

**[Transcript] The News Agents / Suella's asylum plan - why dozens of Tory MPs aren't backing it.**

I'm going to say this name only once after using it multiple times over the past few days because the firework display caused by one tweet from Gary Lineker was over a very specific issue and that was the bill to stop the small boats coming to parliament which he described as cruel and last night it arrived in parliament this piece of legislation and it's going to be pushed through at breakneck speed but very quickly protestors had gathered outside.

So today we're going to take you inside what that bill really tells us. Big questions about whether or not it's actually legal. Big questions about what you would do with minors, with children, with pregnant women who arrived here and whether they would be incarcerated under the 28-day plan. Big questions about the Rwanda process which Soella Brafman keeps holding up as the solution which we know has not yet worked and has been subject to legal appeal. So today we're going to take you inside that bill and tell you what's actually going on. Welcome to the news agents.

It's John.

It's Emily.

And it's Lewis.

And last night one of us was doing a charity event, made less. One of us was having dinner with his daughter, Soaple, and one of us was watching the unedited highlights of the debate in the House of Commons. One Lewis Goodall in a surprise development. No one had seen that coming.

It wasn't the highlights. It was live.

Three hours pausing.

Yeah, exactly. This is my match of the day, seriously.

If you don't watch it live then you miss out all those little points of order and all the best bits that everyone misses. Look, this was actually a really, really interesting debate because it was the first time that MPs had had a chance to digest properly exactly the enormity of what is in the government's illegal migration bill. And I think it is just worth at the very top of this, just going through, reminding ourselves as to what the principles articulated are in it. Basically, as long as someone has arrived in the UK irregularly through small boats or whatever, on or after the 7th of March, meaning the bill is retrospective, then the Home Secretary will be able, as soon as the bill is passed, must, in fact, not just be able, must remove them as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Home Secretary is not required to remove unaccompanied children, but has the power to make arrangements for their removal as soon as they turn 18. So they could have been here theoretically since they were one or two. They could actually be born here, but as soon as they turn 18, the Home Secretary must remove them.

The bill allows a person to challenge their removal by arguing that there could be a real risk of serious, irreversible harm if they were sent to wherever they're being sent.

They will have a week to bring that notice. However, no formal process is established in the bill, as no Home Office asylum interview will take place. The bill will disqualify potential victims of slavery or human trafficking from protection from removal, and all other legal challenges to removal, including those on human rights grounds, would only be considered by the UK courts after a person's removal from the UK. So this, taken altogether, is

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by far and away the most severe, the most draconian set of border, for want of a better expression, immigration measures that any government has introduced or proposed in modern history.

And I think it's worth saying that it's not only draconian, but authoritarian, on the part of the Home Secretary herself. Because what she has set out here is a way of narrowing the number of challenges and appeals. So it puts more power into the hands of the Home Secretary herself. So to stand back from that, what does it mean? Well, normally, if you introduce a bill, you can say, right, there might be legal challenges, there might be court challenges, there might be individual human rights challenges, and those will go through the process. If when you set out your bill, you specifically try and narrow the chance that people have to even call any of it into question, because that's what the bill is signed up to, then you're shutting down any kind of appeals process. And that's where she wants us to go. She thinks that there has been too much delay and too much procrastination and too much, if you like, argument on the other side of those seeking refuge to get anything done.

So it's worth hearing from Swela Brahman now, because in past incarnations, she's talked about the tofu-eating Wokorati, she's talked about the invasion, she's talked about the hundred million people who are on their way to the UK right now, and she was on similar bellicose form last night.

I don't know how far it advances parliamentary debate, but I mean, it's of a piece with Rishi Sunak last week talking about lefty lawyers. But Emily, you were saying a moment ago that she wants to accrue more and more powers for herself and limit the amount of time that other people can have to stop it. She's also trying, just in legislative terms, trying to railroad this through parliament faster than a rubber inflatable dinghy with a big outboard motor on it. And that means, of course, there is not going to be the time for a mass amount of scrutiny.

