

Sadiq Khan is one of the great survivors of British politics.

Someone whose political career spans back to the Blair and Brown governments, who's waxed and waned in the Labour Party's sins and national politics sins, but who has a big presence on the national political scene for the last two decades.

Someone who can boast Donald Trump as an adversary, one of the most senior elected Labour office holders in the country, a seat at the top table, a chance to work with and observe Prime Ministers up close.

Twice elected Mayor of London, he's standing again next year, hoping to do what those other titans of the political stage, Ken Livingston and Boris Johnson, could or would not, secure a third term.

Yet unlike those two politicians of such primary colours, Khan's political palette has been softer, less distinct.

In many ways, he's a man who remains elusive.

The last time he was with us just a few weeks ago, it was for a briefish news interview about the police and the Met.

So as he publishes a new book, outlining his new great passion, environmentalism and the fight against air pollution, we thought what better moment to try and understand this man better, and so invited him into the news agent studio for an extended conversation about his political journey.

The Muslim South London lad, son of a bus driver, to one of the highest offices in the land.

And it matters, far beyond London, because this is a man who is starting to construct a very different model of political progressive leadership than that of his party leader. He's a man who is starting to take risks.

It's Lewis here, welcome to the news agents.

The news agents.

Mercedes, come, welcome back to the news agents, you can't keep your way.

It's good to be back.

You're like a bad smell.

I've got a taste of it now you see.

Well, I know that's what happens to you.

You said before we started, you're like always with the sort of London gags.

Well, I just thought I just...

It's like London buses used to be.

Exactly, you just want to come along then, three come along at the same time.

Not anymore, of course.

Not anymore, of course, no.

Look, we should start with your book.

For those who foolishly haven't had the chance to read it yet, just tell people what it's about and why you managed or wanted to find time and what I imagine is quite a busy schedule to read.

Yeah, so what this is not is a political memoir.

What I sought to do two Christmases ago when that Christmas was cancelled because of, you know, the hubris of Boris Johnson, the second Covid Christmas, I had some time between Christmas

Eve and New Year's Eve and spent the time breaking the back of this book and the book is called Breathe Tackling the Climate Emergency and it's my journey in relation to how I became interested in climate change, tackling climate change and air pollution, my journey in relation to being somebody who wasn't really that interested in this and why I'm so passionate about this. But also what I've tried to do is write the book as a useful handbook.

I've broken the book down into seven chapters and they're the seven obstacles all of us face when it comes to winning an argument on climate change, air pollution.

So it could be, you know, fatalism, there's nothing we can do about it, apathy, well, it doesn't really apply to me, cynicism, all your politicians are the same.

Prioritising things, actually something else is much more important than climate change.

Hostility, a vocal minority often make a lot of noise and you've been scared as a politician to that vocal minority.

The cost is really important, the jargon is a just transition and then gridlock.

And so there are seven obstacles that I faced over the last seven years and how I've responded and the outcome.

There's no doubt, I mean, you've in many ways made your mayoralty about or partly about or attached yourself to the signature issue and there's no doubt that you've been at the forefront of it by comparison to other cities and not just in Britain around the world.

But look, we both know your background, listeners will know your background, you know, son of a bus driver and so on.

You know just how profound the cost of living crisis is for people right now.

Food price inflation, you know, it's eye watering, bread, eggs, all of the sort of basics up not just at 20% but 30, 40, 50%.

You know what that's like, you've experienced that, you know, we're both from those sort of families who know what it's like, just how difficult it can be when prices are rising.

And yet you as mayor, as a progressive mayor, as a left of centre mayor are imposing a deeply regressive, effectively tax on Londoners and the poorest Londoners who are likely to have the most polluting vehicles.

How do you square that?

Because I know you will be concerned about it.

Well, let's unpack the various points that you've made in your question.

Half of Londoners don't own a car.

What that means is just like on a macro scale, those leaves responsible for climate change, some of the worst consequences, global south, on a micro scale, those leaves responsible for climate change and air pollution in our city, some of the consequences.

Half of Londoners don't own a car.

The poorest Londoners are least likely to own a car.

So this is an issue of social justice and racial justice.

Why do I say that?

Social justice because it's the poorest Londoners who, amongst those who die prematurely, 4,000 across our city, across our country, almost 36,000.

This is an issue of racial justice because families, black families, black Asian marital ethnic families live on the main roads where there's the worst pollutant air.

