

## [Transcript] The News Agents / NatCon: fruitcakes, fringe, or future of the Tory Party?

We're going to take you inside the National Conservative Conference. This is going on in London right now, and Douglas Murray was one of the speakers, and this is just a taster of what he had to say about nationalism.

I see no reason why every other country in the world should be prevented from feeling pride in itself because the Germans mucked up twice in a century.

Yeah, mucked up an interesting description of the origins of the First and Second World War and all that flowed from it. But if you think that was the high point of perhaps some weird views that were expressed at the National Conservative Conference, no, there are plenty of others. Welcome to the News Agents.

The News Agents.

It's John.

It's Emily.

And it's Lewis. And you were enjoying the National Conservative Conference. These passed there in half.

I was the News Agents emissary.

The official ambassador.

Did you have official diplomatic standing there?

Not quite, as we can perhaps come on to discuss. Look, we'll start by saying that, like, you know, I really like, and it's a slightly unfashionable thing, maybe in Westminster, to say, I really like ideology. I really like politicians with ideology. I think ideology and politics gives order to the world.

I like politicians and politics that is strongly felt and where people really have something to say. And I have covered, over the last ten years or so, one of the things I've taken a great interest in is the sort of slow intellectual evolution of the British political right and how it's changed from the Cameron period to the present day. And all of that said, I sat in the hall of NatCon yesterday and multiple times, despite all of that exposure and all of that context, multiple times, my jaw still hit the floor.

NatCon is this attempt, and they describe it themselves on their website as this. It says they want to bring together those who understand the past and future of conservatism are inextricably tied to the idea of the nation, to the principle of national independence and to the revival of unique national institutions. Andrew Gamble has described it as a new project for restoring the political hegemony of the Conservative Party in a way that Margaret Thatcher might have understood. But to me, you know, actually sat through it. That is an attempt to put a lot of intellectual and political bone on some absolutely absurd stuff.

Like, in the main, to be honest, I felt just listening to a lot of this. This was mainly the kind of politics of the comments tab on a website. Consistent conspiracy theories, talk of cultural Marxism, talk of the blob, talk of imaginary enemies, talk of the cosmopolitans and all of this stuff. To me, it was the apotheosis of what has been happening on the British right for 10 years, which was going down an internet rabbit hole. It was the end point of the way that the internet, frankly, has kind of ruined much of the British right.

And that's why I think when you call it an ideology, or when you suggest that you're interested in ideology, it's quite a generous view. Because if you look at what is uniting some of these flavours, which is hard Brexit, populism, nationalism, anti-immigrant, anti-globalisation,

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prejudice, anti-woke, bit of climate denial, anti-vax, maybe a little side sopsaw of homophobia thrown in, I think you'd be hard pressed to say there is an actual ideology. It's just a lot of distrust or distaste in modern progressive life. Maybe that is an ideology. But I also think that probably there is no real unity there from one candidate or from one speaker to another. They're just all on a platform of sort of hating something.

Well, isn't it slightly the ideology of, and another thing, and another thing that raises my blood pressure and makes me angry? It's like a drunken rant. I mean, half of the stuff. It was the politics of the bar, the pub, on late on a Friday night. Well, let us just hear a little sample of some of the speakers that we have assembled for you here on the newsagents so you can get a flavour if you weren't lucky enough to attend yourself. This is in some ways still a controversial thing to say. Because in Europe, in particular, and after all, sounds different depending on the country you're in. But I see no reason why every other country in the world should be prevented from feeling pride in itself because the Germans marked up twice in a century.

Marriage is not all about you. It's not just a private arrangement. It's a public act by which you undertake to live for someone else for their sake and the sake of your children and the sake of wider society. And wider society should recognise and reward this undertaking. And there is something peculiar about our current political moment where those of us advancing on fashionable facts are beaten over the head with fashionable fictions. The ethnicity of grooming gangs and the perpetrators in those gangs is the sort of fact that has become unfashionable in some quarters, much like the fact that 100% of women do not have a penis.

Rishi Tsunak made a specific promise to scrap thousands of EU laws in a little video with a shred up, working overtime. But he's broken that promise. And this is very unfortunate as one of his virtues is his trustworthiness and the surrender to the blob risks exposing the government to ridicule.

