

Conspiracy Theories Become Conspiracy Facts

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At first slowly but in recent weeks with seemingly gathering pace, two trends have emerged. On the one hand, many of the core claims behind lockdowns, masks, and vaccines are unravelling and the prevailing narrative has been in retreat on all three fronts. But there is still a long way to go, as indicated by the cussed refusal of the Biden administration to let Novak Djokovic play at [Indian Wells](#).

On the other hand, the explosive lockdown files in the UK have blown apart the official narrative. We the sceptics were right in our dark suspicions of the motives, scientific basis, and evidence behind government decisions, but even we did not fully grasp just how venal, evil, and utterly contemptuous of their citizens some of the bastards in charge of our health, lives, livelihoods, and children's future were. "Hell is empty, And all the devils are here" ([Shakespeare](#), [The Tempest](#)) indeed. They will have to build a new circle of hell to accommodate all the perpetrators of evil let loose upon the world since 2020.

A mistake is when you spill coffee or take the wrong exit ramp off the highway. Lockdown was a policy pushed hard by politicians and health chiefs even against scientific dissent and substantial public opposition, using tools from every tyrants' playbook of disinformation and lies whilst attacking and censoring truth. The depth of public opposition went unrecognized because the fear-peddling media colluded in not reporting on protests.

Genuine mistakes were few and are forgivable. Most were deliberate distortions of reality, outright falsehoods, and a systematic campaign to terrorize people into compliance with arbitrary diktats interspersed with efforts to vilify, silence, and cancel all critics by using the full powers of the state to co-opt, bribe, and bully. All in pursuit of the most maddening public policy insanity of modern times because it ignored existing canons of pandemic planning in blind panic just when calm was most needed. To call lockdown a mistake is to trivialize the shock to society.

Before coming to that, a few preliminary observations to summarize where we are at.

What is Now Known and Generally but Not Universally Admitted

Covid is now endemic. It will circulate throughout the world and keep returning with mutating variants. People who have been infected and/or vaccinated can contract and transmit it. Consequently we have little choice but to learn to live with it. What is important is to make sure the right policy lessons are learnt so that never again, neither for a novel coronavirus nor for any other infectious disease, do we go down the path of public policy insanity to lock up an entire city or country with the discovery of 1-10 cases and bring all social, cultural and economic activity to a shuddering halt – or give total power and control to sociopaths and psychopaths.

Meanwhile what is particularly striking is just how many suspicions voiced by sceptics from early 2020 onwards and mocked as conspiracy theories have turned into plausible claims and accepted facts:

1. The virus may have originated in the laboratory of the Wuhan Institute of Virology;
2. Covid modeling was dodgy and dressed up outliers as reasonable case scenarios;
3. Lockdowns don't work;
4. Lockdowns kill through perverse consequences and inflict other damaging harms, including interruptions to critical life-saving children's immunization campaigns in developing countries;
5. School closures are particularly bad policy. They did not curb transmission but they did cause long-term harm to children's education, development and emotional well-being;
6. Masks are ineffective. They stop neither infection nor transmission;
7. Infection confers natural immunity at least as effective as vaccination;
8. Covid vaccines do not stop infection, hospitalization, or even death;
9. Covid vaccines do not stop transmission;
10. The safety of vaccines using new technology had not been definitively established, neither for the short term nor for the long term;
11. Vaccine harms are real and substantial but safety signals have been summarily dismissed and ignored;
12. mRNA vaccines are [not confined to the arm](#) but spread rapidly to other parts, including reproductive organs, with potentially adverse consequences for fertility and births;
13. The harm-benefit equation of vaccines is, like the disease burden itself, steeply age-differentiated. Healthy young people did not need either initial or booster doses;
14. Vaccination mandates don't increase vaccine take-up;
15. Vaccine mandates can fuel cross-vaccine hesitancy;
16. Suppression of sceptical and dissenting voices will [lessen trust](#) in public health officials, experts and institutions, and possibly also in scientists more generally;
17. [Estimates of "Long Covid" were inflated](#) (CDC estimate of 20 percent of Covid infections against UK study's estimate of 3 percent) by using generalized, non-specific symptoms like mild fatigue and weakness;
18. Health policy interventions involve policy trade-offs just like all other policy choices. Cost-benefit analysis is therefore an essential prerequisite, not an optional add-on.

The Lockdown Files

The last three years have seen lives lost in the millions with tens of millions more yet to be accounted for in the coming years, civilized lifestyles destroyed, previously inviolate freedoms shredded, civil liberties turned into privileges to be granted on the whim of bureaucrats, law enforcement officers corrupted into street thugs brutalizing the very people they are sworn to serve and protect, businesses destroyed, economies wrecked, bodily integrity violated.

