

The Daily Mirror

(1 February 2022)



GRAY REPORT FALLOUT

12 parties now probed by cops, 3 attended by the PM, 1 was in his own flat, 300 pictures handed over... and still



CRUSHING Mr Starmer yesterday

BY PIPPA CRERAR Political Editor

SHAMELESS Boris Johnson again refused to quit over Partygate despite Sue Gray revealing police are probing 12 lockdown bashes at No10.

The civil servant issued an update on her inquiry, confirming the PM attended at least three, possibly six events. One was at the flat he shares with wife Carrie.

And Scotland Yard announced they have more than 300 photographs of gatherings held in Whitehall while the rest of the nation was diligently sticking to the rules.

Mr Johnson snubbed calls to go and brashly insisted he would "fix it". Keir Starmer warned him the public think he "should do the decent thing and resign" but added: "He won't. Because he is a man without shame."

FULL STORY: PAGES 4,5,6,7,8 & 9



I'M NOT GOING PM leaves No10 to give statement yesterday

ZERO SHAME

Image from Tomorrows Papers / tomorrowpapers.com

AS Level Component 1: Investigating the media

A Level Component 1: Media products, industries and audiences

Focus areas:

Media language

Representation

Media industries

Audiences

Media contexts

THE PRODUCT

- The *Daily Mirror* is a British daily national tabloid newspaper. Established in 1903, it is targeted at a predominantly working-class readership and adopts a traditional left-wing political stance.
- One of the *Mirror*'s main competitors is *The Sun* newspaper which targets a similar socio-economic demographic but usually adopts a more traditional right-wing stance. The *Daily Mirror* is one of the only newspapers that consistently supports the Labour Party and their policies.
- The newspaper's slogan 'The Heart of Britain' suggests that the newspaper stands up for the ordinary person and is a key part of the social and cultural life of the UK.
- The set edition for Section A was published on February 1st, 2022. As a mostly left-wing newspaper, the *Daily Mirror* has been critical of the way the Conservative government has been handling the Coronavirus pandemic.

COMPONENT 1: SECTION A

Media language representation contexts

Political context

- This edition of the newspaper deals with the scandal surrounding allegations regarding parties and social gatherings held by the Conservative Party at a time when its leaders had enforced

strict restrictions on the people of England that prohibited such gatherings. The story was first reported by the *Daily Mirror* in November 2021 and alleged that during the lockdown over the Christmas period in 2020, parties had been held at Downing Street, some of which had been attended by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson. This led to an inquiry being undertaken by senior civil servant Sue Gray, the results of which were published in January 2022.

- The scandal surrounding these allegations came to be commonly known in the media as 'Partygate'. The suffix 'gate' was first used in the 'Watergate' scandal in the US in the early 1970s which resulted in the resignation of President Richard Nixon. It has since been used to suggest a far-reaching scandal, usually related to politics or government.
- On the date this edition of the newspaper was published, it was reported that Sue Gray had revealed that the Metropolitan Police were investigating several possible breaches of lockdown by No 10 and Boris Johnson had refused calls for his resignation.

Social and cultural contexts

- All newspapers, including the *Daily Mirror*, reflect the social and cultural contexts of the time in which they were produced. The *Daily Mirror* largely targets a lower middle class/working class readership and does so through the news values of the paper, the selection of stories and how particular social groups are represented.
- The choice to focus on this particular story also reinforces a common social theme for this newspaper – 'us VS them', the idea that the government has issued rules that they feel they do not have to abide by.
- In the editorial, the newspaper asserts itself as the voice of 'the British people', allying with them using the personal pronoun 'us' in 'it makes us look cheap and nasty'.
- The newspaper's plug also reflects a cultural context, advertising a feature on the Platinum Jubilee and reinforcing the cultural heritage of the UK.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language and representation

Front page:

Consider the different ways in which the paradigmatic choices of media language including visual codes, written language and mode of address communicate meanings on this front page:

- The page is split between the political story and a **plug** promoting the Platinum Jubilee feature, with the political story taking prominence.
- The layout and design are conventional of this style of newspaper, which is generally image led rather than text led. The **masthead** is bold and recognisable as a red top, tabloid newspaper. The typography chosen is strong, and the name of the newspaper conveys messages about how the paper may ‘hold a mirror’ up to what is taking place in society.
- The **slogan** within the masthead ‘Heart of Britain’ suggests the role the newspaper has in society and that it cares about what is happening to the people of the UK.
- The **headline** is brief and dramatic, typical of the paper’s style, and uses emotive language such as ‘Zero Shame’. The **strapline** ‘Gray Report Fallout’ sums up the context of the story with negative connotations.
- The **sub-headings** provide more information through the employment of numbers for dramatic impact.
- The image of Boris Johnson dominates the front page and **anchors** the headline – he appears unconcerned. The newspaper reinforces this viewpoint with the inclusion of the **caption** ‘I’M NOT GOING’ suggesting his failure to take responsibility for what has happened. The caption accompanying the image of the Labour leader Keir Starmer is ‘Crushing’, reinforcing the left-wing stance of the newspaper.
- The language used is emotive and reflects the values and attitudes of the newspaper and their political allegiance, referring to Boris Johnson as ‘shameless’.
- The mode of address is direct, using colloquialisms such as ‘cops’ and ‘lockdown bashes’ to engage with the target readership.

Double page spread (see appendix 1):

- The double page spread is busy and eye-catching; it incorporates a range of different newspaper features including the editorial, a letter, personal direct quotations, a cartoon, and large images, as well as the central story. It is relatively unusual to have all these features on the same page, suggesting the story’s importance.
- The branding of the newspaper continues onto these pages with the use of the colour red linking to the ‘red top’ masthead. The subheading, **pull quote** and Kier Starmer’s name are also in a red palette, connoting the political allegiance of the newspaper.
- The headline is large and emotive echoing the front-page headline with the repetition of the word ‘shame’ conveying the values and beliefs of the newspaper and its opinion of what has happened.
- The central images are emotive and dramatic, juxtaposing the scene from the hospital ward with one of the prime minister smirking, looking furtive and holding a glass of wine. The selection of these particular images further reinforces the point that members of the government broke the rules while people were suffering.
- This tone is supported using direct quotations from ordinary people (who this newspaper represents) telling their own tragic Covid-19 stories. The pull quotes in this section, emphasised using large quotation marks, use language that conveys the feeling of the newspaper: ‘continues to lie,’ ‘a mockery’.
- The language used across the double page spread vilifies the government and their actions. Binary opposites are used to reinforce the point – ‘quiet dignity’ set against ‘lying bombast’. The editorial ‘The Voice of The Mirror’ is more opinion led, which can be seen in the standfirst: ‘Boris Johnson is prepared to destroy everything

and everybody around him to survive at all costs.’

Theoretical perspectives: structuralism – Levi-Strauss

- There is a **binary opposition** between the government, Boris Johnson and ‘the people’ which feeds into the ‘us VS them’ ideology of ‘**populism**’.
- The newspaper pages use **signs** that are recognisable to audiences and connote meanings. Consider how the use of the colour red and the codes of clothing, including the nurses’ protective clothing and the wine glass, convey meaning in relation to the story.

Starting points: representation

Consider how representations are constructed through a process of selection and combination

Newspapers have access to the same stories daily but will choose how to represent events and issues in a way that reflects the **values, attitudes and beliefs** of the paper and their readers. The way in which the event / issue / social group is represented will affect the audience response. Newspapers are **opinion leaders** and will influence how audiences may respond to the issue / event. Consider how issues, events and social groups are represented across these newspaper pages:

Front page:

- The construction of the representation of the event and the key players on the front page is dominated by the large image of Boris Johnson, anchored by the dramatic headline and sub-headings. The choice of the image of Boris Johnson focuses on his code of expression and the anchor of the caption. He has been criticised previously for his ‘smirk’ and here the newspaper has selected an image with this expression, reinforced by the caption ‘I’m Not Going’ which connotes his seemingly uncaring attitude. This selection and combination of images and text conveys the attitudes and beliefs of the newspaper whose political allegiance of left wing is suggested by the more active image of Kier Starmer and the anchor ‘Crushing’,

referring to the way he dealt with Boris Johnson in the House of Commons.