No, indeed, the Institute for Government has estimated that it will take about 15 days. Now we've kind of been used to in the last few years, governments have had to legislate at speed. They did it over Brexit because there was a ticking clock. Obviously they did so over COVID because there were obvious medical, virological reasons that they had to move at speed. But 15 days of parliamentary scrutiny for a bill, which as the UNHCR has said, effectively acts as a prohibition on claiming asylum unless invited by the British government to do so is extraordinary. And there are just huge questions about how practically this bill could ever work. So as Emily has already alluded to, the centrepiece of this bill, if you're not allowing these people to stay in the UK under any circumstances, they know they can't send them back to places like Yemen, Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan. Last year, 46% of all arrivals were from those countries, by the way. So you have to have somewhere to send them. They say they can't stay in the UK. So the answer to that from Soella Braverman is Rwanda. We all know that is mired in legal controversy. Rwanda itself probably only has capacity, as they have said, for 200 or so, at least to begin with. But here is Soella Braverman talking about people's criticism of the Rwanda element. Listen to this.

Crucially, if people are truly in need of protection, they will receive protection in Rwanda. Now,

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critics overwhelmingly fail to acknowledge this fact. Let's be clear. Rwanda is a dynamic country with a thriving economy. I've enjoyed visiting myself twice before, and I look forward to visiting again.

Well, yeah, I'm sure Rwanda is lovely to visit. When you fly business class, when you get off and you go to a five-star hotel, it's not quite the same thing.

It's the Caribbean.

Yeah.

Fantastic weather most of the year. Exactly, right? And also, that actually speaks to one of the fundamental problems with the government's line on this, right? Which is that, which is it? Is Rwanda actually a fantastic place where you can go and rebuild your life, thrive in economy? And it is quite funny here, the government minister basically be like, it's great. They've got a growing economy. You can get jobs basically saying, it's better than here. It's actually like really quite nice. Is it all of that? Or it actually is it a massive deterrent? Because it's got to be one or the other. Because the whole premise of what the government is saying is that people won't come. The pull factors will be reduced because people think, God, I'll end up in Rwanda. But which is it? That's not to mention, by the way, the more rehearsed arguments around, you know, she's saying it's a safe place to go to. Well, not if you're LGBT, it's probably not amongst other things. So that continues to be a huge question mark, which frankly, the government has no answers on right.

But also your point about the numbers that they are have the capacity to take. If it is a couple of hundred, and we are talking tens of thousands of people arriving in small boats, it's a pinprick in the numbers.

But that would be 200 more than have gone so far because they haven't managed to send anyone there. And I think it's worth going back to this question of legality as well, because the whole debate last night opened with the Labour MP, Clive Lewis, saying, look, the government's already told us they've already admitted this might be illegal. Why are we having a debate about this bill? To which the answer from Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary, was this.

Times that this bill will breach our refugee convention obligations are simply fatuous. The Convention obliges parties to provide protection to those seeking refuge. It does not require that this protection be in the UK. Illegal arrivals requiring protection will receive it in a safe third country such as Rwanda.

So again, it all comes back to Rwanda. What she's saying is, oh no, the UN, the United Nations Convention on Refugees, doesn't say you have to help people in Britain. It just says you have to help people. So we thought of Rwanda, but as discussed, nobody has yet gone to Rwanda. And I think the complicated area for Labour on this is whether they call this out as unworkable or inhumane, because at the moment they're sort of fudging exactly what they're saying. They're kind of saying, oh, you haven't sent anyone to Rwanda, as if that's a problem. And they're also saying, but that's a terrible thing to do. Look at pregnant women, look at children, look at all the duty of care that we as a civilised and sophisticated and caring country have. So I don't think Labour has quite answered that question either.

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The thing is, it's actually really hard to know where to begin with this bill. I mean, so many of its provisions are, if you take them through to their logical end point, so absurd. I mean, for example, what the government is basically proposing to do here is to remove anyone's right who arrives illegally to access the UK asylum system. Right now, the rule basically is, is that if you are in the system for like six months or so, irrespective of what is happening to you, you can start your asylum claim, you can start to take it through. That right will essentially be removed because the Home Secretary will empower herself so much and take so much power away from the courts to allow that process to be started. But then that leads to the obvious next point, right, which is, well, you're taking away people's right to access the asylum system. You're saying that they can go somewhere like Rwanda, but if Rwanda doesn't happen, all you're actually doing is creating a backlog that can never, ever be filled. There will be nowhere for these people to go. They won't be able to access the asylum system. They will just be in perpetual limbo in Britain unable to work, unable to become part of society, unable to get refugee status. And all that will do is create a massive incentive for those people to disappear.