The [Lockdown Files](#), a treasure trove of over 100,000 WhatsApp messages in real time between all the principal policymakers on Covid in England while Matt Hancock was the Secretary of Health (2020–26 June 2021), offer an unparalleled and gripping window into the amoral and cynical arrogance circulating in the corridors of power. The daily drip-feed of revelations in the *Telegraph* is akin to watching with fascinated horror a slow-motion train wreck. Schadenfreude doesn't come any more delicious.

The files are littered with flippant remarks, mocking comments and contempt for citizens. Among the revelations about the Johnson government:

- The government knew there was no “robust rationale” for including children in the “[rule of six](#)” (the maximum number of people who could meet at any given time), but backed the controversial policy anyway.
- Facemasks were introduced in secondary schools in England after Johnson was told it was “not worth an argument” with Scotland’s Nicola Sturgeon over the issue, despite England’s Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Chris Whitty saying there were “no very strong reasons” to do so. In other words, [political calculations were knowingly prioritized over schoolchildren’s needs](#).
- A plan to lift restrictions were dropped after Johnson was told it would be “[too far ahead of public opinion](#).”
- Consultants were paid over [£1 million a day](#) for more than a year on the totally ineffectual test and trace program, turning the scheme into the embezzlement of public funds to line private pockets.

We now know just how punch drunk on tyranny the political, bureaucratic, scientific, and journalist class was during the pandemic. The ruling elites, when liberated from democratic accountability and media scrutiny, morphed seamlessly into morally cavalier and inhumane petty tyrants. Averse to alternative ways of thinking outside the echo chamber, they developed neuralgia to any idea that might challenge lockdown fanaticism.

Lockdown sceptics like the authors of the [Great Barrington Declaration](#) (GBD) who argued for the elderly and frail to be protected were demonized as dangerous “Covid deniers” who wanted to “let it rip” in a callous and cruel strategy of herd immunity. But government officials whose policies had a direct, catastrophic impact on the health of the elderly and frail were treated as heroes and unimpeachable voices of moral authority.

Sociopath, Psychopath, or Both?

Among the revelations about Hancock:

- More than 40,000 residents of care homes in England died with Covid. Hancock was advised by Whitty in April 2020 to test everyone entering the care homes.

He rejected the advice because testing capacity was limited and, for political (PR) reasons, he [prioritized reaching his grandiose, self-imposed target of 100,000 daily tests](#) in the lower risk general community over protecting the care home residents, despite repeated claims of having thrown a “[protective ring](#)” around the homes. Patients discharged into care homes from hospitals were tested but not those coming in from the community. That is, “focussed protection” of the GBD was the right way to go. Instead Hancock [rubbished the GBD](#) and belittled its three eminent epidemiologist authors.

- Social care minister Helen Whately told Hancock that stopping visits to care homes by spouses was “[inhumane](#)” and risked the elderly residents “just giving up” after prolonged isolation, but he refused to budge.
- He rejected advice in November 2020 to [shift from 14-day Covid quarantine](#) for people who had been in close contact with anyone infected, to five days of testing because it would “imply we’ve been getting it wrong.” Talk of a sunk cost fallacy. Over 20 million people in total were told to self-isolate even if they had no symptoms. God I feel vindicated for refusing flatly to join Australia’s clunky test and trace program.
- In a discussion on how to ensure the public complied with ever-changing lockdown restrictions, Hancock suggested “We [frighten the pants off everyone](#)” and Project Fear was born. Simon Case, Britain’s most senior civil servant, said the “[fear/guilt factor](#)” was “vital” in “ramping up the messaging” during the third lockdown in January 2021.
- Informed of the emergence of the alpha/Kent variant in December 2020, Hancock and his aides canvassed the [ideal time to “deploy” the new variant](#) in order to sustain public fear of the virus to ensure continued compliance with directives.
- A member of his team asked if they could “[lock up” Nigel Farage](#) after he tweeted a video of himself at a pub in Kent, because the troublesome politician was such a thorn in the government’s side.
- Hancock and Case [mocked people](#) forced to isolate in quarantine hotels, joking about returning travelers being “locked up” in “shoe box” rooms. Case wished he could “see some of the faces of people coming out of first class and into a premier inn shoe box.” Informed by Hancock that 149 people had entered “Quarantine Hotels due to their own free will,” Case replied: “Hilarious.”
- Hancock fought furious internal battles to [hog the vaccine media limelight](#). He preened about his pictures in the media and boasted how the pandemic could [propel his career “into the next league.”](#)
- He told other ministers to “[get heavy with the police](#)” to enforce lockdown restrictions and then boasted that “The plod got their marching orders.” This raises questions about the legality of interfering with the operational instructions of police.
- Intoxicated by his own brilliance and infallibility, Hancock attacked vaccine czar [Dame Kate Bingham](#), the chief of the National Health Service (NHS) [Lord Stevens](#), and CEO of the Wellcome Trust (and now top scientist at the WHO) [Sir Jeremy Farrar](#).
- He schemed with his aides, with the help of a [secret spreadsheet](#), to deny rebellious party MPs funding for pet projects in their constituencies if they did not fall in line, including a new [centre for disabled children and adults](#).

