

VIDEO: Ex-Tory Lord Hanningfield exposed in 'clocking in' scandal ripping off taxpayers for thousands of pounds

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David Collins

12/17/2013



Picking up £300 a day for doing virtually nothing usually goes like clockwork for money-grabbing baron Lord Hanningfield.

The 73-year-old peer is ripping off taxpayers to the tune of thousands of pounds by simply turning up and clocking in to the Lords.

He often spends barely half an hour there before turning on his heels and leaving again – racking up his £300 daily attendance allowance without taking part in any votes, discussions or meetings.

But now he was facing a Parliamentary probe – after the Mirror exposed his shameless scam.

[On one occasion we photographed him arriving at the Lords and leaving again just 21 minutes later](#) – earning him more than £14 a minute.

It is barely time to walk to the chamber for his attendance to be officially noted.

Shockingly in just one month this year he claimed £5,700 with his quick “clock in, clock out” technique.

[Hanningfield has previous for milking the system. He spent nine months behind bars for fiddling his accounts in the last Westminster expenses scandal.](#)

Now he has his snout in the trough again – claiming more than £50,000 since he returned to Parliament in April 2012.

But up until the start of October this year he attended NO committee meetings, made NO speeches and asked

NO questions in the House despite his lucrative expenses claims.

The former Tory front-bencher, who had the party whip withdrawn when he was jailed, was followed for 19 days in July by our undercover reporters.

And they compiled a Diary of Disgrace revealing that for 11 days out of the 19 he spent less than 40 minutes each time inside of Parliament.

The Lord turns up each day to have his attendance noted by a clerk – but there are no checks on how long he stays for him to qualify for his allowance.

Our expose raises serious questions over whether other peers are claiming excessive amounts simply for popping in and out of the 300-year-old chamber which costs more than £100million a year to run.

It also piles pressure on Westminster watchdogs to hold peers more accountable for their expenses claims.

Although the Mirror completed its investigation at the end of July, we had to wait six months until Hanningfield's claims were made public on the Parliamentary website.

[Hanningfield – real name Paul White – has claimed he is working to “rebuild his political career” following his prison stint.](#)

But on July 16 our reporters secretly shot video footage of his normal daily routine.

We saw him drive 15 minutes from his home in West Hanningfield, Essex, to Ingatestone station where he parked his blue Audi A3 at 1.20pm.

He bought a £25 return ticket at the automated machine on the platform and caught the 1.32pm train to London, where he switched to the Underground. We filmed him arriving at Westminster Tube station at 2.36pm.

Hanningfield accessed Parliament by ducking into a private door inside the station leading to an underground passage to the Houses of Parliament at 2.37pm.

He appeared smart and professional, looking like he was ready to take on a day's work, possibly joining in an important debate in the main chamber.

But after strolling through the House and getting his attendance recorded by the Journal Office, he was off again – leaving via the same entrance at 3.01pm.

Our video proves Hanningfield was inside just 24 minutes and five seconds to qualify for his £300 fee.

He slowly walked through the tube station, with the clock overhead clearly showing the time as 3.03pm.

He then jumped on a Circle and District line train to head home.

At 4.15pm we saw him arrive back at Ingatestone, get in his car and return to his £700,000 bungalow up a leafy lane in West Hanningfield village, in Essex.

It was a packed schedule in the Lords that day, but Hanningfield played no part in affairs of state including a statement on Northern Ireland, discussion of the Care Bill by the entire House, and a debate on the Congo. The House of Lords finished for the day at 10.27pm - more than six hours after Hanningfield arrived home to put his feet up.

But that didn't stop Lord Hanningfield claiming a full day's attendance rate of £300.

Our reporters witnessed this same pattern occurring again and again throughout the month of July.

The longest time he spent in Parliament was on July 30th - the final day of the summer session - and it lasted 5 hours and 12 minutes.

Parliamentary records show Lord Hanningfield "absent" for eight votes which took place during July.

These were votes on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill on July 8th, Offender Rehabilitation Bill on July 9th, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill on July 10th, Local Audit and Accountability Bill on July 15th, Mesothelioma Bill on July 17th, Intellectual Property Bill on July 23rd, EU: Police and Criminal Justice Measure on July 23rd, and the Local Audit and Accountability Bill on July 24th.

On July 8th Lord Hanningfield spent 34 minutes in Parliament on the day of the vote on the Marriage Bill, arriving at 2.35pm and leaving at 3.09pm.

The next day he stayed for just 27 minutes when there was a vote on the Offender Rehabilitation Bill. He arrived at 2.35pm loaded down with Marks and Spencers shopping bags, and left at 3.02pm.

He arrived back at Ingatestone train station at 4.15pm, missing the vote as well as statements on the National Curriculum.

The main chamber of the Lords finished at 10.17pm - more than seven hours after he left.

But he always made sure his attendance was noted to qualify for his £300.

On top of that he also claimed £471 in travel costs for July, covering the price of his train ticket and the car park charge at Ingatestone train station.

The House of Lords Guide to Financial Support for Members clearly states: "Members who certify that they have carried out appropriate Parliamentary work are entitled to claim a daily allowance of £300 for each qualifying day of attendance at Westminster."

[Lord Hanningfield 'clocking in' expenses scandal exposed](#)

Hanningfield began claiming expenses upon his return to Parliament in April last year after his time behind bars.

He claimed £51,300 in attendance allowance between April 2012 and July 2013 but made no speeches in any parliamentary debate.

His silence was finally broken in October by taking part in a debate on East Anglia's rail network.

Lord Hanningfield was caught in the last expenses scandal that exposed parliamentarians for claiming public cash for duck houses, flatscreen televisions and cleaning out moats.

In July, 2011, he was found guilty of wrongly claiming nearly £14,000 after the jury heard he claimed £174 for overnight stays in London when he was not in the capital.

He was released in September 2011 after three months before being placed on a home detention curfew.

Lord Hanningfield has paid back around £70,000 for false expenses claims on the orders of a court.

The system of overnight stay allowances for peers was scrapped after Lord Hanningfield and Lord Taylor of Warwick were jailed.

The new £300 attendance fee was brought in to simplify the system and pay peers for their work in Parliament on behalf of the taxpayers they are supposed to serve.

The system of "clocking in" was introduced by the Senior Salaries Review Board which promised to shake up the system at the Lords.

Hanningfield began his working life as Britain's youngest pig farmer at the tender age of 15.

He was educated at the King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford and earned a farming scholarship in the US before returning to Britain.

He joined the National Farmers' Union and by 22 was president of its quality pigs committee.

His career with the NFU gave him a taste for politics and, aged 29, became an councillor for Essex County Council, which he went on to lead between 2001 and 2010.

He was made a life peer in 1998 after a long career in local politics, and took the title of Lord Hanningfield from his home village, West Hanningfield in Essex, where his family still own a farm.

He stepped up to the House of Lords and entered national politics, keeping his role as council leader whilst representing the Tories in Parliament.

Between 1997 and 2001 he was deputy chair and Conservative group leader of the Local Government Association.

He rose to become a shadow minister in 2005.

He was behind a parliamentary question that same year revealing how Tony Blair spent more than £1,800 of public money on cosmetics and make-up artists.

The peer claims to live a normal lifestyle, shopping in Marks & Spencer, and living home alone with his dog.

It was in 2009 when he found himself under the spotlight due to his expenses claims whilst serving in the Lords.

Last night Labour MP John Mann, who campaigned to clean up the Commons, called for Hanningfield to be booted out of the Lords.

He added: "There needs to be a full investigation into how he has been allowed to get away with it. We need to give the House of Lords a proper, transparent spring cleaning."

[**Read the transcript of the Mirror confronting Lord Hanningfield here**](#)

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Lord Hanningfield expenses scandal: 'There are 50 other peers doing it that I could name'

In a heated exchange in the car park of Ingatestone train station, in Essex, at 1pm on Monday, we confronted him with our dossier of evidence

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BY DAVID COLLINS
07:50, 17 DEC 2013 | UPDATED 11:29, 17 DEC 2013

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Lord Hanningfield has defended himself over a “clock in, clock out” row and said: “I could name 50 other peers that do it.”

Defiant Hanningfield admitted there was a culture within the House of Lords of peers turning up just to claim their £300 tax-free allowance.

But he insisted the money was used by Lords for “entertaining and meeting people”, as well as paying staff.

Despite our overwhelming evidence that he was spending just minutes inside Parliament in exchange for the £300 attendance rate, he still insisted he had done nothing wrong.

In a heated exchange in the car park of Ingatestone train station, in Essex, at 1pm yesterday, we confronted him.

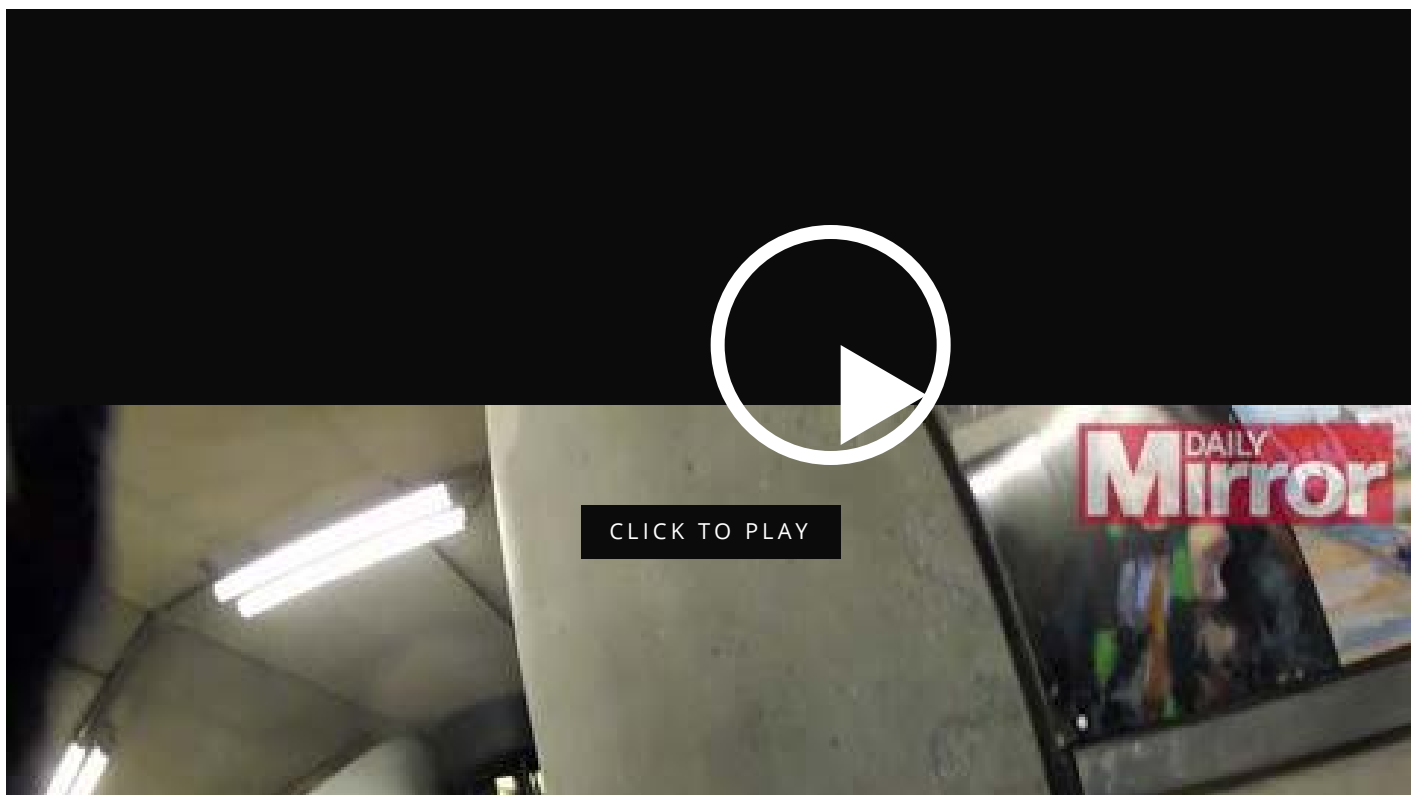
After hearing our undercover team followed his movements throughout July, he gave a series of bizarre excuses, such as it being a “hot month”, that he “has to eat” and “hasn’t been well”.

At one point he even blasted: “Clocking in and out of Parliament is only part of being a peer.”

He told the Mirror to examine his career in public service, saying he had “worked for 40 years for nothing”.

He even said he “shouldn’t have been jailed” in July 2011, despite a jury finding him guilty on six counts of false accounting following the last Parliamentary expenses scandal.

Labour’s John Mann said Hanningfield must now identify the other peers. The MP said: “He needs to name them, all of them. It is an absolute scandal.”



Here we print an edited transcript of the exchange between Lord Hanningfield and our reporter:

Q How do you explain claiming £300 pounds per day for each of the days you were in for minutes?

A It's cost me, by the time I have people at home to help, time I have people in the House of Lords to help me, I actually spend something like £150 per day on expenses, so I don't really make any profit,

Q But, Lord Hanningfield, do you understand how the British taxpayer may see a £300 claim for an attendance allowance in which you are supposed to attend Parliament and you have come out after just minutes? People may see that as not a good use of taxpayer's money?

A No not really because I've actually spent my whole life serving the taxpayer, and I am now trying to get back again. I've spoken twice recently, I'm getting very involved in transport, I have been through a very traumatic time, a terrible time. I still don't believe I'm that guilty of expenses problems initially at all.

I've made some mistakes, and I've paid back everything I've ever claimed before. I've paid back £70,000 and I'm now trying to get myself going again. When you're in the Lords, most of my Lords work is actually in post, it's meeting people and things like that...

Q But don't you see how people will see this as the system being used by Lords as clocking in and out of Parliament for minutes, simply to claim £300 pounds?

A Well, you will see at least half of the people doing that actually.

Q Half of the Lords in the House of Lords are doing the same thing?

A Many go in...let me explain, again, it isn't (just) what you do you in the House. I am now speaking more in the House of Lords. When you go in the House of Lords, if you speak you are there a lot longer.

Q But Lord Hanningfield, for that month of July you didn't speak, you didn't say anything, you didn't attend a committee?

A I have been trying to get myself on track again, I have spoken twice, I have now been to some committees since October...

Q So why were you attending Parliament?

A Because I am a member of Parliament and I want to be back again, what I was trying to do was was get myself on track again, which I've done

Q On track by turning up and claiming money though?

A Yes, because I was doing things there you see

Q You weren't doing anything there were you?

A I was.

Q I can show you the 16th of July right here, where you arrived at 14.36 and then you left at 15.02, that isn't doing anything though is it, that's turning up claiming £300 and going back

home?

A You are talking a load of rubbish quite honestly because being a Lord is not just going in the House of Lords, it's the post you have. I have 15 letters a day, I have all sorts of things like that. I can do some of it at home, some of it at my office in the Lords.

Q You are effectively clocking in and out of Parliament?

A You are talking a load of rubbish quite honestly . . . Shut up. I have worked my heart out for the taxpayer.

Q You are spending more time on the train than you are in Parliament, aren't you?

A You are talking a lot of rubbish.

Q Don't the rules clearly state as a fact, that you can claim that money if you vote, if you attend a committee or if you attend the main chamber of Parliament? You are effectively going into the main chamber of Parliament, staying a couple of minutes so a clerk ticks you off on a register and then you are coming home?

A Well I admit I don't go much into the main chamber, if you look at my records since October it's changed dramatically because I've spoken twice...let me explain again I was trying to get myself organised after a nervous breakdown... I have been exhausted by this and I find you pretentious and talking a lot of utter rubbish

Q Are you going to pay back any of the £5,700 pounds you claimed for July?

A No, because I've spent that on what I did there, you misunderstand. I am absolutely fed up with people like you lying about it. . . I have given the British taxpayer hundreds of thousands of pounds in my life, I have worked for 40 years for nothing, I have done a jolly good job under pressure

Q And yet you have been jailed for your expenses?

A That is wrong, it was wrong, I shouldn't have been jailed.

Q A jury found you guilty though?

A I didn't stand a chance though did I? Being the last one I didn't stand a chance, I could have carried it on through the European court. I didn't realise how much effect it would have afterwards.

Q Just on a wider thing, what you're saying, it's not just you, there are lots of peers doing it?

A Lot's of peers just go in and check in for their expenses I agree, but they are using their expenses for a lot of things, entertaining, meeting people, employing people. Lots of peers like I do have an assistant

Q So you are saying that perhaps the rules need to change, because what you have been doing is not in the spirit of the rules?

A I have to live don't I? I don't do anything else. How do you think I am going to eat, how am I going to pay my electricity bills?

Q I realise that, but people won't see that as good enough though, you're a Lord, people hold you to a very high standard.

A I have to eat, other people have to eat. My income from the Lords will be about £30,000 a year, I pay about that in £18,000 in expense to other people, I'll end up with 12000 a year.

Q I don't think the taxpayer will see what you have done in July as value..

