

[Transcript] The News Agents / Where the f*** is Nadine Dorries?

Here we are again. I'm having to start today's show by warning you that as a result of John Sople, there is strong language from the very start of this podcast.

This is a global player original podcast.

I'm not a party political MP. When I am a constituency, I'm not a conservative MP.

I represent everybody, regardless of what political party they vote for. And my constituents know that.

They also know that I will go the extra mile. I don't do constituencies once a month.

I do them most times every week. And my constituents know that I will go the extra mile for them.

They know I don't get involved in grubby games or political games in parliament.

They know that I represent them. I put my constituency before my party.

The production team assure me that that actually is Nadine Doris speaking in the House of Commons.

It certainly sounds like Nadine Doris. The background noise sounds like the House of Commons.

Apparently, it was in 2014 that she was saying this after she'd returned from the celebrity jungle to reassure everybody. Just what a fantastic constituency MP she is.

Is that the same Nadine Doris that we've got today?

75 days ago, Nadine Doris said that she was going to resign as an MP with immediate effect, partly protesting the fact that she had not received the peerage for Rishi Sunak, that she'd been promised and assured she would have by Boris Johnson. And yet here we are, 75 days later, she's still a conservative MP for Mid Bedfordshire, despite the fact that she's not spoken in the House of Commons for over a year, not voted in the House of Commons for months. And more and more senior politicians, including the PM and the leader of the opposition, Keir Starmer, are saying that she needs to go and she needs to go now.

Our production team have given us a running order and part one is where the fuck is Nadine Doris? Welcome to the news, agents.

It's John. It's Lewis. And later on in the show, we are going to be previewing the first, that's quite a big moment in the American political calendar, the first Republican primary debate for next year's presidential election, which will, you'll be amazed to hear, be dominated by one full time indicted, Septuagenarian, who may or actually may not, emphasis on the may not, even be on the stage. Won't be. Won't be. All right, fine. I was trying to keep build up the suspense, John. I just spoiled the punchline. We can't just like keep, you know, we'll just have to get you to swear again a couple of times. Just keep the energy up now. Christ almighty. Right, go on then. So what are we going to do before that?

You went off on one on me and then you forgot what we're actually going to do.

Just so distra- I'm just so worried about your language. No, we're going to talk about where the is Nadine Dorries. And obviously listening to this show, we've covered Nadine quite a bit and her amazing political career in lots of ways. And it would be quite fitting that even her denouement, even her ending, even the final bit of her time as an MP, should end up being controversial. Because as we were saying at the top, 75 days ago, she said she was going to resign as an MP with immediate effect. She was part of that string of conservative MPs, allies of Boris Johnson, who resigned at more or less the same time, trying to wound Rishi Sunak, trying to damage Rishi Sunak largely as a result or partly as a result of a fit of peak as a result of the fact that they did not receive the honours that they had been promised as part of Boris Johnson's now infamous resignation honours list. The rest did resign. That is why we had that series of by-elections