How much do you love your country? How much do you love the values that you claim to defend? Do you love them enough to tweet under your own name? Do you love them enough to change your child's school to one that's less woke and ignore the impact on your social status? Do you love them enough to do more than simply chat to your friends who already agree with you at dinner parties? If I haven't sateman, stand up and be counted. As Russell Crowe says in the film Gladiator, a clip I regularly play for my staff, hold the line. Stay with me. What we do in life echoes in eternity. Will your life echo hollow with cowardly hypocrisy or will it echo with courage, valiance and honor? The choice is yours. Strength and honor be with you all.

Well, I will have my revenge in this life or the next. Also, Russell Crowe, there should be a special Lewis Goodall quiz question on name the five speakers that we heard excerpts from there. But I'm going to ruin it and tell you who they were. We heard Douglas Murray, a right wing commentator, writes for the spectator, writes for the sun on all manner of issues. But this was him on nationalism in Europe. Danny Kruger, who is the conservative MP for Devises, talking about the joys of marriage. You heard Suella Braverman. Does she need an introduction now? I think we know who Suella Braverman is, the Home Secretary, on Unfashionable Views. We heard Jacob Riesmog on Brexit and Rishi. And one that was new to me was Catherine Burble Singh, who is a head teacher. And she was the one extensively

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quoting Russell Crowe at the end there about woke schools and something about dinner parties, but I didn't quite get that.

Don't go to dinner parties. Do you go to dinner parties?

Probably talking about you.

Yeah, don't go to dinner parties in a North London townhouse. I think it was the subtext of what she was saying. I mean, it was kind of fairly out there, wasn't it? And as you said, Emily, what was the unifying theme there apart from sort of a slight kind of anger? I mean, I think it's worth explaining that this might be the first time it's hit your consciousness. But this is a thing that has been going on. We've had NACON conferences in Rome. We've had them around Europe. There was a memorable time about three years ago when Daniel Kaczynski, who is a Conservative MP, I think, Shrewsbury, who was the one you might remember, who tried to petition Poland to veto what the UK government parliament was trying to do around Brexit. That went well. And he was actually told off by the Conservative Party in 2020 for appearing at the Rome version of this, where he stood alongside Victor Orban, Salvini, the Italian populace leader. And so at one point, I think it's worth just pointing out, there was a sense in the mainstream of the Conservative Party that this wasn't a great thing to be seeing alongside. Now it is the mainstream who are there.

But this exactly, this is the point. This would be of no interest whatsoever. Some of these people, some of whom you just heard from, they've been sort of preaching this gospel, they've been talking this talk for a long time, and they've been assembling in different sort of conferences and writing in their pamphlets, sometimes for other obscure ones and so on. And it would be of no import whatsoever. Were it not for the fact that this conference being held in Westminster has a series of keynote speakers who are either in the current cabinet, up to and including the Home Secretary, Michael Gove once held up as a really the kind of intellectual powerhouse of sort of liberal Cameroon.

And future leader.

Conservatives and potentially future leader and other ministers and rising MPs as well. And the two things that really struck me, the other two things that really struck me about it were, and I suppose in a sense, this has been more obvious for some time and it has been a sort of set of trends which have been going on for some time. One is, and John, I'm sure you would have thought this in particular, that the legitimisation and the just how embedded sort of Trumpian language and Trumpian political focus ideas have become, how mainstream

they've become within the contemporary Conservative Party and the conversation it has. And the other thing is, and I think you saw this in the Brexit years as well, they are so much like, and they would have pour this idea, but they are so much like the old doctrinal left. You know, they think like the old left.

Not even that old. I mean, momentum actually is not a million miles away from it.

