



Attack: David Dimbleby with Boris Johnson – then London Mayor – on Question Time

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chief adviser Dominic Cummings, seen as the driving force behind Downing St threats to cut the licence fee – or scrap it altogether. 'Johnson's never governed anything, Cummings has never governed anything,' said the former Question Time host. 'They're ignorant... floundering. I don't think they have a strategy.'

His comments were disclosed after Downing Street mooted a radical overhaul that could mean introducing a subscription model, forcing the sale of most BBC radio stations, cutting the number of TV stations and reducing the amount of online content.

Senior BBC figures have been encouraging people to sign a petition demanding the PM stops trying to 'undermine' the broadcaster. And some Tory backbenchers have urged Mr Johnson not to 'pick a fight' with the corporation, saying it still plays a key role in national life.

In an interview broadcast by Germany's ARD state TV channel, Dimbleby said: 'The BBC is under threat in a way it has

HIS ACID VIEWS

Dimbleby during the broadcast:

The BBC is under threat in a way it has never been before. The pernicious route they are using is to say the licence fee is wrong or unfair. I don't actually believe it is wrong or unfair. It is a way of damaging and undermining the BBC that is dangerous and should be resisted.

... and remarks not broadcast:

Nobody trusts Boris Johnson. Who could trust Boris Johnson? He lies everywhere to everyone. He lies to his family. Johnson is apeing some of the attitudes of Trump. If you're in the glorious moment of supreme power the one thing you don't want is to be held to account... He doesn't take any notice of what people say. He doesn't care what people think. He just wants to be Prime Minister.

'He lies everywhere to everyone'

never been before. The pernicious route they [the Government] are using is to say the licence fee is wrong or unfair. I don't believe it is wrong or unfair.

'It is a way of damaging and undermining the BBC that is dangerous and should be resisted forcefully if public broadcasting is to survive. Anything that chips away at what we believe to be a good democratic process is dangerous and has to be fought against.'

'It has to be explained why not speaking to people is dangerous, why not appearing on television is dangerous.'

However, Dimbleby, who saw Mr Johnson at close quarters during the election campaign while making a BBC documentary about him, went much further in remarks made in the long interview with ARD that were not broadcast. A transcript of the full interview shows that he launched a vitriolic personal attack.

According to the transcript he said: 'Nobody trusts Boris Johnson. Who could trust Boris Johnson? He lies everywhere to everyone. He lies to his family. He just makes it up, you know.'

'Johnson is apeing some of the attitudes of Trump. He is a different kind of political animal, like Trump, very similar rulebook. If you are like that the one thing you don't want is people questioning what you're doing, which is why he won't let his ministers go on television or any serious programme.'

Johnson 'doesn't give a damn for independent analysis, impartial judgment on what it [the Government] is doing. They're not willing to submit to scrutiny... because they're arrogant with power. And they won't last.'

'If you're in the glorious moment of supreme power the one thing you don't want is to be held to account. You do it your way. Boris Johnson, above all politicians, does it his way. He doesn't take any notice of what people say. He doesn't care what people think. He just

'Doesn't care what people think'

part of the interview that was broadcast, Dimbleby lambasted Mr Johnson's decision to use his own in-house TV film makers for his Brexit night broadcast instead of the BBC or another mainstream media organisation.

Mocking the kind of soft interview he said Mr Johnson wanted, grinning Dimbleby went on: 'The idea he can have his own television unit and you come in, chat to him, and say "ooh, Prime Minister, things are going very well," and he says, "yes, it's going very well, thank

wants to be Prime Minister.' But he claimed the tactic would backfire, and said that moment could occur when Mr Johnson's Brexit strategy started to go wrong.

'The moment will come when they need to talk to someone. Things are not going to go easy. The decisions that are stacking up over Brexit, trade negotiations, are going to be very difficult. At some point they will need to explain why they failed to get the 100 per cent they promised.' In the edited

you.' That is taking us back 50 years. It's propaganda.'

In the full transcript, Dimbleby said: 'The whole idea of a national broadcaster that speaks truth to the nation and is impartial and objective is under threat.'

But he conceded that the Government's anti-licence fee move was a 'clever strategy'.

It was a 'good moment to latch on to' the growth in Net flix and social media to argue 'why should people pay £154 a year to watch the BBC when they don't watch the BBC. What are they paying for?'