where generally speaking, the Conservatives did quite badly. But Nadine Dorries is still there. And that means the by-election process cannot start. Because I mean, listening to this, you may think, well, if an MP says they're going to resign, that must happen straight away. But no, they have to do this really weird thing. Technically, an MP can't resign. They have to, and this is again, another arcane bit of a constitution, they have to accept in order to de facto resign as an MP, they have to accept a sort of crown office, which is normally the steward of the Chiltern Hundreds, for example. That is basically how they become an MP, because you can't be part, have a crown office, as well as being a member of Parliament. And she has not asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for that office. And so until such time as she does, she remains a Conservative MP for Mid-Bedfordshire. It'll be quite fun just to go down the byways of kind of why the hell do you have to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and go into the Chiltern Hundreds and all this kind of mumbo jumbo that goes on when you essentially just trying to force a by-election. But it does mark the end of a really interesting career, because I think that there is something about Nadine Dorries, which does stand out, and there's part of it that's very admirable. I mean, she does sort of break the mould. She communicates very brilliantly, and is very effective in reaching out to people. She was also, I think, greatly admired by a lot of her civil servants, whose back she would have in some of the sort of turf fights that would go on in government. I quite liked her being anti the posh boys, like George Osborne and David Cameron. But now she's going, because she hasn't got a peerage, because she thinks she's entitled to sit in the House of Lords for the rest of her life. And you just want to say, get over it. I mean, obviously, we've known about this for some time. The reason to talk about this today is not only because it's 75 days, but it's also because it is actually becoming an increasing problem for the Conservative Party and for Rishi Sunak. Ministers cannot now really take to the radio or to the television and not end up getting asked about what is going on with Nadine Dorries, because although, as we say, this process is actually entirely in her hands, Sunak can't force her out. They could take away the Conservative whip, but they can't force her out. They are being held as being responsible in some way for it, and they are increasingly being attacked by the Labour Party for perceived inaction. So here is Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak just in the last couple of days and weeks being asked about Nadine Dorries. She's got to go. She hasn't been representing them for a very, very long time. He's much more effective than she is, by the way. But she said she'd resign with immediate effect. I don't know what her dictionary definition of immediate effect is, but 10 weeks after the event doesn't seem to me immediate effect. She's got to go, give mid-bed for sheer. An MP will actually stand up for them, fight for them, because at the moment she's absolutely absent. And I would say to Rishi Sunak, get a grip of this. This is one of your MPs. Do something about it. Force the issue and get on with it. I think people deserve to have an MP that represents them wherever they are, and it's just making sure that your MP is engaging with you, representing you, whether that's speaking in Parliament or being present in their constituencies, doing surgeries, answering your letters. That's the job of an MP, and all MPs should be held to that standard. So she's failing in that, isn't she? Well, at the moment, people aren't being properly represented, right? But we'll have that. We'll have a strong Conservative candidate, Festus, who's there, who's doing a great job, is pleased and climbing. And just today, Ed Davy, the leader of the Lib Dems, has joined this chorus of party leaders talking about this, because he's in mid-bed for today,

he's tweeted, Rishi Sunak should have the guts to sack Nadine Doris as a Conservative MP. Yet again, he's a Prime Minister too weak to control the chaotic Conservative party. So again, it's Sunak's opponents using the kind of prism of Doris and the fact that she's still there to damage and attack Sunak. So the great tradition, if you are an MP of Labour Party, Conservative, or whoever, is that you hold constituency surgeries where people can come in and talk about the problems they've got with planning or housing or whatever the issue happens to be. And you are a conduit for them, you're like their case worker.

Nadine Doris apparently hasn't had a constituency office now for some time, and the one she did have has now become a dance studio because she's fox trotted off somewhere. So do you see what I did there? You've been working on that for a while, haven't you? That was just genius, wasn't it? So she hasn't been around. However, we contacted her because we didn't want to, you know, the news

agents' right of reply is very important. We contacted Nadine Doris this morning and she's got back to our producer Laura and said, Hi Laura, myself and my team of four case workers are working

daily with constituents. I understand that political opponents such as Labour-run Flitwick Town Council are choosing the summer and the news hungry outlets in the summer recessed to be noticed.

However, we are just getting on with the work. Which is fine, but you said that there wasn't going to be any more work. If she hadn't said anything, everyone would just expect her to see out the parliament. So this is obviously a self-inflicted wound. And this has been, I mean, it is true in a sense, which is that in the summer where, because it's recessed, there are a few political stories around, there is no doubt that this is a story that is getting more and more attention, the longer that it goes on. As I say, Labour honing in on it, Conservative ministers are being repeatedly asked about it. It's one of those sort of things that is easy as a media story to kind of build up. So for example, apparently there have been fresh missing person posters popping up across her constituency. One local has erected a Dosa Doris out banner at the local Flitwick rail station. Last month, Flitwick Town Council urged her to resign because of her quotes continuing lack of representation of constituents. This week, the usually apolitical Shefford Town Council, great guys there, did the same, claiming she had abandoned the area. And as we heard, Sunak himself has said people aren't being properly represented. Education Secretary Gillian Keegan was asked about it on LBC this week saying, I don't know when I last saw her