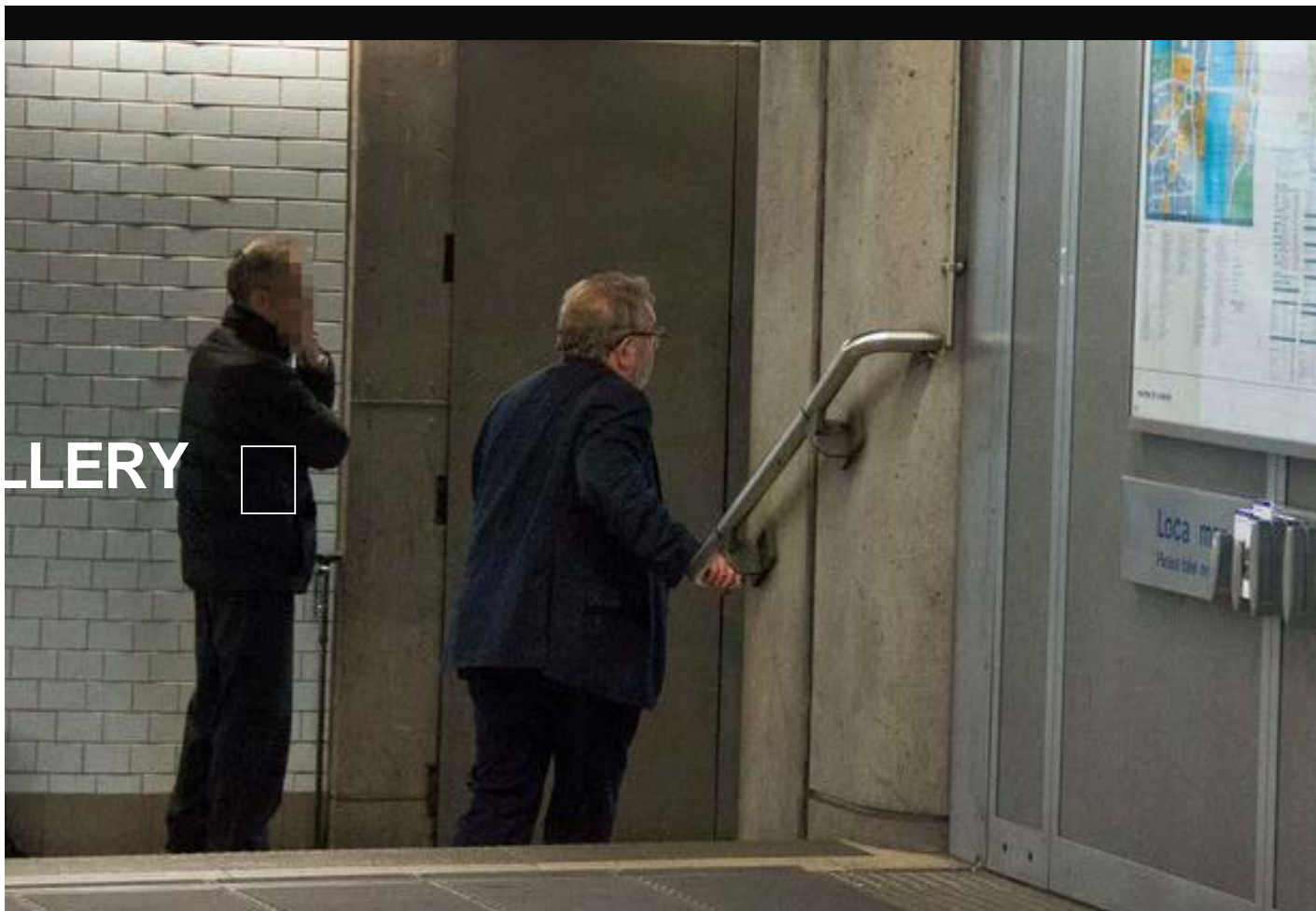
A Well no, why don't you choose October?

Q The fact that Lords clock in and out is a thing that annoys people, I don't think it's just you, I think it is a wider thing.

A No I can name 50 that do it.

Q Right, would you like to do that now?

A I see the same people go in and out as I do. I don't want to be persecuted.



Mirror Associate Editor Kevin Maguire says the time is right to abolish the House of Lords

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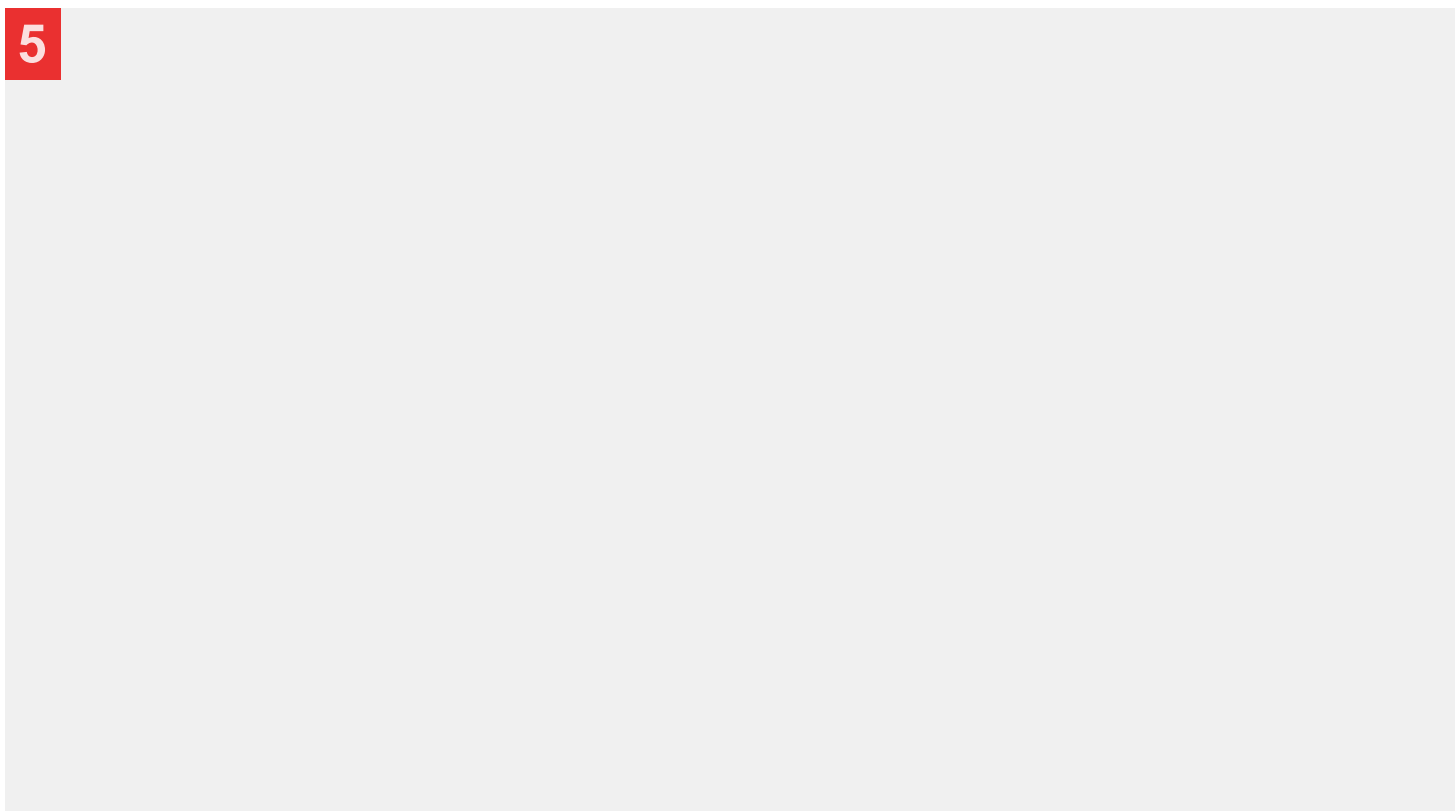
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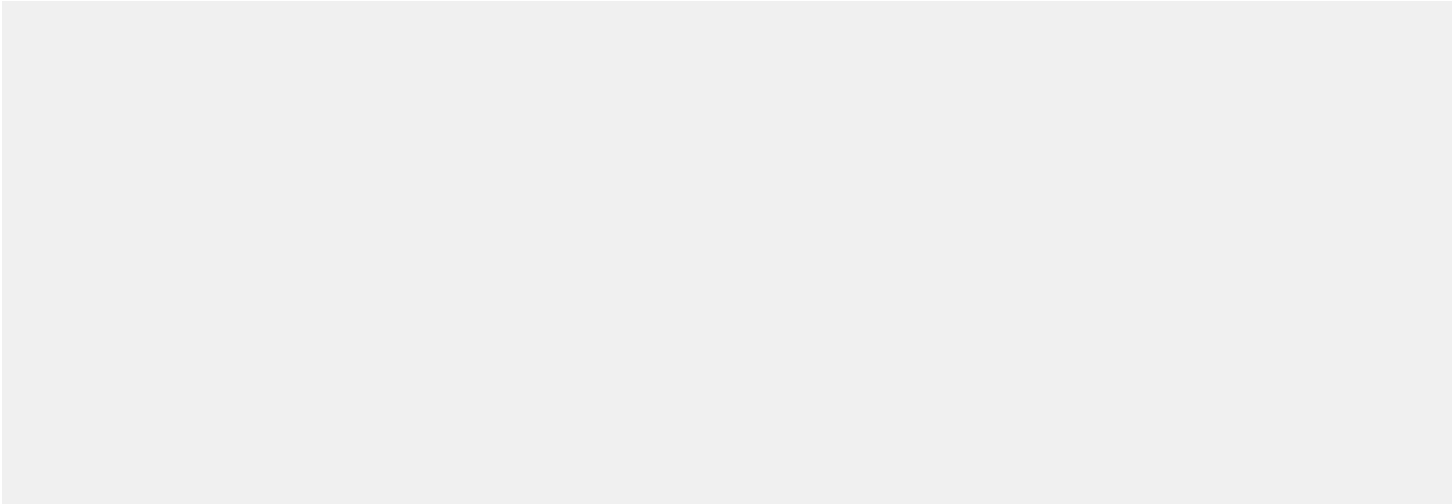