I can relate therefore to this online comment on one of these stories in the *Telegraph*:

“Hancock was intellectually stunted pondlife before the pandemic and still is now, but with more slime and a bit of a stink to him.” Or, to put it in more technical language: Hancock comes across as an ego-driven total f...wit.

The state criminalized quotidian activities like sitting on a bench in the park, walking on the beach and meeting with extended family. Public health messaging was weaponized to normalize and sacralize spirit-sapping levels of social isolation. Even East Germany’s Stasi did not stop the elderly from hugging their grandchildren. Elderly patients were forced to die alone and surviving family members were banned from saying final farewells and denied the solace of a full funeral.

Hancock was able to get away with exercising his lust for power because his prime minister, Boris Johnson, proved to be lazy, weak, and vacillating. The vivid description of Johnson by fired top aide Dominic Cummings – an out of control “[shopping trolley](#)” lurching from side to side in a supermarket aisle, depending on who he last talked to – has been amply validated by the leaked files. The instinctual libertarian rapidly morphed from a lockdown sceptic into a [zealot](#).

Lessons

The Lockdown Files confirm that politics informed the policymakers in most of the key decisions on how to manage the pandemic. Accordingly, while medical specialists can debate the technical details of different medical approaches, policy specialists should be among the lead assessors in evaluating the justifications for and results and effectiveness of the policy interventions.

The existing frameworks, processes and institutional safeguards under which liberal democracies operated until 2020 had ensured expanding freedoms, growing prosperity, an enviable lifestyle, quality of life and educational and health outcomes without precedent in human history. Abandoning them in favour of a tightly centralized small group of decision-makers liberated from any external scrutiny, contestability, and accountability produced both a dysfunctional process and suboptimal outcomes: very modest gains for much long-lasting pain.

The sooner we return to the conviction that good process ensures better long-term outcomes and acts as a check against suboptimal outcomes alongside curbs on abuses of power and wastage of public funds, the better.

Interventions rooted in panic, driven by political machinations, and using all the levers of state power to terrify citizens and muzzle critics in the end needlessly killed massive numbers of the most vulnerable while putting the vast low-risk majority under house arrest. The benefits are questionable but the harms are increasingly obvious. The Johnson government in general and Hancock in particular revalidate Lord Acton’s astute observation that [power corrupts](#) and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

They weren’t following the science but Hancock’s ego and career ambitions. He exploited Johnson’s “stonking” laziness and shallowness. The Lockdown Files reveal a government gone rogue that viewed and treated the people as enemies. The UK, US, and Australia don’t need an inquiry strung out over years, focused on small details to the neglect of the big picture, with the tame conclusion that lessons will be learnt but blame cannot be apportioned. Instead we need criminal charges, and the sooner the better.

Britain's top civil servant acted more like [a partisan political hack](#) than an apolitical, neutral and loyal-to-the-elected-government of the day civil servant. Case's bias, immaturity, poor judgment, and unwillingness to support the PM with accurate, balanced, and impartial information were such as to warrant instant sacking. His hubris is such that he is yet to submit his resignation despite the publication of these appalling exchanges with Hancock who had effectively taken over the government.

The fact that as the "[absolutely cringe-worthy](#)" revelations came tumbling out, PM Rishi Sunak insisted Case has his confidence reflects poorly on Sunak's judgment.

Flawed process produced bad outcomes.

In a modern-day version of sacrificing virgins to appease the viral gods, the young have lost many more years of their life to buy a few more lonely, miserable months for the infirm old.

If the vast sums thrown at Covid had been redirected to the leading killer diseases and upgrades to public health infrastructure, using the standard quality-adjusted life years (QALY) metric, many million deaths would have been averted around the world over the coming decades.

If we fail to heed the lessons of the last three years, we will indeed be condemned to repeat them, not just for new pandemics of infectious diseases but also for other crises like the "[climate emergency](#)."

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by Michel Chossudovsky

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