Twitter Thread by Ben Pile



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Bad faith smears, such as this article, omits so much context, order of events and perspective, in order to turn Lockdown into a partisan issue.

Context like claims about 500K deaths, and 67 million people under house arrest for a year.

67 million house arrest years, and their as yet uncalculated second-order consequences amounts to vastly more lost QALYs than were allegedly lost to Covid19.

No lockdown sceptic I am aware argued against precautionary measures for the categorically vulnerable.

Moreover, the lockdown hawks have traded on rank fearmongering, leaving much of the public with the view that ~10% of the population had succumbed to the virus. There has been no effort from the official narrative to address that fear.

Here, Lawson takes Yeadon's comment, which is a statement about ONS's reporting of the week -- ONS's own claim of no statistically significant increase -- as a claim about the year.

https://t.co/J0ZBFKxfG4

> And this month, as the Covid deaths escalated, Yeadon — who has denounced as unsafe and unnecessary the vaccine made by his erstwhile employer — took to Twitter to assert,"We do NOT have EXCESS DEATHS". To put it most politely, his opinion does not tally with the findings of the Office for National Statistics, which released figures last week showing that in 2020 the number of "excess deaths", as a proportion of the population, amounted to a 12.1% rise over the average of the previous five years. As Sky's outstanding data analyst, Ed Conway, wrote: "That's the biggest leap in any year since 1940 ... the only other years that came close — save for 1940 — are 1929, in which there was a global flu pandemic on top of an economic crash; 1918, year of the Spanish flu; and 1915, during the First World War."

> I\u2019ve called for a complete halt to PCR mass testing. Even if it was trustworthy, it serves no helpful purpose. We do NOT have EXCESS DEATHS. That\u2019s as it is in England & U.K. wide. People terrorised into staying home to die. Non-COVID excess deaths. Self-inflicted, due lockdown. https://t.co/M82gTgGpBm pic.twitter.com/c3CIfM7CZH
>
> — Yardley Yeadon (@MichaelYeadon3) January 10, 2021

He goes on to wonder what Yeadon was referring to, though Yeadon's Tweet was clear enough. The 5-week figures give some big number-drama to his story, but the daily death rate is less stark: 1,691 versus 1,397. Hardly heart-warming figures, but hardly the year 1349.

> But was Yeadon referring only to the winter deaths? Well, the official England and Wales figure for mortality over the last five weeks of 2020 was 59,195, compared with an average of 48,901 over the past five years. Which might explain the inability of some hospital mortuaries to meet demand, and the opening of emergency facilities for storing the bodies.

I wonder if Lawson's reference to 'government-mandated social-distancing' is a reference to the practice of sending older people back from hospital with newly-acquired Covid19, to "care" homes?

That is the reality of government policy.

> Funnily enough, I had a (courteous) email from Young last week, critical of some of my columns, which had supported the government's policies of mandatory social restrictions and attacked the so-called lockdown sceptics, not least for their dismissing so many victims as old or vulnerable folk who were due to meet their maker soon anyway. Young told me, "I'm not sure you've fully grasped the case [of lockdown sceptics], but I think the case you make is often against a caricature of our position."
>
> Well, Toby, you did write, in March: "Spending £350bn to prolong the lives of a few hundred thousand mostly elderly people is an irresponsible use of taxpayers' money." Leave aside the moral issues, he, in common with others of this opinion, never attempts to calculate the counterfactual: what would be the economic consequences, not least for the hospitality industry, of adopting a so-called herd immunity strategy and letting the virus rip. A number of serious economists — free-market ones, not lovers of big government — have done so. I'm thinking of Sam Bowman of the Adam Smith Institute, Julian Jessop of the Institute of Economic Affairs, and Ryan Bourne of the Cato Institute. They have all supported the policy of government-mandated social distancing.

And it was Bowman who claimed that Lockdown would have little to no lasting impact on the economy: since there was no 'structural' problem, demand would bounce back as soon as the lockdown ended.

That's every bit a failure as Lawson's claims against Lockdown sceptics.

Recall: lockdown sceptics have NOT argued AGAINST protecting vulnerable people. Nor even against spending a LOT of money to provide that protection.