What she's really trying to say is don't come. I mean, that's, that's what they want the message to be. Please don't come. But just saying, please don't come isn't going to work there.

I suppose their argument will be, well, if you people know for a fact that they can never access the UK asylum system under any circumstances, then they won't come. But then that always goes back to the same point, which is that's only if you assume that those people A are choosing to come, which actually, again, the Home Office has never released or published its evidence being asked to do so many, many times. They haven't published any evidence since 2002 about the reasons why people choose to come. And it presupposes that, frankly, these people, as I say, can't just disappear into the UK work system because we don't have ID cards and all those arguments and so on.

And Lewis, what's so interesting about what you've just said is, of course, it's not just the Labour Party that are making these kind of arguments. There are many conservatives who understand the difficulties and how problematic this proposed legislation is. And they also have reservations about it. So how many conservatives voted against it last night answer none, although

40 did not vote for it. So they kind of abstained on the vote. One of them, the former Prime Minister, who has made people trafficking one of her central concerns since leaving office, said this, Theresa May.

The UK has always welcomed those who are fleeing persecution, regardless of whether they come through a safe and legal route. By definition, someone fleeing for their life will more often than not be unable to access a legal route. I don't think it's enough to say we will meet our requirements by sending people to claim asylum in Rwanda. And this matters because of the reputation of the UK on the world stage. And that matters because the UK's ability to play a role internationally is based on our reputation, not because we are British, but because of what we stand for and what we do.

I mean, it seems if you are convinced that there are things that are so structurally wrong with this bill that you decide to speak out in Parliament, and then you don't vote

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against when it gets to the vote, and there were 43 to be absolutely precise conservative MPs who found themselves in that position last night.

Then you have to wonder, well, I've heard one MP say, look, I'll look at the detail.

This was just an indicative vote last night. You know, I'll look at the detail and then maybe I would vote against if my concerns aren't answered. But you sense that if they wanted to halt it, last night was the opportunity.

Well, let us give you the government's perspective on this, the government's point of view, because they will argue, and indeed the Home Secretary argued last night, that there are safe routes and that's what they want asylum seekers to use.

And Suella Braverman was talking about the 150,000 who'd come through a safe route from Hong Kong. We know that they've given out half a million visas to Ukrainians in brackets.

Those probably aren't people who are going to stay forever. They are people on visas who will probably want to return to their country soon as they can. When they talk about the Afghan safe route, it's interesting to look at the actual numbers because that's only 25,000. So all this talk of having a safe route from Afghanistan, it has not worked.

They cannot get people out of Afghanistan safely to here. And also, the use of a safe route involves preparation and paperwork and administration. And if you are desperate, if you're fleeing for your life, you're not going to sit there doing the paperwork. And I think it's interesting to hear, as you were saying, some of the conservative MPs saying, if there was a female Afghan judge who was trying to make a safe route here, she'd be allowed in, right? But if that same female Afghan judge doesn't have time to fill out the papers because somebody's coming after her and her family and she jumps in a boat or she tries to get here, what's the answer? We lock them up. We send them home.

She literally would not be allowed. She wouldn't be allowed.

She wouldn't be allowed to access our asylum system.

What if you are an Iranian woman who's been part of the protests, are wanted by the Iranian police? Completely. There is no path. There is no way you can find yourself, even though you are fleeing likely life imprisonment in Iran, because you have dared to say, I don't need to wear a hijab. There is no path. There is no route.

But, John, I think you talking about Theresa May, I think you could see last night. Yeah, no one voted against it. I think they will have more difficulty when it comes to the committee stage and amendments start to be putting down. You can imagine this legislation ended up in quite a different form. But look, what I thought looking at Theresa May last night, yes, someone who, when she was Home Secretary, did pioneer modern slavery legislation, some of the first of its kind in the world. But look, Theresa May was no slouch on immigration or our borders by any stretch of the imagination. Many people thought she was authoritarian and all these sorts of things. But I think what you could see for her and a phalanx of other small group, but not the less significant group of conservative MPs, is that the Conservative Party has changed around it in the last few years. I don't think this legislation would have been proposed, certainly 10 years ago, even possibly five years ago. The party has moved in a far more draconian direction on these matters. And you could see Theresa May and others feeling uncomfortable with that. It's not that they've changed, the party has changed. OK, let me ask you something. Has the party