I'm more extreme than that. I think, you know, they alone get to define what a Conservative is. It's just like the old hard left only ever got to define what a socialist was. They think that everything that previous Conservative governments have done weren't really Conservative at all, just like old hard left socialists always said whatever a Labour government did wasn't really socialist. They always think that the real authentic Conservatism is just

around the corner. And crucially, they think that if only they could be truly Conservative, they think that they can win an election by appealing only to the true hardcore Conservative base, that there is this imaginary coalition which does not exist in the country, which is going to find these ideas, this hard turn to core social Conservatism, to core deep nationalist Conservatism, that there is this coalition out there that will find this so appealing that they will flock to the Conservative Party in droves. It doesn't exist, but it is exactly analogous to the way the old hard left of the Labour Party, and I mean that really the 70s and 80s rather than the Corbyn version used to conceive of socialism. Well, it's so interesting you talk about the American comparison. There is a couple in American politics. Matt and Mercedes Schlapp. Mercedes Schlapp became kind of strategic communications head to Donald Trump, and I had an extraordinary meeting with her in the White House at one stage where we were trying to persuade Donald Trump to do a sit-down interview with us when he was president and it never quite worked. But anyway, they run CPAC, the Conservative Political Action Committee, and listening to the language from yesterday and comparing it to CPAC, it sounded so similar. And in 2012, when the Republicans lost the presidential election for the second time, and the GOP, the Republican Party, wrote a thing called the Growth and Opportunity Project, which was their version of liberal republicanism, and that was the way to win back Hispanics and other minority groups to that flag. And of course, Donald Trump came along and ripped it all up, and the Republican Party has since been taken over. And it is now a Trumpian party. Not completely Trump, but Trumpian. And you feel that even if it doesn't have the figurehead of a Donald Trump, that something is similar is happening to conservative thinking, that this is the flag around which people seem to want to rally. And I don't think it's just conservative thinking. I think it is the same funding model that has been imported from the US. What you notice, first of all, about these anti-globalization movements is they're really bloody global, you know, and all the populace from all over the world will want to be in the same place, talk about the same things. So this really sort of owes its roots to the Christian conservative movement, which was where this sort of idea was imported from. And one of the things I think we all understood as being a sort of tenet of this conference was the ideology of free speech, of the end of what we call it the council culture. And I find it particularly beautiful that at this point where you wanted to actually hear from members and audience people who were there, that Lewis, you found, you came hard up against the free speech warriors in a rather unusual way. Yeah, this was really fascinating. And I think it is very instructive about the psychology of some of the people behind this. So we were trying to interview some of the delegates. There were lots of students there. You know, you might imagine this was a sort of really event just for sort of older people, not a bit of it. There were a lot of young students there as part of these kind of right-wing sort of cultural groups that are proliferating across university campuses, no matter what people will tell you about them or just being incredibly woke and liberal. But nonetheless, we wanted to speak to some of these people, just get a sense of why they were there, what had drawn them there, what their thinking was, their ideology, what they thought of the speeches they'd heard so far. And we'd done a couple. And then suddenly, and you know, both know what this is like, you know, you just see someone just out of the corner of your eyes, you're finishing an interview, you just see someone just wanting to have a little word and they've got an official lanyard on and you just know what was coming. Anyway, Cameron

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and Rory decided to keep the tape flowing, as you all know, is exactly the thing to do as this conversation went on. This is a bit of what they said.

Across all of their conferences.

Right.

So, if that's all right.

Well, that's fine.

Well, that's fine.

I appreciate that, sir.

As I said, I'm just intrigued by the sort of champions of liberty and free speech and counselling culture, not wanting free journalists to interview people at their event.

It's just interesting.

Yeah, no, it's how they organise them. It's how they do it.

The speakers?

Absolutely fine.

We stood on the doorstep outside.

Well, I mean, if you wanted to do that, I guess you, you know, I mean, technically at that point, you're outside, you know, you're outside the confines of the conference.

It is indeed. Yeah, indeed, we believe in free speech, but you're not allowed to speak to anyone.

But this was the thing. At one point, there was a suggestion that even the speech from the Home Secretary wouldn't be televised or couldn't be recorded or could only be recorded by the conference organisers and they could put out little bits that they wanted. And this actually started a whole kind of set to with the British broadcasters that were there, because BBC were there as well, and we were all talking to them and saying, hang on a minute, that's not how it works. If the Home Secretary is going to a conference, then these things are televised. And the response was that on the American side, that they were much more where the whole genesis of this conference really is, that they were much more accustomed to having much more control, and they certainly didn't appreciate ceding that control of the main speeches to the broadcasters, or certainly not us people sort of trying to cause trouble as they see it, talking to their own delegates. And so we had that conversation.