So this issue of racial justice, as well, you're rightly concerned about for poorest

Londoners.

So the good news is because of our policies, not only have we seen any remarkable transformation in the quality of air benefitting the poorest Londoners that we both you and I care about, but also the number of non-compliant vehicles, brackets, those that pay the charge, closed brackets, has gone from 6 out of 10 to now less than 1 out of 10.

So in central and in London, 94% of vehicles, compliant pay no charge.

In out of London, more than 9 out of 10 vehicles are now compliant.

So here's the remarkable thing.

You speak to experts at Imperial College or others from Great Elm Street to the Chief Medical Officer, to World Health Organization, they've never seen a policy so transformative to air quality, but I've also announced a further 110 million pounds of crapage scheme to support those Londoners who made this out.

Surely you will know that by extending you less, the ultra low emission zone, to the outer boroughs where the outer boroughs as you know, you know, public transport is often less intense and there are fewer public transport options and there will be an end in London.

You will know that inevitably there will be poorer Londoners and you can say the majority of this, majority of that, but there will be plenty of poorer Londoners who right at the point where the cost of living crisis, this crisis, which by the way, we thought that by August or September, when these changes are going to be made, perhaps these things would have abated, but it looks like core inflation is embedded in the system and you're going to make their life harder.

But let's do that. So let's deal just with Outer London, which is your question. So in Outer London, two-thirds of Londoners who have asthma or respiratory issues live in Outer London.

But why not just wait? Why not just postpone a bit of change?

Let me explain one. So two-thirds of those with asthma or respiratory issues live in Outer London. If you know what I was speaking 20 years ago, there'd be a mainstream group of politicians denying climate change, denying air pollution. They can no longer deny it what they do now is to seek to delay it. When's the right time to tackle climate change?

This is one of the chapters in my book called De-Prioritizing. We can't do with climate change air pollution because we've got COVID. The green crap inverted commas that George Osborne and David Cameron talked about because of austerity, had we kept inverted commas, the green crap, we'd be energy secure. The cost of living crisis would be less bad because people's bill would not have gone up as sharply when Putin invaded Ukraine. If we had, and if we do, and I'm hoping the next global government does, invest in retrofitting people's homes, insulation, double glazing, so forth, bills cut down. We invest in wind and solar, bills come down, and the same goes with tackling air pollution. The NHS saves money.

Those stuck in congestion are more productive because they're not stuck in congestion and families live longer lives. You're trying to do something unprecedented. Third term, Boris Johnson didn't stand. Ken Livingston tried several times, but he never achieved the third term. Lettuce poll says 50% of Londoners think you're not doing a good job.

How are you feeling about the election next year? It's going to be first pass the post for the first time. That changes the game, and we're seeing what happened with ID. Are you concerned about that, voter ID? Of course I'm concerned about the government moving the goalpost to try

to make it easier to win. Do you think they did that with first pass the post? Without a doubt. You speak to those close to Priti Patel, who was the home secretary obsessed with having a Tory back in London, they're around London for a year.

She just explained to people. So before, all the mayoral systems used the alternative vote, which meant that people gave their first and second preference, and that meant if no one got a majority, then their people's second preferences would be reallocated. So you had to get more than 50%. So the thinking behind the Tory movies, Labour and Tory are probably first and second. So the second preferences of the Lib Dems and the Greens are quite important because it's very unlikely any candidate will get more than 50% on the first round of voting. So you vote for a number one and then a number two. And now it's going to be first pass the post. Exactly. So the thinking behind the Tories, you know, extensively, you know, using a different context, Gerry Mandarin, is because if you're voting Lib Dems or Greens and in the last 24 years, Labour or Tory have come first, second, except when Ken was an independent, the thinking behind the Tories changing the electoral system is those Lib Dems who give me the second preference or the Greens who give me the second preference will not be able to do so. And so that's why I say moving the goalpost. And the second thing you mentioned is photo ID. So 2.5 million Londoners don't have a driving license, 500,000 Londoners don't have a passport. Many of them have limited means and will not be able to get the photo ID and many of them may live,

you know, lives where they're transient moving around and stuff. So the thesis is the government's doing these things to make it easier to win the election. But here's the thing about trying to rig your election, the other mayor elections. We've seen with photo ID evidence of conservatives here speaking to Republicans in the USA to find tricks to the same power. And this is just another trick they're trying to pull. But I think Londoners are smarter than that. And I'm hoping over the next, you know, 11, 12 months, I persuade enough Londoners to let me do that again