and on and on it goes. And there is, I think, just irritation, understandably, within Conservative circles that this is going to be increasingly used and pointed to fairly or unfairly whatever the real whatever is really going on as by political opponents of the Conservatives as a kind of symbol of where the Conservative Party is at. This idea that there is neglect, that they care more about themselves than they do about you and the work for you. Because ultimately, as we know,

Nadine Doris partly has done this because, as we say, she didn't get that peerage. And John, as you were saying, in a way, it is a bit of a shame about Nadine Doris. Because like you, funnily enough, maybe people wouldn't expect this. You know, I've got a lot of time for her. I think she's been a very interesting political figure. She isn't a typical Conservative MP. She has got a properly working class background. She has got an interesting perspective. She was

a thorn in the side of Cameron and Osborne, who she famously called the posh boys. She did rally against some of Westminster's absurdities. The sad irony about Nadine Doris is that she's become the thing that she rallied against, that she detested. She's become a creature of Westminster. She's decided to take this stand over she herself, not receiving political preferment and a peerage. And that is just sad. In terms of people wondering, like, what is she playing or what is she doing? I mean, some people have said, well, obviously, she's continuing to get paid as she's an MP. I suspect it's not that. She actually, because of her success, very successful writer, I think financially, she's more than assured. There is this suggestion that one of the reasons she's clinging onto it is this, she has asked for this subject access request, the information about her and her appointment from number 10 or lack of appointment from number 10 Downing Street. There is this suggestion that it will help her in getting that information, as long as she has parliamentary privilege. And she obviously has particular abilities and MP to ask written questions and so on. But if that is true itself, it's hardly a great use of parliamentary time. It's also pathetic. It's also just pathetic that you are using parliamentary resources to essentially say, why didn't you give me a peerage? And no one is, you know, look, we could talk about her record the last time she spoke in parliament, which is over a year ago. You know, she's not been that assiduous in being that interested in the workings of parliament and representing her constituents. But she seems to be very assiduous in representing her own interests. And that is a bad look. Well, we've heard a lot of LBC clips because it's something that LBC presenters are entirely rightly asking about when ministers and shadow ministers trot through their door. Last week, LBC sent reporter, Henry Riley, who we've had on the show before, to Flitwick, which is in Nadine Doris constituency, to try and find the missing MP. We've gone to great lengths to try and find Nadine Doris. And we have a very big advert in the local paper. This is the Bedford Times and Citizen Wanted. Have you seen this woman? And not only that, we have posters. It's upside down. We have posters for lamp posts as well. Do you know who that is? Nadine Doris. And how do you know her from being the local MP or army celebrity? By the way, have you seen this woman? No. No. How likely is it she's going to turn up at that bus stop to get the 17A to Bedford High Street? Yeah, perhaps that's not the best idea in the world. Okay, let's get moving, H. You know, if I'm a celebrity. I do, yes. But just to be absolutely clear, you haven't seen her. I haven't seen her in years. She's not showing it to cars. Have you seen this woman? He's giving me a thumbs up. So I don't think that means he's seen her. I think it means he's a fan of the content. We are determined to find Nadine Doris. Henry, did you get any whiff, any scent? Did you feel you were on the trail and it was getting warm? No. Everyone I spoke with said they hadn't seen her in years, let alone months now. You often get that with people talking about the local MP, but there was a real sense of anger, of frustration. There are various issues in Flitwick. You forget on a sort of regional level as well. I mean, for instance, the bus shelter there. They were furious about this new bus shelter they've built because it doesn't allow buses to turn in it bizarrely. They've built it too narrow so that any double decker bus goes in can't actually use it. And they've been writing to Nadine Doris about that and they claim they haven't had a reply yet. So they were not best pleased. Not sure. I blame it. I'm not entirely sure what you say to that. Seems unfortunate. But I suppose there is a suggestion she as well, she doesn't live in the constituency, right? So this is builds on like long established resentment, presumably. Yes. And her office is only about five miles away from

Flittick. And so there was a sense that they did see her in the area quite a lot beforehand. And one thing that I spoke with a lot of constituents about is she's been the MP there since 2005. A long time. And I was looking back at her maiden speech, which was in May of that year.