- The sub-heading uses numbers to highlight the misdemeanours that Johnson was said to be involved in along with the evidence to support this – ‘300 pictures handed over’. The inclusion of the ellipsis constructs a dramatic pause before ‘and still,’ suggesting the weight of evidence against him should be enough but he does not take responsibility. The combination of images, layout and language choices construct a negative representation of the event and the prime minister’s role in it.
- The response of the readers to the representation of the event would be to accept the newspaper’s view as it reinforces their own ideas about the government.

Double page spread:

- The newspaper has made decisions regarding how the story will be **mediated** and what the focus will be. In the case of this double page spread, the focus of the representation is on a range of different responses to ‘Partygate’, all of which construct a negative representation of the government and, in particular, the prime minister. This mediation of the story is to be expected from a left-wing publication.
- The use of the direct quotations and the inclusion of individual stories and representations of ordinary people **personalises** the story by making it about the experiences of individuals, rather than a complicated political progress involving subjects distanced from the newspaper’s readers. This technique is used by the news media to help audiences build **emotional engagement** with political stories and is a technique particularly used by tabloid newspapers.
- A similar technique is used through the inclusion of the open letter from Kier Starmer, ‘Dear Mirror Readers,’ which strikes a personal tone and reinforces the values and beliefs of the newspaper and the expectations of the readers.
- The **selection and combination** of images contributes to the construction of the

representations of the issue and the people involved. The choice of the image of Boris Johnson, accompanied by the anchor ‘Rule Breaker’, directly contrasts with the image from the hospital and that of the ‘voice of reason’ Kier Starmer with the anchor: ‘he should do the decent thing and resign.’ This constructs a representation of the issue from a left-wing perspective.

- The **language and mode of address** used also contributes to the construction of representations; the use of emotive and declamatory language constructs a negative representation of Boris Johnson – ‘disgraced country’s highest office,’ ‘fiasco’ and ‘stain on our great nation’. The use of ‘our’ encourages the audience to join with the newspaper in condemning these actions.

Theoretical perspectives: representation – Stuart Hall

- The *Daily Mirror* uses **stereotypical representations** of the prime minister and other members of the government to convey its left-wing agenda and to raise awareness of inequalities in society. This is particularly pertinent with this story through which the inequalities in power are highlighted – those in power have been seen to flout the rules they themselves set, whilst the ‘ordinary person’ conformed to the restrictions and suffered as a result.
- The representation of the event and of those involved in it are constructed through the language of recognisable signs. Codes of clothing are used to convey messages about social standing. Similarly, the sign of the glass of fizz in the hand of Boris Johnson connotes a party and is juxtaposed against the signs that suggest the ‘Critical care’ ward, leading the audience to draw negative conclusions about his behaviour.

COMPONENT 1 SECTION B: MEDIA INDUSTRIES AUDIENCES

For this section you will be using the issue of *Daily Mirror* that you have

studied in class. This will be different from the set pages studied for Section A.

STARTING POINTS – Media industry

Industry context

The *Daily Mirror* was first published in 1903 as a newspaper for women ‘to act as a mirror on feminine life’. However, the newspaper was quickly redesigned to appeal to a broader audience. Owned by the Reach plc, the *Daily Mirror* was once the most popular tabloid in the UK. However, as is the case with other daily newspapers, the sales have been falling year on year. The average daily sales in February 2022 were 329,485 (www.abc.org.uk/data), down 9%. Consider the fact that the most circulated newspaper is the *Metro* free paper at 1,066,327, almost double its circulation in 2021.