in 2024. Let's imagine you get that third term. And let's imagine if the current polls arrived that there's a Labour government at some point in 2024, early 2025. And let's look forward to the end of your third term. And that will roughly coincide with the end of that first Labour term. What would you expect? And what would you be asking for in terms of new powers, new changes? Because this will be a unique term for you. You've always worked, had to work with conservative governments. This time, you'd be working with a Labour government, a Labour Prime Minister. How do you think that would change the game? And what would you expect to get from

that government? Well, the most important change would be stability and certainty. You know, Ken had two Prime Ministers, Boris had two Prime Ministers, I've had five and counting, right? That's really important. And counting. That's real time. That's the first thing. The second thing is, you know, we're trying to lobby the Labour team to when they win the election, one of the first things they do is give power away, to devolve powers and resources to Great Manchester, Andy Burnham, to West Midlands, Andy Street, Torrey, Mayor, Tees Valley's Ben Halchin, Tracy Brebin in West Yorkshire, and of course to London as well. That devolution of powers is really important. So I'll give you an example. In London, we get to spend 7% of taxes raised in London, New York 50%, Tokyo 70%. That's that devolution of powers is really important and resources. That means, for example, we can address some of the crisis we face, whether it's the

housing crisis, building more genuine affordable homes. We've already started building more council homes than any time since the 70s, more completions of homes, more time than any time since the 30s.

We need to do much, much, much more on air quality. The government would hopefully support us in

relation to tackling climate change and air pollution. One of the five missions is around the net zero economy and Eddabilla Bands. Taking back empty properties, you talked about that.

Well, listen, I mean, we've got a situation in London where we know, according to experts, we need to be building, roughly speaking, 50,000 homes a year. When Johnson was a mayor, we were building 25,000. We're now up to 35,000. There's still a big gap between supply and demand.

And all these empty properties where even now, David Cameron first promised this in 2016, we're not fully aware who owns these properties, but they left empty.

I'm really interested in, I mean, earlier on, you were talking about the importance of leading and leadership and of being brave and not delaying and being clear. And you know, whether people like

you or they don't like you, and we talked about those polls and whatever, it's very clear, you know, you've made some unpopular or controversial decisions because you think it's right.

You could argue that that rather contrast with the approach that the current National Labour Party leadership is taking, right? I mean, that is, okay, they're far ahead in the polls,

people use the analogy of the Ming Vars, don't break it, don't smash it. But they're being kissed on as cautious, very cautious. He doesn't want to really say what he's going to do. He

doesn't want to potentially frighten the horses. I mean, do you think he should be a bit braver? I've done care for more than 25 years. I used to work together, I used to brief him quite a bit.

Keir is a leader that I trust. I think he's getting his strategy and tactics right. Why

do I say that? The general election, you said earlier on, could be 2025. It's a long way off,

18 months, according to most pundits. And so the issue is timing. The issue is to make sure that you peak at the right time. And the three steps of the process that Keir's embarked on, he's

really achieved the first two. The first step was to sort the Labour Party out, address the issues of Adam Simpson and so forth. The second step was to be in effective opposition. He's now

in his second or third prime minister, I'm not sure which one, to make sure the public knows what the Tories are about and to hold them to account tick. The third step is what you're

alluding to, which is the positive vision for our country. And he set out the five missions. And over the course of the next 18 months, you will see more detail of what the jargon we use as

politicians is the retail office. So Tony Blair's pledge card came quite late in the day.

Does that caution speak to the kind of moment that we're in? I mean, do you think Britain is a country in decline right now? I think we are. I think we are. Look at the economy, look at, you

know, culturally, look at socially in relation to whether you use GDP, whether you use inflation, you mentioned, whether it's you look at, you know, inward investment and so forth. I think the

country

is in decline. Didn't London's in decline? No, I think London is bounced back faster from the pandemic than any other global city. You know, you will see this summer amazing events in London

to attract more people. But the effect, I mean, you know what I'm getting at me.

Sporting capital of the world, where the cultural capital of the world.

