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EXCLUSIVE: Families who lost loved ones in Covid pandemic 'sickened' by new Partygate video

Bereaved relatives called on the Metropolitan busting held in December when socialising ind

By Ashley Cowburn, Political Correspondent, 06:50, 19 Jun 2023 | UPDATED 07:22, 19 JUN 2023

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Families who lost loved ones during the pandemic have described watching the new Partygate video as a "punch in the stomach".

Campaigners accused Tory aides filmed twirling each other around in the footage of "dancing on the graves of those who died".

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The bereaved relatives called on the Metropolitan Police to prosecute those who boozed at the lockdown-busting held in December when socialising indoors was banned in London.

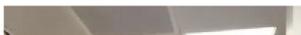
The previously unseen footage, **revealed by The Mirror**, shows Conservative aides dancing, crashing into a buffet table, and mocking pandemic-era laws at Conservative Campaign Headquarters in central London.

The party was organised by the campaign team of the then London Mayor candidate Shaun Bailey – now Lord Bailey after Mr Johnson made him a peer in his resignation honours list. Mr Bailey had left the party before the video was taken.

Did you lose loved ones during the Covid pandemic? Let us know at webnews@mirror.co.uk

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The video shows staff dancing, crashing into a buffet table, and mocking pandemic-era laws



The Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group hit out at the footage showing Tory activists living in a parallel universe'

The clip does, however, feature Ben Mallet – a

Mr Mallet, filmed holding a glass of red wine at the 2021 London mayoral election.

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by Taboola

Lobby Akinola, a spokesperson for Covid Bereaved Families For Justice (CBFFJ), lost his key worker father Femi, 60, two weeks after he caught Covid in April 2020.

The 32-year-old, from London, told the Mirror the footage is “truly disgusting”.



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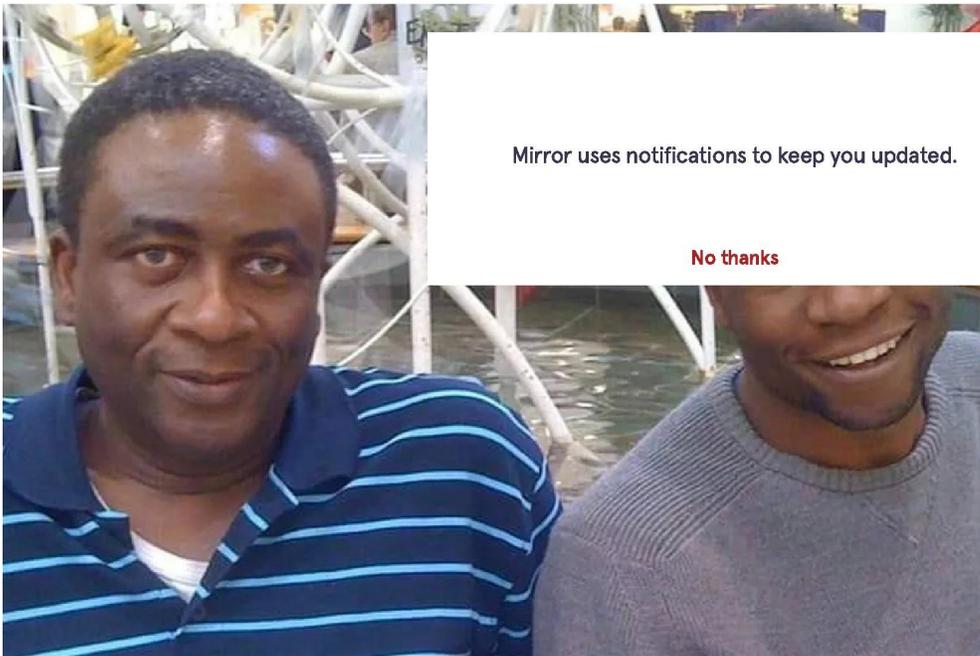
A picture shows 24 revellers at the party

"There was a really serious task at hand - keeping the nation safe and saving lives. They have made a mockery of it," he said.