There was a 'small element of truth in it', said Dimbleby and there was a case to 'tweak' the licence fee. It was reasonable that people on welfare benefits did not pay it, but wealthy older people, such as him, should carry on paying.

There has been a significant revolt from Tory MPs about No10's threat to shake up the BBC. Earlier this week, Huw Merriman, who is chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on the BBC, said the 'ideological trench warfare' against the corporation was 'unedifying'.

Downing Street last night declined to comment on the Dimbleby interview.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS DUKE?

By Arthur Martin and Daniel Bates in New York

AS the saying goes, you wait ages for a bus and then three come along at once.

But in this instance it was the same big yellow one – going round and round in circles – and it wasn't particularly welcome by the locals.

The American school bus – emblazoned with a picture of Prince Andrew alongside demands for him to help the FBI – was repeatedly driven past Buckingham Palace yesterday.

The stunt was organised by US lawyer Gloria Allred who represents five women who claim they were abused by paedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein when they were children.

Miss Allred has repeatedly called for the Duke of York to give the FBI a full account, under oath, about his decade-long friendship with Epstein.

The bus she hired featured the message: 'If you see this man please ask him to call the FBI to answer their questions.' It circled the grounds of Buckingham Palace for an hour.

However, it might have been better off taking a trip to Windsor – where the prince was spotted for the first time since he turned 60 on Wednesday.

Andrew was pictured leaving his home at Royal Lodge and later riding a white horse in the grounds of Windsor Castle.

Miss Allred held up a photo of the bus during a press conference on the



Day out: Andrew leaves his home at Royal Lodge yesterday

steps of the New York Supreme Court yesterday. She said: 'My clients deserve the truth. They have been denied justice so many times over so many years... And there will be no truth unless Prince Andrew stops hiding from the FBI and from the public.'

The prince stepped down from royal duties in November following his disastrous Newsnight interview about his relationship with Epstein, who died in a New York jail last year at the age of 66.

He has previously said he is willing to co-operate with US authorities 'if required'. He maintains that any allegations of 'impropriety with underage minors' involving himself are 'categorically untrue'.

By Jake Hurfurt

THE Duke and Duchess of Sussex announced last night that they will stop using their Sussex Royal brand from this spring.

It follows the Daily Mail's revelation this week that Buckingham Palace had told Harry and Meghan not to employ the name when they are no longer working royals.

It is a significant blow for the couple, who have spent tens of thousands of pounds building the Sussex Royal-branded website and creating a hugely popular Instagram feed.

A string of trademark applications, covering items from clothing and books to stationery and bandanas, were filed under the brand.

'These global trademark applications have now been withdrawn, the Sussexes' spokesman said yesterday.

Harry and Meghan are also in the process of setting up a new charitable

'Significant blow to couple'

organisation after their split in August last year from the Royal Foundation Charity, which they shared with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

The pair wanted to use Sussex Royal branding but a new name will now have to be found.

It is the latest humiliation for the couple who announced last month they were stepping down as senior royals and moving to North America.

The pair have already agreed to give up their HRH titles for work purposes, and their official patronages on behalf of the queen, including Harry's honorary military titles.

Complicated negotiations concluded that it was untenable for them to use the word 'royal' in their branding.

A spokesman for the Sussexes said last night: 'While The Duke and Duchess are focused on plans to establish a new non-profit organisation, given the specific UK government rules sur-



Wednesday's Daily Mail

Mail told you first: Sussexes lose Royal branding

commercial opportunities, they simply cannot be allowed to market themselves as royals.'

Harry and Meghan announced on Wednesday that they will step down as working royals in less than six weeks and close their Buckingham Palace office.

They will take part in six more engagements before formally withdrawing from frontline roles on

March 31. Their final official engagement is expected to be on March 9, when they will join the Queen at Westminster Abbey to mark Commonwealth Day.

Harry and Meghan intend to split their time between North America and the UK.

They are planning to base themselves in Canada, where the duchess lived while starring in TV drama



Talks: Meghan, Harry with the Queen in 2018. The Queen has ruled they cannot use the word 'Royal'



Brand: Their Instagram account

US lawyers for Epstein victims send American bus to Palace to try to shame Andrew into contacting FBI... but the prince is in Windsor



Room for one more: The distinctive American yellow school bus circled Buckingham Palace for an hour yesterday, attracting attention from tourists and commuters