I mean, Brexit has had a profound effect in London, hasn't it? And you've talked about that many times before. I mean, you hate what happened. Of course I do. Listen, I've had the neighbours, friends and colleagues who are Londoners, originally from Italy or Spain or Poland, who are heartbroken. They feel like they're not wanted here. They feel like they're foreigners. They're Londoners. Their kids are born in this city. I hate what it's done to them. I hate what it's done to, you know, the reputation of our country. But I respect the result. I hate, by the way, when Liverpool lose. But, you know, I accept that Liverpool lose sometimes. And so the point is, you know, we've got to make the best of this. That means the opposite of an extreme hard Brexit. You know, so I do believe we should talk about, you know, rejoining the single market. You can be a member of the single market outside the European Union, by the way. You know, if you look at the number of scenarios, being a member of the single market, being a member of the customs union, being a member of one or the other, or both, close alignment, all these things are far better for us economically and I think socially and culturally than what we have now, which is an extreme hard Brexit. Thinking about the mayoral election next year, there has been a few whispers, rumors that Jeremy Corbyn could stand. What would you think about that? Would you welcome him joining the race as an independent, perhaps? I think the more the merrier. I think about, you know, it's well, listen, I think that the joy of a democracy and the joy of pluralism is, you know, having a debate and an argument and a discussion. And the best person wins that and stuff. And that's one of the joys of our system. You beat him. You know, it's not, it's not a question of, you know, me beating him. It's a question of having the debate and the discussion. One of the things I've tried to do, which is hard for me, because of just the way I'm wired, is to not be as prejudiced as I normally am. You know, I tend to be tribal, right? Did you change in that way? I've tried to. I've really tried. And the book is all about how the way you deal with cynicism is by coalition building, by reaching across, by trying to build bridges, by trying to understand the other point of view. As a teenager, I hated Margaret Thatcher, her cabinet, what they did. And John Gummer was a big part of that. I think he's an amazing, amazing campaign. And what he's done on the Climate Change Committee and as Lord Debon. Chris Skidmore. Chris Skidmore was the guy that nominated Liz Truss. And I actually parked that for a second. Some of the stuff he's talking about and saying is incredibly brave. And the Green Party, Sean Berry and Jenny Jones and so forth. And so I think you've got to reach across more. And I think had I continued to be a parliamentarian, that the sort of nature of parliament makes it more difficult. Do you have a fantasy going back into parliament? No. Never? No. You rule out, you could never see circumstances in which you'd go back into. If the ball comes loose at the end of the box, I'll pass it sideways to care or somebody else. Really? Absolutely. Why? I think there's got to be no fantasy anymore. A number of things. One of the things about being in parliament, and listen, I wasn't just a minister, I was a whip. And so I understand this policy. People might forget, I mean, you really do go back quite a long way to the last Labour government, you were a minister. I was in Gordon's cabinet. Yeah, that's great. So I mean, I was a MP for 11 years and I was in the cabinet or shadow cabinet for six of those years. I was a minister or shadow minister for many years. And I had the pleasure of being part of Gordon's cabinet. But you know, there's a quote from an American mayor who said, and I'm paraphrasing, that the 19th century was

about empire. And the 20th century about nation states, the 21st century is about cities and mayors. And I think here's where the action is. And one of the things that I'm trying to say in the book is actually where the doers, whether it's, you know, New York or Paris or Barcelona or Ducca or Freetown or London or Manchester or Liverpool or Birmingham, where the doers. And I think governments, whether it's prime ministers, presidents or parliaments, they're the delays. I wonder if, you know, what you talk about, you're sort of changing your political personality, changing, you're becoming a bit less pugilistic, you wanting to reach across more. It's partly as a result of how your own experience of the sort of raw end of politics, I mean, you spoke about potentially of having some form of PTSD as a result of the death threats that you've had and so on. Do you think that's the case? And just tell people maybe about that, about that change and what you went through? One of the things I realized is actually, we often do stuff without realizing it makes us well. So you may not realize, but you walk into work, good exercise, right? Or you can't reach your base, good for your mental health or, you know, other things that you do. And so when you stop doing them, you realize that you need to do them. And I discovered a lot that during the pandemic. But we've suffered in the last seven years, I've been there, awful Grenfell Tower tragedy, you know, I went to so many funerals, 72 people's lives perished. I went to Christian funerals, Muslim funerals, secular funerals. I've still spent so much time with those families. We had four terror attacks in 2017 again, you know, going to funerals and services of those who passed away, both as an MP and as a mayor, you know, often meet brief families

who died because of violent crime within another pandemic. And amongst all that, we had Donald Trump and, you know, his stuff on social media and some of the stuff he said about me. And then I mean, to be clear, I mean, he harangued you repeatedly. He sort of constant kind of war of war. But independent experts, you know, have analyzed that whenever he had a pop up me, there was a massive spike in the hatred towards me on social media and in real life.