Recent technological change, in particular online media, has largely been responsible for the downturn in print sales; the *Daily Mirror* responded to this by launching ‘Mirror Online’ and establishing a presence on social media sites. However, this technology has given the newspaper the ability to produce up-to-the-minute national and global news and to update this content regularly.

The website produces accessible content whereby it breaks down the key stories into ‘bitesize’ chunks, for example ‘6 Key Details in new Tory schools plan...’. This reinforces the *Daily Mirror*’s brand claim to being the ‘Intelligent Tabloid’. There are also opinion pieces by journalists and free-lance commentators which reinforce the left-wing agenda of the newspaper – ‘Kevin Maguire: Squeezing Everybody and plunging 1.3 million into absolute poverty, is a political choice’ (28/03/2022).

Reach plc is the largest commercial, national and regional publisher in the UK. The group publishes more than 130 national and local media brands from the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Record*, the *Daily Express*, to local newspapers such as the *Manchester Evening News* and *Nottingham Post*. Reach plc states that they are: ‘Champions, Campaigners and Changemakers At Reach, we have a clear core purpose: speaking up and shining a light on the truth.’

The *Daily Mirror* is part of a **regulatory framework** known as the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) – an independent body which is not backed by the government and is fully funded by the industry itself. This is a regulatory body that maintains press standards but is anti-Leveson in its approach.

Theoretical approaches: Power and media industries – Curran and Seaton

The newspaper industry is dominated by a small number of powerful companies. Initially, there were concerns about the deal that brought about the new company Reach plc, which was investigated by the Competition and Markets Authority. The concentrated ownership model of the newspaper industry means that audiences receive a narrow range of viewpoints; indeed, the *Daily Mirror* is a relatively lone voice in a largely right-wing press.

Reach plc has maintained their position in the UK market despite falling sales of the *Daily Mirror* and other mainstream titles by diversifying into regional news. This diverse pattern of ownership has allowed them to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media products.

Regulation – Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (A Level)

Reach plc is facing increasing pressure alongside the rest of the UK press industry to adhere to strict rules and regulations on industry practice. This pressure arose after the phone hacking scandal and subsequent Leveson enquiry into the industry. There is an underlying issue of protecting citizens from harmful material while ensuring choice and press freedom.

Cultural industries – David Hesmondhalgh (A Level)

Reach plc is one of the UK's largest newspaper publishers and has become a horizontally integrated company with a wide range of titles in order to maximise audiences and minimise risks. Rather than seeing digital media as a threat, the company has embraced its digital expansion and now offers digital marketing as well as digital classifieds to generate additional income. They have also introduced a subscription of £6.99 for a tablet edition of the newspaper with an introductory offer of two free months.

Starting points: Audience

Consider the following points in relation to the issue of the newspaper you have studied in class.

How are audiences grouped and categorised?

It is important that newspapers have a clear idea of their audience demographic in order to produce content that will appeal to the target audience and their ideas and beliefs. Newspaper audiences, similarly, to other media products, can be categorised in terms of age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste. Regarding newspapers, the political allegiance of the audience is also a key factor.

The *Daily Mirror's* target audience, according to ABC data, is predominantly C2DE, over 35 and are working class Labour supporters.

How do newspaper producers target audiences?

- The front page of the newspaper is important in attracting an audience, particularly regarding tabloid newspapers. The choice and style of the main headline and central image are important in attracting the reader and in communicating the view the newspaper is taking on the particular story featured. For example, the headline 'Thanks for Nothing' and the sub-heading 'Sunak's Sickener' used emotive language and alliteration to make its views clear about the mini budget in March 2022.
- Other pages in the newspaper and on digital platforms will reinforce the ideology of the newspaper including the editorial 'The Voice of the Mirror', the letters pages and opinion pieces.
- The values, attitudes and beliefs of the newspaper and the way in which they represent particular stories will resonate with like-minded readers who may have chosen this newspaper because of its left-wing stance. Readers will be made to feel part of the newspaper's community and that the stories and articles reflect their views. This audience will accept the **preferred reading** of the newspaper.
- Newspapers have had to adapt to survive, and the *Daily Mirror* has achieved this using new

technologies. In May 2021, it became the UK's number one website with 32 million monthly readers across all digital platforms (www.mirror.co.uk). The digital platforms also enable the readers to **interact** with the newspaper and encourages them to post comments on the stories featured. Distributing the publication across digital platforms which allow it to be interactive and immediate will also appeal to younger audiences.

