



THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE RICH LIST

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MAGAZINE

Braverman asked civil servants to help her avoid speeding fine

She wanted a private speed awareness course

Harry Yorke and Dipesh Gadhher

Suella Braverman asked civil servants to help her avoid a speeding fine and points on her licence by arranging a private driving awareness course.

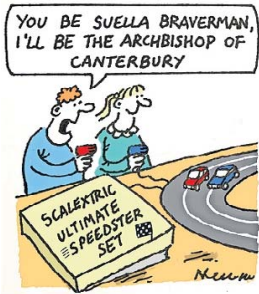
The arrangement, which the home secretary sought after being caught speeding last summer, would have meant she would not have to attend an in-person course with other motorists, or an online one in which her name and face would be visible on camera to other participants.

When the civil servants declined to help, she turned to a political aide, who tried to persuade the course provider to agree to the arrangements. After the requests were refused Braverman, 43, who is a barrister and is in charge of law enforcement, opted to take the three points on her licence.

The revelation raises questions about whether Braverman breached the ministerial code by directing civil servants to help with her personal affairs, and whether she has complied with the Nolan principles of public life.

Critics suggested that Braverman's position was in jeopardy.

NEWMAN'S VIEW



Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, called on Rishi Sunak to ask the independent adviser on ministerial standards to investigate. "The prime minister has promised integrity, professionalism and accountability yet it appears his home secretary is blatantly flouting all three. We need an urgent investigation into what has gone on here."

Nazir Afzal, a former chief prosecutor for the northwest, said

there was "one law for Suella, another for the rest of us".

He added: "Many who are offered a course rather than points for speeding are grateful for the opportunity. Part of its usefulness is that speeders learn together. The home secretary thinks that this doesn't apply to her... it's the arrogance of power."

Braverman was issued with a speeding notice by police after being caught outside London when she was attorney-general, the government's most senior legal officer. She was offered the choice of paying the fine and receiving three points, attending the course in lieu of points and the fine, or challenging the speeding notice.

She initially opted for the course, which sources close to her say was because she was concerned that points on her licence would increase her car insurance premium. As home secretary, she earns more than £150,000 a year and is driven in a ministerial car.

In September, shortly after being appointed home secretary by Liz Truss, she asked civil servants to help her secure a special arrangement for the course.

The courses are often run by

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Martin Amis, era-defining author, dies at 73

EXPRESS/ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



Martin Amis, who became a literary star with his debut novel, *The Rachel Papers*, published when he was 24, died of oesophageal cancer at his home in Florida on Friday. He was due to be knighted later this year

My friend wrote sentences that lesser scribes would die for, says *Will Self*

Martin Amis came into my life along with my first wife – he was a friend of my new brother-in-law.

When I was having difficulty finding a publisher for my first book, Martin read it, complimented it, and frankly, made my career: I was the only British writer of fiction whose work he endorsed in this way.

Of course, this isn't about me – it's about him. I only tell the anecdote to explain how extraordinary it was to be around him in the early 1990s. For a young writer, simply to be in the presence of the pre-eminent practitioner of English literature at that time was as if I'd been invited up to Olympia.

Here he was, poised, acerbic, his trademark roll-up in one hand, his glass of something in the other, and discussing how difficult it was to put children to bed.

His younger son with his first wife, Antonia Phillips, had just been born, and the boy's night-time ructions became the basis for the tumultuous baby in *London Fields*. I got the opportunity to see this ordinary life experience being transformed into Martin's peerless prose pretty much live.

It's early days, but what I want to stress here – since, no doubt, there will be a lot said and written in the days to come about his status as a writer – is what a gentle man he fundamentally was.

The last time I saw him, before the pandemic, the Atlantic, and life events rived us, we were walking through Manhattan after supper at a restaurant local to his home together with his beloved second wife, Isabel Fonseca, and I felt this arm gently snaking across my back. He

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Teachers 'should get 6.5% rise'

Harry Yorke and Sian Griffiths

Teachers should be given a 6.5 per cent wage rise this year, the independent pay award body has recommended, despite warnings from the Treasury that it could contribute to inflation.