And she said, I always pledged to do my best for Mid Bedfordshire. I will always act with integrity. I will always put the interests of people in Mid Bedfordshire above everything else and raise their concerns in Parliament. Now, whether you have a view one way or the other and Nadine Doris, if you don't speak in Parliament or vote in Parliament for the time that she has, then rightly, those people don't feel that their concerns are being listened to. And one of the curious things about this whole situation, right, is at the moment, there is this kind of shadow by election going on, right? Which is that the Conservatives have chosen a candidate. The Labour Party has got a candidate there who is constantly, I've seen some tweeting about the constituency and saying, we're getting ready for this by-election. You've got Peter Keill there, as Keir Starmer was saying, on LBC to James O'Brien yesterday, you know, they're running this campaign, but there is no campaign.

And Greg Hans was there two days before I got there, the Conservative Party chairman campaigning with their candidate. He's actually quite well known because he's the Police and Crime Commissioner there, Festus. And when they were out campaigning, it's bizarre because I was speaking

with a few local Conservatives as well. And if it's an MP who's had the whip removed, or there has been some particular reason why they have been chucked out of the party, it's different because you can distance yourself. But she's a sitting Conservative MP who they are campaigning against in many ways because they want her to go. Okay, so she hasn't been seen and we haven't heard

of her much. But did you get a sense there was an affection for her among people that you spoke to? Or was it kind of just sod off? I think what you were saying earlier about her civil servants, her being very popular among civil servants, there were certainly a few people who did like the chaos of Nadine Dorries. They enjoyed that she was going out to bat for her man as they saw it Boris Johnson during the whole leadership shenanigans. They enjoyed that she's not afraid to say what she thinks. But there was a sense that the kind of I'm a celebrity shine when she went on the jungle. And a lot of people referenced that in quite a positive way, really. They liked the fact that she did that in some ways. I'm sure that all of them did, but they found it amusing. That seemed to have slightly wore off. And I did expect to find more affection for Nadine Dorries among her constituents, but even among lifelong conservatives, as they told me, they couldn't put aside what had happened for the last few months or year.

Nadine Dorries has a way obviously of getting attention. And she has brought this on herself. But in a way, it is a slightly wider issue than her. The truth is, there are far fewer than they used to be, by the way, but there is still a sort of phalanx of MPs, particularly longer serving MPs who don't do a lot. You know, they don't speak often in the House of Commons. It can be highly variable how seriously a particular MP takes their constituency responsibilities. There's no requirement. It's basically up to you as an MP, how much you particularly in safer seats, sometimes how much you think you can get away with. Again, much rarer than it used to be. Most MPs these days are hardworking. But that is true. But most of them go by without much attention.