Theoretical approaches:

Cultivation theory – Gerbner

Audience exposure to **repeated patterns** of representation, such as that of Brexit, the economy or of the government in power by newspapers may shape and influence their views and opinions of the world around them. Gerbner went on to say that this is not like 'hypodermic model' but rather depends on what the audience already believes. Newspapers function as opinion leaders and **mediate** the news for the readers with their political allegiance in mind. These views will be cultivated and reinforced by the newspaper and its content. The messages, such as that of the government being corrupt and elitist, need to **resonate** with an established belief in the audience of working-class left-wing men and women, such as that of Boris Johnson not being fit to govern.

Reception theory – Stuart Hall

The producers of newspapers encode ideas in their publications that are to be decoded by their readers. Active audiences who agree with the ideology of the newspaper will accept the viewpoint of the newspaper that is evident in its approach to stories. Those readers who have a different political allegiance will have an **oppositional response**, disagreeing with the messages constructed by the newspaper and will not buy/read a publication that does not reflect their ideas and opinions.

End of audience – Clay Shirky (A Level)

The concept of audience members as passive consumers is no longer tenable in the age of digital technologies. This is because they have enabled the rise of the **prosumer** who can create their own content submitting stories as a citizen journalist, offering an immediate perspective on news stories.

Consumers can also actively engage and 'speak back' to the news media. The *Daily Mirror* website offers opportunities for readers to comment on stories and features, thus giving them a voice as part of the newspaper's community.

CONTEXTS

Social and cultural

Newspapers reflect the society and culture in which they are produced. The *Daily Mirror* is a left-wing publication in a largely right-wing press. The newspaper is known for its support of the ordinary working-class person and regularly runs stories and campaigns related to social issues and inequalities. Consider how this context is evident in the issue of the newspaper you have studied.

Economic

The newspaper industry has faced economic pressure in recent years as the sale of print copies has steadily fallen. Newspapers like the *Daily Mirror*, which are part of larger conglomerates, are more protected from economic risks. Some newspaper titles have introduced subscriptions for some or all of their digital products. For example, there is a subscription for the tablet version of the *Daily Mirror*.

Political

The political context of newspapers is reflected in the way in which stories are selected and how issues, events and social groups are represented. As a left-wing publication and a tabloid, the *Daily Mirror* will be openly critical of the Conservative government and supportive of Labour. It will also raise awareness of the effect of the Conservative policies on their working-class readers. For example, the newspaper actively supported footballer Marcus Rashford's campaign to force the government to give extra help for struggling families: 'Marcus: Don't Abandon Hungry Kids' (May 2021).

Appendix 1.

DAILY MIRROR TUESDAY 01.02.2022

VOICE OF THE

DAILY Mirror

Stain on our great nation

BORIS Johnson is prepared to destroy everything and everybody around him to survive at all costs.

He is an embarrassment to our great nation. The world thinks worse of Britain because we're led by a reckless liar.

The Prime Minister is a charlatan who makes us look cheap and nasty.

The police inquiry into Downing Street's lockdown parties, followed by damning evidence in Sue Gray's limited report and a risible response in Parliament demonstrate why Johnson is uniquely unfit for high office.

Labour leader Keir Starmer was pitch perfect in his condemnation.

And even more telling for Johnson were the assaults from his own side, particularly Theresa May, former Cabinet minister Andrew Mitchell and MP Aaron Bell who asked if he is a fool for obeying the rules at his gran's funeral.

The Russians, Ukrainians, Americans and Chinese – in fact, leaders of every nation – know Johnson is a vastly diminished Premier.