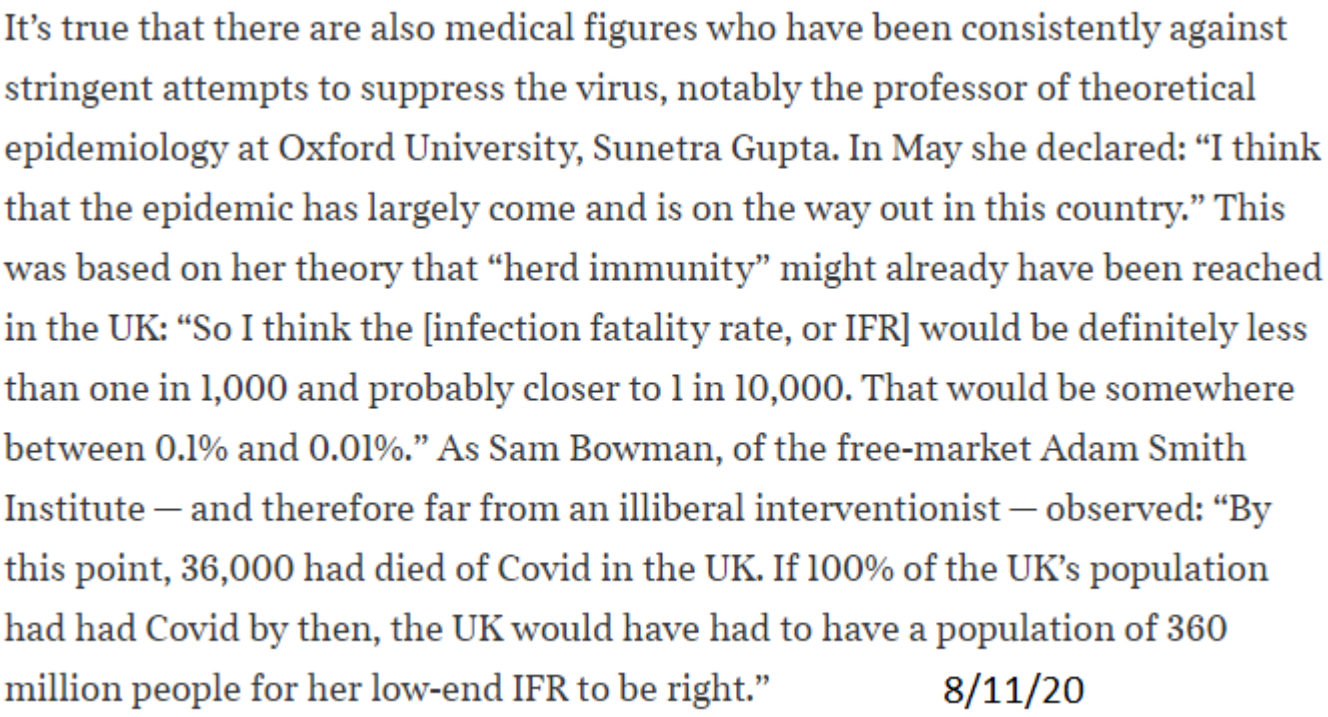
"Counterfactual" not required, Dom.

I argued it from the outset: focus the state's resources on protecting the vulnerable, not on policing (i.e. criminalising) the entire population.

And here, Lawson recycles his article points from November.

In the November article, he states that Bowman is "far from an illiberal interventionist".

But illiberal interventionism is exactly what Bowman is for. If he was ever against it, he folded under the pressure.



All the search results for "Gupta" and “definitely less than one in 1,000 and probably closer to 1 in 10,000” return links to Lawson's articles.

I would like to know what she actually said back in May.

This appears to be the source of the quote.

It's fair to say that Gupta's claim is more nuanced than Lawson allows.

And it's a statement in an informal interview, not in a paper offered to peers in the field, like the prediction of 500K deaths was.

https://t.co/sV7Sh7315u

This is the conclusion of the article in which Gupta is quoted, after stating:

“I think there’s a chance we might have done better by doing nothing at all, or at least by doing something different, which would have been to pay attention to protecting the vulnerable..."

> “So I know there is a sort of libertarian argument for the release of lockdown, and I think it is unfortunate that those of us who feel we should think differently about lockdown have had our voices added to that libertarian harangue. But the truth is that lockdown is a luxury, and it’s a luxury that the middle classes are enjoying and higher income countries are enjoying at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable and less developed countries. It’s a very serious crisis.”

Lawson would have you believe that Gupta's underestimate is underpinned by a callous disregard. But she speaks both about protecting people, and resisting political impulses, as well as seeking the consequences of lockdowns in the broadest perspective.

Lawson omits all that.

Lawson, like Bowman, who he plagiarises, is obsessed with a definitive fatality rate. He holds Gupta and sceptics accountable for their putative failures, but not fearmongering estimates for theirs.