

I had high hopes for the Covid inquiry. They have dissipated. Yesterday was, in a very real sense, the final straw.

Rishi Sunak presented patently obviously absurd explanation as to why he had, mysteriously, lost his WhatsApp messages after raising a legal challenge to the demand that they be submitted to the inquiry. His suggestion was that when swapping phones data had not been transferred, which transfer is an issue so basic it is impossible to believe that his claim was true. And yet, despite the powers that the inquiry has available to it, it is apparent that this matter is going to be dropped.

Sunak's inability to recall more than twenty critical events, many of which he must have been intimately involved with, was also left effectively uncommented upon. He was allowed to say that he did not recall, and the inquiry moved on, however implausible such a string of answers obviously was.

Most tellingly, when one barrister was slightly aggressive in his tone of questioning, he was ruled out of order. At that moment, you knew why the chair of the enquiry had been chosen. This now looks horribly like an immensely expensive and deliberate time-delaying whitewash.