

## Newsnight - a footnote

Published: January 13, 2026, 7:34 am

---

I feel I have to post this, and do so as explanation with a little reluctance.

On Wednesday night, after being told no one was available to debate with me on Newsnight I posted this fact on Twitter because having previously tweeted that I would be on air I felt I had to explain why that would not be happening. The tweet got a lot of reaction - it has been retweeted thousands of times.

This was Emily Maitlis' reaction:

This was my response to that:

Rapidly followed by this

And this:

These last two points are very important. When [I wrote about the cancellation](#) on Wednesday evening I said:

*[T]hey said Laffer had pulled out. No reason had been given.*

'They' does refer to the BBC. And I told the truth. By the time I wrote I had had two conversations on the issue with a producer and an email from her. No emergency was mentioned. And I admit I was rather led to believe something different. Maybe that was not true. But that is what I think I was led to believe.

What is true is that I had no idea that there was a family emergency. I happen to have

met Arthur Laffer. I do not agree with him on much, but it has not stopped me sharing his company, and I readily admit that if I had known that there was such an emergency I would not have commented as I did. I would have wished him well. I do so now. But I did not know that.

In that case I greatly resent Emily Maitlis' tweet. She has accused me of distorting things when I did not. I had not been told information that she was in possession of. Her accusation was, then, wrong. There is no other way of putting it.

It's annoying enough to be cancelled by the BBC when already waiting to go on. To then be abused after not being told why is not, I think acceptable. I have made that clear to the BBC.

On a more lighthearted level, [my blog](#) on what I might have said was read well over 10,000 times yesterday. And I passed 50,000 twitter followers as a result. There are always upsides.