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Because as long as you stay on the right side of the party and you maintain the whip, then actually, and you have far lower profile in Nadine Dorries, then it's fine. It's actually one of the drawbacks in a way. People always talk about the constituency system we have in this country. It's good in one way. But when you only have one MP per constituency, which is not true with other countries, which tend to have multi-member systems, it is one of the drawbacks. If you get a bit of a feckless MP or an MP who isn't taking their responsibilities particularly seriously, there's not a lot you can do about it as long as they maintain the party nomination. Or if you've got an MP who's the foreign secretary or whatever, and where they require to be traveling the world a lot of the time, then they're not going to be able to spend as much time in the constituency. Yeah, she's in the Cotswolds, John. There's a bit less excuse. It is extraordinary. And I think the longer it goes on, I'm sure Rishi Sunak would love to be going into the Tory party conference with all of this well behind him, and it won't be. Although it's no win, right? Because this either continues to hang around his neck and it's a bit embarrassing, or she does go. And then, of course, she's got the by-election in mid-Bedfordshire. And who knows? Maybe she's just waiting still, thinking about the timing as to when that might be most embarrassing. And of course, there is the Conservative. If she were to go in early September, by-election could well be around the Conservatives, or just after the Conservative party conference in October. Henry Riley, thank you. Keep on searching if you find a... Let us know, will you? Let us know. We'll do. Also... Ring this number. Also, just to be clear, Nadine, we'd love to have you on the news, agents. You know that. Please come on any time you'd like. We'll be back after the break with the Republican Party debate and Donald Trump. This is The News, agents. Welcome back. And if you find yourself sleepless tonight, at two o'clock in the morning, the debate starts in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, of the Republican candidates vying for the nomination to be president next year. There are going to be eight hopefuls on stage. And there is going to be one very prominent person who won't be on stage. Donald Trump has decided to sit it out, which means that we, onlookers, the American people, are going to be denied the Socratic debate skills of Mr. Donald Trump. Here's a reminder of him in action back in 2016. If he builds the wall the way he built Trump towers, he'll be using illegal immigrant labor to do it. So cute. Such a cute sound bite. Here's the guy that buys a house for \$179,000. He sells it to a lobbyist who's probably here for \$380,000 and then legislation is passed. You tell me about this guy. One of the things people love about you is you speak your mind and you don't use a politician's filter. However, that is not without its downsides, in particular, when it comes to women. You've called women you don't like fat pigs, dogs, slobs, and disgusting animals. Your Twitter account is separate. Only Rosie O'Donnell. A policy question for you, sir. Let's see if he answers it. I will. Don't worry about it, don't worry about it. Don't worry about it, little Marco. I will. Let's hear a big, big doc. Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it, little Marco. Gentlemen. Gentlemen. You want to chill a bit? You got to do better than this. This guy has the number one absentee record in the

United States. I'd like to ask you a policy question. You lied about the Polish workers. You lied to their students at Trump University. 38 years ago. He lied 38 years ago. All right, I guess there's a statute of limitation on lies. Nice drip down memory lane, isn't it? Some of the best moments. I mean, he really is a titan of debating. What can we say? You know, funnily enough, because I'm sad, I was watching the 1960 presidential debate, the first one between Nixon and Kennedy the other night, because this is my married life now. Well, basically my pre-married life as well. So you're saying you're married life now. You've got this beautiful wife and you just sit around watching 1960 reruns of presidential debates. Yeah. Geez. And why did she say yes? It's a quandary for us all. But, you know, honestly, it is amazing the extraordinary decline in the quality of the debate. People remember that 1960 debate as being this sort of fractures thing and Nixon and Kennedy sort of had it out. They are so respectful. It's unbelievable. Like in a sense of kind of they are so differentially to each other saying, well, I agree completely with Senator Kennedy. I agree with the vice president there. You know, we both all agree on how to get there. It's just a question of means. Well, the vice president and I came to the Congress together. 1946. We both served in the Labour Committee. I've been there now for 14 years, the same period of time that he has, so that our experience in government is comparable. Secondly, I think the question is what are the programs that we advocate? What is the party record that we lead? I come out of the Democratic Party, which in this century has produced Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, and which supported and sustained these programs, which I've discussed tonight. Mr. Nixon comes out of the Republican Party. He was nominated by it. And it is a fact that through most of these last 25 years, the Republican leadership has opposed federal aid for education, medical care for the agent, development of the Tennessee Valley, development of our natural resources. I think Mr. Nixon is an effective leader of his party. I hope he would grant me the same. The question before us is, which point of view and which party do we want to lead the United States? Mr. Nixon, would you like to comment on that statement? I have no comment. The next question to Vice President Nixon for Mr. Van Oker. Mr. Vice President, since the question of executive leadership is a very the fractiousness now. But I suppose the difference with those clips there in 2015-16 is, look, I mean, Trump then was the outsider, right? He needed to be, he's the insurgent, he needed to be there. Now he is, despite all of the predictions after 2020 and January the sixth and the indictments, the suggestion was that he would lose his crown as the de facto leader of the Republican Party. But he still is. So he's thinking, what's the point in turning up? So after the first Republican debate, which was held in Cleveland in 2015-2016, I was there. And then into the spin room, which is where the candidates can, you know, kind of talk about how well they did in the debate, came Donald Trump. And there was the most almighty scrum that formed around him. And I was part of that scrum. And where I could get to my nose was pressed against the nape of his neck. I couldn't get front, dear, and all I could smell was hairspray and sweat. And I just kind of kept looking at the marvel that had kept his hair in place. Still, the architectural achievement of building that hairdo in one place. But this time round, Donald Trump is like 37 points ahead, according to the poll of polls of his nearest rival, Ron DeSantis. And he's got an unstoppable lead. What do you think about this idea, which is now sort of doing the rounds and percolating more and more in American press,