The advice creates a headache for Rishi Sunak in his battle with the unions and is likely to fuel demands for higher pay in sectors still threatening to strike.

The government has said rises should be limited to 5 per cent, but in a victory for the teaching unions

the School Teachers' Review Body has said the education sector needs a bigger increase to keep it on a stable footing.

While the government has yet to disclose the recommendation publicly, sources said the review body had recommended a rise 2 percentage points higher than that offered by the Department for Education (DfE).

The proposal was submitted to ministers on Tuesday and would apply to the 2023-24 financial year. The 2 percentage points would equate to £360 million of extra

government spending if entirely funded by the Treasury.

Alternatively, the DfE might receive only part of the funding and could be forced to make steep cuts elsewhere in its budget.

Leaders of the National Education Union (NEU) welcomed the recommendation and suggested that their members could call off strike action if the government fully funded and implemented it.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the NEU, described it as a "breakthrough and much

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WHAT ARE YOU TUNING INTO?

The past year has seen a spate of interest rate increases to quell rampant inflation. A corollary of that is growing concerns about growth as well as the banking turmoil that has caused anxiety. In these fraught times, it's important to cut out the noise, and fine tune your investment choices. Our wide range of fixed income funds may be able to provide the bandwidth to match your wavelength. We call it the value of active minds. To find out more about our fixed income capabilities, visit jupiteram.com/inflation



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A generation’s coolest, funniest

Martin Amis emerged from his father Kingsley’s shadow to take the literary scene by storm. His life had as many twists as any novel — and he was due to be knighted this year, write *Liam Kelly* and *Laura Hackett*

Martin Amis, whose literary career spanned 50 years and whose life was chronicled in tabloids for almost as long, has died aged 73.

The author of 15 novels had oesophageal cancer, according to his wife, Isabel Fonseca, the same disease that killed his best friend and fellow writer Christopher Hitchens 12 years ago. He died on Friday at his home in Lake Worth, Florida.

Amis was due to be knighted next month in the first King’s birthday honours List for services to literature. A source close to the honours committee said: “It’s tragic that it has come too late but he was aware of it. He regarded himself in quite a modest way and thought he extended the life of the English comic novel by 30 years.”

The son of the acclaimed novelist Kingsley, Amis was 24 when he burst on to the scene with *The Rachel Papers*, an semi-autobiographical novel about a precocious teenager and his girlfriend before they go to Oxford. He wrote the book while working as an editorial assistant at the New Statesman.

Amis with his second wife, the writer Isabel Fonseca, with whom he had two daughters



Amis was best-known for the books of the “London Trilogy”: *Money*, *London Fields* and *The Information*. *Money*, a black comedy from 1984 was interpreted as a rebuke of Margaret Thatcher’s reforms. Amis’s father said that his left-wing views were “howling nonsense”. Along with Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan and Julian Barnes, Amis was at the heart of the raucous British literary scene of the 1980s. Amis would later write: “My life looked good on paper — where, in fact, almost all of it was being lived.”

Last night, Michal Shavit, Amis’s UK editor at Vintage Books, said: “It’s hard to imagine a world without Martin Amis in it. He was the king — a stylist extraordinaire, super cool, a brilliantly witty, erudite and fearless writer, and a truly wonderful man.”

Sebastian Faulks, the author of novels including *Birdsong*, called Amis “the greatest stylist of our generation” whose “peak years” were from his twenties to forties. “Such a comet-like span is quite normal in poets, but not in prose writers. He was an entirely verbal writer,” Faulks said.

“The style was the man. The fall-off was severe, and in some later books he seemed like a punch-drunk boxer, trying to find the footwork of his glorious youth. It was gone.

“Rather than lament the brevity of this peak, we should celebrate the heights of it. *Money* remains the sharpest and most enjoyable English novel of the 1980s.”