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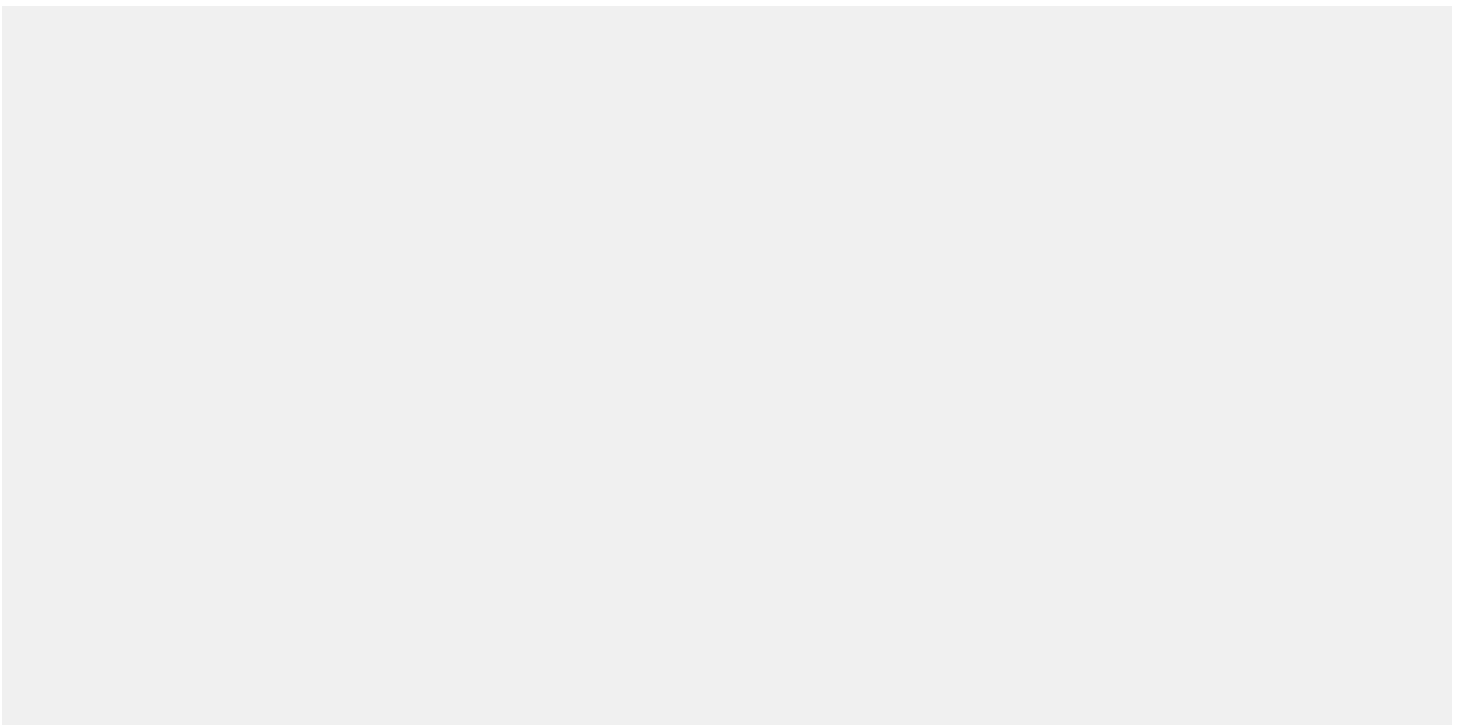
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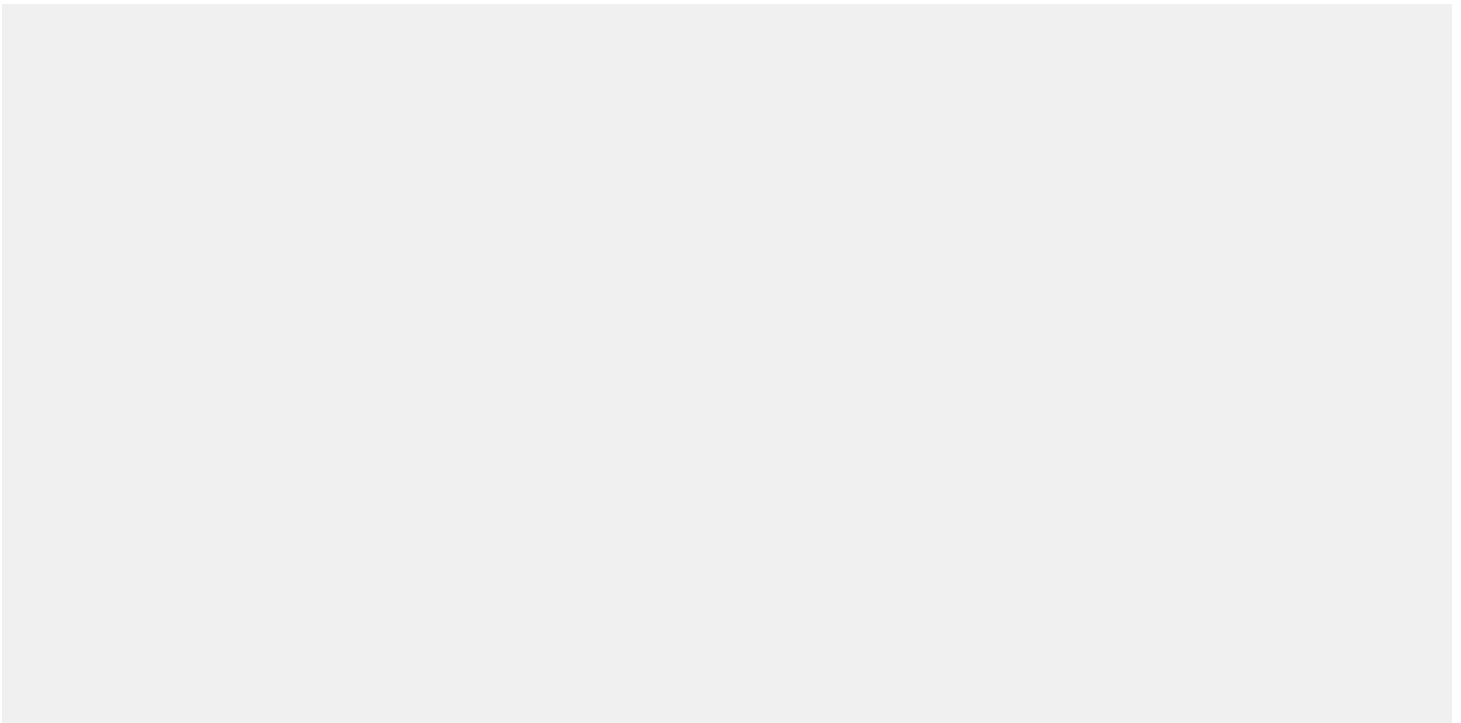
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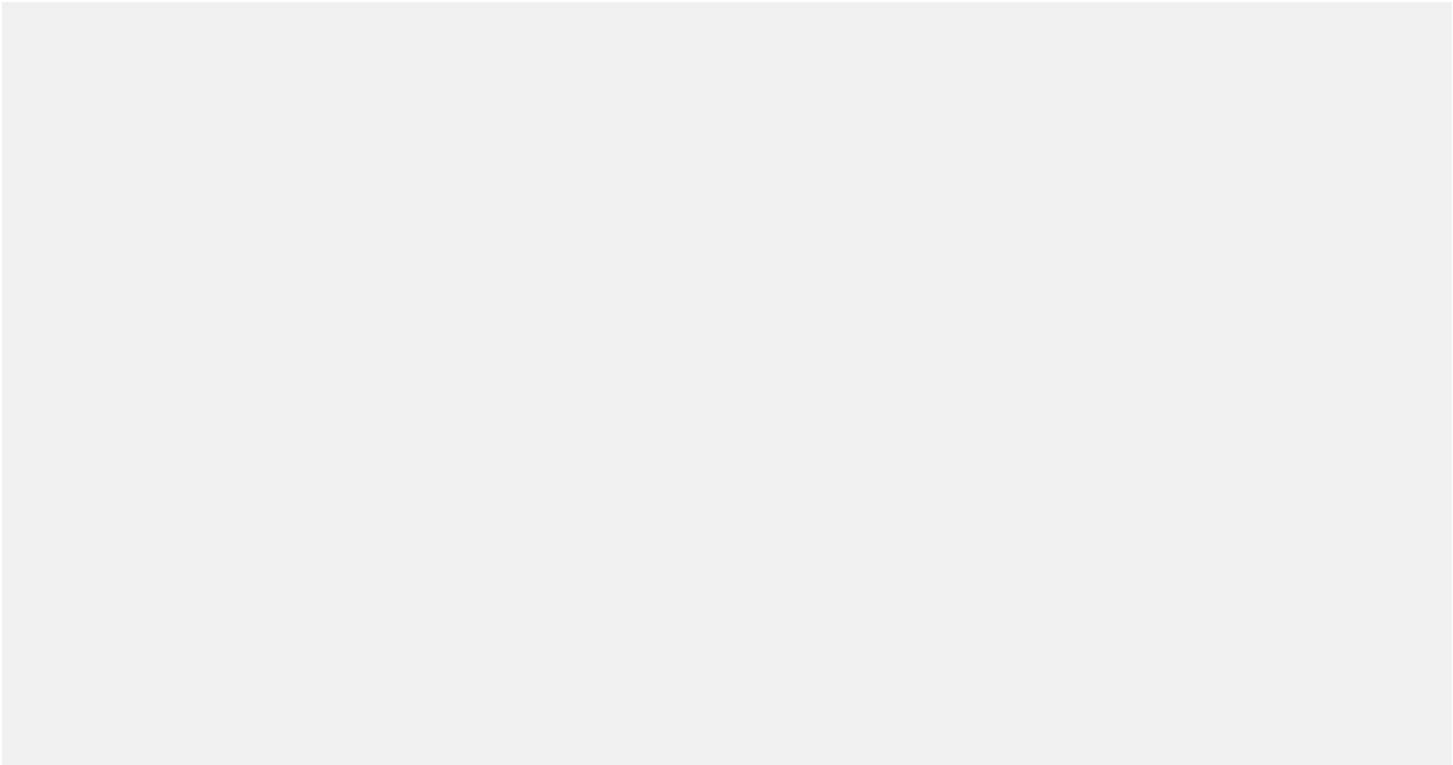
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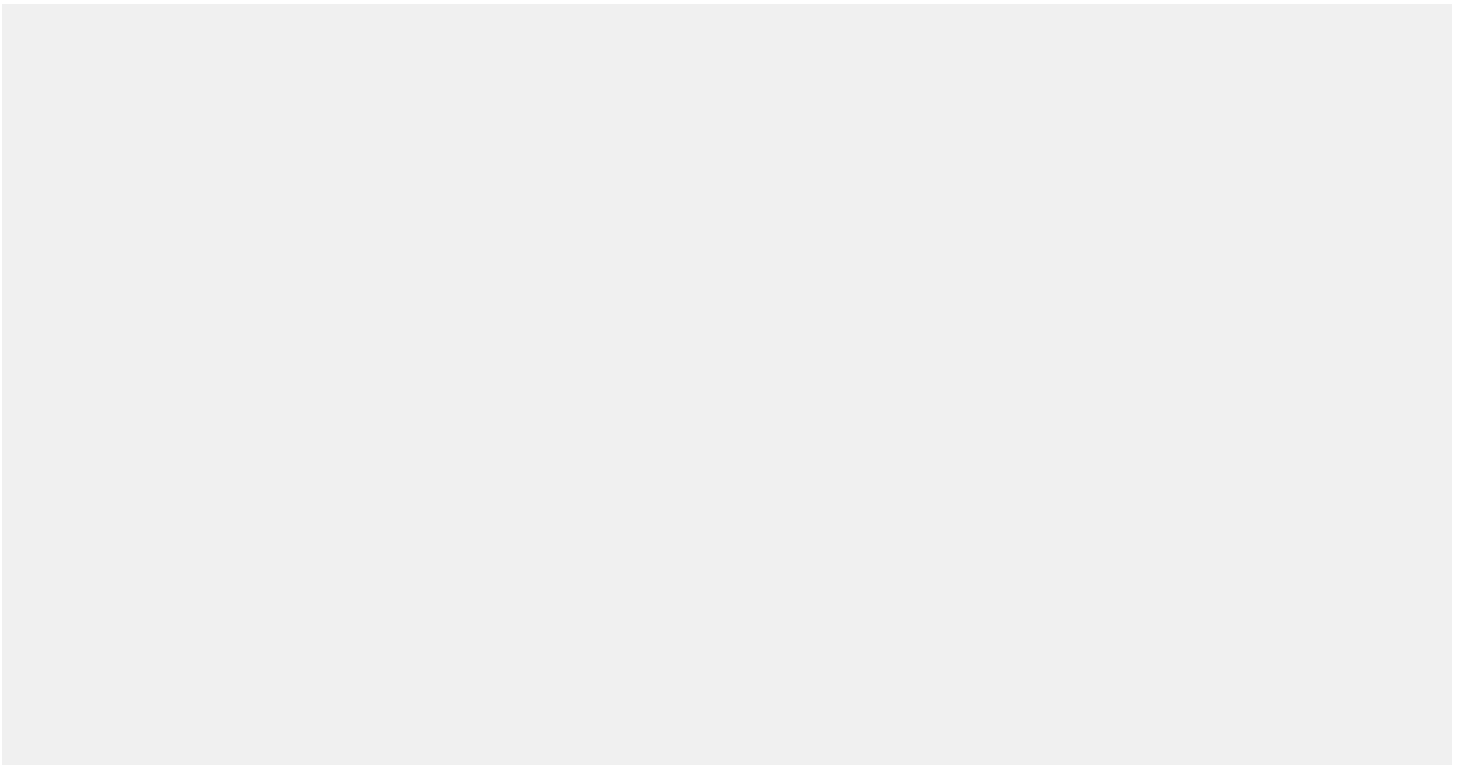
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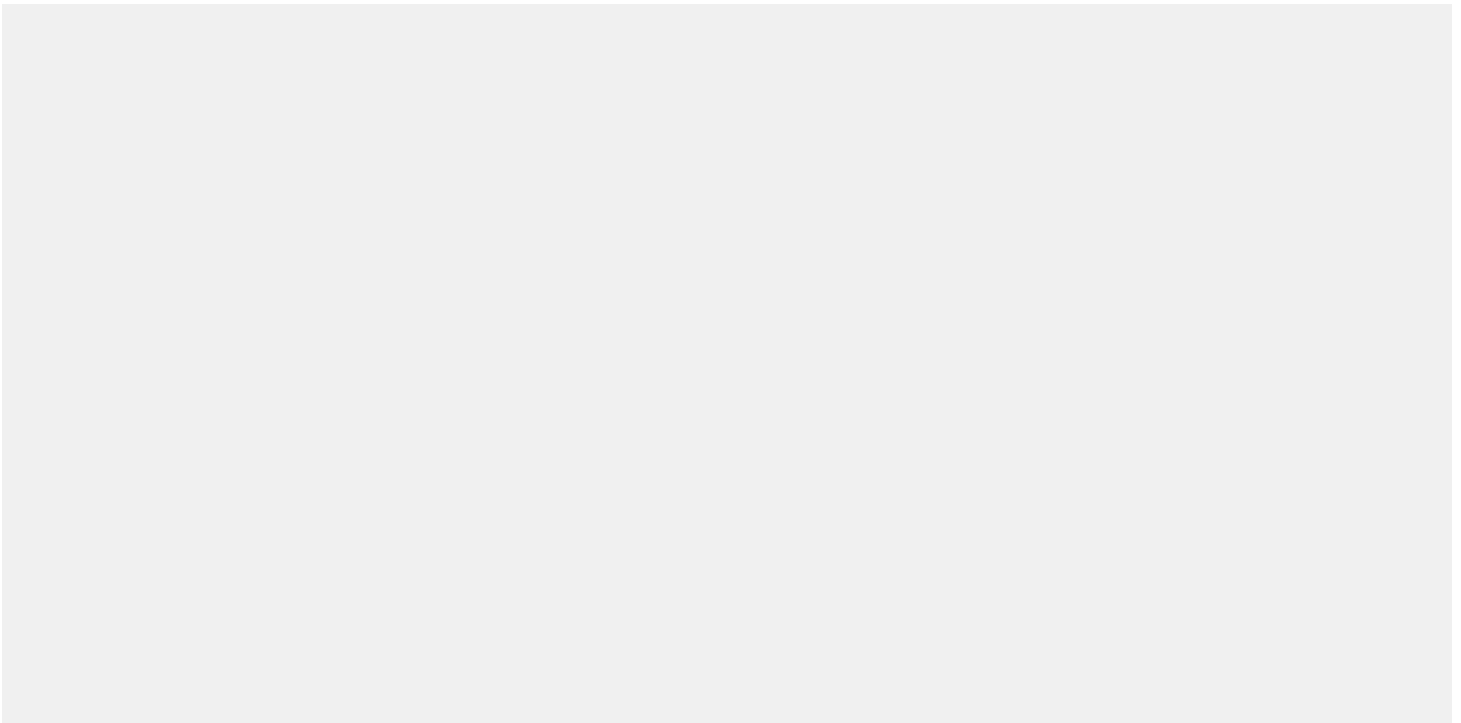
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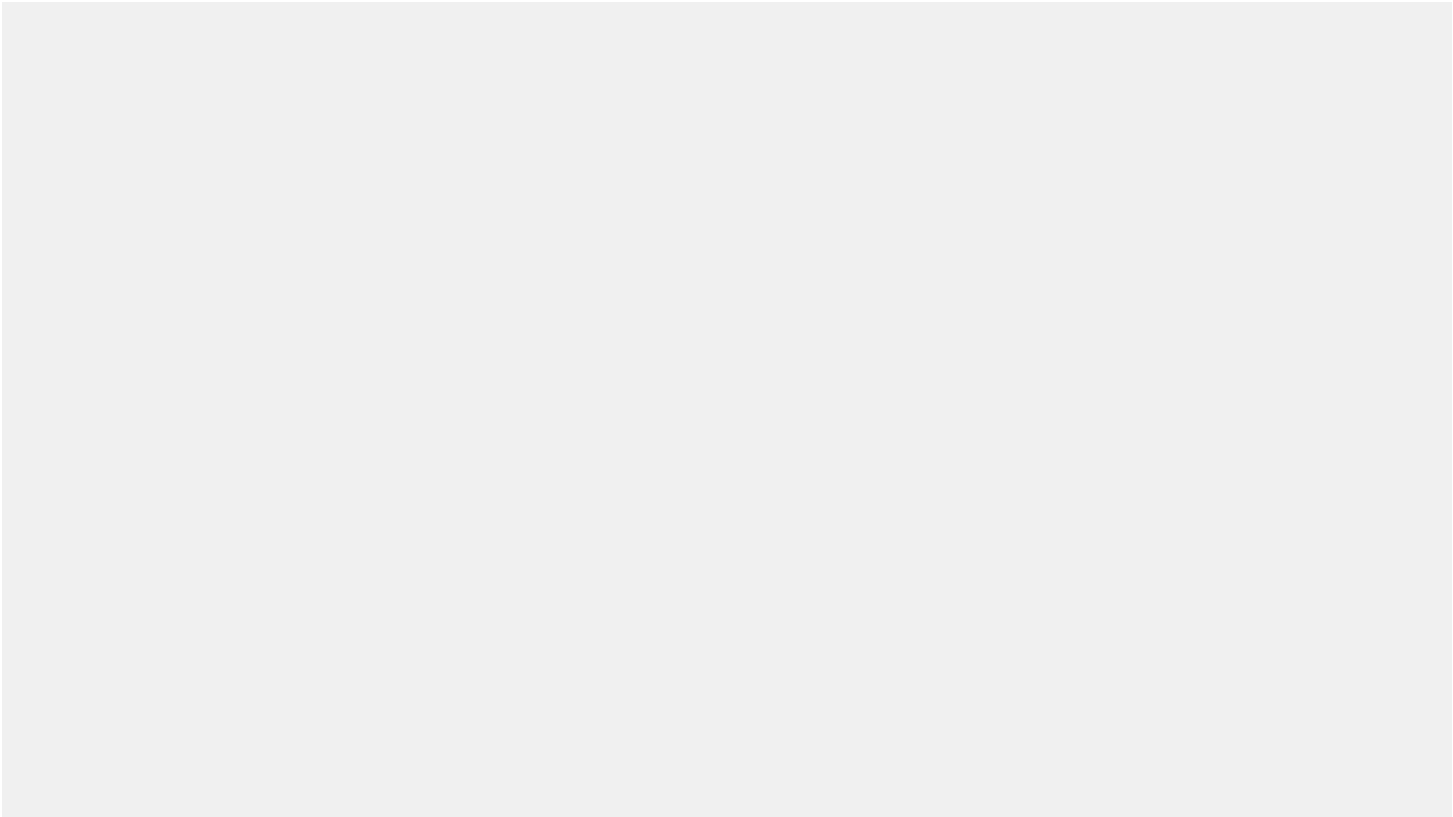
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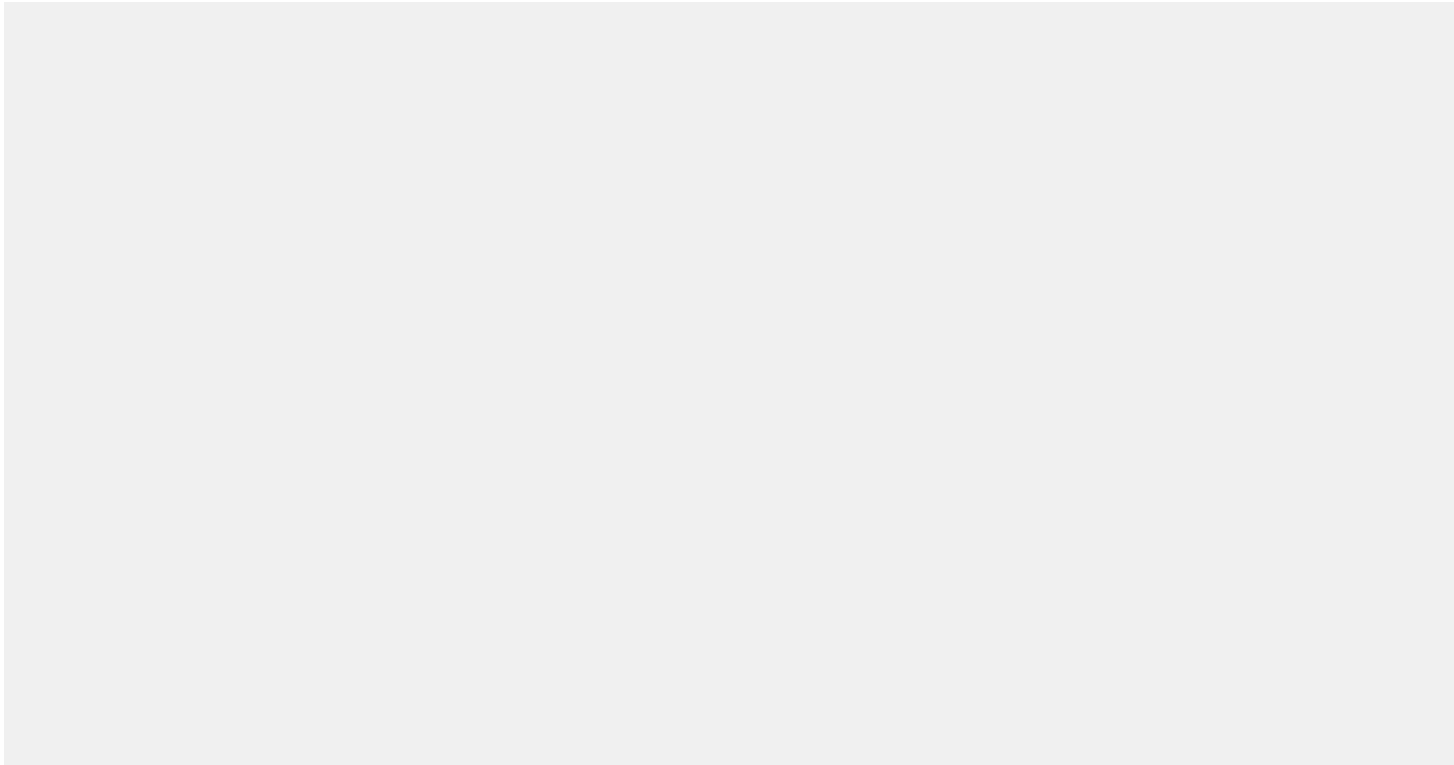
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Ex Tory peer Lord Hanningfield jailed for nine months for expenses fiddle

A disgraced former Tory peer was jailed for nine months today for fiddling his parliamentary expenses.