which is that actually most of them, which seems completely counterintuitive to us, that most of them are now angling for the VP spot. They sort of know that it's over. There's just no way there's this immovable block of Trump voters, Republican voters, that just doesn't matter what happens. The indictment of sort of playing into his sense of persecution, it's solidified his support. But they basically know that Trump is going down for at least one of these things. And therefore, he will not be able to take up office. And that therefore, if he wins the election and they're the VP, they become president. Do you think that's actually credible? I think it is credible among some of them. So if we go through the runners and riders, and they're going to be a whole bunch of names that, frankly, are not even household names in their own households, but you've got Senator Tim Scott, Republican Senator from South Carolina, he may be going for the vice presidency. You've got Vivek Ramaswamy, who's a sort of young, biotech entrepreneur, 38 years old, was putting up photos of himself playing tennis topless yesterday. And Martin Navratilova commented about his lousy backhand. You've got Mike Pence. He is not going for the vice president's job. There is not a chance. Been there, done that. Been there. Almost got killed. DeSantis, I think, is still going for the nomination.

DeSantis believes he can win. So he's not. Nikki Haley, who was the former UN ambassador for Donald Trump. Yes, possibly. Chris Christie, absolutely not. Chris Christie is going in there as this giant wrecking ball who is prepared to take out anyone and everyone, but particularly Donald Trump, who he now absolutely detests, even though he backed Trump in 2016, was hoping for

a big job and didn't get one. There's a guy called Asa Hutchinson, who used to be the governor of Arkansas. He is also hugely critical of Donald Trump. So he's not going for the vice presidency and he's too old anyway. And there's a guy called Doug Bergam, who is the governor of North Dakota, very small state. Titans, these guys. Yeah, Titans, these guys. And Donald Trump don't think that he's suddenly become this kind of wilting violet, who's going to sit at home quietly doing nothing. He is upstaging the debate or he's going to attempt to.

The debate is being screened by Fox. He is doing a sit down interview with the most famous presenter

that Fox had to get rid of a few months ago, Tucker Carlson, that will run at the same time as the debate. And tomorrow in the US, when all conversation should be about who did well in the debate, who did badly the analysis, it's all going to be about Donald Trump again, because that's the day he's chosen to go to Fulton County Jail to face his arraignment charges of election interference on the 2020 election. He still manages to upstage them every time. Like getting arrested. I mean, that's what he's willing to do in order to sort of maintain the limelight. But the Fox thing that you just alluded to, John, I mean, that is one of the fascinating subtext or subplots of all of this period with Trump, which is his relationship with Murdoch, which is that Trump continues to be this really difficult, thorny problem for Murdoch and his empire in terms of how to deal with him. We know what happened with the Fox and the Dominion defamation case. We know that that's cost Fox. Murdoch, a huge amount of

