

[Transcript] The News Agents / The (sexist, racist, homophobic) Met Police

This is a Global Player Original Podcast.

This is Louise Casey.

She's the author of the Casey Review, published today, into the Metropolitan Police Force. She's describing here the actions of a serving police sergeant on a train, and a warning it is unflinchingly shocking.

masturbating during the daytime on a train with an elderly couple that asked him to put it away.

He went to the toilet, he locked himself in the toilet, comes out of the toilet when the train's going the opposite direction, did exactly the same thing in front of children.

We're going to devote a lot of today's podcast to this report asking where does it leave the Metropolitan Police, asking where does it leave trust in the Metropolitan Police.

And we'll also be talking about Boris Johnson and his defence, ahead of the party gate hearing tomorrow in the Commons.

Welcome to the News Agents.

The News Agents.

It's Emily.

And it's John.

And we are in News Agents HQ, and we have the woman of the moment with us in the studio.

Dame Louise Casey, who's put this, God, you choose your word, eviscerating report together.

And I'm just going to go through a few of the top lines now from that report.

Violence against women investigations were so degraded that broken fridges we used to store rape victim samples.

Evidence of those rapes then was thrown out.

Eye-watering force, you say, Louise, against black people and a willful blindness to racism at all levels.

Bullying boys club in which predators flourished.

An elite culture which prioritised specialist units such as firearms, which left frontline police in creaking at the seams.

Scores of officers who met routine bullying, discrimination and misconduct.

Others worried about their own families coming into contact with the Met.

And failures in rooting out misconduct, meaning that predators who were targeted, that their colleagues had not been fired.

I don't know where you want to start with some of these findings, but you've basically called it racist, sexist, homophobic.

I mean, at what point did you just say this can still go on?

Well, I think the counter to that is that we have new management in town.

So the appointment of Mark Rowley as the commissioner and Lynne Owen as the deputy commissioner,

to me is a bit of a game changer.

I think this would have been, no matter what I think or don't think about the previous leadership and the previous leadership before that, whichever way you look at it, it's always extremely helpful to have fresh blood and new beginnings.

And I think that's really what I think is my main reason for saying, let's just give these people a chance.

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Let's let them see the true enormity of what I've found, which I don't think they have when they arrived in the organisation.

Let's get Sadiq Khan as the mayor to chair his own policing board for London that has outsiders on it.

So I've cranked it open or we've cranked the whole of the Met open and it's laid bare, isn't it?

It's pretty rough.

And so we've got to keep it open now.

I think that's the key thing.

It's got to stay open, stay transparent and thereby stay accountable to the public.

You've taken these findings to the new Met chief, Mark Rowley.

He doesn't agree with you that it's institutionally racist or sexist or homophobic.

He won't use that word institutional.

What's your response to that?

Well, I think he's dancing on a pin by what stretch?

I mean, I don't know why the word institutional is such a sort of thing for him and for policing in that by any stretch of the imagination, I could have said it's organisationally racist.

It's organisationally misogynist.

It's systemically misogynist.

I mean, my four tests, I've tried Emily to give them a way out of kind of, so what would it look like if it changed because, you know, I understand they don't like the label and they think once they have it, I quote, it will be an albatross around their neck.

So I sort of understand that unless I was black and lived in London, at which point

I would think I have waited a long time for somebody to hear how it is to be a black person living in London, being police by the Met.

But leaving that to one side, basically the tests for me are, do you have racists working in your organisation?

Yes, not every police officer is a racist, of course they're not, but some are.

Do you have people in your organisation that are experiencing racism or misogyny or homophobia or the test goes all three ways?

Yes, you definitely do.

Do you have systemic bias?

Without a doubt, you can see it in the misconduct system.

You're 81% more likely to be the subject of misconduct if your skin is black than if it's white.

I mean, that's just off the barometer in terms of systemic bias.

And my fourth test, just to get it in, is that I think that the other test is what are they doing to the community outside?

And actually on race, they're under-protecting, 65% of black women are more likely to be the subjects of domestic violence than you or I, and they're over-policing.