I do think that raises a really interesting question, which is, do they want to be heard?

Are they just speaking to the people in the room? Or do they want to be heard more broadly?

Because they're putting all this stuff out on Twitter. Presumably they want it carried, but they don't want you to interpret it or they don't want...

They want to be heard on their own terms. They want total control. They don't want free speech.

They don't want scrutiny. They don't want any of those things.

We'd like to speak freely. Lewis Goodall, just shut up.

Yeah, extraordinary. Exactly. Anyway, we'll be back after the break to see what implications this has for the future of the Conservative Party.

This is The News Agents.

Welcome back. I suppose my thought about listening to all of this yesterday,

I kept on thinking, have we had the general election? Has that now been and gone? The Conservatives are in opposition and they are ideologically trying to regroup and fathom out an agenda that will get them back into power. Because by God, it sounded like something

that happens after a general election and not a year, a year and a half before it.

Okay, so I was just working out the trajectory of where this lot have been over the course of what the last decade. And actually, I think it's not irrelevant that in the recent council elections, UKIP as a party almost disappeared. We were almost sort of looking around for it and going, is that the end? Where is UKIP now? It lost a lot of ground. The BNP similarly completely, through I think financial worries more than anything else, corruption scandals, stopped being a party. In the days when David Cameron came to power in 2010, in the coalition days of the Conservative government, he talked originally, or maybe it was even before he actually became Prime Minister, he talked about, was it fruit cakes and loons? Fruit cakes, loonies and closet racists. Right, and that was his description of UKIP, that the wing of the party he didn't really want to have anything to do with. And I think what happened is, as we saw over the 2019 election, when they threatened to stand against Boris Johnson in certain seats and then somehow just got subsumed, the Conservative party became a big enough vehicle to take them all in under the Brexit banner, whatever had been the UKIP, whatever had been, in Cameron's words, the fruit cakes, all became part of the wider Conservative family. And I think post-Brexit or post-Brexit failures, those people have now decided that the Conservatives somehow let them down. It wasn't Brexit enough. It wasn't hard enough. It wasn't successful enough, quite frankly. And they are now trying to re-establish themselves as an offshoot that finds the Conservative party a failure. So they have almost moved through it from one side, through the party, and have emerged on the other side, where they are now looking like a separate entity once again. I think it's completely spot on. You know, I said at the start about sort of watching the sort of changes in the British right over the last 10 years. The thing that it most reminded me of, although to be honest, it was in places far more frenzied than that. The thing that it reminded me a bit of is the days of the sort of Brexit party rallies, the Leave Means Leave rallies, you know, you had a similar sort of tone then, similar sort of tropes and so on. You know, what has basically happened is, is that this thing that used to happen outside of the Conservative party is now happening within the Conservative party. The Conservative party over a number of years has become deeply radicalised.

And I think you're right Emily, that it all comes down to Brexit in the end. Brexit is at the centre of all of it. And it is a feedback loop. The more Brexit continues to fail and to be seen to fail, the argument then becomes that Brexit hasn't really been tried. And Brexit there is basically a synonym for, a cipher for, real conservatism, right? In this telling, Brexit was an opportunity missed for a rebooted conservatism. But like, what does that mean? Because ultimately, the point of this is, it all intellectually falls apart, goes back to that kind of lack of cohesion we talked about at the start. Because realistically, the only other model that we could have pursued after Brexit was this sort of fabled low tax, low regulation, sort of more globalist, higher immigration model, which is exactly the thing that they claim to abhor. The thing they say they want is a reclamation of the nation state. Those two things just don't go together. I think the other thing that I think is worth picking out, which came from not just one speaker, although we played a clip of that in that montage in the first bit of the podcast, is attitudes towards the family. And I think there's a fascinating area. If you think of when David Cameron came to power supporting gay marriage, and Theresa May saying, we've got to get past the image of the Nazi party, and many conservative MPs came out as gay. And you felt that the Conservative party had relaxed and unbuttoned