money. Well, three quarters of a billion. Unbelievable amount of money. In an ideal world, I mean, it's been reported many times, Murdoch wanted to move away from Trump. He wanted to bury him after January the sixth that actually in so many ways, they've always had a fractious relationship and Trump is not what Murdoch would ideally like in a kind of Republican

candidate and a Republican president. And yet, like so much else of American conservatism and the wider American right, there is this inescapable gravitational pull towards Trump. And so much of Fox's profits, which there still are a huge amount, still rely on the Trump show. And in the way, right, this is partly Trump saying to Murdoch, you know what, you need me far more than I need

you, not least when you consider, I think this is one of the things that's been sort of missed in the last few years, which has been a really big transformation, even since like the 2016 run, is the decline in the number of American households who have cable news. I think back in 2015, 1670% is now 40%. So even that juggernaut, which was partly responsible for the rise of Trump, i.e. television and cable news, is itself on the decline while Trump continues to ride high. And also, Trump being on your show brings viewers. And so Trump is saying, okay, Fox, you don't love me. You don't want me. I'll go to Newsmax. I'll go to one American news network, where they do love me. I'll go to Tucker Carlson, who is now homeless. I'll go to John Sopron. Yeah, I don't think that is going to happen. I'm coming on the news agents, John. I don't need these guys. I see you got a middle chair there empty. Emily left you guys behind set.

I don't think Donald's going to be doing me any time soon. But the fact of the matter is that he knows how to go on a publicity. And so even before the 2016 election, Murdoch had his huge doubts about Donald Trump, but had to get on board. In 2020, in the lead up to the election, they were right behind Donald Trump because he was obviously running for reelection. But after January the 6th, as you say, they put distance. And we know from the disclosure of the emails that were being sent among Fox News executives, they knew also that Trump had lost the election. But they're now in a position where they're losing money. They're losing viewers. They're losing ad revenue. As a result of, you know, this kind of breach in the relationship with Donald Trump, they try to get behind Ron DeSantis at the start. Ron DeSantis has just been a really poor candidate who just has failed to convince. And so if he becomes the Republican nominee, and it's against Joe Biden, what does Fox do? Is it going to suddenly think, we'll clamber back on board? I don't think Trump will give a shit. I think he'll be quite happy. Yeah, you want to clamber back on board? Do you want to give me free publicity?

That's fine. It will be on my terms. And Donald Trump will rule the roost again. And it's a quandary that the wider American right have, right? The wider Republican party has, which is that there was always, you know, there were different camps. There were those who loved him. There were those who, particularly in 2016, did not like him, but were willing to swallow it because he was the Republican candidate. And so much water has passed on the bridges. He's obviously pre-indictments. It's pre-January the 6th. There was all that stuff about, oh, actually, he'll change when he's in office, you know, all the worst predictions of all time. And then there were the sort of never Trumpers who, you know, they left even in 2016. And that has obviously been a growing band. And the question clearly for that middle group who have sort of not particularly cared for him within the Republican party but were willing to tolerate him, you know,

the stakes could not be higher going to that presidential election when your candidate is not just Donald Trump, but it's Donald Trump who has a very high percentage chance of going to jail. And bear in mind that the federal prosecutors have a 95% success rate, right? When the feds come for you, they come for you and you're probably going away. That is, well, on one level, it shouldn't even be a quandary. It should be a case of, well,

this guy's beyond the pale. But as we've learned time and time again with the American party system and the Republican party, the line is never quite where you think it is.

The thing you can't exaggerate enough is the sense of total fear of Donald Trump.