And you can see there, the use of force in particular, there are horrific statistics there.

So, whichever one of the isms you take, it's stacked up in the report, and then you can move the organisation into a better direction should you choose to do something about it.

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I suppose Mark Rowley's argument was that he said it was kind of vague and it was imprecise word to use.

You set out some horrifying stories, incidents, episodes which are just beyond description.

Is it a structural problem or a people problem?

Is there something about the way the Met Police is organised that is the cause of this?

So I've been through that and out the other side and I think a lot of reports and reviews and enquiries reach for structure.

It makes people feel that something really big is going to change and it's always tempting to go down the structural route.

The Met is badly managed, full stop, from how they recruit to how they vet to how they train to how they support or manage people on their boroughs, the way they treated women, the choices they made around austerity, it's badly managed and, running on the side there, it has baked in culture of denial, defensiveness, optimism bias.

So really restructuring it wouldn't necessarily deal with those issues.

Louise, is there any reason to think that if you had done this investigation in Devon and Cornwall, in Lancashire, in West Midlands, the outcome would have been any different?

I mean, is there a problem that is not just the Met that is institutionally misogynistic, racist, homophobic, it is the police force generally?

I mean, I think the answer to that is there are definite elements of what we have found that I think you would find in other police forces.

I am categorically evidenced up to my eyeballs about what is happening in the Met.

I mean, I looked at the Met, my job was to look at the Met, they asked me to look at the Met.

I can tell you everything I think you might want to know about the Metropolitan Police.

I also think what's different about the Metropolitan Police and other forces around the country will tell you this and this is a tough thing to say as well, but they are sort of long on hubris and short on humility.

So of all of the forces, they say they accept good practice, they never do.

I mean, they've sat on something called Operation Satiria, which is about rape, much to the frustration of other police forces around the country because they didn't invent it.

There is a culture of not invented here, therefore it's not as good as anywhere else.

They love being the best police force in the world and I kind of admire them for that as long as you're also the best police force for a woman that's been raped in London or a black kid that's about to be stabbed.

And I think that they've got their sense of priorities wrong.

So there is an arrogance in the Met, which other police chiefs find really hard going.

But Louise, is there a concern, however well intended this is of unintended consequences, which is that as soon as you say it's racist, it's misogynist, it's homophobic, you are killing public trust in what's left of it.

You are disempowering the police who are trying to do a good job.

You are allowing whether it's the public to say don't trust them, whether it's people telling their daughters, don't go near a police officer, whether it's criminals saying, oh, well, if they're as bad as us, we might as well get going.

I mean, is there not a worry that you've just disempowered this whole force?

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The fact of the matter is that it's almost by their in admission to accept that there are failings that they have got themselves in this situation.

So I think how much lower could public confidence be in the Met?

I mean, under the four indicators of trust, confidence, confidence in the police to do a good job locally, confidence to do a good job.

They've noticed that.

Would you tell a young woman late at night to go and ask for help from a serving Met police officer?

I would still tell them to go and do that because I think that we have to make sure that people are able to report crime and there are still police officers out there, Emily, who are able to do their jobs well.

But when Sarah Everard was abducted, raped, and then murdered by a serving police officer, I think I say it in the forward, that's my equivalent of a plane dropping out of the sky.

As an organisation, you would go, okay, he's one of ours.

How did he get to this stage?

What were the warning signs?

Is our vetting okay?

What is going on?

And none of that was done.

And none of that went on.

They were upset, but they didn't see it as an organisational responsibility.

I mean, it's a really tough finding, but I would say to you, confidence couldn't be any worse than it is.

Less women have confidence in the Met to do a good job by them right now today without my report than do, you know, it's all moved into minority figures.

This is a country where we police by consent.

And I think, you know, what has happened is so many officers that have come forward and so much feedback, including on their own internet today that's going out is finally, the truth is out, finally, we can do something about it.

Let me just play you a clip of a serving policewoman who called in to James O'Brien's show this morning.

So I think she's really fascinating.

