Twitter Thread by small robots



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The UK government's only strategy for some time - and this goes for everything, not just the pandemic - is leaking vague policy plans to trusted journos and letting the speculation outrage simmer to guage public reactions before committing to anything.

It happens so consistently that it simply must be be their core PR policy, and you just know they're very smug about how effective it is (note: it isn't).

This generation of Tories, as we've talked about before, have the concept of social engineering built into their ideology. It's their one guiding principle: you don't ever admit what you want, you just convince people they want it too.

It's all about manipulation and optics. It sort-of-kind-of worked with Brexit, in that it got them a result that brought them to power, but they've run up against the basic inertia of reality since.

As the wrestler Scott Steiner once put it in an interview, "You can't make chicken salad out of chicken shit."

With the pandemic it's totally derailing, because all people need to survive this is *good information*. And if you have, as Johnson and his ilk do, a compulsion to obfuscate, you just end up killing people.

You can see the wheels turning as they try to implement every policy change without ever saying why they're doing things. You can just about discern the *shape* of the situation they're trying to create...but it's not happening.

Because they have a fundamental belief that anyone who is Not One of Them is, for all intents and purposes, a mindless data point that exists to be smeared out into an average in a behavioural algorithm.

But it turns out we're actually people who talk to each other and remember things. We're not an amorphous GDP-producing mass of trending topics and voting intentions.

So when we get pushed and prodded into quasi-lockdowns with arbitrary rules that don't make sense, we don't respond uniformly, and the virus spreads. They want us to basically run like a clock they only have to wind up now and then.

They're addicted to this idea of just quietly pulling some levers in the background and then letting the whole system just run itself smoothly to their benefit. It's almost an aesthetic principle, a philosophical exercise, a demonstration of superior statecraft.

Just *telling us* what they want to happen feels inelegant. It's like how we'll put together an elaborate Excel formula that takes ages to figure out rather than just spend 5 minutes typing in numbers. It's mastery for its own sake.

And that's all very well but *people are dying*.