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and was embracing the very diverse society in which we live, where not everything is a nuclear family in the conventional sense of a mother, a father, and two children. And yet you felt there was a sort of turning back of the clock that people wanted to applaud yesterday of this idea of the family circa the 1950s. The idea that the Conservative party is taking sides on which sort of family life works best just seems to me kind of anathema in the 21st century. We played a bit of Danny Kruger at the top. I want to play another bit of him talking about what his concept really of the family is. The normative family held together by marriage, by mother and father sticking together for the sake of the children, and the sake of their own parents, and the sake of themselves. This is the only possible basis for a safe and successful society. Marriage is not all about you. It's not just a private arrangement. It's a public act by which you undertake to live for someone else, for their sake, and the sake of your children, and the sake of wider society. And wider society should recognise and reward this undertaking. And as Miriam said earlier, we need to put families back at the heart of our fiscal system. You know, the idea that the family should stay together for the sake of the children, I'm sure there are an awful lot of children who would say their lives have been totally upended by living with a warring mother and father, and maybe they'd have been better off in a different setup. Or an abusive parent. Or whatever it was, or a parent who felt that they were living this heterosexual life when they really they were gay and they were bitterly unhappy. Most places that don't allow divorce tend to be more misogynist. And also, I thought this lot were all about non-interference of the state. Freedom. Yeah, freedom. Liberty. Yeah, who wants to know? Not suggesting there might be something coherent. Yeah, which is the great contradiction of the argument in America about abortion. It is men telling women what they can do with their bodies.

We should also say this isn't the only organisation which is putting pressure on SUNAC. So there is also, and this gets a bit people's front of Judea, Judean people's front, but there is also the conservative democratic organisation, the CDO, which also had a conference and met in Bournemouth on Saturday. And in a way, this is the two directions SUNAC is going to get pulled in, right? Because on the one hand, you've got this law who are trying to pull him really quite far right, radical right, we should call it what it is, radical right on ideology and thinking. But then there is also this other group, the CDO, which is basically set up by a group of disgruntled Boris Johnson supporters who are trying to infiltrate, this is more momentum style, infiltrate local conservative associations, grass roots, and certainly perhaps, you know, try and de-select MPs they don't like, but certainly put all of the pieces in place for a future leadership election to get their candidate, perhaps a brotherhood or whoever it might be, over the line, either as leader of the opposition or whatever. Yeah, I mean, we should say, as I think you referenced at the beginning, that this is also possibly a lineup of people who now expect to lose the next election and would like to lead the party in opposition. I mean, that is kind of blaring out from the speakers really, as they stand there. That's how it feels. It feels like a battle for the soul of the Conservative Party that starts now. I was a political correspondent during the John Major years when he talked about the bastards in the Cabinet. But compared to what John Major had to put up with, it's nothing compared to what Rishi Sunaka has got with these hugely organised, well-funded factions trying to pull in different camps, in different directions, to set an agenda for the Conservative Party that they believe and they alone believe

