they don't get onto the sorts of courses in prison that can lead to early release.

And it's been estimated that this man had made a false confession in prison.

He could have been released within seven years or at the seven year mark.

I mean, looking at it from the other point of view, the problem for the probation officers in prison is that if someone has been convicted and they then following the conviction have to treat that person as a guilty prisoner, if that person continually refuses to admit it, then from their point of view, this is someone who's failing to address their offending, as they put it, failing to make an acknowledgement, failing to come to terms with it.

And that makes that individual unsafe to release.

So this is a very problematic area.

I agree with you.

There comes a time when you have to say to yourself, hang on a minute.

On the other hand, there are, I have to tell you, plenty of people in prison who are undoubtedly guilty, who continue decade after decade after decade to protest their innocence.

So the fact that someone is protesting their innocence is not necessarily a marker that they are, in fact, innocent.

Sure.

But not to the point of spending an extra 10 years in prison, presumably.

Yeah.

Well, I'm sure you could find examples of people who are not innocent who have done that.

In a sense, if you're convicted of a crime and you really, really want to get out, the only rational thing to do, if you're on a very long sentence and you're not like to see the light of day, is to continue to protest your innocence in the hope that something comes up. But I agree with you.

If you have a man who has passed a release date of seven years, for example, and for many, many years after that refuses to admit his guilt, knowing that that's keeping him in prison, that becomes an alarming and probably very telling circumstance.

Do you think there should be a criminal investigation into the police now?

I think there should be an investigation to determine whether crimes were committed.

I'm reluctant to say criminal investigation because that would mean it would be an

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investigation conducted by the police.

I think this is a case which calls for an independent inquiry into what happened with the Greater Manchester Police. Also, I think we need to examine why it was the Criminal Cases Review Commission declined twice to take this case on.

Particularly if they declined some years after this man would have been released, had he not continued to deny the crime for the reason that you suggested.

You would think that everything was being done now to make this man's life bearable, and that would include very swift, very wholesale compensation.

It cannot be right, can it, that he told my colleague Justin Web on Radio 4 this morning that even if compensation were forthcoming, and he thinks there's no guarantee of that, he would have to pay back board and lodging to the prison service.

I cannot actually believe that we have a system that allows that, do we?

I don't know whether that's true. If it is true, it's a system which should be abolished immediately if it's true. It's absolutely unbelievable if that is still the position. As I said, I don't know whether it is or not, but if it is, the government ought to act on that very, very swiftly. It's beyond belief that someone who's been wrongly incarcerated by the state would have to pay for their board and lodging that way.

As I say, I just don't know whether that's true or not. I hope very much it's not.

And the compensation? I mean, he's talking about having still to prove his innocent, having still to wait and having still to work out if he's even going to get compensation.

You could start with the idea that it is almost impossible to compensate a man for 20 years of lost life, but that seems extraordinary that he would now have to start his

efforts on this now. Well, the government changed the rules. The rule

used to be that if you were acquitted in the Court of Appeal, if the Court of Appeal,

I should say allowed your appeal, that you would get your compensation. The government changed the

rule, so that is no longer enough. And now you have to take steps positively to demonstrate your innocence. I think that was an outrageous change. I thought it was outrageous at the time.

And I think this case is living proof of why that change is outrageous. This man is entitled to huge compensation. There's no compensation that's going to really compensate him for all those years

in prison. Let's not forget a convicted rapist. A convicted rapist. Nothing's going to compensate him from that. But for the government to have in place a system which puts any other barriers in his way at all from claiming compensation seems to me to be completely unforgivable and insupportable,

and they should look at this urgently. Okay, McDonald, Lord McDonald. Thank you very much.

Thanks for joining us. Thank you. And after the break, we'll be talking about

Giorgio Malone, Italy's PM with Lewis.

This is The News Agents.

Welcome back, and Lewis joins us from Manchester. I think I might have got the wrong flight, Emily. But that's all right. It's no problem. I'll make my way back eventually.