They're terrified of him and what he might do, whether it is to the party or whether it is to individuals whose reputations he can trash, whether it is to a candidate who you suddenly put up a primary against because you don't like something that they've said about Donald Trump. And so you have a party that is terrified of him. And Donald Trump has worked on the Machiavelli maxim that it is better to be feared than loved, although Donald Trump is that odd mix that he loves to be loved as well as being feared. And so the party doesn't move. And so they're always hoping that someone else is going to take him out. I'm firmly of the view that overwhelmingly the leadership of the Republican party, such as it is, believes that Donald Trump is an absolute menace and that it wouldn't be wonderful if he could just go away quietly. But I can't be the one to lead the charge. And so you get someone like Chris Christie who is coming out and saying, yeah, I'm prepared to lead that charge. But the establishment Republicans, they don't want to do it because they're going to lose donors and they're going to lose voters. Because if Donald Trump says, I'm going to pick up my ball, okay, I'm not going to run, or I'm going to run, but run as an independent and not as a Republican, then that's it game over. That's it game over. Find the win 450 electoral votes. Exactly. And so they are terrified of him. And that is what is governing this primary race now this race for who should be the Republican nominee. And that's why they're still sucking up to him, even though they know he lost the 2020 election. I mean, talking about fear, I mean, arguably it's wider than that, right? You could argue that Trump is the most feared political figure in the history of the American Republic, right? Because everyone's afraid of him. I mean, the right, as you say, are afraid of him or the Republicans are afraid of him because they're afraid of what he might do because he now commands the party. The left are terrified of him because they basically know, well, they think well, the guy won in 2016, but they also know that he's a menace to the American Republic. Like if he wins again, all bets are off in terms of what happens to American democracy. And the international community terrified of him for the same reason,

not least because the stakes are higher now than they were in 2016, because in 2023 and 2024, you've got Ukraine. And the weird dynamic has been that the change maybe compared to a year ago is that Biden looks weaker than a year ago, right? Like actually, when we were talking about the midterms and the aftermath of the midterms, there was this sense that Biden actually, he was looking

difficult to be, that he'd been surprisingly resilient. That meant you needed someone other than Trump because Trump was a busted flush. And now there is this sense within the Republican Party that Biden is declining, both politically, but also potentially in terms of his health as well, that it's an easier sell and that Trump could win. And that both enables his supporters, but terrifies his opponents, both within and without as well.

And just the added perversion of it all is that the calculation in Trump land is not that you say Biden is useless. You ignore Biden. You talk about the indictments because that is solidifying support amongst Trump voters, that the system is against him, that their guy is always being brought

down. It's the deep state that is trying to destroy Donald Trump. And that is what's being the most effective. So you have got this situation where it really is for Donald Trump in 2024.

[Transcript] The News Agents / Where the f*** is Nadine Dorries?

It's the jailhouse or it's the White House. That's the choice. Anyway, look, we're going to be discussing

this an awful lot more on tomorrow's special episode of Newsagents USA. It's so special, in fact, that Emily is breaking off her holiday to come on and discuss what has happened in the overnight debate. She's back. She's back. Newsagents USA, bigger, better, bolder tomorrow on Global

Player. Happy to help you out with your ratings, John. You need it.

This is the Newsagents.

Before we go, a post script on something we did on the podcast yesterday and last week. And that's the case of Mason Greenwood, the Manchester United striker who is no longer going to play for Manchester United. And we spoke yesterday to Adam Kraft and as well as Rachel Riley on the podcast. And Adam, I asked, well, which clubs do you think would take Mason Greenwood? And we kind of talked about what countries, what places. And there's one country,

of course, that is spending a huge amount to build up its football profile. And that is Saudi Arabia. Yeah. And the Telegraph have reported today that Mason Greenwood, quote, is set to be snubbed by clubs in Saudi Arabia over major concerns about how a move would be perceived. The Saudi Pro League is already under intense scrutiny over human rights issues in the country. And while not absolutely ruling out the prospect of a club showing interest, sources believe they will not want the added baggage that would follow Greenwood at this particular time. So Saudi Arabia distancing themselves over reputational risk. Saudi Arabian governments effectively from Mason Greenwood, irony is dead. We'll see you tomorrow. Bye-bye.