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will be their salvation. I think the question that I want to ask now is about Rishi Sunaka's response to this, because as we saw with Boris Johnson, when you're the Prime Minister, you have two choices. Either you distance yourself and you say, well, David Cameron, these are the fruitcakes and the loons, or else you embed yourself within them. And I think Rishi Sunaka, who after all is not on the political spectrum, Gordon Brown, let's just say, is now probably going to find himself fighting them by embracing some of what they're asking for. And it's no coincidence that he's in Iceland today, where he's calling on the European Court of Human Rights to reform its whole approach to the asylum injunctions that stopped his Rwanda policy working. So he can do two things. He can either say, oh my god, they're nothing to do with me. And they've got some really weird Holocaust minimizing homophobic, slightly racist ideas and that bit transphobic ideas in that place. Or he can say, leave this with me. I'll just see what I can do. Maybe if I can come back with a reformed Court of Human Rights where we are allowed to send people to Rwanda, everyone will love me again. So it's sort of playing to the gallery whilst not actually being part of the crowd. The thing is, though, the speech that sort of really taught me about yesterday, more than any of the others, the Suella Braverman stuff, it's kind of what she more or less than what she normally said. Some parts of it were actually quite considered. The thing that really taught me about was Danny Krugert's speech. He was talking about saying that the party had to sort of essentially capitalize on the 2019 and 2016 mandates. And he started to say, he said, the Conservative party should not retreat to its base of the intelligentsia, the globalized elite, whose loyalties are to everyone and to no one. Let us not retreat to the southeast, to the managerial class. Hello. This was quite literally, the southeast managerial class, is quite literally the core of your base as a party. And fundamentally, what Sunak is trying to do is to steady the ship, which he's done, and project this sort of image of cool, calm competence. What these people want to do is go back to ripping it all up. And I think the problem for them is this in terms of like the idea of their projects is kind of like an electoral project. The problem is this is like this stuff works in America. This stuff works in America because America is deeply, deeply polarized. And essentially, it almost does not matter what once how crazy one side becomes, as we've seen time and time again, roughly 50% of the electorate will stick with them. If the last year has shown us anything, it is that Britain and British politics is not like that, that there is still a public square, that when the public moves, it really moves. And this agenda of woke bashing marks, cultural Marxism, you know, all of this stuff that to most people, quite frankly, it means absolutely nothing. There is no place for it as a mainstream British political project, at least for the moment. What Sunak is trying to do, and what conservatism needs to do is have answers on the housing crisis, on the economy, on inflation, et cetera, et cetera. And on that, at NatCon, there is quite literally nothing. Because actually, the whole List Trust experiment showed us that we had very little appetite for extreme ideology, right? We don't have that in Starmer. I mean, he's literally, we've said it many times, he's managerially boring, you know, by choice. He doesn't want to particularly create a storm when he walks into a room. And whatever we know about Rishi Sunak's sort of quite fervent Brexit ideology, he manages to walk a line of being similarly managerially boring. You know, he calms people down. He talks to you as if you're a group



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of children. We don't really appeal to the, all right, kind of rallying cry of Kimberley girlfriend of Donald Trump. We don't really like noisy politicians too much here. No, we don't. And this could be the big mistake that is being made. The phrase that was used by, you know, at the time of Reagan, for example, in America was we talk about the moral majority. And the moral majority was the people who thought that the permissive society had gone too far, too quickly, and had left the majority. It's like Jerry Falwell did, right? The Bible kind of fearing, God fearing American decent folk behind. And I'm not sure there is that moral majority in Britain to hark back to that 1950s ideal. And I don't think there's a big anti gay constituency now, really? I mean, Britain is quiet. I mean, this is the thing about this whole conference. I mean, if you were to listen to the people in this conference, they're the ones who sound like they hate Britain. They sound like they hate almost everything that modern Britain has become. Well, that was the anti-growth coalition speech. It was like, how big do you want your anti-growth coalition to be because you're including quite a lot of the country in this? The point is, is that Britain is actually quite a liberal cosmopolitan country. And whether they like that or not, it isn't going to turn back. And as I say, that is why there is very little salience to these sort of arguments in British politics. And one of the huge differences, you know, you're right to say that America is absolutely divided. You look at the subject of abortion in America, compared to the UK, completely different attitudes, on guns, for example, on, you know, the Second Amendment. We don't have anything like that here. Britain has its divisions and Brexit exacerbated those divisions between pro and anti. But we are nothing like as divided a society as America. And I think there is limited political mileage for the politicians who think, oh, right, if I can just kind of cash in on being in an extreme position, we will win an election. Look, I also think that Brexit sought out those divisions in no uncertain terms. And look, we spent a lot of time looking after the Brexit result at what was kind of euphemistically called the left behind broadly, people who had done really badly after the financial crash, who felt that their living standards hadn't improved, their homes hadn't improved, their kids weren't going to go on and do better than them. They didn't particularly travel. They weren't particularly highly educated, so they didn't get the benefits of higher paying jobs. And that was and remains a massive, massive problem for Britain, right? We understand that that that is very much in all the problems to do with housing, all the problems to do with cost of living, all the problems to do with North South geographical divides and not having the infrastructure or the transport to actually, you know, bring people into more prosperous parts of the country, everything that Lewis has just laid out. What I don't think it's about was this idea of the elites of the Southeast necessarily trying to scupper things for everyone else. And I think what we ended up doing at the time was buying this shit, quite frankly, from people who were privately educated, who were forex traders, who had German wives with German passports that they were trying to get, who were public school educated, who'd worked in hedge funds, who were low tax paying because they were non-doms, telling us and anyone who was covering Brexit somehow that we were the elites. And I think it took us all too long to wise up to that and too long to understand that that is what a real elite, a real kind of very, very small percentage of the population could afford to do to con a lot of people to coming with them on the Brexit ride and that's