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moved the public with their use of rhetoric and the way that they've sold this policy, or has the public brought the Conservative Party, the government over onto their side? I don't know what that is. I think part of the answer there is that the manifestation, the visual manifestation of the problem has changed. So in fairness, five to 10 years ago, although we've always had to some extent a problem with so-called irregular migration, it just wasn't visible in the same way. It was through lorries and so on. This is turning up on the front pages, day after day, on the beaches, photographs of it. So it's definitely had a sort of radicalising effect and it's charged it enormously. But I think to some extent, you know, it also plays into it is part of the direction, the kind of ideological direction the Conservative Party has gone in as well. And yet, you know, I can totally see from their point of view, electorate in terms of their coalition, they need to be seen to be doing something about it. The point is with this, though, is that they are, as we've talked about before in this show, they're setting themselves up to fail, because quite frankly, this bill is just not going to work. Well, Lewis, I mean, let me ask you a different question, which is this. David Cameron promised a referendum on whether we would stay in the European Union and we all know what the result was. He promised it when he was in a coalition and never thought that the Tories would win a majority and ever be in a position to deliver on it, where there would have to be a referendum. And suddenly the Tories win the election and oh my word, I suppose I've got to have this referendum and he loses and loses the premiership. The Tories in a way now, hoping that this bill never goes on to the statute book, because they also think, oh my God, if we have to ever have to enact this, it would be chaos and we'd probably disappoint people along the way. And then you can blame it on the courts, you blame it on whoever you like, want to say, well, we tried to get tough legislation. We're talking about it. We've got a three-word slogan back. It's on the lectern. Yeah, we've got stop the boats. We've got the slogan, but we never have to deliver on it. Well, I'll tell you one thing it would do. And this is why it is sort of slightly odd in a way. If they press ahead with its current form, it will completely undermine so much of what Sunak is trying to do on the European front and trying to reestablish and put back in order the government and the UK's relationship with the European Union, because the EU have been absolutely clear that, first of all, they're very concerned about the contents of this bill. And they're very concerned about any potential move that we should try and move away from the European Convention on Human Rights. So it would destabilize exactly the moment that Sunak is trying to, as I say, inject order back into this, it would destabilize that situation. And there are just so many other just practical things. I mean, if you look at what the Children's Commissioner has said about this, so I'm concerned that while unaccompanied children are exempted from the duty to remove, the Secretary of State would be able to make arrangements for their removal before they can claim asylum at the moment they turn 18. This is a violation of their rights. It is likely to dramatically increase the number of children going missing as they fear what will happen on their 18th birthday. That is not to mention where they could end up and the sorts of people they could end up with. It's already happened. Let's not forget the hundreds of missing migrant children that have still not been accounted for in this country. And this was a point raised about two months ago. We do not know where those kids are. Why isn't there an absolute

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national emergency, an absolute manhunt, searching for the missing children who, to all intents and purposes, are probably part of the modern slavery problem right now?

We'll be back in a moment with pretty alarming accusations about the number of police who have been accused of violence against women and the poultry number who have faced the consequences as a result. Welcome back. As sometimes we do on the news agents, we're going to give you some numbers. More than 1,500 police officers have been accused of violent offences against women and girls over a period of six months. Fewer than 1% have been sacked. There were over 1,483 unique allegations against 1,539 police officers or 0.7% of the workforce. Just over half the cases were conduct matters, which are usually raised by a colleague within the force. The remaining 45% were complaints from the public. And the number of police who were dismissed as a result, let's not put a number on it. Let's just say it is

miniscule. Actually, let's put a number on it because

there were 1,500 police officers who faced accusations, 13 were dismissed as a result.

And that was so stark. I had to read that paragraph about four times to make sure I hadn't misread that. And this load of statistics takes place over the period of October 2021 for six months. That was just a six-month period. And when I went back, I realised that it was six months after the murder of Sarah Everard. And I'm talking to women at the moment whose timeline is full, you know, the way sort of Facebook in your picture, memories brings back the photos of what you were doing two years ago this month. And actually a lot of us were thinking about Sarah Everard and the vigil. And I remember specifically asking if I was able to go to that vigil when I was working in my last job and being told actually, you know, there were COVID breaches and all the rest of it, so to stay away. But it was a time for many women where we felt desperately scared and desperately unhappy, but also desperately

hopeful that something would change, that no one could ever not take violence within the police force seriously again after the murder of Sarah Everard. And what this set of numbers tells us is that we were mistaken, we were naive, because the counting started six months on and look at it, only 13 officers were sacked. And of course, it just raises that awful question. If you can't trust the police to help you, who the hell can you trust? Well, let's talk now to Diana Johnson. She is the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee. The Home Affairs Select Committee has a role in scrutinising what the police are doing, anything to do with the Home Office brief they're examining. And Diana, just when you look at these numbers, are they as horrific as they seem?