"Worse still, they felt emboldened and safe enough to not only do that but to film it and create evidence.

"I can't stress enough - going into that Christmas the UK was in crisis, we were approaching the highest death rate in the world.

"What are you even celebrating? What is there to be celebrating?"



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Lobby Akinola and his dad Femi Akinola

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He added: "At a time when they literally held the nation's lives in their hands they were thinking of themselves."

Mr Akinola also questioned what the previous police investigation into the party actually involved, and worries this will be "brushed under the carpet" as the world moves on from the pandemic.

"How can we forget it? Our loved ones aren't coming back. This is something we live with forever. It's insulting," he said.

Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group spokesman Amos Waldman, who lost his grandmother Sheila Lamb in April 2020, said he was "appalled and sickened".

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Leshie and her father Ranjith (Image: Collect Unknown)

He told Times Radio: "It's not a huge surprise given we know what was happening, but the imagery of it was pretty powerful, and completely at odds with families were going through at the time."

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He added: "It's like a parallel universe.

"And to be honest, it's difficult to comprehend how they can act in such a carefree manner, given what the rest of the country was going through.

"To think of these people who were celebrating, just oblivious to what was going on around them and putting other people's lives in danger.

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Amos's gran Sheila Lamb (Image: Collect Unknown)

"Which is, you know, one of the worst aspects of this because we all complied with the rules."

Debbie Lewis, a campaigner from Milton Keynes who founded Covid 19 Families UK after her father Richard died, said she was more "angry than surprised" about the footage.

"Lots of my anger to be honest is that I was unable to see my father when he was in hospital as I was sticking to the rules," she said.

"The funeral restrictions meant that there were so many people who wanted to say goodbye who were unable to.

"To find out that they held parties and danced and sang about it when we suffered so much is just horrendous, absolutely horrendous.

"It just adds to the pain we are already sufferi

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Lobby at the Covid Tribute Wall in Westminster (Image: TIM ANDERSON)

Sioux Vosper, who also lost her dad to Covid, said that watching the video on Father's Day was "a punch in the stomach".

"I feel upset and angry," she said. "They partied while our loved ones died. We obeyed the rules, there were no goodbyes."

Ms Vosper was unable to visit her father John when he was admitted to hospital. He died 18 days later in April 2020.

She demanded that Scotland Yard take action over the footage. "The people at the party need to be held accountable," she added.

"Now the police have got video evidence, they need to be prosecuted."

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Sioux Vosper lost her dad to Covid (Image: Daily Mirror/Ian Vogler)

Leshie Chandrapala, whose father passed away in April 2020, said: "Whilst the country were following the rules, Tory HQ were dancing on the graves of those who died, betraying Covid bereaved and taking the nation for fools."

Matt Forrest, whose mum Kaye died of Covid i
churn".

Mr Forrest, from Doncaster, South Yorkshire, s

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Hannah Brady and Matt Fowler by the Covid Memorial Wall in Westminster (Image: David Dyson)

Matt Fowler, a co-founder of CBFFJ whose father, Ian, died in April 2020, told **the Guardian**: "It's pretty
PRIVACY see this especially on Father's Day."

"It absolutely should be investigated again, but you've got to wonder how much confidence to have in that investigation.

Labour's Shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting said: "People followed the rules at great personal pain and sacrifice.

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'People followed the rules at great personal pain and sacrifice,' says Labour's Wes Streeting (Image: Getty Images)

"This is what the Tory rule-breakers in Number 10 still don't get. As far as they were concerned, it was one rule for them and another for everyone else."

Cabinet minister **Michael Gove** said Lord Bailey and Mr Mallet should not be stripped of their honours, claiming: "The decision to confer honours on people was one that was made by **David Johnson** as an outgoing prime minister.

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Michael Gove said they should not be stripped of their honours (Image: PA)

"Outgoing prime ministers have that right.

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"Whether or not they should is a matter of legitimate public debate, but they do at the moment."

A **Conservative Party** spokesman said: "Senio gathering in the basement of Matthew Parker December 14 2020.

"Formal disciplinary action was taken against t campaign."

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