Tory MPs should do their patriotic duty and immediately remove this ghastly stain.

Vaccines fiasco

BACKING down on mandatory jabs-for-jobs for England's health and care workers saves the NHS from mass sackings but many thousands of care home staff were forced out last year.

Luring them back won't be easy but the Government could help by offering compensation and improved wages. Despite being so valuable, these jobs are horribly underpaid.

The Mirror has consistently urged everyone to get vaccinated, but regular tests were always preferable to showing objectors the door.

Once again the Tories got it wrong. In future, they should try thinking before going down the wrong road and having to do a U-turn.

Charm & a Legg

LEONARD Fenton's role as Dr Legg in EastEnders made him a household name.

The charming actor had a fine career. We thank the good doctor for the great memories.

HELLO, KREMLIN SWITCHBOARD

Boris? Boris who? That one! No, no, don't put him through. I can't be seen to associate with that sort



PARTYGATE: LABOUR LEADER'S MESSAGE TO YOU

A man with no shame



CRITICAL CARE Medics at King's College Hospital, London, treat Covid victim



RULE-BREAKER Boris Johnson took us for fools

Johnson has disgraced country's highest office

BY LOUIE SMITH

DAD-OF-FIVE Rex Williams, 85, died of Covid-19 at a care home in Coventry, Warks, on April 20 last year. The retired factory manager's son Charlie, pictured, is part of the campaigners Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK. Charlie, 53, said the PM "believes he and his office are

"He needs to go

above the rules". He added: "Families like mine are absolutely livid. We were bewildered with grief and in a state of trauma but they were having a party.

"He has disgraced our highest office. "Us bereaved families are not going to forget, it's unforgivable, he has got to go."

BY LUCY THORNTON

A MAN unable to see his 89-year-old mum who died after getting Covid called the findings "an insult".

"It's an insult

in March. He said: "It's an insult to all families who lost relatives. She made sacrifices all her life to look after 87 foster children.

"It's appalling the Prime Minister cannot follow his own rules. "If you're in leadership you should lead by example. I don't feel I can trust him now."

BY LUCY THORNTON

BORIS Johnson should be kicked out now, says Simone Casey whose mum Susan died "alone and petrified" of Covid at 60 last November.

"Continues to lie

of parties there's no way he could not know. I think this will anger people even more, that he continues to lie.

"He's a rich schoolboy whose dad's always told him he's untouchable and that's what he thinks. "If anyone else was being investigated by the police at work we would be suspended."

BY DAVID BURKE

TIFFANY Jones, whose dad Colin died aged 61 on December 18, 2020 - the day a party was held in Downing Street - told The Mirror she is furious the PM has not quit.

"A mockery

nothing to Boris, yet this country is founded on people like him. It's an insult, it makes a mockery of everything families have gone through."

Tiffany, 41, continued: "He's not a leader we can trust, he's just sorry he got caught. "All he's doing is inflicting pain on people that lost someone."

BY DAVID BURKE

RIVKA Gottlieb, who lost her father Michael aged 73 during the first lockdown in April 2020, said Mr Johnson's "position is untenable" and he "cannot be taken seriously".

"I feel disgusted

abdicated responsibility again. And his apology is worthless because I don't believe a word he says."

Rivka praised Sue Gray for her report, but said she found it "shocking to see it in black and white". She said: "It's a very damning report of how people in high office should not behave."

Dear Mirror readers

KEIR STARMER

THE British people should feel pride in our response to Covid.

When we were tested we stood up.

It wasn't easy. We weren't able to visit elderly relatives or hug loved ones.

Many of us missed funerals and births.

Those heart-wrenching sacrifices were for a reason. In making them, we saved the lives of people we will probably never meet.

That deep public spirit, that

love and respect for others has always characterised our nation at its best.

It's what patriotism is really about.

I know the real anger people feel about how the Prime Minister behaved.

He set the rules then he broke them repeatedly.

And when he was caught he did what

he always does – deny, pretend and then blame someone else.