Despite his diminutive frame — he described himself as a “short arse” — Amis cut a dash with women. While still a student he had an affair with the journalist Tina Brown and became a fixture of gossip columns on both sides of the Atlantic. He also had relationships with Germaine Greer — who wrote him a 30,000-word unsent love letter in 1976 — and the writer Julie Kavanagh. She wrote in 2009 that he was “coldly alluring”, with “Jagger lips, moody monobrow and fag between two fingers”. Newspapers speculated on everything from his wealth to his lovers to his teeth.

Amis was born in Oxford in 1949, when his family had little money, and his father soon upped roots to teach at University College, Swansea. It was while in south Wales that Kingsley absorbed the experiences that would inform his breakthrough novel, 1954’s *Lucky Jim*. Amis said Wales was “Arcadian”.

Martin was a wayward child. When he was nine the family had moved to New Jersey, where Kingsley was a professor at Princeton. Martin was “interfered with” by a stranger at a party. By the age of ten he was smoking and Kingsley left his mother, Hilly, for the writer Elizabeth Jane Howard.

Kingsley was distant to an almost Victorian degree, Amis’s schooling was disrupted and he attended 14 establishments before getting into Oxford.

Howard recalled in her memoir, *Slipstream*, how the teenage Amis wanted to become a writer. “Finding Martin lounging in his disaffected way, boredom seeping from every pore, I asked him what he wanted to do when he was older. ‘Be a writer,’ he said. ‘You — a writer? But you never read anything. If you’re so interested in writing, why don’t you read?’ He looked at me and said, ‘Give me a book to read then.’ I gave him *Pride and Prejudice*,” she wrote.

“A little later he came to me and said, ‘You’ve got to tell me how it ends.’ ‘Of course I won’t. You find out for yourself.’ He argued with persuasive charm, but I felt on firm ground: he was obviously enjoying it. That was when he started to read properly.”

Amis regarded being the younger son of such a famous writer as a blessing and a curse. “I’d be in a very different position now if my father had been a school-teacher,” he told The Sunday Times in 2014. “I’ve been delegitimised by heredity. In the 1970s, people were sympathetic to me being the son of a novelist. They’re not at all sympathetic now, because it looks like cronyism.”

Despite the early success with *The Rachel Papers*, when he was older he would look back on the book with disdain and told the Oxford Literary Festival in 2010 that he was “aghast” to re-read it.

Amis’s life was also touched by tragedy. His cousin, Lucy Partington, was murdered by the serial killers Fred and Rose West at Christmas 1973.

He had two sons with Antonia Phillips, whom he married in 1984. They divorced nine years later and Amis had two daughters with Fonseca, following their 1996 wedding. He had another daughter, Delilah, with the artist Lamorna Seale in the 1970s but discovered the fact only when she was 19 and he was 47.

In later years Amis, like Hitchens, became animated by 9/11 and a critic of militant Islam. Some of his comments caused controversy, including when he said that the “Muslim community should suffer until it gets its house in order”.

Shavit said: “He has been so important and formative for so many readers and writers over the last half century. Every time he published a new book it was an event. He will be remembered as one of the greatest writers of his time and his books will stand the test of time alongside some of his favourite writers: Saul Bellow, John Updike and Vladimir Nabokov.”

Dan Franklin, formerly Amis’s editor, said: “For so many people of my generation, Martin was the one: the coolest, funniest, most quotable, most beautiful writer in the British literary firmament.

“
I wouldn’t be in this position if my father had been a teacher

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A peerless writer and sensitive, warm man

→ Continued from page 1

didn’t say anything, he knew that I wasn’t in a good space, he simply gave me a cuddle.