Our officers go around beating their chest to be the alpha, the bravado is intense.

Female officers, they're like targeted as sexual property.

And it almost beats you down to the point where you think, you know, what is the point anymore?

You know, the media hate us.

Many people on the street hate us.

There are people within the organization that I would never call a friend because of the way that they behave.

Where do you go with it?

You know, you are, it's just a constant barrage.

And at that point there, you start to give up trying to fight the fight and you just

plod along in order to just, and I think many pockets of us don't accept that we are what you're saying that we are.

So I don't accept I've been institutionally racist or misogynistic or homophobic, but have I become complicit in that?

Yeah, I guess I have because I've heard it and I've not done anything about it.

And it does become a normalized thing.

It definitely does.

It's every day, it's everywhere and it's just so toxic, it feels horrible.

She feels so demoralized.

I'm not sure that she feels energized by your report.

I think that was there long before I even arrived at the Met.

So they've been in that bunker mode for a long time and she's a serving police officer.

She talks about the toxic environment she has to work in every single day.

I've just put a mirror up to it.

And I think, you know, one of the things that has been so profoundly depressing about the last 12 months is the officers in that organization and staff, they experience misogyny and sexism, they work in it, that officers account is exactly right.

They also feel that the media are out to get them.

So there's this staggering difference between what they think and what the public think.

They blame the media for the nosedive in confidence and all the rest of it, of which potentially you're saying my report is part of that, Londoners blame their conduct.

And I said yesterday and I'll say it again today, if serving police officers didn't go out and I don't know when this is going out, so I'll use careful language, indecently expose themselves on a public train twice and then not be sad.

Louise, you don't have to do that, we're a podcast and I actually prefer you to use the language that reflects.

He was openly masturbating during the daytime on a train with an elderly couple that asked him to put it away.

He went to the toilet, he locked himself in the toilet, comes out of the toilet when the train's going the opposite direction, did exactly the same thing in front of children and he is still a serving police officer.

So when the news cover that, I don't blame that woman that's come forward, I would not want to be in her shoes.

But I take a long hard look at the management of an organisation that thinks it's acceptable for a serving police officer to do that.

Why aren't people getting fired?

Because we hear this time and again, I mean you described something horrendous, I'm wondering, you've been up to, no, you've been up to your neck in evidence, I'm wondering if that was the worst thing you came across or if there are other cases that you got lodged in your brain?

Yes, I have quite a number of cases lodged in my brain.

I've got inspectors coming out, going into a room of trainee detectives, looking around the room and saying, I'll take you because she was an attractive girl, saying in front of all of them and I'm going to break you.

And he did.

He sent her off on her own to look at when a body, God love them, ends up on the floor.

It's a real mess.

He sent her to that on her own.

He sent her out to a rape case on her own.

She'd been a trainee detective for weeks and over a period of time and people in the team were saying, look, we'll go with you, he was saying she has to learn.

He wanted to show that he didn't agree with direct entry trainee detectives.

He was a misogynist in the actual meaning of the word and sexist.

She left the force.

We lost a really, they lost a really good officer.

I've got people where officers have, if you make an allegation, this is a pattern, we've established a pattern.

If you make an allegation, particularly as a woman against a man, they're normally making allegations against somebody more senior.

That's what the evidence shows.

There will be a campaign of counterclaim.

There will be a campaign.

Sometimes they leave it six months, sometimes they leave it 12 months and they then counterclaim.

The idea that women like we've just heard can do anything about that toxic environment on their own.

My report does not make that worse for them.

It blows it open and shows what's going on and means that we all have to take some responsibility particularly the leadership of the mayor and the home office doing something about it.

Louise, it is such a powerful report that you've written and disturbing and upsetting, but you still won't go that step further and say the met needs to be broken up.

I just wonder how much worse things would need to be for someone to say the whole thing needs a fundamental structural reform.

I think that's a really, really fair and difficult question.

The easier path for me to have taken would have been to say this is so broken it can't be fixed.

Then what we would have entered into was lots of structural changes, lots of people thinking.

It's a bit like dealing with crime.