BY MIRROR.CO.UK
15:16, 1 JUL 2011 | UPDATED 08:32, 4 FEB 2012



Lord Hanningfield (Pic: PA)



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A disgraced former Tory peer was jailed for nine months today for fiddling his parliamentary expenses.

Lord Hanningfield, 70, falsely claimed for nearly £14,000 for overnight stays in London when he was not in the capital.

His expenses-fiddling included one occasion in February 2008 when he was actually on board a flight to India.

In May he was found guilty of six counts of false accounting at Chelmsford Crown Court and

today he was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court.

Lord Hanningfield joins four ex-MPs and a fellow member of the Lords convicted of dishonestly obtaining thousands of pounds from the taxpayer by making false claims for allowances.

Lord Hanningfield, who showed no emotion as sentence was passed, has lodged an appeal.

Passing sentence, Mr Justice Saunders said he would now be partly remembered as a "benefits cheat".

He said: "While there were ambiguities in the peers' expenses schemes which have resulted in its revision, it was clear from the terms of the scheme, as well as according with common sense, that a peer could not claim an overnight allowance to cover the expense of staying the night in London when he did not stay in London but went home.

"It was perfectly clear from the terms of the scheme, as well as according with common sense, that a peer could not claim for travelling expenses that he did not incur."

The judge said that Lord Hanningfield was not paid for the work he carried out in the House of Lords but he refused to believe the extent to which he claimed he was out of pocket.

"He knew when he accepted a peerage that the job of a working peer was unpaid and he did not have to accept the honour," he went on.

"It is not for me to say whether peers should or should not be paid but whatever you think of the scheme, it was not for any peer to take money to which he was not entitled on the basis that he believes he is worth it."

The judge added: "Great trust was placed in peers to be honest in their claims for expenses.

"The public expects no less of them. Lord Hanningfield and others have broken that trust.

"The consequences for the reputation of the House of Lords have been serious."

Mr Justice Saunders said Lord Hanningfield could not benefit from a guilty plea when considering sentencing.

He said: "He has been diagnosed as suffering from clinical depression and he is being treated for that condition.

"The bringing of these charges brought about the end of his work which was very important to him.

"He is 70 and his physical health is not good. Imprisonment will be harder for him than for others who are mentally and physically fitter.

"Also, while others convicted in this series of prosecution will have some chance to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the public, Lord Hanningfield is less likely to be able to do that because of his age but it is not impossible that he will."

Mr Justice Saunders said he would reduce the length of imprisonment after hearing mitigation relating to his ill-health.

Professor Valerie Cowie told the court that Lord Hanningfield "collapsed completely" after being found guilty.

She said: "He was severely shocked. He was in a state of denial and confusion and he became physically unwell.

"His blood pressure increased and he had several falls, and latterly he has been very worried about his custodial sentence."

She added: "He did remark to me that if he did receive a custodial sentence he would be completely crushed.

"He has lost his resilience and he wouldn't be able to pick himself up again. He has since shown suicidal ideas."

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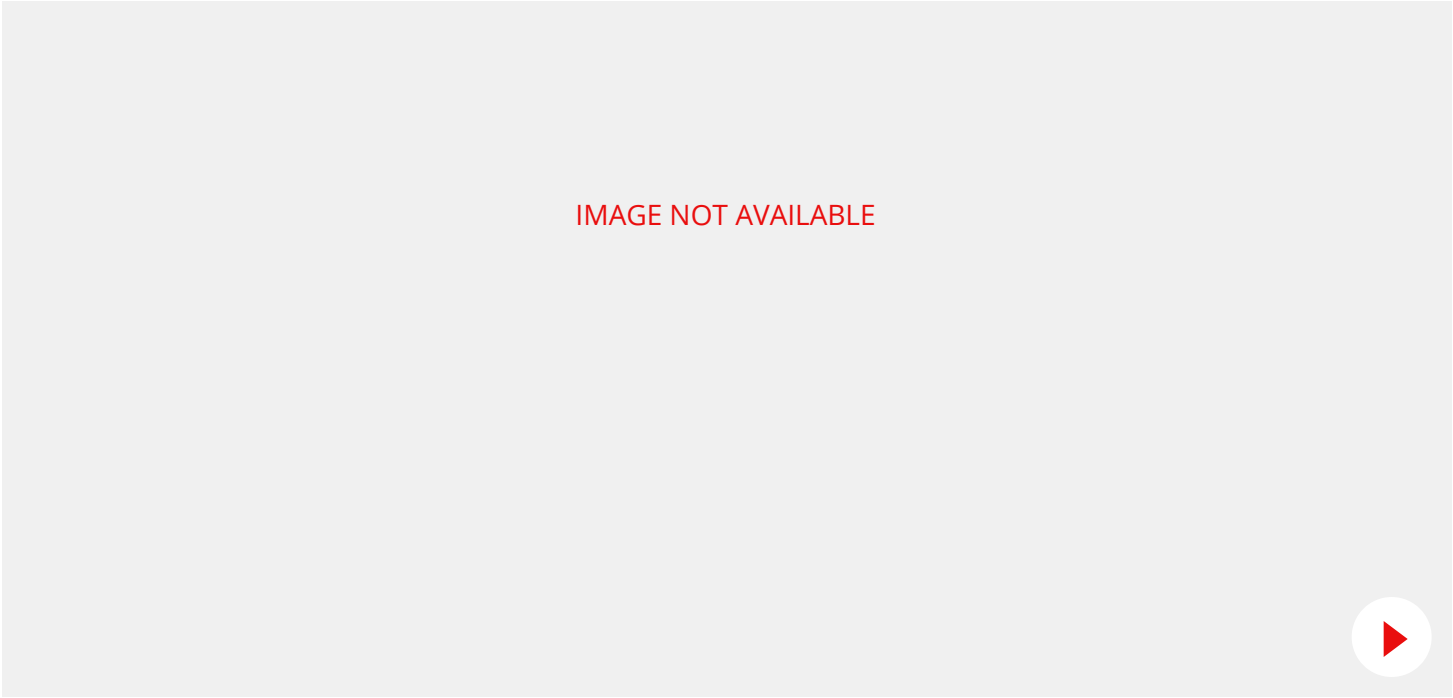


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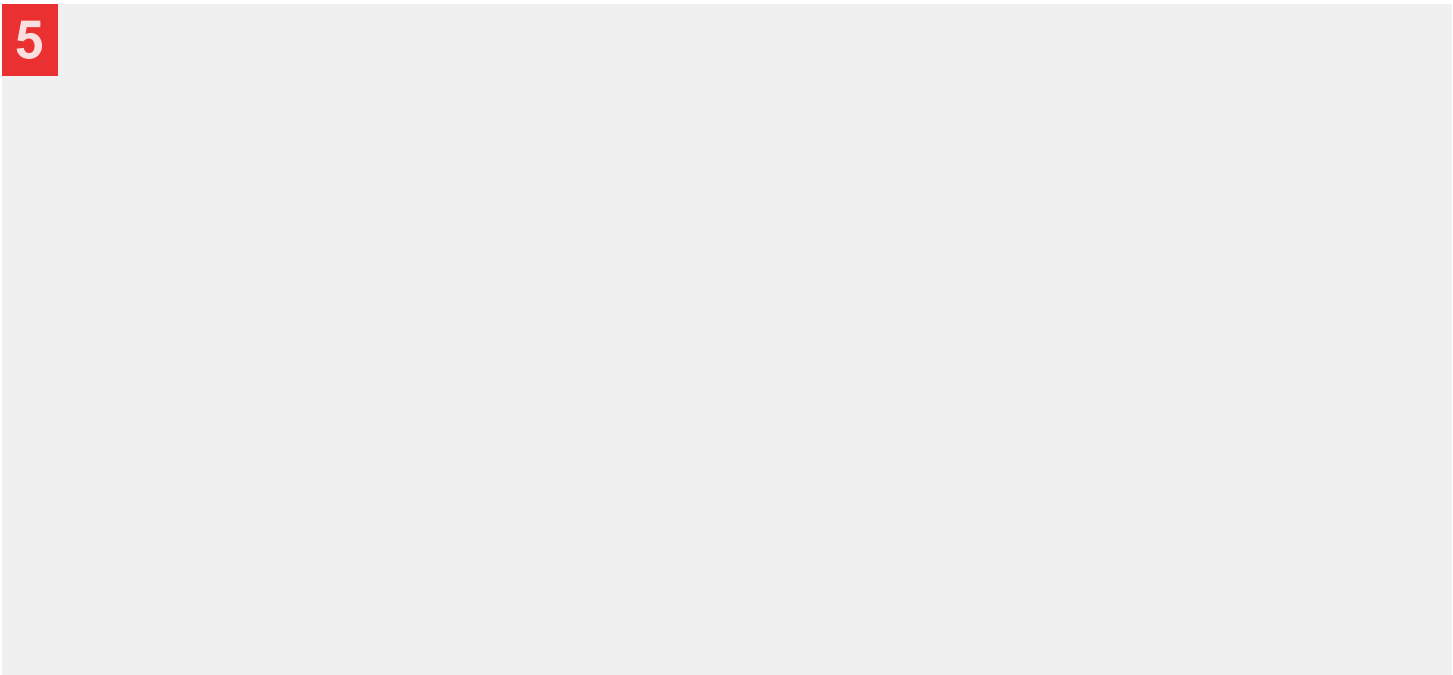
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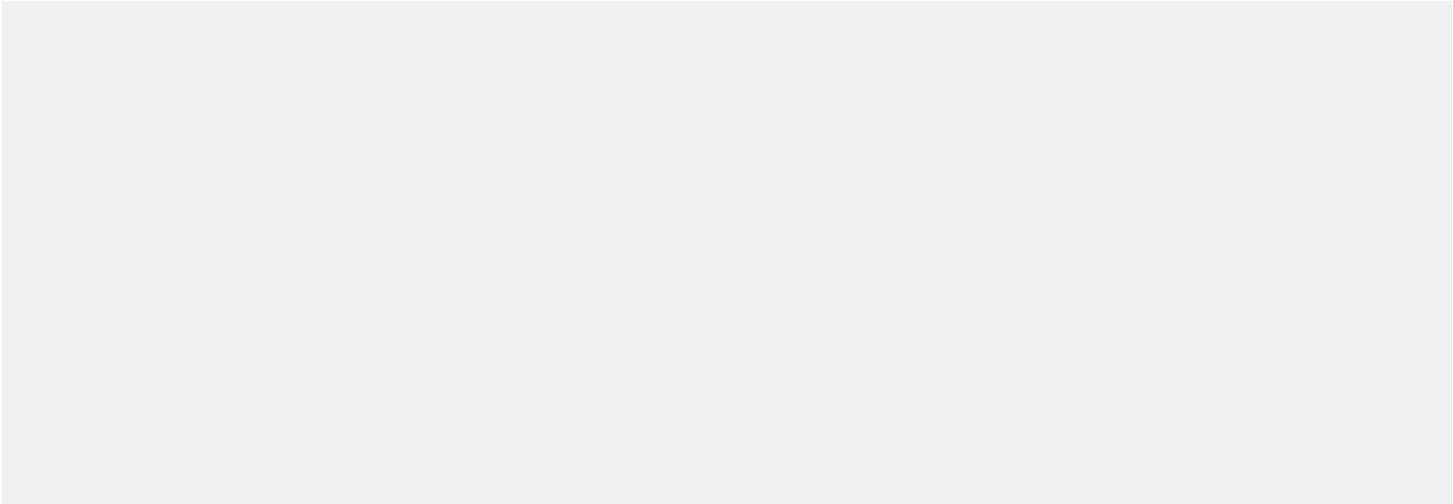




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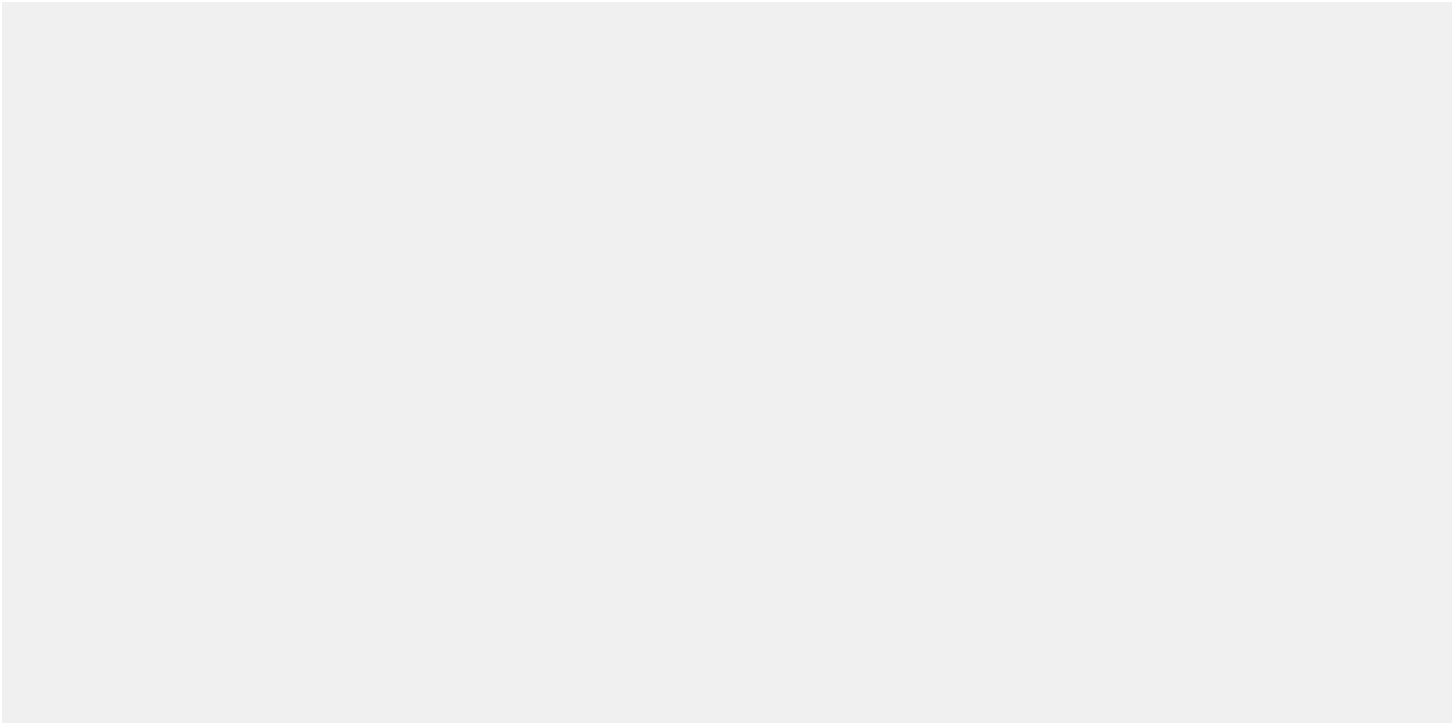
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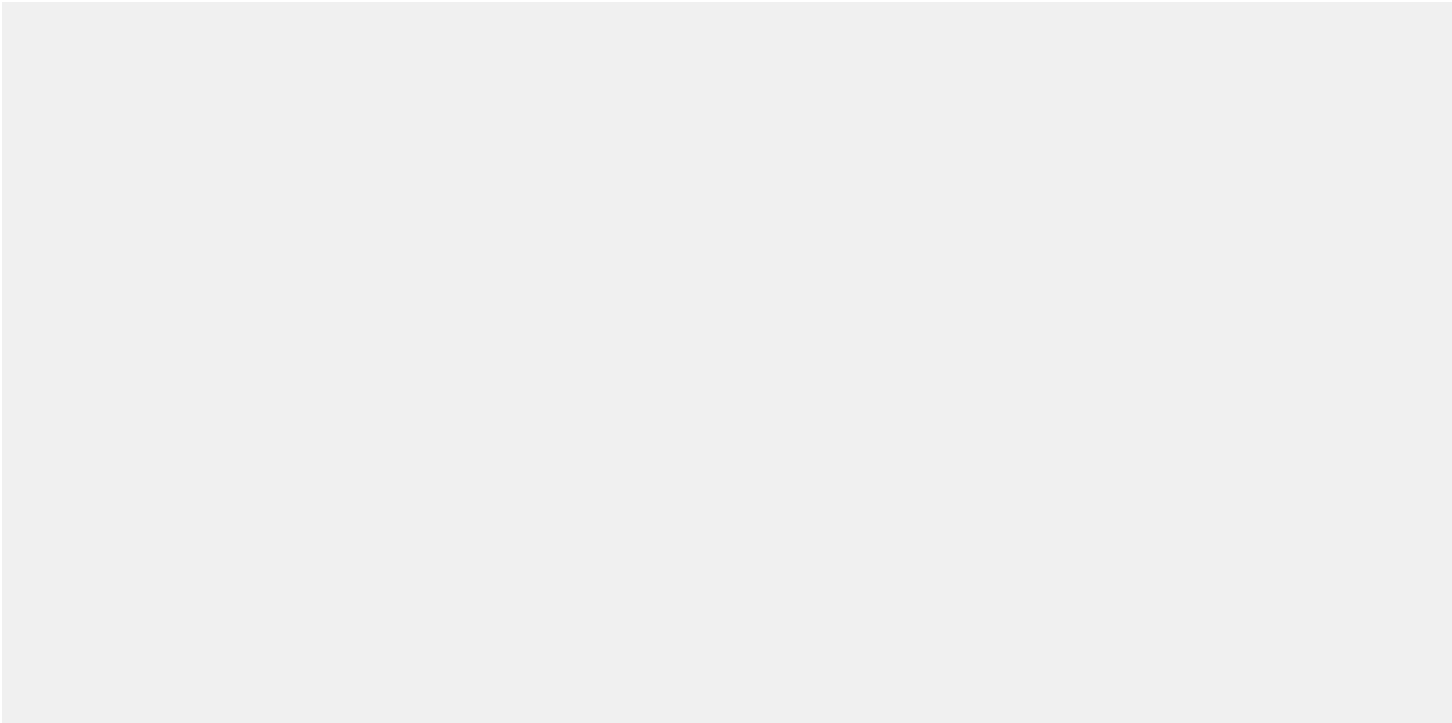
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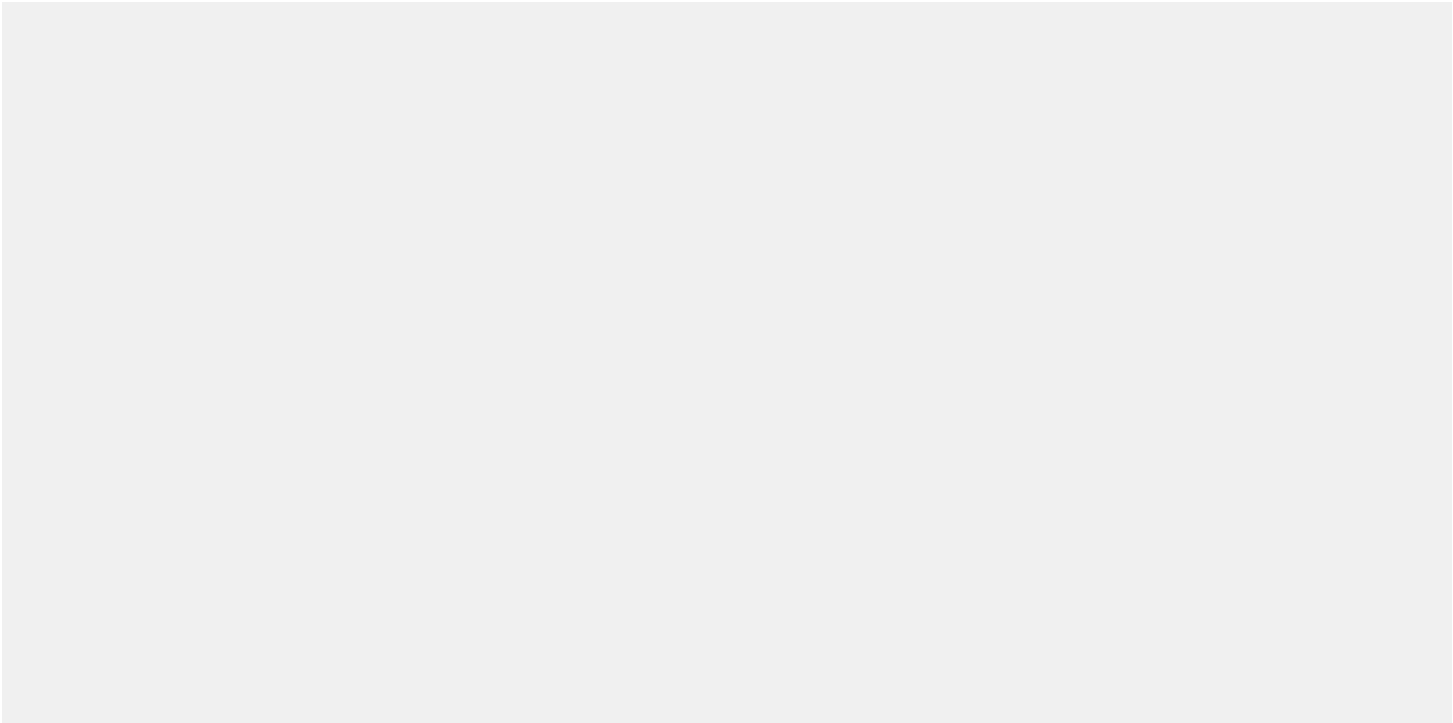