Even now, he's saying he's going to sack the people that work for him just to save himself.

His latest argument is that he couldn't possibly know if there was a party in his house or his office or if he was there when it happened – that he needs the police to tell him.

But his behaviour

The Prime Minister took us all for fools.

He held your sacrifice in contempt. He insulted your intelligence.

That is the least you deserve

No more embarrassing our

doesn't lessen what we have achieved as a country.

It only lessens him and those who continue to parrot his nonsense.

My message to the Prime Minister is simple – the British people aren't fools. They never believed any of it.

He should do the decent thing and resign.

Of course, he won't. He is a man without shame.

When the Queen mourned her husband alone, we saw what leadership looks like.

It is an act of service to you, the British people.

from a Prime Minister. Because whoever you are and whatever party you vote for, behaviour and character matter.

That's why I have committed to a contract with you.

Because, while this Prime Minister has been proven as totally unworthy of his office, the Labour Party I lead will focus on restoring decency, honour and integrity to public life.

No more treating your hard-earned money as if it's the personal cash machine of the Tory party to hand out to its friends and donors.

No more embarrassing our

country. No more lies. I know that things are tough at the moment. The cost of living is increasing for all of us.

Energy bills are going up but wages aren't matching them.

Boris Johnson's tax rises will hit in April.

Too many people do not feel safe on their streets.

GP appointments are hard to come by.

That's why, while the Tories have been distracted by their own chaos, Labour has been busy setting out plans – to bring down your energy bills, to tackle crime, to renew our NHS.

I promise that when this

complacent government pays the price for its actions, my Labour government will be inspired by the way our country came together to get through the pandemic.

And I promise that our priorities will be delivering the security, prosperity and respect you and your family deserve.

Yours, Keir Starmer, Leader of the Labour Party

Compare Hannah's quiet dignity with his lying bombast

AS Boris Johnson faced the Commons yesterday over the shock findings in Sue Gray's interim report, it fell to Tory Aaron Bell to deliver the most painful blow.

The MP for Newcastle-Under-Lyme told the House that he didn't hug his parents at his grandmother's funeral.

"Am I a fool?" he asked the Prime Minister. The windows in the chamber are too high for the Prime Minister to see out to the River Thames. But across that river, the sea of red hearts painted on the south side of the river are visible from Parliament's terraces. Every

ROS WYNNE-JONES

heart represents a life lost to Covid. And now, 16 parties later, every heart is a reproach. A reminder that while those in No10 partied, everyday people died alone.

Last summer, I walked the Covid Memorial Wall with the two bereaved young people behind it, Hannah Brady and Matt Fowler.

On May 20, 2020, when No10 was holding a Bring Your Own Bottle party, Hannah was registering her beloved father Shaun's death. Later, as part of a Covid-19 Bereaved Families

delegation to Downing Street, Hannah sat in that back garden. A few days later, the infamous case full of booze was again being wheeled into position for yet another party.

Hannah and Matt have shown nothing but dignity in their fight for justice.

The contrast with yesterday's bombastic performance by the Prime Minister in the Commons could not be more shameful.

Johnson even stooped so low as to flog conspiracy theories at the Labour leader, accusing Keir Starmer of failing to prosecute Jimmy Savile, a claim he knows is false. So

Trumpian was the performance, Johnson only just stopped short of dancing to YMCA.

But Keir spoke to those of us who may have questioned why we all didn't bend the rules, like those in high office. The people of Britain have been so gaslit by our Prime Minister, some wonder – were we wrong not to hug our loved ones or let our kids see friends? Keir told us: "People shouldn't feel

HEARTS FOR THE LOST Hannah at the Covid wall

guilty. They should feel pride. By abiding by the rules, they have saved the lives of people they will probably never meet."

One allegation is that pals of Johnson's wife Carrie Symonds held a party when Dominic Cummings quit, playing Abba's The Winner Takes It All.

Tonight, it's SOS the couple in the Downing Street flat should play. Because the question is, after today, how can he... even try... to go on?