People always think you can design out crime, stopping rough sleeping.

If you want to stop somebody sleeping on the street, you make sure the benches have arm rest so that people can't lie on the bench.

Behavior, standards, behavior, you can do something about it physically, but actually at the end of the day it's about good management and the way you run the organization.

I genuinely think, and I'm staking a lot on this, and if I change my mind, I will say

I've changed my mind, but I genuinely think that Mark Rowley and Lynn Owens, if I was going to choose, if somebody said to me, God, Louise, what leadership would you put into the met?

I start with Lynn Owens and I would start with Mark Rowley.

I feel that they accept, if you've noticed in the last few months, they haven't said

it's all fine here, it's a few bad apples, there's nothing wrong.

In the last few months, what you've seen is the commissioner, the deputy commissioner say, yet we have problems, yet we acknowledge that we need to do something about it.

They talk about some of their green shoots in their turnaround plan and today they're saying they will revisit their turnaround plan and make it a reform plan.

We've got Sadiq Khan now chairing a board across London with independent people on it.

Two years from now, frankly, 12 months from now, I think we should be able to tell the Met makes their own choices on how it deals with people that have got misconduct and they will tighten up considerably and I think there will be a cleanup under Mark Rowley and Lynn Owens and we will know very quickly if there aren't.

The same way you could shift the relationship with black Londoners, a lot of the stop and search that is done is done really rudely and really horribly.

To be honest, some of it I've seen for myself, it's almost humiliating young black kids, it's just got to stop and the absolute minimum, they won't like it, is I've said they actually have to give their name and their badge number, of course in the Met it's called a shoulder number, always has to be different and so what I've said is you stop me, you have to say hello, I'm Louise Casey, my badge number, shoulder number is one, two, three, I am stopping you today for these reasons.

So it's accountability.

It's accountability, it's transparency, what I'm doing is showing them and the world how bad it is so that for that officer she doesn't have to work in that toxic environment for the rest of her career because unless somebody does throw it open, how will it change?

Louise Casey, thank you so much.

Sorry, that was a rand.

Thank you.

No, no, no.

It was an important thing to do.

It's got to change.

It's got to change.

Honestly, listening to that report, I just kind of feel I want to go and have a drink, a stiff drink because it's just so shocking what she has outlined and I'm thinking of the million years I've been a journalist and the reports that have been commissioned over the years by governments into this or that and I can't remember anything quite as blistering and as full on as what we've just had from Louise Casey.

Yeah, the word that nearly always accompanies these official reports is whitewash and it's a way of saying that the author has kind of pulled their punches or they set their parameters very thinly or they've only really reported on the thing that they knew about in the beginning. This feels like another calibre of report and it is so scary actually.

I mean, I was going to say sort of damning or eviscerating, whatever, but actually it's really scary to learn that the police force that has 45,000 members altogether that looks after a population of Greater London, 8 million people is basically not working and what she's done is said, I haven't determined that, I've just told you that, I'm going to keep telling you that until something changes.

And this report wasn't a government report this time, it has to be said.

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It was actually commissioned by Dame Cressida Dick, who was the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police until fired by Sadiq Khan.

And what's really interesting is that we know that Louise Casey is not a punch puller, not a white washer, not someone who just decides, oh, I better obfuscate where possible. She calls it as she sees it and the evidence and the stories that she has put into this report which makes it so much more vivid and compelling and the stories she's just told us are just so harrowing that this is a report for the ages because it's going to resonate for a long time to come.

I mean, let's hope that good comes out of it.

In a moment we'll be talking about that dossier.

It's the Boris Johnson published dossier that is going to form the most part of his defence when he faces the parliamentary inquiry tomorrow afternoon.

This is The News Agents.

Welcome back.

And Louise is in the studio because we now have the 50 something pages of Boris Johnson's defence, Emily Lewis, going to give me the precise number of pages because she's flicking through the report.

I've literally got my sweaty little hands on it and it's called to in the matter, referred to the House of Commons Committee of Privileges on the 21st of April, 2022, submissions of the right honourable Boris Johnson MP.