I think they are shocking. And that's one of the reasons why the Home Affairs Select Committee has an inquiry at the moment into policing. And in fact, tomorrow we've got in front of us various witnesses to come and talk to us about these types of figures and what is going on with the police, the culture that allows the discrimination, the misogyny, the sexism that exists in police forces. And we know the inspectorate in their inquiry at the end of last year said misogyny and sexism is there in police forces. And in some police forces it's very prevalent. So in a way, they're shocking figures, but they're not surprising. These figures, the counting started six months after the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving policeman. I'm just wondering how you can even begin to understand the culture in the force that says, oh, don't worry about that. Oh, let's overlook that. Oh, I wouldn't report

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that. I mean, what do you think is happening there? Is this about police covering up for each other? Or is it that they simply don't recognise what they're turning a blind eye to?

Well, I think it's probably a combination of all those things. I think that the police force is institutionally sexist, actually. I think that's my view now, having looked at what's been going on in the Met and other police forces. I think there's a real problem with the institution of policing. And it's being recognised. And I think that's good. And I'm looking forward to what Baroness Louise Casey has to say about her inquiry into the Met, where she's looking at culture and what's been allowed to happen. And I think it's interesting just in the interim report that Baroness Casey produced, where she talks about gross misconduct, the threshold to get gross misconduct has been increased and increased and increased. So actually, over the last few years, less officers have actually been dismissed for gross misconduct. And that's why it's good. Some art role is going back and looking at those cases and looking at actually whether there's been a tolerance of behaviour that should have been called out, that should have resulted in officers being dismissed from the force. So I think it's a whole combination of things. It's not going to be easy to solve this. But at least there's a tension on it now and there's statistics and we can see what's actually happening.

So let me just get this right, because two decades ago, we heard the McPherson report call out the police force for being institutionally racist. Now we've got the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee saying the police are institutionally sexist. Does that mean that the force is broken?

Well, I'm saying that as the chair of the committee. That's my personal view. I think there's a huge piece of work that needs to be done around policing. I mean, that's one of the reasons why we're looking at it, particularly on the Home Affairs Select Committee at the moment, because policing has changed enormously over the last 20, 30, 40 years. And I think that issues around misogyny and sexism have never been properly addressed in the police. It's really important that now male violence against women and girls is a policing priority. So it has to be given the same weight in policing as terrorism and serious organised crime. But that's all very new. And I think there is a huge piece of work to do in policing across the piece about how they treat women, how they treat women officers and staff in the police, their attitudes to certain crimes that involve women. And I've been talking a lot recently about indecent exposure. And I think that hasn't been given the attention it needs by the police. So there's a whole big piece of work that the police need to do about how their culture will be going forward, how they will treat women, how they will treat women victims in particular, and how they treat their staff and who actually we have going into police forces. Who is it that we want to have serving as police officers? Because there are real questions about whether our vetting procedures pick up on those officers who really should be nowhere near the police. What some people might say is that this is the police protecting each other, just as if you get pulled over, you're drunk driving, you happen to show your police card, you're more likely to be told, you know what, why don't you park the car here and get a taxi home? Whereas if you weren't a member of the police, you'd be done and you'd lose your license. Is it that as well that feeds into



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this, the closing of ranks? I think there's probably some of that. And I think the tolerance within the workplace of behaviour that is totally unacceptable is part of the institutional problem that the police have. So, you know, we had very recently the inquiry into the Sharon Cross police station, the WhatsApp messages that were going between officers, the racism, the sexism, the misogyny, the homophobia, that was part of that conversation that officers

were having with each other. And the lack of supervision, that was another issue about what culture was allowed to develop. So, I think there is something about a tolerance of behaviour that, in 2023, is completely unacceptable, is not something that should be tolerated. And when people come forward to report it, those whistleblowers also need to be protected by the police, because in the past we know when people have stepped up and said, this isn't right, this isn't acceptable, they've often found themselves then either moved sideways or the complaints that they're raising dismissed as trivial or not something that the police need to investigate.