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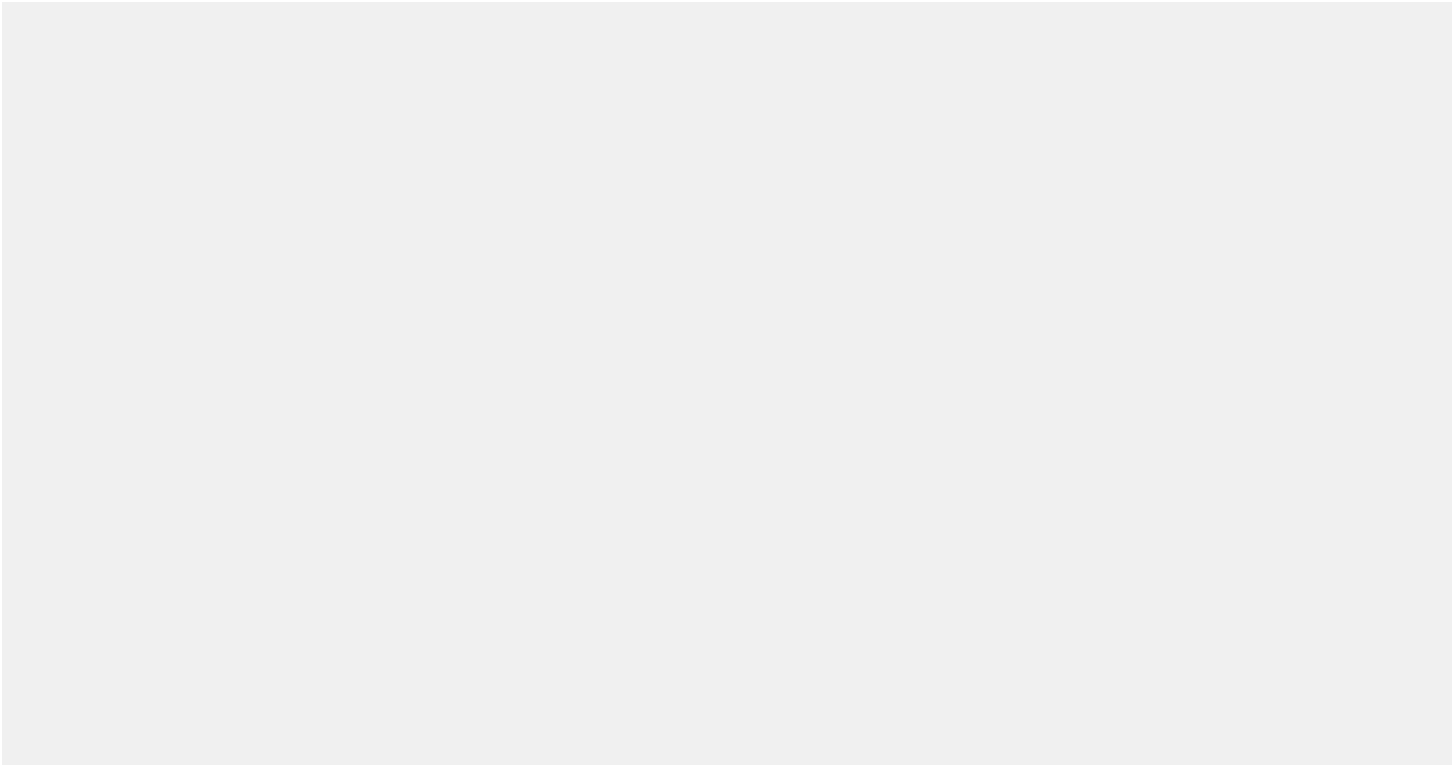
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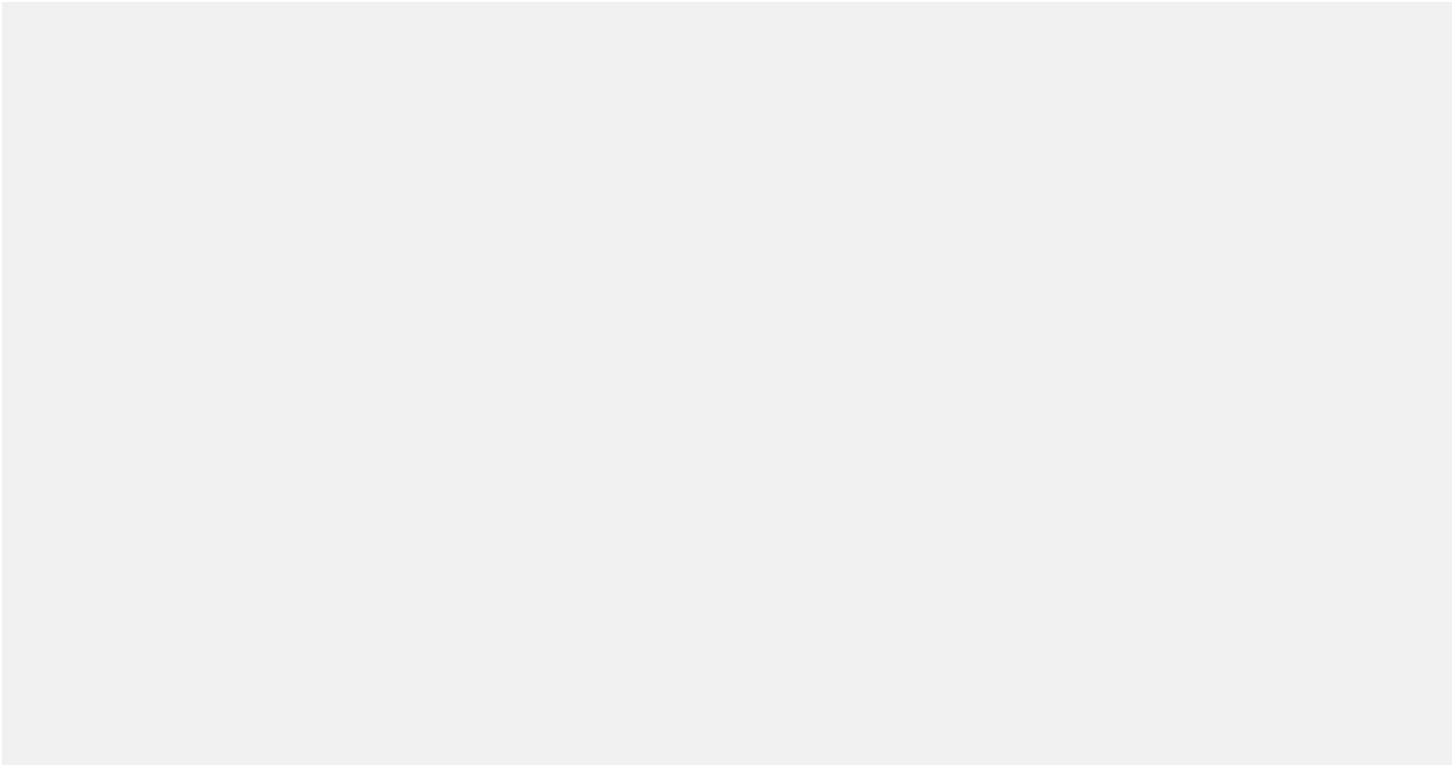
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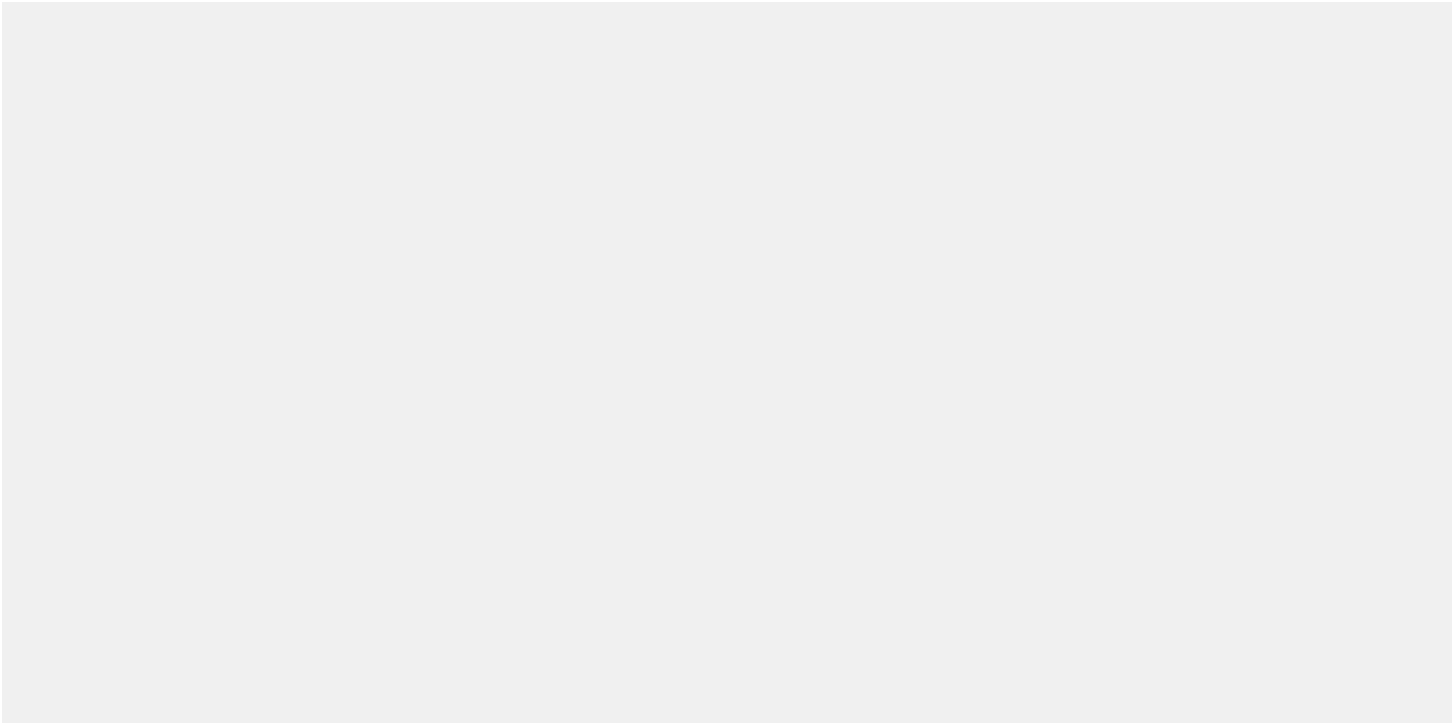
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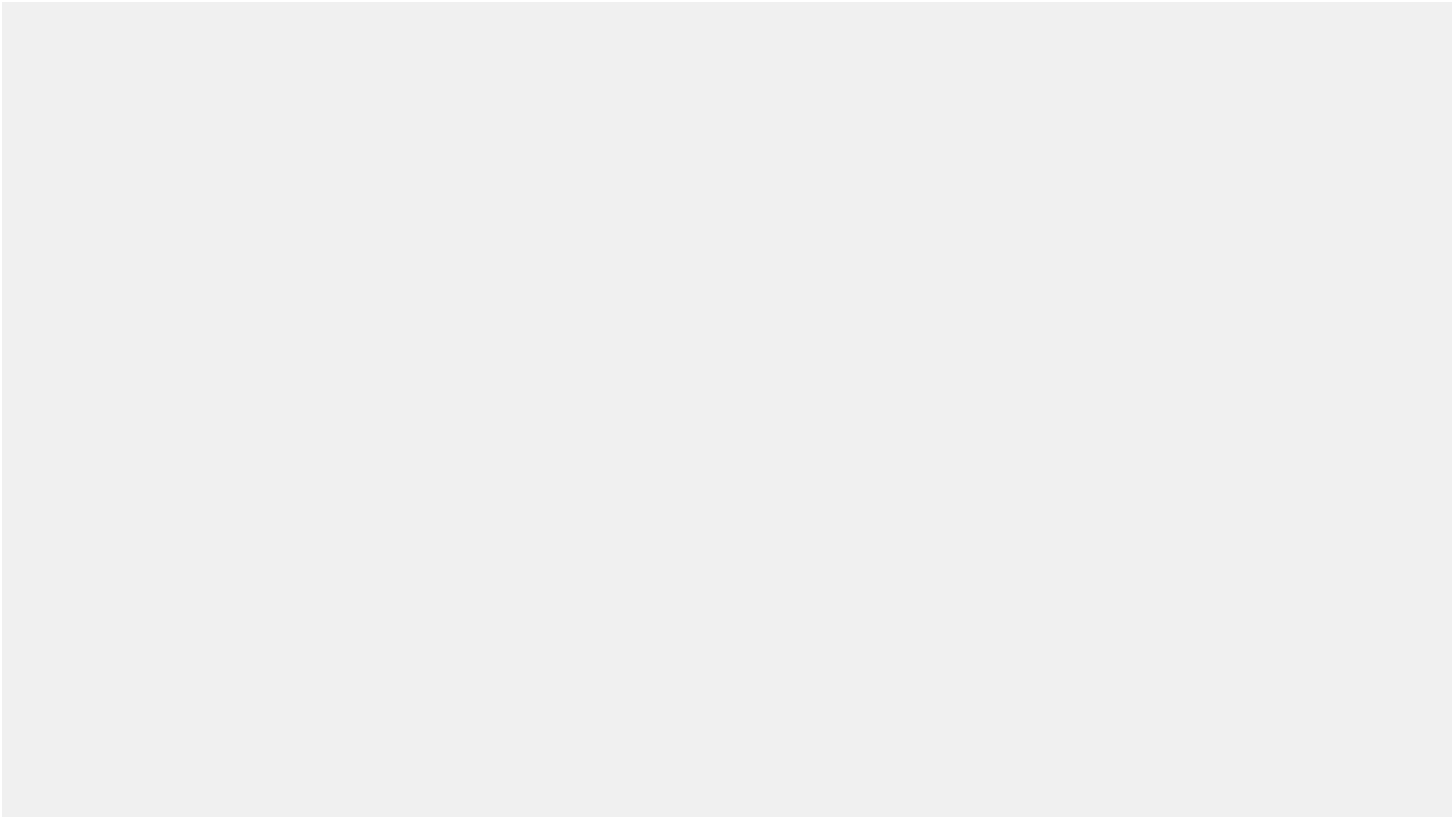
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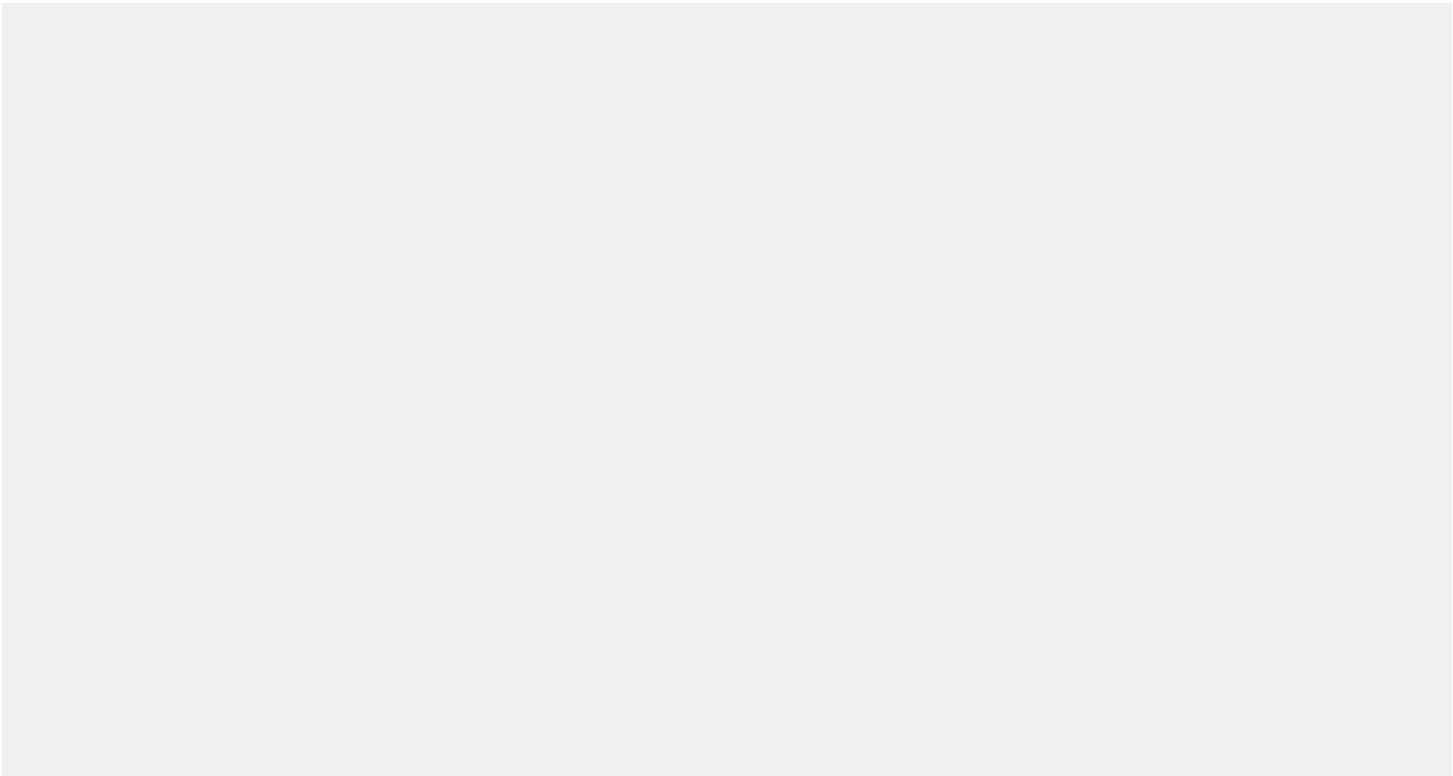
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NEWS