Yeah, that's lovely.

How high you got there?

Yeah.

Legal soprano.

Someone told me on the committee that it was so badly typed that it had to be sent.

That's right.

First thing.

Did you hear that as well?

So many typos.

They had to send it back.

They said that that's not true.

Not true.

Yes, rubbish.

But Johnson's defence does start with, yes, I mislead parliament, but it was the most innocent of charges.

It was inadvertent, not willful or malicious.

And therefore, you can't really blame me for anything because I was just following the advice that I was given by my civil servants.

And then it goes into another 50 pages of kind of explanation, sometimes a bit tortured word.

What did you make of it?

Well, there's one theme that runs through this, right, which is someone else's fault.

Each paragraph is always the same thing.

It's always someone else's fault.

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It was my officials because I received this advice.

It was my staff.

The number of times that he decides to dump from a great height on his staff is extraordinary. Each time he says, you know, with the head of communications at that time, Jack Doyle, whether it's some of his officials, each time saying, well, they told me it was within the rules.

The argument is essentially circular, right?

His argument is basically, if you boil it down, is I attended the events, which by definition means I must have believed them to be within the guidance, otherwise I wouldn't have attended and they wouldn't have taken place.

Therefore that's why I attended.

And of course, there's a different explanation, which is frankly, there was just a rather lackluster, rather looish atmosphere, which the prime minister himself contributed to.

And his argument is, is that fundamentally, we've got to remember this report and what's going to happen tomorrow isn't about whether or not he broke the rules in a sense.

It's about whether he knowingly misled the house when he said there weren't any parties.

And his argument is that he didn't, because at the time he thought they were all within the guidance, which either basically boils down to you, prime minister, you either did knowingly mislead the house, or frankly, your grasp of your own rules was very, very poor and therefore, to be honest, should you have even been prime minister?

Kirstama led Boris Johnson in prime minister's questions all that time ago into a place where he committed to saying that he had not broken rules or guidance.

And what we've got now in this document is an admission, if you like, that yes, he did break those rules.

He did break those.

Who put those rules there, and where did those rules come from, who invented the rules?

Well, actually, you were the prime minister at the time.

You, we understood, had made those rules at the time.

He says, if the rules and guidance were not being followed, it would have been equally obvious to dozens of others who also attended the gatherings I did, which seems to evade any sense of responsibility or leadership.

If you saw a prime minister there, others would be following suit.

Just on that, point 62, where he references the comment he is alleged to have made at one of the parties saying, this is probably the most unsociety distance gathering in the UK right now.

And he says the comment has been publicized widely.

And he says, I don't remember the words being quoted by the number 10 official.

He says about that event that as soon as he left, it became socially undistanced.

And this is another one of his repeated justifications, right?

He's like, it was all fine when I was there, gov.

But just as soon as I left, it must have gone terribly wrong.

And that is another one of the sort of crucial pillars of his defense, which I think we'll hear a lot from tomorrow.

Yes.

And also, point 83 now from the Boris defense, which is where in private correspondence with his communications director, he does talk about a party.

But then he explains in his evidence to the committee, I use party as shorthand because that is how it was being referred to in the media.

So obviously it wasn't a party by any means that I don't really understand what the word party means.

What is a party?

I think the heart of this, the question of rules is perhaps staring us in the face, which is that fundamentally throughout his life, Boris Johnson has seen rules as being things for other people.

He memorably famously congratulated Josephine on Downing Street note paper for having suspended

her own birthday party during the COVID rules, the lockdown rules.

It was Josephine who had to cancel the birthday party, but it wouldn't have occurred to him as a leader, as a prime minister, as a setter of the rules that any of this should apply to him.

And I think possibly we are looking for a different context in this document to the one that we have seen throughout Boris Johnson's whole life, which is that rules are for other people.

As in you, I always felt during the whole Partigate period, and this is like trying to get inside Boris Johnson's head a little bit, which, you know, is a place that none of us really want to stand or sit for very long, but I always just felt there was an element to him.