Meanwhile, we're going to be talking about Giorgio Malone, who's the Italian Prime Minister, that you might remember. We talked about a little bit when she first got elected. She was one of the first hard-right leaders of Europe and kind of took the country in the election

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somewhat by storm. But today, she's meeting Joe Biden, and she's going to the White House. And it's quite an interesting meeting of what might otherwise be fairly strange bedfellows. She has very ideological, pretty hard-line domestic policies. But certainly when it comes to the international stage, they see a lot of things in the same way, particularly, and this is critical right now, particularly on Russia, because she is a supporter of Ukraine. And she has defied mentors like Berlusconi and indeed like her own Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, who've been dumping on the West Sanctions. And she has said, we have to show solid support behind Ukraine. And at this point, she becomes a woman, a politician that America, Joe Biden, thinks he can do business with. Yeah, Malone's journey is amazing, really. I mean, Emily, you remember when we were covering the Italian election, and there was all of this trepidation in Brussels, in Washington as well, that this was going to be the first hard-right, far-right, whatever you want to call it, Prime Minister of Italy since Mussolini, sort of Berlusconi plus, plus, plus. And at the time, just to take Biden as an example, he was asked about this. And he responded in what is quite a familiar stick for him, which he started talking about the question about whether democracy could survive. And he said there is a question about whether democracies can be sustained in the 21st century. And he said, you just saw what happened in Italy in that election, as if that were proof that democracies were fragile and feeble. You fast forward, you know, only really a few months later, a year later. And here he is rolling out the red carpet for a woman who is very, very interesting in terms of her development. But in terms of her domestic politics, and we can talk about this, particularly on cultural issues, it's very, very far removed from where the Democrats are and where Biden is.

She was recently in France. In fact, she speaks fluent French. I was listening to her on a podcast, actually, and she had a dinner with Emmanuel Macron there. And quite interesting that

some members of his cabinet decided they didn't actually want to be seen with her that night, that they were not 100% on board. But as I say, I think a lot of it comes from having to leave her domestic policies on one side. And when I say that, it is worth just explaining what some of those are, because she is very family friendly in a kind of nuclear way, to the point where she is now not only vocal in defense of traditional families, but she is backing the removal of non-birth lesbian mothers from their children's birth certificates. I mean, an extraordinary thing to sort of start and upend in the interests of just making LGBT people incredibly unhappy and forcing them to undertake really lengthy legal process just to claim their rights.

So on the one hand, she's everything that sort of socially Joe Biden wouldn't stand for. But on the other, she is in a place where she can start to help shape European policy, maybe lead European union delegations in the areas where America really needs Europe. And that is on the military staff. And that is on the Ukraine staff. And she has sent armaments, lethal and non-lethal weapons. And she's also got Italy to support the training of Ukrainian soldiers. And I think it's also worth saying that on climate change, she has sort of pushed her climate deniers out of government. And she said, this has to be something that we take seriously. She's not massively in favor of a green push. She doesn't think that's where the economics is, but she won't tolerate climate deniers. And so you can sort of see this very delicate meeting, almost an interweaving of the fingers, of the hands. In fact, they did hold hands, I think, when they last met. But Biden and Maloney trying to find the ground, the sort of stateswoman, statesman ground on which they can sort of, if you like, pretend that everything is