Dana, can I take you back to your phrase, indecent exposure, which could quite frankly sound like hypothermia. Don't you think we need to find a way of calling out what's happening? It's sexual assault. Do we need to change the language around how we describe men who threaten women literally by appearing naked in front of them?

Yes, you're absolutely right. And of course, I use the word indecent exposure, but the phrase that's often used is flashing. And flashing sounds kind of jokey and it's not seen as a very serious thing. And I think that's part of the problem, the language that we use. And at the moment, indecent exposure is described as low-level sexual offending. It's described as non-contact sexual offending. So, it kind of diminishes the actual trauma that a victim...

What would you call it then? I mean, if you're going to take it seriously, you have to be prepared to describe to people what it is.

Yes, you're absolutely right. And perhaps we do need to look at a better definition for what this is, because it is male violence. I mean, it's male violence against women. That's what it is. And it's using a male body, a male body part, to intimidate, to threaten a woman or a girl. And what we also know is it's often younger women that this happens to. I mean, it happens throughout a woman's life. And most of the women I know would say at some point in their life, a man has done this, has either sat on a bus or a tube and masturbated in front of them, or at the school gate or by a six-form college. So, there is a real issue. This is something that happens to most women in their lives. And I think you'd be hard-pressed to find a woman who hadn't had this experience. But it is violence. It's violence against women. And it is about intimidation and threatening women.

Is there any shred of encouragement in the wake of Sarah Everard, that I suspect before Sarah Everard, we would never have seen the compilation of statistics like this. This is a direct consequence of what has happened. And therefore that maybe we are seeing a turning point in what is maybe not in attitudes yet. That takes a long time. But in what the public will see as acceptable. I think that's absolutely right. And I think there is a watershed moment around that dreadful case of Sarah Everard. But also recently we've had David Carrick, who was a very long-serving officer in the Met, and what came out about the failures

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of the Met to deal with him when complaints were being made over a number of years. And I have to say that Sir Mark Rowley has made it clear. He wants to clean house. He wants to get the Met sorted in terms of officers who really should not be in the Metropolitan Police. And the compiling, as you say, of statistics. So we can see what's going on. How many police officers are being disciplined? How many police officers are being dismissed? This is all really important work in trying to rebuild the trust that the police have a problem with trust, particularly, I think, with women and girls at the moment. Because we want to know that if something horrible happens to us, if a crime is committed and we go to the police, we are going to be helped and supported, and action is going to be taken. We're not going to be dismissed or even police officers preying on women coming forward and reporting crimes, as we know happens. So this is the start of something, but there is a very long way to go. I also want to say as well that we know there are many, many, many police officers who do an exceptional job, who do not in any way tolerate this type of behaviour. So we do need to recognise that. But I think there is a problem culturally with the institution of policing.

Diana, a couple of months ago, we interviewed Keir Starmer and he talked about Root and Branch reform of the Met. I mean, does the Met need to start again? Does it need to change its name just like the RUC became the Police Service of Northern Ireland? And what do you think is needed here?

Well, that's a very big question. Obviously, we have a new commissioner in place and I think he is doing a good job. We've got the second part of Baroness Casey's inquiry into the culture and what's happening in the Met. And I think that's due quite soon. So it'll be interesting to see what she has to say. Of course, the Met is in special measures at the moment because of what's gone on, not just around its culture, but around its delivery in terms of tackling crime, making Londoners feel safe. So it will be interesting as well what the inspectorate have to say about the progress the Met are making. I've certainly questioned in the past whether all the duties and responsibilities at the Met have, not only to keep Londoners safe and to deal with crime in London, but their national responsibilities around counterterrorism, whether that needs to be looked at and whether we need to hived that off. Now, most people say to me, no, they do that part of their work very well in terms of the counterterrorism. But there is an issue about the way London is pleased. And I think there are questions to be asked. We haven't, as a committee, come to a view on that, but we're certainly looking at the Met and looking at what Sir Mark Rowley is doing at the moment. OK, Diana Johnson, thank you so much for being with us. And I thought really fascinating few lines in there, didn't you, about, I mean, institutionally sexist, and you picking up from, you know, the report which said the Met was institutionally racist, and now we've got institutional sexism to add to it.