There was this duality to him, right?

It was this irony that this man who, as you say, Emily, had spent his life being the fly in the ointment, being the grit in the oyster, being the guy who loves to get away with the things that no one else can, and who is at heart a libertarian, being forced into a position by the state and the circumstances of being the most authoritarian prime minister that we've had for decades in modern history.

And there was always a part of me that wondered whether, when he saw this stuff, whether there was an element of him that it was just speaking to that other part of him.

The real Boris Johnson.

Look, I think that forgets the narrative that we were sold, which was Boris Johnson nearly died and when he recovered, he had an epiphany and suddenly realized the importance for the whole country of avoiding what he'd gone through.

Now, you can't have it both ways.

Either you see the light, your damocene conversion is, I might have been a libertarian, now I understand it, or else it's, oh, well, I am a libertarian, but I'm doing this for the rest of you.

It's all around these words, inadvertently, intentionally, recklessly.

And it's angels dancing on the head of a pin, isn't it, really?

Because he's trying to say, everything I did was inadvertent, if I did anything wrong at all, but none of it was intentional or reckless and it gets very problematic, given what went on and given what he said in the commons.

And this sort of defence, which, let's face it, got briefed very heavily on Sunday that this was going to show beyond any measure of doubt that Boris Johnson is being treated harshly.

Having read this, I'm not sure that it changes much at all about the perceptions that people had.

How many people, I wonder, will read this or hear about this on the news and think, oh, I've now got a completely different impression.

We've been too harsh on Boris, or we haven't been harsh enough.

Does it change anyone's perception of any of it?

No, I suppose what matters is, in a way, the perception of the public is now a material, because Johnson is fighting for his political life.

There is a circumstance, there is an outcome to this, where Johnson's political career is finished, is done, because he's suspended from the commons as punishment for this.

There is a recalled petition, and he probably doesn't even stand in that by-election because he knows that he would lose it.

So that's the stakes.

I mean, the stakes are incredibly high, but we should just take a step back for a minute.

I mean, reading the document, I just thought, God, how unbelievably, you know, Lowy's been brought in a sense that he has having to spend 50 pages all this time, a former prime minister, having to try and delicately tie together all of the positions that he's been backed into, all of the statements he had to make, and fundamentally having to come down and asking the committee to believe that when it comes down to it, he just didn't really understand the nature of the rules that he was implementing on the rest of the country, rules that, as we all know, he did not particularly care for.

That is a hell of a position for him to be in.

So I got a little bit of a peek behind the curtain today from a colleague of two of the legal brains, the two legal brains, that are helping both Boris Johnson's side and the committee's side.

And we know that Boris Johnson's being helped and advised by Lord Panic, who is, this person says, the ultimate pro.

But they went on to say, this session isn't about Panic.

It's about Boris Johnson, who has to answer the questions that Panic isn't around to help with, and he won't be remotely invested in this emotionally.

It is a purely professional thing.

But whilst there has been a lot of focus on Panic, the person that has sort of slipped under the radar is the lawyer that is advising the other side, the committee.

His name is Ernest Ryder, and he is a court of appeal judge, and he has been working behind the scenes to try and neutralise all the complaints of unfairness about the committee, about whether it was bias about whether it was going to be labour-led and unfair in its findings.

And he's gone out of his way to make it clear that the committee is not relying on the Sue Gray report, and he wants, he's told the committee to keep their questioning concise and precise, sober detail, no grandstanding, and how the big question is, because it's quite hard as we know.

Yeah, so this is going to be the moment where you watch and see if the committee can just

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go very, very detailed, resist the temptation to get up there and sort of start spouting off about what they think of Boris Johnson, and be the best cross-examiners, because they can't take centre stage, they have to be short, simple, lethal.

And that's what we're going to look out for tomorrow.

We'll be following that closely, of course, tomorrow, but we'll be back in a moment with someone else with very blonde hair, with an American accent.

Lewis, do you want to do an impression?

No, I do not, John.

I do not wish to do that, I'm not your trained monkey.

Someone else is facing legal difficulties.