Ex Tory peer Lord Hanningfield jailed for nine months for expenses fiddle

A disgraced former Tory peer was jailed for nine months today for fiddling his parliamentary expenses.



BY MIRROR.CO.UK
15:16, 1 JUL 2011 | UPDATED 08:32, 4 FEB 2012



Lord Hanningfield (Pic: PA)



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A disgraced former Tory peer was jailed for nine months today for fiddling his parliamentary expenses.

Lord Hanningfield, 70, falsely claimed for nearly £14,000 for overnight stays in London when he was not in the capital.

His expenses-fiddling included one occasion in February 2008 when he was actually on board a flight to India.

In May he was found guilty of six counts of false accounting at Chelmsford Crown Court and

today he was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court.

Lord Hanningfield joins four ex-MPs and a fellow member of the Lords convicted of dishonestly obtaining thousands of pounds from the taxpayer by making false claims for allowances.

Lord Hanningfield, who showed no emotion as sentence was passed, has lodged an appeal.

Passing sentence, Mr Justice Saunders said he would now be partly remembered as a "benefits cheat".

He said: "While there were ambiguities in the peers' expenses schemes which have resulted in its revision, it was clear from the terms of the scheme, as well as according with common sense, that a peer could not claim an overnight allowance to cover the expense of staying the night in London when he did not stay in London but went home.

"It was perfectly clear from the terms of the scheme, as well as according with common sense, that a peer could not claim for travelling expenses that he did not incur."

The judge said that Lord Hanningfield was not paid for the work he carried out in the House of Lords but he refused to believe the extent to which he claimed he was out of pocket.

"He knew when he accepted a peerage that the job of a working peer was unpaid and he did not have to accept the honour," he went on.

"It is not for me to say whether peers should or should not be paid but whatever you think of the scheme, it was not for any peer to take money to which he was not entitled on the basis that he believes he is worth it."

The judge added: "Great trust was placed in peers to be honest in their claims for expenses.

"The public expects no less of them. Lord Hanningfield and others have broken that trust.

"The consequences for the reputation of the House of Lords have been serious."

Mr Justice Saunders said Lord Hanningfield could not benefit from a guilty plea when considering sentencing.

He said: "He has been diagnosed as suffering from clinical depression and he is being treated for that condition.

"The bringing of these charges brought about the end of his work which was very important to him.

"He is 70 and his physical health is not good. Imprisonment will be harder for him than for others who are mentally and physically fitter.

"Also, while others convicted in this series of prosecution will have some chance to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the public, Lord Hanningfield is less likely to be able to do that because of his age but it is not impossible that he will."

Mr Justice Saunders said he would reduce the length of imprisonment after hearing mitigation relating to his ill-health.

Professor Valerie Cowie told the court that Lord Hanningfield "collapsed completely" after being found guilty.

She said: "He was severely shocked. He was in a state of denial and confusion and he became physically unwell.

"His blood pressure increased and he had several falls, and latterly he has been very worried about his custodial sentence."

She added: "He did remark to me that if he did receive a custodial sentence he would be completely crushed.

"He has lost his resilience and he wouldn't be able to pick himself up again. He has since shown suicidal ideas."

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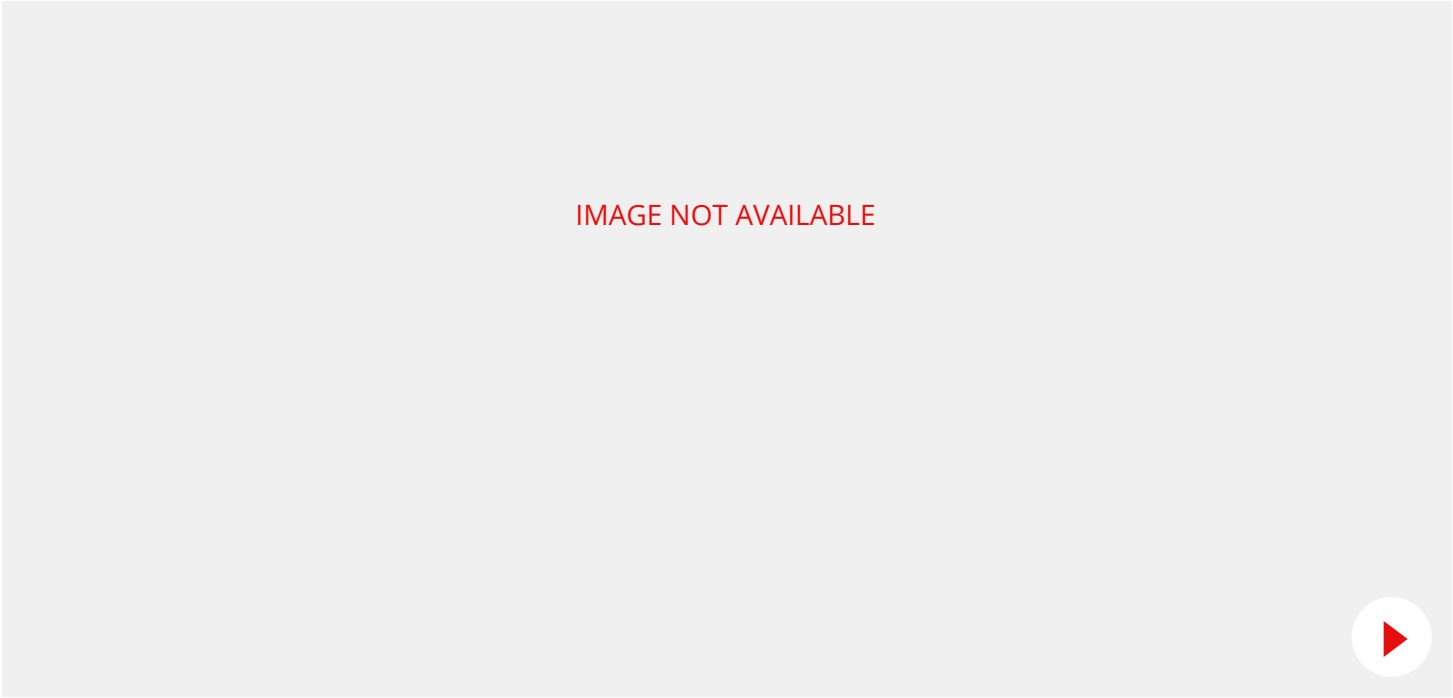
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Barrister Katie Gollop QC broke the news on Friday during the latest stage of the couple's legal fight over treatment for the terminally-ill baby

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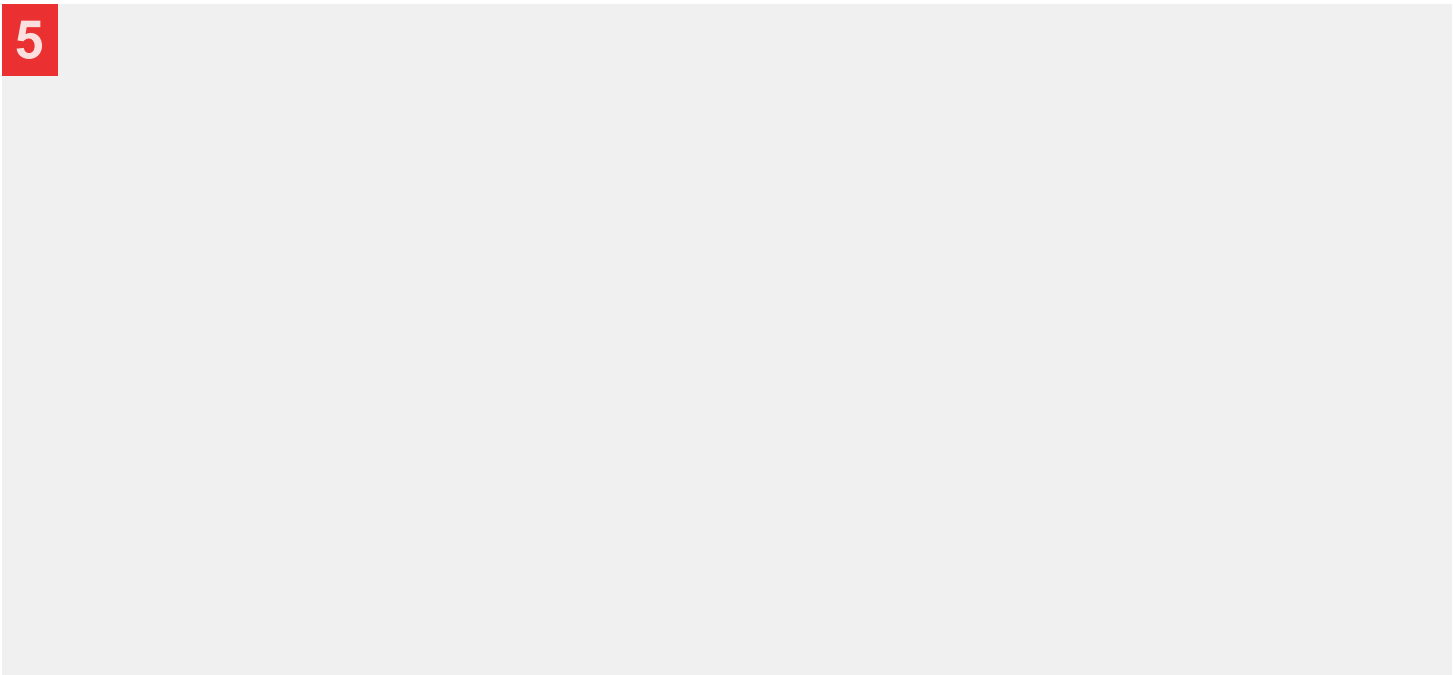
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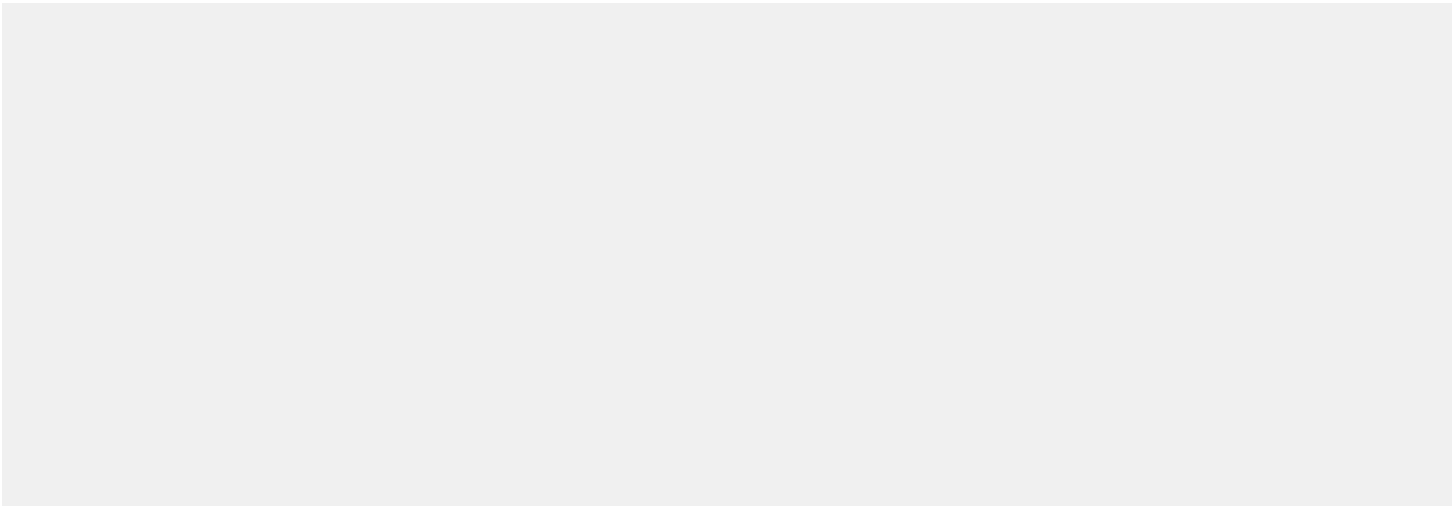