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fine. Yeah. And like, we shouldn't forget her pedigree and the pedigree of her party, right? Brothers of Italy, political party has its roots in the post war, Italian, post Mussolini, post fascist, you use too many posts, movement. And this is a party which does not disavow the legacy of Mussolini. When they're asked about it, they usually just say, well, we don't really want to talk about that. Time to move on. Time to move on. Exactly. They put up statues of a famous post war or pre war Italian fascist. You know, this is this is a party with, let's say, a pretty rum history in all sorts of ways. But her and before she became Prime Minister, she was much more typical in some ways of what you might expect. She was against the euro. She was against the EU. She was tough on migration. She slammed woke ideology, her famous slogan that she sort of says repeatedly and has been made into quite popular music videos. I'm a woman, I'm a mother, I'm a Christian, you'll never take that away from me. And yet in office, she has developed and cultivated a far more like sophisticated political personalities. You say Emily, she's unlike people like Salvini and others on the Italian right. She has stayed close to Biden against Russia. She supported the Ukrainian war effort. She supported Ukrainian refugees. And in terms of the EU as well, she's become it's not total exaggeration to say she's become the toast of Brussels. She's been warmly welcomed instead of isolated as many people thought she would be by Ursula von der Leyen, by Macron, by Schultz and by outside the EU, of course, where she soon act as well. And the other thing I think we should talk about is her relationship with China, which is clearly a major policy talking point for this meeting with Biden because Italy actually signed up in 2019 to the so-called belts and roads initiative. This is a vast China project. It is cross continents. It is all through Africa. It's in parts of Asia. It's about highways and railway lines and energy pipelines. And basically trying to connect and link up parts of the countries, parts of the continents that weren't previously reachable. And when Rome signed up to this with China, there are a lot of raised eyebrows that people thought they were just getting too cozy with China trade deals. And Maloney is now signaling. And I think this is going to be something that we'll hear about later in those chats. She is signaling that she would take Italy out of this China deal, which I think would be an enormous relief to Biden because it's a bit like all the Huawei stuff that we went through a few years ago. If they fundamentally don't trust China, then they fundamentally don't really trust allies who are working with China. And if they manage to reset or to signal a sort of recalibration of that relationship, then I think it would probably be real music to America's ears that they were sort of pushing China at arms length. It's also interesting actually that for somebody who has been so deeply anti-immigration and has been sort of of the Rishi Sunak variety in terms of talking about stopping small boats and making that a priority, she is at the same time recognizing the need for more legal migration, more people to come into Italy, because she recognizes that actually they need a younger workforce, they need to populate the country with more workers. And so somebody who's kind of not ideological about immigration, who's actually quite pragmatic when it comes to the economy, sounds as if there's somebody that you can kind of do business with on if you like individual projects, policies and frameworks. Yeah, I think there's two other things to say as well, which is that Maloney herself, just to think about her domestically in terms of Italian politics, right now, she's very, very popular. She's most popular at Politician Italy by miles. She's the most popular, as things stand right now, Prime Minister that we've seen in Italy for a very long time, because she has whatever the ills or demerits or merits of her policies

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and political personality, she is through pretty savvy political skill, impose order, some political order at last on Italy, a country as we know, which recently at least rivals Britain in terms of its political instability and its difficulties. The other thing is, is that I think that so the EU leaders, for example, know they could be dealing with her for some time, probably, although obviously Italian politics is very unstable. The other thing is, is that like actually as we've been talking about this all week, Emily, and actually for longer as well, look, Maloney in some ways, we talk about her being far right or hard right, like in so many ways, she basically epitomizes where the centre of the European right in all sorts of countries now is, including to some extent our own. So the idea that she could be ostracised in that way was perhaps always going to be for the birds, because really what she represents is the fusion which has taken place between the old centre right, which in many European countries is now basically just dead, and a series of harder right positions which have become the conservative European mainstream. So Maloney, in some ways, we talk about her political pedigree, she doesn't really represent the past. Right now, as things stand, it looks like she, in terms of the right of politics and the way the ideological flow of the right of politics in Europe is going, she represents the future. Well, joining us now is Gianni Riotta, who's a columnist with La Repubblica. He's also a dual national, and this is kind of really useful because he's the chair of the council for the United States and Italy, which actually promotes better relations between both countries. Joining us from Rome, and I can't think of a better voice on this, Gianni, just take us into that relationship. What do they like together, Giorgio Maloney and Joe Biden?