Martin adored all his children — he was a warm and sensitive man. In the more than thirty years that I knew Martin he could also be waspish, remote, often preoccupied — passionate about a political issue, then just as *déjà*. In that sense he was a strange sort of everyman: in his extraordinary journalism and essays registering the minute calibrations of the *zeitgeist* with sentence after sentence that lesser scribes would,

indeed, die for. He was a “Mandarin”, in Cyril Connolly’s formulation, who wrote superb demotic prose. He was the writer, more than any other, who opened a channel between the working class and middle-class cultures in this country, between high and lower culture, and between the square and the bohemian.

There’s a good reason why he achieved both adjectival status (things, situations, characters can indeed be Amisian), and the sobriquet “far too famous”. His position, as both the pre-eminent grafter on Grub Street and the most talked about novelist of his generation, was because of something he once said to me: “As writers, fundamentally our thoughts have to be of interest to people.”

Martin’s thoughts were always, always of interest. His contribution to the great wheel of writing will last for a long time. Farewell, friend.

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and most quotable author

DUNCAN BAXTER/THE TIMES



DANIEL FARSON/GETTY IMAGES; DAFYDD JONES; DAVE M. BENETT/ GETTY IMAGES



Amis in London in 1981, top; with Christopher Hitchens and Tina Brown, right; with Salman Rushdie, left; with his parents Kingsley and Hilly, elder brother Philip and sister Sally in 1956, above



“When I first moved to Cape in 1993 it still seemed, 20 years on from *The Rachel Papers*, that every young writer wanted to be on the list because Martin was on it. The fact that he was so overlooked for literary prizes only added to his allure. He was fearless in his opinions (although curiously naive about the furore those opinions would provoke in the British press), he wrote inimitable prose and some of the funniest novels you will ever read.”

Amis often gave the impression of somebody who thought about what sort of legacy he would have. “As you get older

you realise that all these things – prizes, reviews, advances, readers – it’s all show-biz, and the real action starts with your obituary,” he said after his 2003 novel *Yellow Dog* got critical reviews. “Writers don’t realise how good they are because they are dead when the action begins: with the obituaries. And then the truth is revealed 50 years later by how many of your books are read. You feel the honour of being judged by something that is never wrong: time.”

David Baddiel hailed Amis as “the first writer who made me understand that lit-

erature didn’t have to be ‘high’ literature. He had for me something of the quality of punk rock, not because he couldn’t play his instrument, but because he could, brilliantly, play the dirtiest of tunes on it, turning his astonishing prose virtuosity to all the things in life that I assumed “proper” writers would consider below them – ET, to haircuts, to wanking. He was also really funny, laugh-out-loud funny in the way critics often say writers are and it’s almost never true.”

Obituary: [sundaytimes.co.uk](https://www.sundaytimes.co.uk)

Johanna Thomas-Corr Literary Editor

Distinctively British — he was the ultimate, swaggering literary male



How do you measure a writer’s influence? It is impossible to be objective about these things but surely the key measure is how many other writers they inspire. By this metric, Martin Amis was peerless among the literary males of his generation.

It is true that he inspired vitriolic takedowns and snarky reviews almost as much as he inspired admiration and imitation. But these are merely two sides of the same coin.

Amis was the pace-setter. He was the literary novelist who sold the most books, scored the largest advance and gave British literature in the late 20th century a swagger that had previously been reserved for the Americans. All British writers owe something to him.

What were his singular gifts? There were the dazzling sentences foremost, in books such as *Money*, *Time’s Arrow* and *The Information*.

“He was an entirely verbal writer. The style was the man,” said Sebastian Faulks. “*The Rachel Papers*, by virtue of its verbal brilliance, killed the genre of the young man’s coming of age novel dead. There was no point in anyone else trying after that.”

There was also the depth of his feeling for literature. There’s no two ways around the nepo baby charge: Kingsley Amis was his father, Philip Larkin a family friend, and Saul Bellow became his literary soulmate. He could discuss Vladimir Nabokov’s parentheses with the applied passion others used to discuss football formations.

But it was also his sense of fun. He was a supremely generous writer.