You got death threats, death threats. Yeah. You know, you know, without going to details, you know, I've got huge amount of protection and so forth.

You know, you've got terrorists around the world who, you know, pray me in aid for the stuff they do and so forth. What have I lived with?

Well, it has a toll. I mean, I'm quite stoic and I can deal with these things. But firstly, you realize actually you're not dealing with it. You think you are, but you're not. Secondly, it has an impact on people you love and care about because, you know, you may be as stoic as you like as a journalist, but when your mum reads an article about you, it affects your mum and upsets you as a consequence, right? I hear about it, believe me.

Yeah. By the way, you've got a great garden. Well, thank you very much.

So, but here's the point. And so it does impact you, right? In relation to these things. And I worry, Lewis, our gender, our sex doesn't talk about these things. It's macho. It's alpha male, you know, right, you know, I can imagine the form of me training in my boxing gym with my brother and the coach is saying, listen, I've got a bit of mental health today, what have happened. But now people are talking about it because hopefully people like me, people like Alistair Campbell, you know, Prince Harry, William, many, many others are talking about mental health and

we should encourage them. Is there a moment when you realize that this was deeply affecting you? You talked about PTSD. I mean, was there a moment? During the pandemic, I really felt

low during the pandemic. And actually, Alistair was a big source of help during the pandemic and many others. And the way our phrase is, I lost my mojo. What I mean by that is, you know, not shaving unless I had to, I was doing media broadcast, wearing, you know, jogging bombs through in the course of the day, I'd wear a white shirt because obviously in Zoom, the Zoom means you only look a bit smart and stuff. But you know, what I realized is, although I try and inspire my staff and my team, they inspire me. So you get something back, but also not getting back and having the sort of stuff being thrown at you, because you've not got the usual defensive mechanisms you have, which is discussing things with your team, talking things through and so forth. And you know, that's what I do now is I do things to keep myself physically fit, exercise, and so forth, and mentally fit. And that means, you know, the phrase is talking therapy. So I, you know, talk to somebody who's who's a doctor while playing tennis. So you kill two birds, but also it means I'm keeping myself physically fit and mentally fit. And I give this advice to not just you because you're very busy, but anybody, you know, you may think you're okay, and that's great. But just check that you'll continue to do the stuff that keeps you okay, whether it's mental fitness or physical fitness. Trump could come back. I mean, you're someone that hit me, he was sort of crazy obsessed with you. Listen, I think, I think, of course, he would come back. I'll make this point, you know, one of the tweets Trump said against me was, you know, with the hashtag stone cold loser. Well, I won my reelection. Right, we will be back with more from Sadiq Khan, right after this.

This is the news agents.

Welcome back. And Sadiq Khan is still with us. And Sadiq talked about your longevity. I mean, you are, I don't want to call you a veteran, because that's the sort of kiss of death being called a veteran. But you know, you have seen a lot of politics come and go since you were in parliament. Amazing. A lot of prime ministers come and go. What are your impressions about leadership? What have you learned about leadership during that time? I mean, watching those, I mean, what's it five prime ministers now, watching them up close as you obviously in Cobra meetings and things like that, particularly during the pandemic and before and since you saw them up close. What are your impressions of them? What have you, what have you learned? Or what have you, what have you changed your view about politics? One of the things I mentor a lot of people and always ask people, ask yourself the question, why are you running for this? Why are you running to be a counsellor? Why are you running to be an MP? Why are you running to be

the leader of your party? You're running to be mayor? I think a lot of these prime ministers didn't think through why they wanted to be the prime minister. Cameron, you thought he'd be good at it, not because he wanted to improve the country or whatever. Theresa May, I spent a lot of time with Theresa May and I kid you not, I haven't got a clue what she stands for, what she believes in. There are things I had with Theresa May where, that's five seconds silence, right? That's hard, where for two minutes, I try and play chicken in my head, so he'll see who speaks first, she won't speak. Why? Because she, I mean, I think that 2017 election was quite traumatic for her and I think basically, you know, she never bounced back from that and, you know, Gavin Baal, well, Gavin Baal was, you know, was the person doing the work in number 10 when I was there, you know, huge respect for

Gavin Baal, being the chief of staff and what he managed to do with Theresa May, kept going for

two years. Boris Johnson is somebody who, you know, wanted to be king of the world and became king

of the world or the prime minister and then we saw how that movie ended and it's still ongoing. Liz Truss, of course, the 49T. What was he like, Johnson, in the COVID meetings during the pandemic?