This was a movie that will be very interesting because it's a very old president, a democratic, and pretty much a liberal centrist of his life, and a former neo-fascist leader like Giorgio Maloney that then moved to the centre, to the centre right, but she comes from a very, very anti-American tradition. Still, Ukraine unifies them because so far, Prime Minister Maloney has kept the line on Ukraine, and that's what President Biden wants from her. That's what matters to him, that Italy stays in the column of pro-Ukrainian-European leaders.

Have people in Italy been surprised by her, I don't know, sort of rise power these past nine months? You know, I don't belong to the cultural tradition of President Maloney, but I think that the left and the centre left vastly underestimate the impact that the first woman Prime Minister of Italy, no president of the republic, no prime minister of the republic since 1945 has done a lot of people. There are a lot of people even in the younger generation that may not agree with Maloney, but they are impressed that for the first time Italy is a woman as a leader. Has she changed her stance on immigration? Because that was a big vote winner for her when she got elected. Now she's talking about the need to have more people coming in. You know, it's easy when you are in the opposition and she did something that I think presently she regrets, like she went to the far right in Spain, the Vox party, and gave a very, very, very raucous speech. You can still see it on YouTube. And I think she regrets that now she went to Tunisia because she knows that there will be a steady stream of immigration from North Africa. So she sat down with the Tunisian president trying to make agreements. And of course,

when she was in the opposition, she would have denounced that. And she knows that Italy is a grain country of all people. The natality is very, very, very low. And so she knows the chest to address this issue as well. When you look across Europe now, we see Vox who has just failed to actually make it into government. Their share of the vote fell. We look at Marine Le Pen,

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the Le Pen's as a family, have never actually held power in France. Why do you think that the hard right has succeeded electorally in Italy?

First of all, there was fatigue with the left, because the left has pretty much run the country twice with the five stars, the populist five stars. And then you had three straight prime ministers from the Democratic Party. And the left never managed to get a clear majority at the election. But they're always like, you know, can whip up some chemistry in parliament to elect a prime minister. And I think that many Italians were fed up with that. And they made a choice. And also, Meloni was a very effective candidate because she was young, because she was a woman, because she was straight to the point. And a lot of people thought, you know what, let's change. Jenny Riotta, great to have you on. Thank you so much. Thank you very much. Thank you.

This is the news agents.

Before we go, we're going to stay in America listening, not to words said, but to words unspoken. There was an extraordinary moment during a press conference with Mitch McConnell yesterday, where he seemed to just freeze and halfway through a sentence. I mean, let's not forget, he's 81 years old. He's the US Senate Republican leader. He's talking to the press. And suddenly, the sentence just stops. And nobody moves and nobody interrupts. And it just stops. Let's have a quick listen. Well, good afternoon, everyone. We're on a path to finishing the NDA this week. We've been good by partisan cooperation. And a string of... That is it. It is a very, very long pause, where in the video of this clip, you can see the eyes of the aides behind him, shifting left and right, trying to work out if they're going to step in, if one of them is going to step in, if he's about to fall over. And then they gently escort him off to the side where he still doesn't say a word. And one of the others has to finish the train of thought and indeed the press conference. It is just a reminder of a country which has octogenarians right at the heart of its political system in both sides, in every house, in all parties. And these people are running the country in incredibly, sometimes vulnerable positions. Yeah. I mean, I think, to be honest, I mean, maybe Mitch McConnell has an oldest, we don't know. I mean, I think more broadly, the octogenarian point that you said, Emily, it speaks to an illness in American democracy, which is that in order to succeed in American democracy, you basically have to, A, have a lot of money just to even run for somewhere like the Senate. The average worth of a Senate in America is, you know, they usually multi-millionaires in order to fundraise all of those sorts of things. And that leads to people who are very, very well established in the political parties. It leads to people who are, have usually been doing what they've been doing for a long time. I mean, to take Mitch McConnell, in March, he overtook the previous longest serving majority leader or Senate political leader, party leader in the Senate, because he's been serving there for 16 years. Pelosi had been there, who obviously only recently stood down in the house, had been there for 20 years. Biden has obviously been in American politics for over 50 years. Now, experience is a good thing. And I think Biden in lots of ways has used and corraled that experience effectively. But there does come a tipping point in a political system where experience can give way to atrophy and inertia. And as for Biden, I mean, I don't know about you listening to him recently, I've just felt that there has been, in terms of his energy and even his voice, he's sounding weaker than he has before. And, you know, not even, haven't even started the next election presidential cycle properly yet. And his aides have got to be worried about that, looking forward to the primaries in the campaign next year. I mean, you make the point about money, which is obviously central. But I also