I think that's quite important because I think if you keep saying a few bad apples here, a few bad apples there, you never ever get to the cause, right? Which is exactly as Diana explained exactly as you said, if basically the people that are running the Met do not think that these crimes sound like crimes, then nothing will change. And then there is an acceptance and then there is a tolerance. And I think by calling out the sexism within it, obviously with the exception of all the great police officers who do much better.

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But if you call it out as a problem within the whole system, then it tells you it's not a few bed apples. It's something that fundamentally has to change in the way the training works, in the way that you call out your colleagues, in the way that if you have to blow the whistle, you get listened to. And I think that is a major step.

I just wonder whether in the police force, it is going to go through what other institutions have been through and is sort of, I don't know, 20, 30 years behind the zeitgeist. I mean, look, you know, what language was acceptable in a newsroom when I started is totally not acceptable today. And attitudes have changed fundamentally. And if you look at attitudes towards homosexuality in particular, which have just dramatically shifted, but yet in the police force still seems to be kind of lagging behind. But since Sarah Everard, I think Diana Johnson said it has been a wake up call. It may well be a watershed moment that actually now there is a recognition that this needs to be challenged and challenged right pretty toughly. And I think I think the language point is really important as well, because she's absolutely right. You know, we grew up sort of joking about flashing like flashing was sort of like, Oh, if you got your skirt tucked into your, you know, your knickers, Oh, what are you doing? You flashing? It was always a sort of slightly jokey thing. What she called out then was male violence, right? And I think that puts it in a totally different category. And I think for a long time, we've assumed that violence has to be tactile, it has to be contact between two people. And yet if a man is sitting on a bus masturbating in front of a young woman, or if a young woman is receiving pictures unsolicited of male genitalia, that is an act of violence. That is an act of aggression. And I think once you start changing the language around it and not kind of talking about flashing as if it was this slightly funny thing where, you know, somebody got their skirt caught in their knickers or whatever, once you actually call it out for what it is, then it's taken more seriously as a crime. And then you'd hope the sentencing befits the crime. And there is so much talk now about how these acts, these what we might have called microaggressions, are a gateway. They are a gateway to more male violence, whether that is assault, whether it is rape, it's exactly what happened to Sarah Everard. We know that Wayne Cousins was a man who exposed himself. Actually, if he'd been caught in the early days, I can't even bear to think of the different ending that story might have had. We'll be back in just a moment.

This is The Newsagents.

It's been pretty serious there today, but that's okay. There are going to be a lot of laughs tomorrow. It's the budget. That was my gag. You stole my gag, John, so far. Not for the first time. Well, it won't be the last time, either. And I think one of the hallmarks of The Newsagents is we all steal each other's jokes and each other's best lines.

Mate, I said that. Honest to God.

By now. Oh, no, not by for now. Go on.

No, I was just going to say, I'm looking forward. You know, just going back to what we said at the start, I'm looking forward to one of the parliamentary highlights of the year.

It will be gag-tastic. You can read that word in one of two ways, of course, depending on your persuasion.

Monday night was four hours watching a parliamentary debate and the excitement building.

**[Transcript] The News Agents / Suella's asylum plan - why dozens of Tory MPs aren't backing it.**

Technically, it's five days of budget debate.

Exactly.

Exactly.

We should flag up possibly that we have Jeremy Hunt joining us very early on Thursday morning. So all the things that you hear about in the budget that you don't understand or maybe don't believe or don't like, tell us and we can put them to him.

Bit budget trivia, John. You probably know this, but you probably both know this. What was the drink that the chancellor used to have on budget day?

Milk.

And then it was abolished by, as in they stopped doing it. Oh, I would probably Gordon Brown. It was Gordon Brown.

Well, Shant always used to have a small glass of whiskey to go through budget day. Ken Clark was the last one, predictably enough to do it. Just like us on the news agents, of course.

Daboni and Lemonade for Emily Maitlis.

I went to see Ken Clark when he was Secretary of State for Health and you walked into his office and there was just a cloud of cigar smoke resurrected by Toretz Coffee, of course.

In the Health Secretary's office.

Good. Well, on that. We'll be back tomorrow.

Bye.

Bye.

Bye-bye.

This has been a global player, original podcast and a Persephoneka production.