“He was so funny,” recalled his friend, the poet Craig Raine. “He had this marvellous way of telling you bits of his novels as he was writing them. He wasn’t trying things out, testing his jokes. He knew they worked and he just wanted to crack you up. And his prose is so quotable: who can forget ‘mouth-farts’, or the ‘fine double-yolker’ pimple between Charles Highway’s eyebrows, or ‘the body-builder who had set up a gym in his loins’?”

He was so distinctively British, too – in his schoolboy humour, in his preoccupations with yobs and hooligans, snooker and darts, and often in his high handedness too.

It’s often said that he influenced men – and men of a certain generation at that. But younger novelists such as Zadie Smith and Megan Nolan have both told me how much his work meant to them.

As I read Amis, there are many moments I find him maddening, embarrassing, ignorant, pompous, entitled, muddled, misogynist. There was a definite falling off in the mid-1990s, and he increasingly used great historical tragedies – the Holocaust, the gulag, 9/11 – merely as means to dazzle us with his technique.

But he never lacked courage. He flung himself against it all. And the bad Amis stems from the same urge that produces the good stuff.

He wants to entertain, to provoke, to instruct, to crack you up. Sometimes this turns into the stand-up’s overkill. But when he hit the right vein he was delightful companion. He was unvain enough to offer up his “penny-farthing nostrils” in his dreadfully interesting 2000 memoir, *Experience*; his hilarious essay about *Pride and Prejudice*, in which he fantasises about the missing

“He wanted to entertain, provoke and crack you up

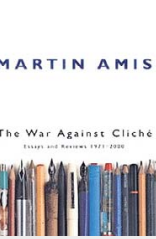
20-page sex scene between Lizzie and Darcy, is the best celebration I’ve ever read of the novel’s “recurrent and remorseless power to move”; and I still smile at his line about Cyril Connolly revealing “what appears to be an anti-knack for catching human speech”.

As dazzling as his 1980s highpoints are, I suspect it will be as a critic and memoirist that Amis will be most fondly remembered. Whenever he wrote as himself, in fact.

Yes, he’s sometimes showing off, but he pays you the compliment of saying you’re worth showing off to. Reflecting in the New Statesman recently, the young writer Will Lloyd confessed that the one male writer he and his friends looked up to – “quote repeatedly in conversation with each other” – was Martin Amis: “I love Amis in some unreasonable ways.”

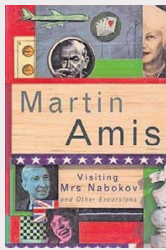
He was the ultimate literary male – and I mean that literally, in that he might just have been the last of his kind. The British literary world feels smaller without him.

FIVE MODERN CLASSICS TO READ AGAIN



THE WAR AGAINST CLICHE (2001)

Amis was a superlative critic: fearless, surprising and funny. This covers writers from Austen and Dickens to Kafka and Elmore Leonard as well as essays on Hillary Clinton and Margaret Thatcher.



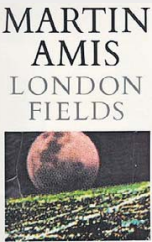
VISITING MRS NABOKOV (1993)

Amis’s journalism is frequently more thrilling than his fiction – he was just so good at explaining things, whether elite chess, nuclear arms, or John Updike’s sentences. This is full of delights.



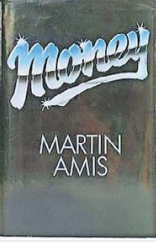
EXPERIENCE (2000)

Amis’s strange, moving first memoir. It’s a portrait of his father, Kingsley, the disappearance of his cousin (a victim of Fred West), his teeth and gossip. The cover shows him as a child – smoking.



LONDON FIELDS (1989)

A blackly comic murder mystery about a woman and her efforts to get murdered in ways she has foreseen. It features Keith Talent, a chain-smoking darts player who looks like a murderer’s dog.



MONEY (1984)

An electric comic novel, it revolves around John Self, who moves between London and New York, striking movie deals while consuming truckloads of pills, alcohol, tobacco, porn and junk food.

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