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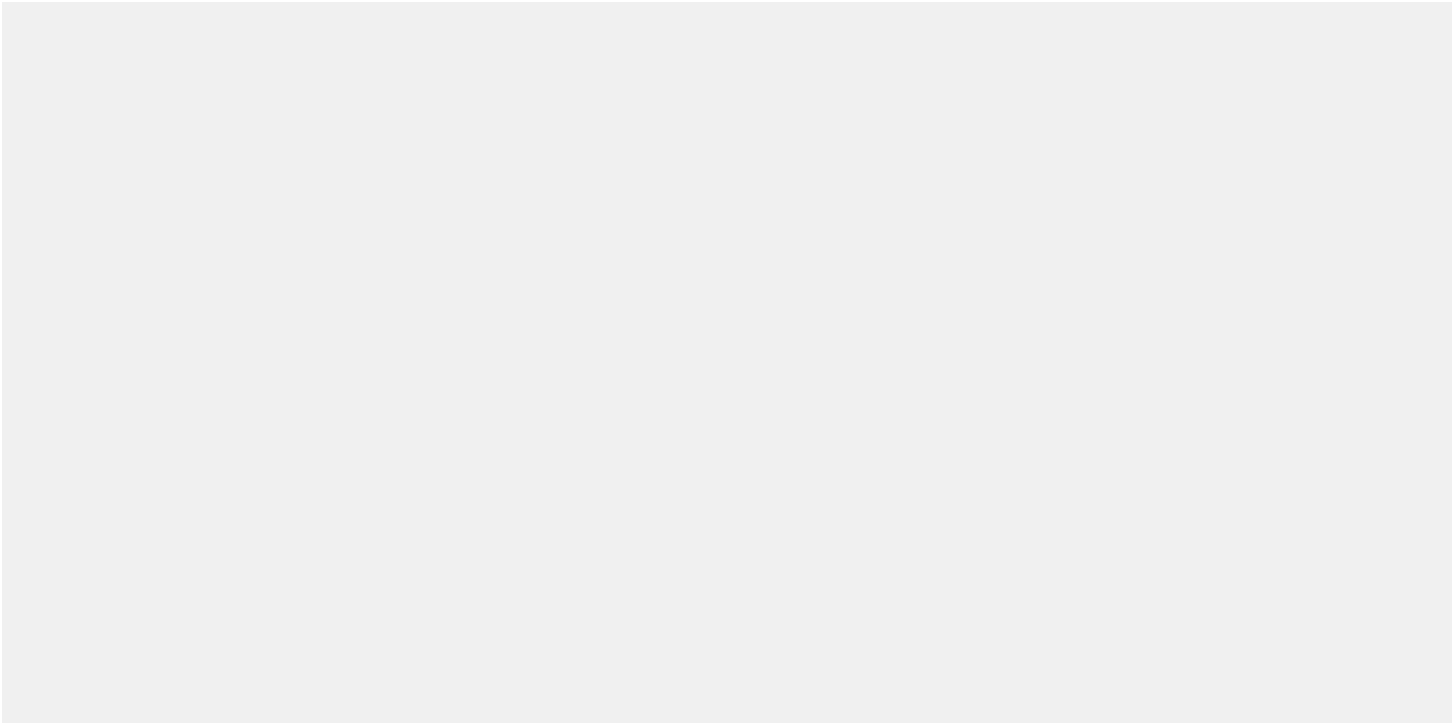
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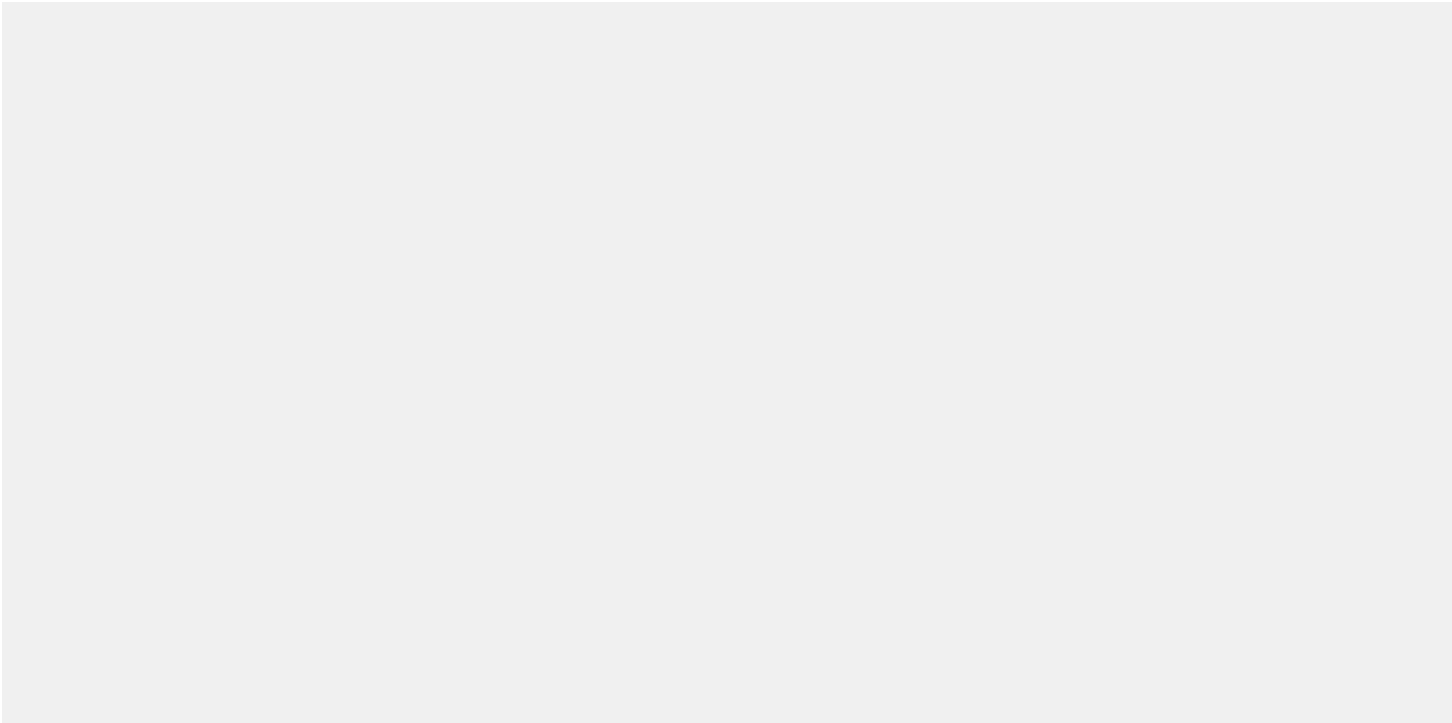
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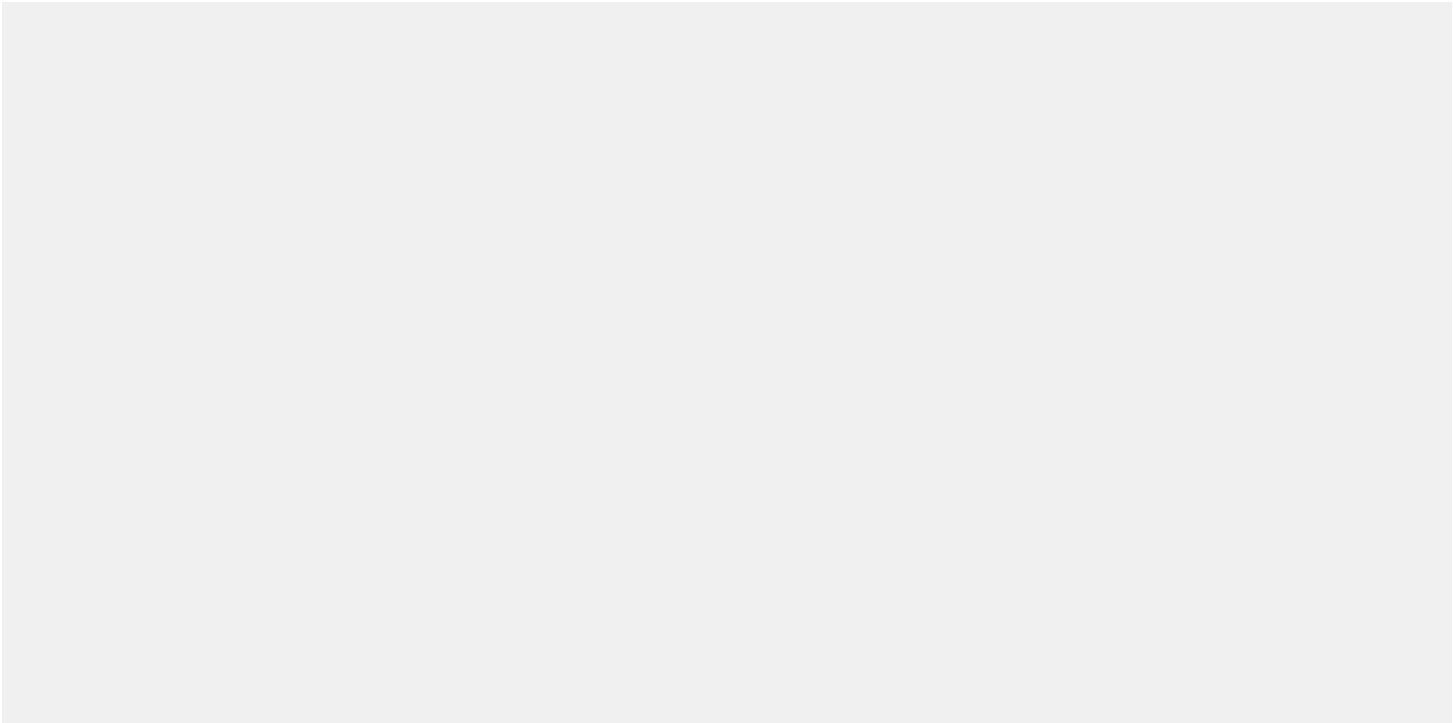
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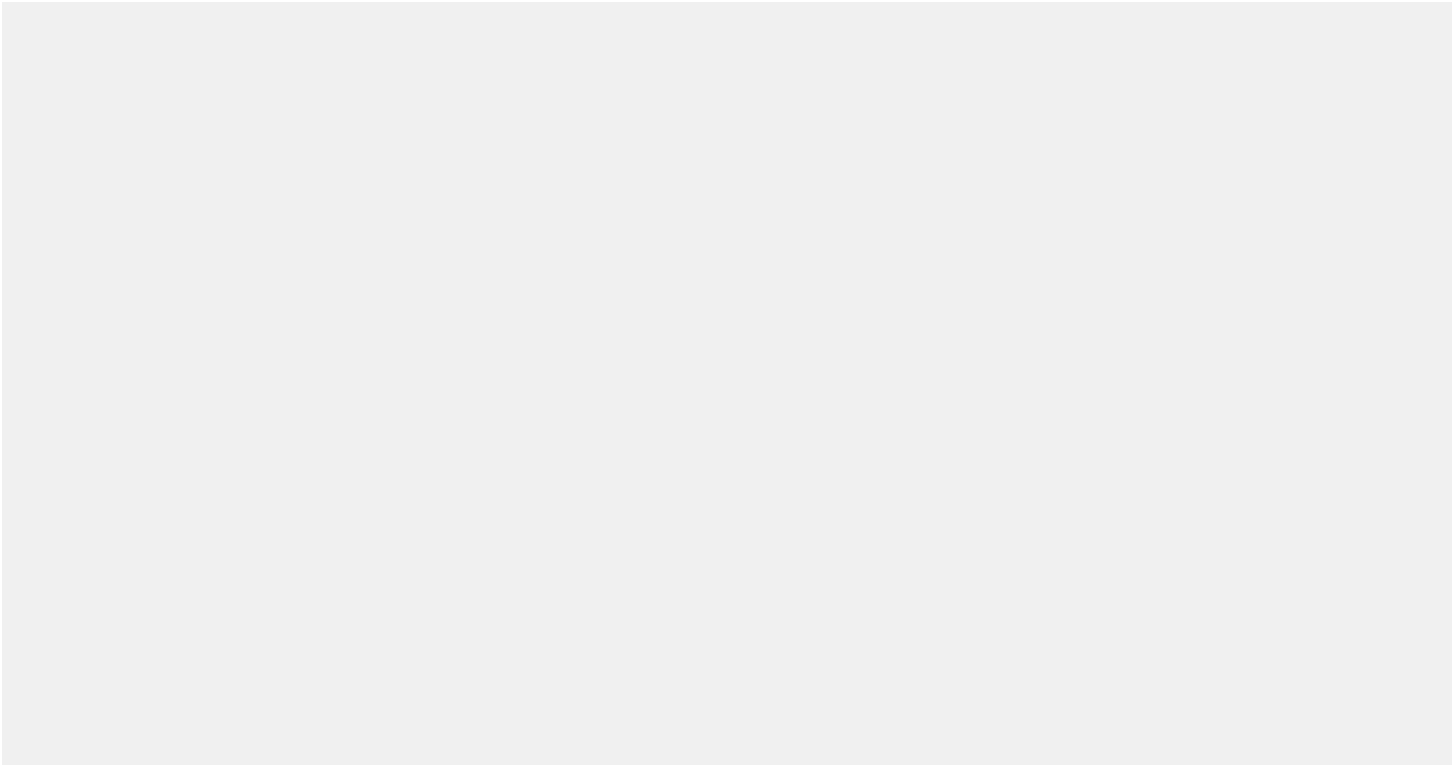
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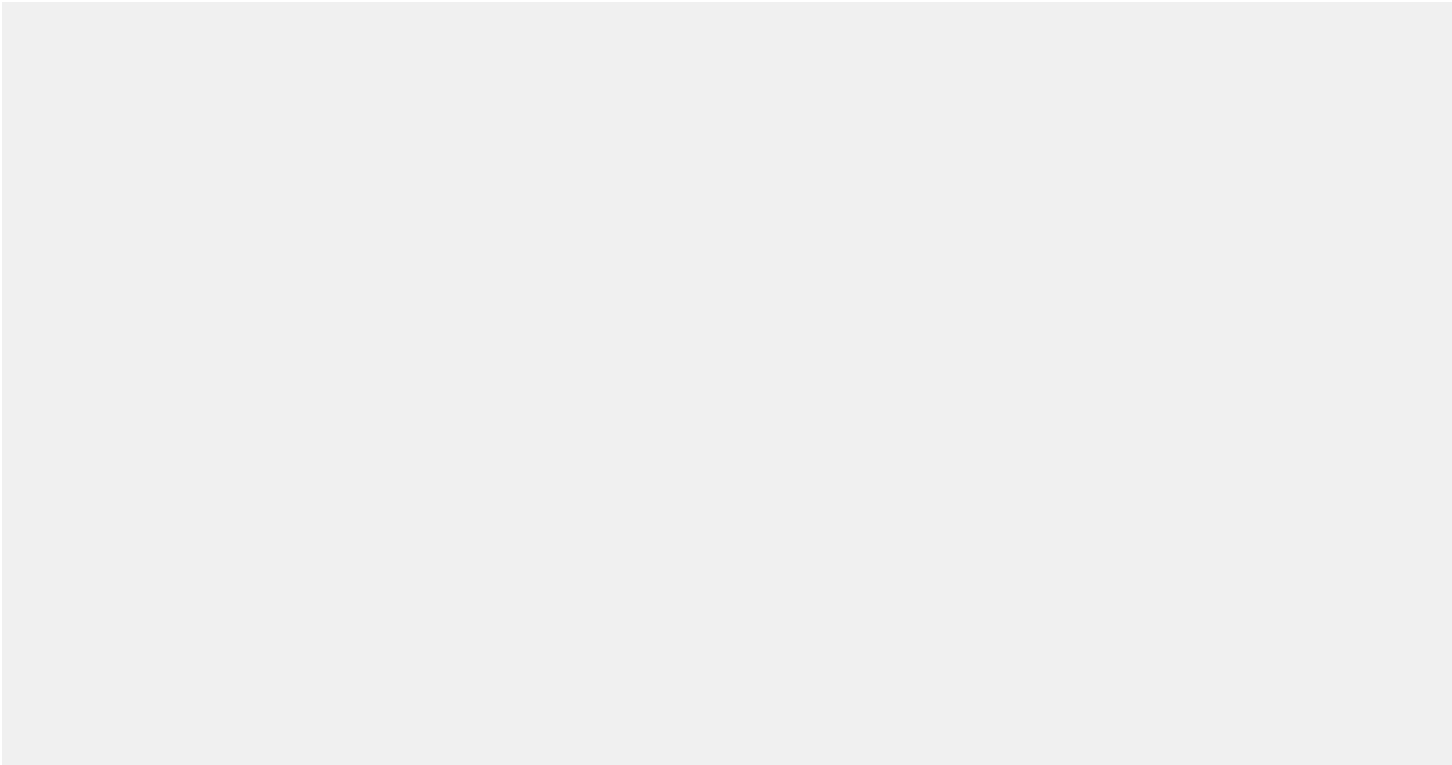
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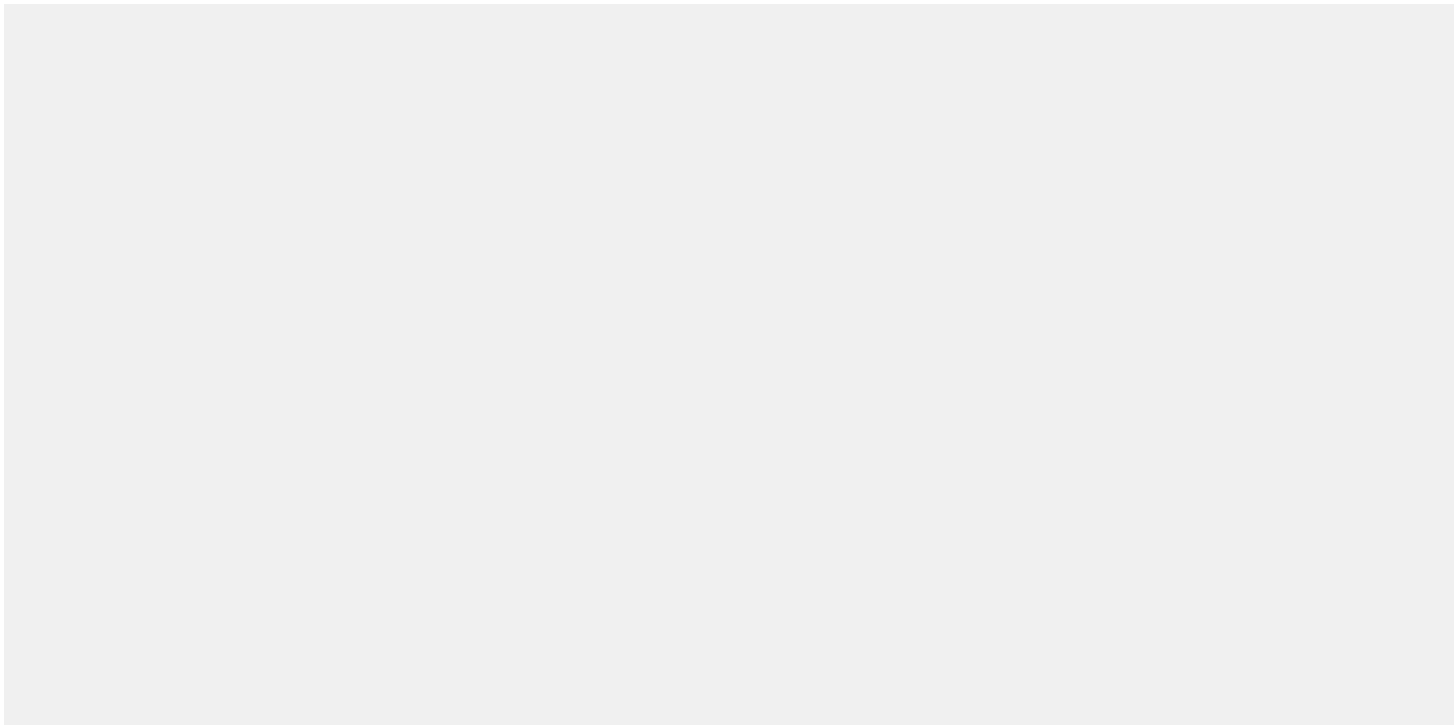
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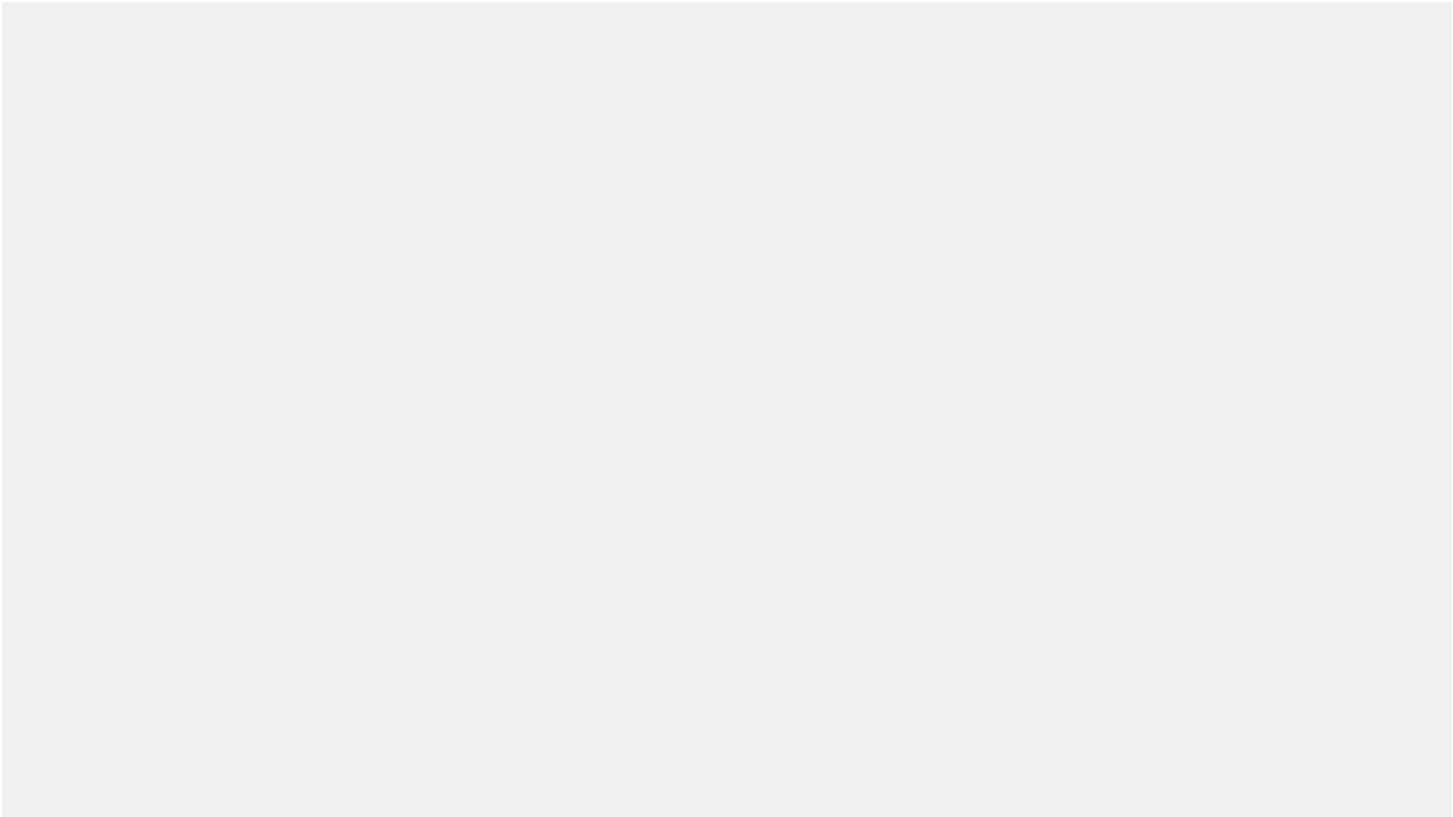
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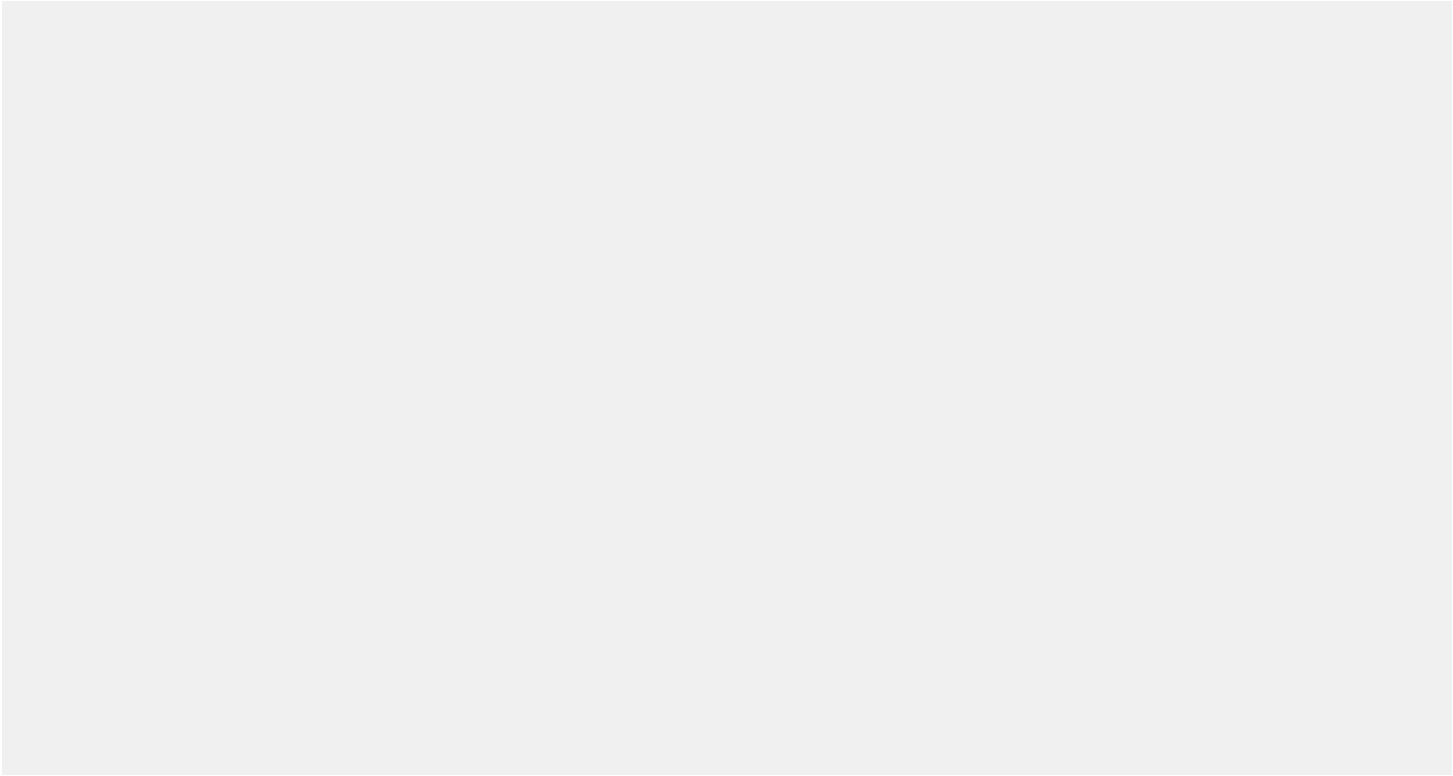
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Lord Hanningfield expenses scandal: Peer tells Mirror reporter - YOU should be in prison for exposing ME