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what ended up happening. The other reason this is getting space and the other reason it's going to exert a political gravity on the Conservative Party is partly because a moderate quote unquote conservatism or liberal conservatism over that 10-year period has time and time again yielded to it. It hasn't made the arguments against it. It's thought that the way to deal with it is to accommodate it. So now they are left with so few actual rhetorical or political arguments left in the locker to deal with it. And secondly as well, because frankly in terms of Sunak as well, his particular form of conservatism, which this isn't, it's not as if he or his side are articulating any great particular vision for the future of conservatism either. We're going to the break in a second. I've just got a quiz question because I've just worked out the answer. It took me a little while but I'm there. We played you five clips and I named them all. The men were Douglas Murray, Danny Kruger and Jacob Riesmog. Where did the three of them go to school? Oh, I wear, now is it somewhere, is it somewhere near Slough? Yeah, it's somewhere near Slough.

I think you're getting very warm. Yeah, it's not Slough comp. No, no, no. So anyway, yes. Is it somewhere they wear, they wear ridiculous gowns, ridiculous hats. Yeah, all three of those clips and we didn't single them out for that but all Etonians. It's amazing they were all there, isn't it? That's quite a coincidence. Anyway, you know how you, when you went to primary school, not Eton, there was show and tell. You brought in something for the nature table.

Lewis has brought in something for the nature table and he won't tell us what until after the break. We're calling this surprise news. The best kind of news. See you in a moment.

Welcome back. This is the moment we get to see Lewis's acorn.

No, no, that's later. That's at nine o'clock.

We shouldn't do that now. That's for subscribers only, as you know.

We've got the nature table made out. We've gone down a dangerous route now.

Come on, show and tell, Lewis. Anyway, yeah, no, it's a little quiz for the two of you, right?

So, right, on this day, first one to get to get a special prize, right? On this day, a seismic event happened in British political history. So it was the 16th of June.

May.

We're doing this a month early.

Sorry, it was the talk of the acorn. That's the thing I was going to have to get like a little little some oil. Anyway, stop. 16th of May, seismic event, huge event in British politics.

Dumbusters. 2001. Oh, 2001. It was the day that Tony Blair pushed back the election because the foot and mouth... It is to do with the general election of 2001, but it's not that. Leo Blair

was born. No, not that. No, he's born the first. Come on, John. You were probably there. It was foot and mouth. 2001. I was in Paris then. Paris correspondent. Sorry, I wasn't familiar enough with your Le Fierre afeuse. Le Boucher, Le Rashfall, and the other one was Le Fierre afeuse.

Locations about this, perhaps, is real in North Wales. Oh, I know, I know. Prescott punched the punch. I think we can listen to a little bit of it now. Oh, great. The deputy prime minister got off his bus at Rhyll in North Wales and quickly realised that to reach the local Labour Club, he had to run the gauntlet of a group of largely countryside and fuel protesters.

As he walked through them, a local man chucked an egg at him almost at point-blank range.

John Prescott immediately swung round and landed a punch straight on his jaw.

The man then wrestled the deputy prime minister onto his back and held him down over a small wall as police and Labour Party officials tried to release him.

Right, I've got a question for you. What phrase did that event coin for evermore?

**[Transcript] The News Agents / NatCon: fruitcakes, fringe, or future of the Tory Party?**

It came from Tony Blair. Oh, it was John's John. John will be John.  
John will be John. You wish they was used for Boris Johnson.  
It's really exciting to go to Rhyll, and I feel a little worried for Rhyll,  
that despite the Sun Centre, as I will remember it, from the 1980s.  
Rhyll's famous Sun Centre. Famous Sun Centre. Now closed, alas.  
Yeah, I'm worried that Rhyll will kind of politically only be known for that punch.  
Well, that's a challenge to Rhyll. Yep, a challenge to Rhyll. We need another major event  
in Rhyll. It's really a sun mitt. We could do a show from there.  
Let's do the news agents from Rhyll. Until then, bye. See you soon, Rhyll.