What was he like? So, during the early days of pandemic, Dominic Cummings knew his stuff, Johnson didn't. What's fascinating about that was we did a lot of work in London because we were speaking to, I was speaking to mayors around the world, so the mayor of Milan, the mayor of Seoul, because he went to the Far East first, East and Southeast Asia first, I went to Italy next and then when I first met Johnson and Cummings privately, it was quite clear we knew more than they did about what happened in, you know, South Korea, what happened in Italy and I beg to believe because they got the foreign office at their disposal, they got, you know, and they knew nothing about what's going on. Simple things like when I explained to them that actually we'd think about lockdown, other cities around the world were doing this and I explained to Johnson, listen, you know, you're a civil libertarian, I'm a human rights lawyer, if both of us are both saying the importance of lockdown, that I'll cut through, that I'll have, that I'll have people understand, it must be serious if we're both saying we're curtailing people's human rights and civil liberties, but he just wasn't, he hadn't engaged in these Cummings to be fair to Cummings had, Cummings have been thinking these things through and you could tell, I mean, honestly, if you were a Martian in that room, you'd think Cummings was the prime minister, not Johnson. I mean, that must have been pretty troubling at the time.

Absolutely, and so I was imploring Johnson, and this will come out during the inquiry, to take action, to go into lockdown. In advance of lockdown, you know, I'd encourage people to not travel in public transport, taking a huge risk. In advance of lockdown, we'd counsel St Patrick's Day and the London Marathon, in advance of lockdown, in advance of lockdown, I'd stop shaking hands, even though this guy was, you know, bragging about his virility by shaking hands and so forth. Do you think that he was the, of all the prime ministers you've seen, he was the sort of worst one that we could have had at that moment? Without a doubt. Without a doubt. I genuinely think that in relation to, Adam, I'm very careful what I say because of the public inquiry, but, you know, I think a few people may have died, had been a different prime minister.

I mean, briefly, I mean, trust was barely there at all, so I'm not sure if you really saw much of her up close. But Sunak, I mean, what are your impressions of him? I mean, he's a completely different character to Johnson. I mean, now you've got this working relationship, you will have him with him for at least the next 12 months or so. What are your impressions of him as a prime minister?

Well, firstly, you know, I'm incredibly proud that we've got an Asian prime minister.

Well, I was going to say, I mean, that must have happened.

It's a huge source of pride to me. We have, you know, a Hindu prime minister of Asian origin.

Even, I see why it's less important because it shows we're not one homogenous blob, right? We are diverse within, you know, ethnic origin and so forth. So that to me is a source of pride, parking all the knockabout stuff, you know, as need Hamza becoming First Minister in.

It's got also great about Hamza. He's SNP. So it just shows how diverse we are. You can be SNP, you can be Labour, you can be Tory. It just shows our diversity. When my dad first came here

and my dad first came here, they were presently with signs saying, you know, no blacks, no Irish, no dogs, by no blacks, it was anybody of colour. Their boy is the mayor of London. And, you know, Rishi is the prime minister, you know, and Hamza is the First Minister, and I says that they do Scottish Labour. But his thing about Sunak, you know, put aside that he looks like a supply teacher, he behaves like a supply teacher, not invest in relation to the children's education. Look, I love teachers. I've got family members who are teachers. The criticism of supply teachers is because by nature of the fact they're in there for a day, right, they're just trading water, aren't they? And I think Sunak's not thought through why he wants to be prime minister, what he wants to do. And he's weak. He is weak. You just see this week, we're having this conversation