Shut up, Soaple.

This is The News Agents.

One of the defences that Boris Johnson makes in this document that's been released today is that there were a number of occasions where he didn't recall hearing things that were said to him, like, you know, from his Director of Communications or from Dominic Cummings or whoever, just set off a little memory for me of someone else who claimed to have the best memory of anyone in the world, Donald Trump, and so these clips just brought it all back to me.

I don't have teleprompters here, folks.

I don't need teleprompters.

It's called, like, up here, and it's called memory, and it's called other things.

I have a good memory and all that stuff, like, a great memory.

I have a really good memory, and I have a very good memory.

And I have a good memory, like, a great memory.

I have a great memory.

And I'm blessed with a great memory.

One of the great memories of all time.

I don't remember much about that meeting.

It was a very unimportant meeting, took place a long time.

Don't remember much about it.

It's a great defense, isn't it?

Yeah, I just can't recall.

Did I say I was going to buy lunch?

I thought you would.

I can't.

I can't recall.

I mean, it's totally credible that Trump wouldn't be able to recall almost anything, to be fair.

More credible than Johnson.

Oh, I don't know.

I think he's got the memory of an elephant.

Raise a shout.

Thank you, Emily.

I never forgets a grudge.

No, well, that's certainly true.

That's certainly true.

But, I mean, there were bits of the Johnson defense.

I mean, they were highly Trumpian.

I mean, you know, he's talking about this whole thing being weaponized by the media against him, whatever the hell that's supposed to mean, what you mean, like scrutiny. There's a bit where, you know, he goes for the committee, and I suspect we'll see that some of that tomorrow.

You know, Johnson will be unsparing.

He'll do it strategically, but at every single opportunity, he will attempt to plant a notion that this is a partisan attempt to try and remove him from parliament, or to use, he won't use this phrase, but of course, it is completely analogous to the Donald Trump witch hunt.

That's the one word that should always ring alarm bells, because in the olden days, witch hunt used to be McCarthyism, it used to be a shutting down and going after the beacon of free speech.

Now, as soon as you hear the word witch hunt, you think, oh, somebody's trying to avoid scrutiny.

Well, Trump has claimed that the campaigning against him is the worst witch hunt in US history, apart from, you know, literally a country known for the Salem witch trials.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Donald Trump has got his problems, but one person's witch hunt is another person's holding people in power to account, which is what we are paid to do as journalists.

The one thing I'd say about that, though, is when you were talking about public opinion, and I'm going back to Boris Johnson now, conservative home website, which basically is the place that monitors what conservative activists feel, they remain on the side of Boris Johnson.

They think that he was unfairly tarnished by this.

They think the committee in the inquiry is a complete fabricated invention, which is too great stuff has, has augmented the idea for them.

Exactly.

And they think he did break the rules, but they still think that the investigation shouldn't be following him.

And there have been deselections, a few deselections now of conservative MPs, or I should say they have not been reselected as conservative candidates.

All of them, I mean, there will be particular circumstances involved, but there has been a great deal of concern among conservative MPs who spoke out against Johnson, who called for him to resign, who say that there are increasing campaigns at a local level to deselect or not reselect those MPs.

And in that respect, again, it's another parallel to Trump and the GOP, right?

Exactly, because anyone who criticised and voted for Donald Trump's impeachment after the January the 6th right is either standing down or has been deselected.

So the echoes and the parallels are really quite striking.

Meanwhile, apparently across cities in America, the police are on standby in case of protests,

[Transcript] The News Agents / The (sexist, racist, homophobic) Met Police

because it seems that Donald Trump is about to be arrested the first president, ex-president in history to face criminal charges.

We're going to be back tomorrow, a little bit later, because we want to give you the full benefit of our understanding of what the committee has actually said and asked and Boris Johnson's responses to all of that.

It starts at 2pm, we'll be with you in your feeds as soon as we can.

I think it'll be a goodie.

I think it's going to be one to watch.

I'm buying popcorn.

It's going to be a doozy.

Bye.

Bye.

Bye.

Bye.

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