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can't help thinking that if they were in this country, they would have burned out a lot more quickly. I mean, you know, we saw Mari Black, who's not even 30, saying 10 years of Westminster had

done her head in and she didn't want to have any more of it. Mitch McConnell was first elected to the Senate in 1984, right? That's four decades ago next year. And so you suddenly understand that, I mean, look at Joe Biden, the same. He's already served eight years in the White House as the vice president for Obama. And he was a senator 20 years before that. So I think there is probably something about the political system in America, which is a bit more comfortable, quite frankly, which doesn't become as intrusive on your home life, doesn't present as many contradictions with, you know, maybe other careers or your sort of financial status or your situation, because people don't want to leave it. I mean, there's the case of Diane Feinstein, who we know has been a very important chair of a committee. And she is not well at the moment, but she's also refusing to stand down. It can create quite a problem for constituents, for those people who are expecting representation, if they're not getting that in a proper way. But it also speaks to a system that kind of expects you to be there, perhaps for life.

And it also speaks to a system, I think, which has become so polarized in it to the extent that, actually, the risk of not running, the risk of vacating a seat when the margins are that tight can be so great for the incumbent that the incentive on any individual candidate is to stay on. And in a way, Biden is the best example of that, right? I mean, actually,

if America had a far more healthy political system, if the stakes on every general election, presidential election now weren't existential, you've got to wonder, would Biden think to himself, well, even if I don't run next time, and, you know, maybe the Republican wins,

if it were like Mitt Romney, say, that wouldn't be the biggest disaster in the world, right?

The problem for Biden, in a way, I'm sure he likes being president, he wants to run again, but he almost doesn't really even have the option of not doing so, because the prospect

of failure, of defeat, of losing to Trump is literally as great as the democracy itself, the republic itself, breaks down. And I think probably in 2020, there is a feeling that very

few other Democrats could have beaten Trump, if anyone. So the onus on Biden to see that one through

was felt pretty strongly, and that was even before, obviously, the January 6th attempt to overturn democracy. I think there is a real sort of compelling argument, if you think you can do it,

to stick at it. I mean, Americans are always talking about public service, thank you for your service. It seemed as a real part of the American ethos. Yeah, one last job, even if, frankly,

he doesn't do very much there, he keeps Trump out. And talking about people who are loath to go, I think it's worth just bringing it back to sort of home turf here, or mid-beds turf,

shall we say, because Nadine Dorris, local town council, has just written to her to raise there what they call concerns and frustration at the continuing lack of representation for the people

of mid-bedfordshire at Westminster. And they've actually demanded she, their words, immediately vacate her seat. You'll remember Nadine Dorris is sort of in this purgatory of not quite going and not quite staying, but clearly one council has had enough and just want her to vamoose.

Mitch would never have allowed this to happen. Mitch would never, Mitch would never have got himself into this position. We'll be back tomorrow, some of us will be back tomorrow,

some of us won't. Indeed, because right as soon as we've finished this, I'm going to be speaking to the mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, for an extended conversation about politics,

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about Keir Starmer, about Labour and his political future. Bye for now. Bye-bye.
This has been a Global Player original podcast and a Persephoneka production.