with Swalla Brafman. What's what's Sunak's view on Swalla Brafman? Nobody knows, because he's weak to have a view, because he's he's wanting to see which way his back benches go and, you know, what people are saying, what his whips are advising. Look at Johnson, you'd have thought Sunak could have a view on Johnson in relation to, let me just be clear, the cabinet office have referred papers to two police forces because of what they saw in Johnson's diary. What's the prime minister's view on that? Bear in mind, three words he used when he stood on the doors of Dining Street. And he's weak. And this sort of stuff comes from the top, whether it's Johnson partying that affects the ethos of those in number 10, those across government, or Sunak being weak and has been rudderless. And I tell you this, if you are thinking about investing in the UK, if you're thinking about doing business in the UK, you're worried about this weak leadership, because you're not sure if they're going to change their policies or what they're going to do. And that's one of the reasons why I think, you know, bring on a general election, because I think the British public should have a choice of a fresh start. And in my view, that should be Kerstarmer. And his government employs Swalla Brafman. And he has Swalla Brafman as his home secretary. And she talks, her home secretary talks about an invasion of people.

I mean, in one sense, you just talked about it, you referenced it, we've got this British Asian prime minister, we've taken an enormous step forward. And yet it feels to me, I don't know how it feels to you, as if the rhetoric that characterizes politics has gone backwards. I mean, how do you feel about that when you hear phrases like that from the home secretary?

I think a number of things happened around 2015, 2016, which is a mainstream and a normalizing of stuff I thought had been gone forever. I'm not just talking about the fact that I thought the P word, the N word, the Y word were gone from from use in the English language in this country. It's now come back people are using it, but also the use of words like invasion, when it comes to immigration asylum seekers, refugees from people who should know better, not just from personal experience, but from being mainstream politicians.

And I think you'll be really careful with language. Look, I'm somebody and I say this with rural experience, who has police officers protecting me 24 hours a day, seven days a week because of the use of words, leading to others acting those words, right? So words matter and use of words matter. You saw it in Noseley outside the hotel where asylum seekers fleeing persecution were being housed, police fans being fire bombed and so forth. You've seen the increase in race tax in this country. I think words do matter. And by the way, those sorts of words, if you go back in history, they're not usually words used by mainstream political parties. They use by peripheral parties. And I think I think we should all be careful about use of language. And if you're in a position of power and influence and have

the medium or the media or the fall of the House of Commons, be very careful. I use that. When we look back on the Sadiq Khan, the Sadiq Khan, this man, this son of a bus driver, Europe's first Muslim mayor, how would you like to be remembered?

I think being remembered or the L word, the legacy word is what you talk about towards the end of your career. I'm just, I'm just getting going, Lewis. The phrase that I use is the London promise. You work hard. You got to help in hand. You can achieve anything. And, you know, what I want to do as long as I've got the privilege of being mayor is to give more people that help in hand. Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London. Thank you very much.

Thanks for coming about. See you next week.

Well, I thought that was fascinating. One of the interesting things about Khan is that, as he said himself, he has gone on a journey. He's evolved both in terms of his politics and his personality. And fascinating to hear him say, as Andy Burnham has said, that Westminster for him is just no longer where the action is. The devolution settlement, the creation of these numeralities for the big cities has been one of the biggest structural changes to the balance of power in English politics. And though right now they still don't have that much power, incrementally, it feels as if that will change. If there is a Labour government, how he and Burnham, in particular, will interact with that government, the inevitable tensions as it was with Johnson and Cameron will be one of the most interesting subplots of the politics of the second half of this decade. It is also, if we're to take Stammer at his word, that he wants to devolve more, give more responsibility to mayors and local areas, potentially one of the ways an incoming Labour government without much money could be most innovative and transformative.

It is a really interesting bit of politics to come. We'll be back just after this.

Right, that is it from all of us for this week. John and Emily, not here. You'll have noticed they're off sunning themselves, Singapore sling in one hand, bucket and spade in the other, for an early bank holiday weekend. Remember, you can catch up on all of our shows from this week on Global Player and send us story tips and feedback to newsagents at global.com. Thanks to our production. Team on the newsagents, Gabriel Radis, Laura Fitzpatrick, Ellie Clifford, Georgia Fox, Will Gibson-Smith, Alex Barnett and Roy Simon. Our editor is Tom Hughes and our executive producer is Dino Sophos. It's presented by Emily Merlis, John, Sopol and me. Lewis Goodall. We'll see you on Tuesday. Have a lovely bank holiday weekend. This has been a Global Player original podcast and a Persephoneka production.