In what could be a thinly veiled reference to attempts to bring in new laws to stifle the press after the Leveson Inquiry, he said: “Thank goodness people are going to stop people doing things like that.”

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BY DAVID COLLINS

08:19, 17 DEC 2013

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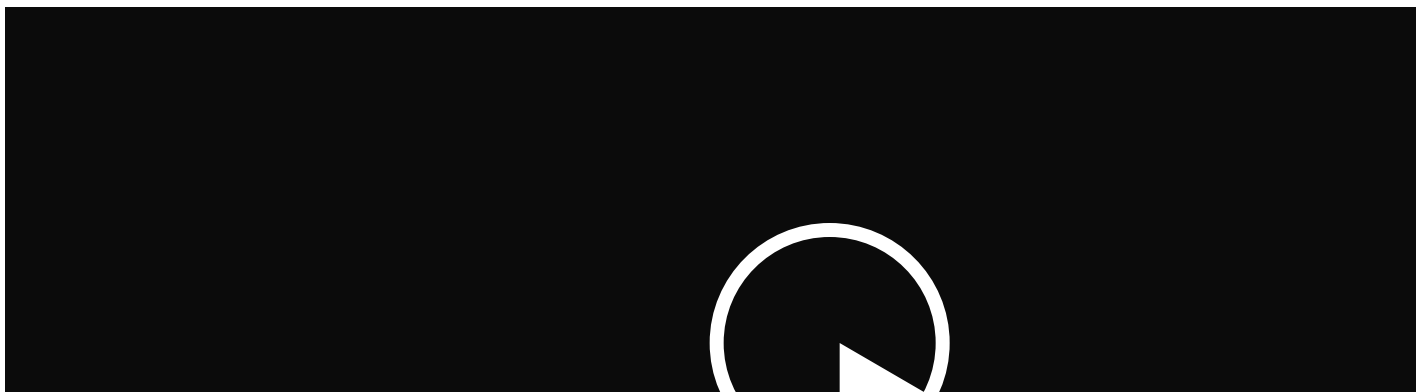
▶ Lord Hanningfield 'clocking in' expenses scandal exposed

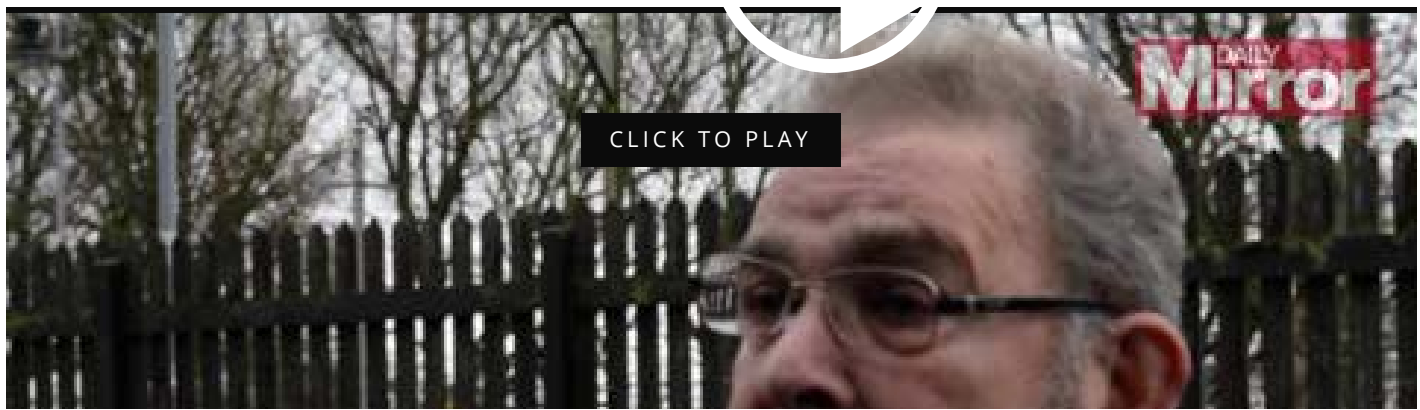


Brazen ex-jailbird Lord Hanningfield told our reporter he should be sent to prison for exposing his expenses fiddle.

In what could be a thinly veiled reference to attempts to bring in new laws to stifle the press after the Leveson Inquiry, he said: "Thank goodness people are going to stop people doing things like that."

Earlier he stormed: "I am trying to get back on track again... and if people like you put me off track again you deserve to be in prison."





Peers jailed for serious criminal offences cannot be permanently removed from the House of Lords.

MPs lose their seats if they are sentenced to more than a year in prison. But archaic rules mean peers are simply banned from the Lords for the duration of their sentence or for the period when they are bankrupt.

Tory peer Lord Archer was jailed for four years for perjury and perverting the course of justice in 2001.

He had lied under oath during his 1987 libel case against the Daily Star over allegations he had sex with a prostitute.

Yet he is still a peer and has been allowed to keep his seat.

Former media tycoon Conrad Black spent three years in a US jail for defrauding investors. He was released in May last year and may return to the Lords.

[Lord Hanningfield and Lord Taylor of Warwick, both jailed for fiddling their expenses,](#) have kept their seats in the House of Lords.

They are all eligible for a £300 attendance rate.

The House of Lords costs taxpayers more than £100million per year.

More than £2million of public money goes on subsidising peers' restaurants and bars alone.

Annual accounts for 2012-13 show the Lords cost a total of £101,896,000. This covers Members' expenses and allowances, staff salaries, pension and admin costs, as well as security for the House.

More than one fifth, roughly £21million, is paid out to cover the expenses for the 760 Lords, bishops and baronesses.

They can also dine in their fancy restaurants on a subsidised rate, costing the taxpayer £2,361,437 per year, or £63,823 for each of the 37 weeks the Lords were sitting.

Each of the House of Lords' 760 peers benefits from an £84 discount on their food every week so they can eat foie gras and steak on the cheap.

That is on top of the £300-a-day "subsistence" allowance to cover food and accommodation for each day they attend.

[Read the transcript of the Mirror confronting Lord Hanningfield here](#)

[Mirror Associate Editor Kevin Maguire says the time is right to abolish the House of Lords](#)

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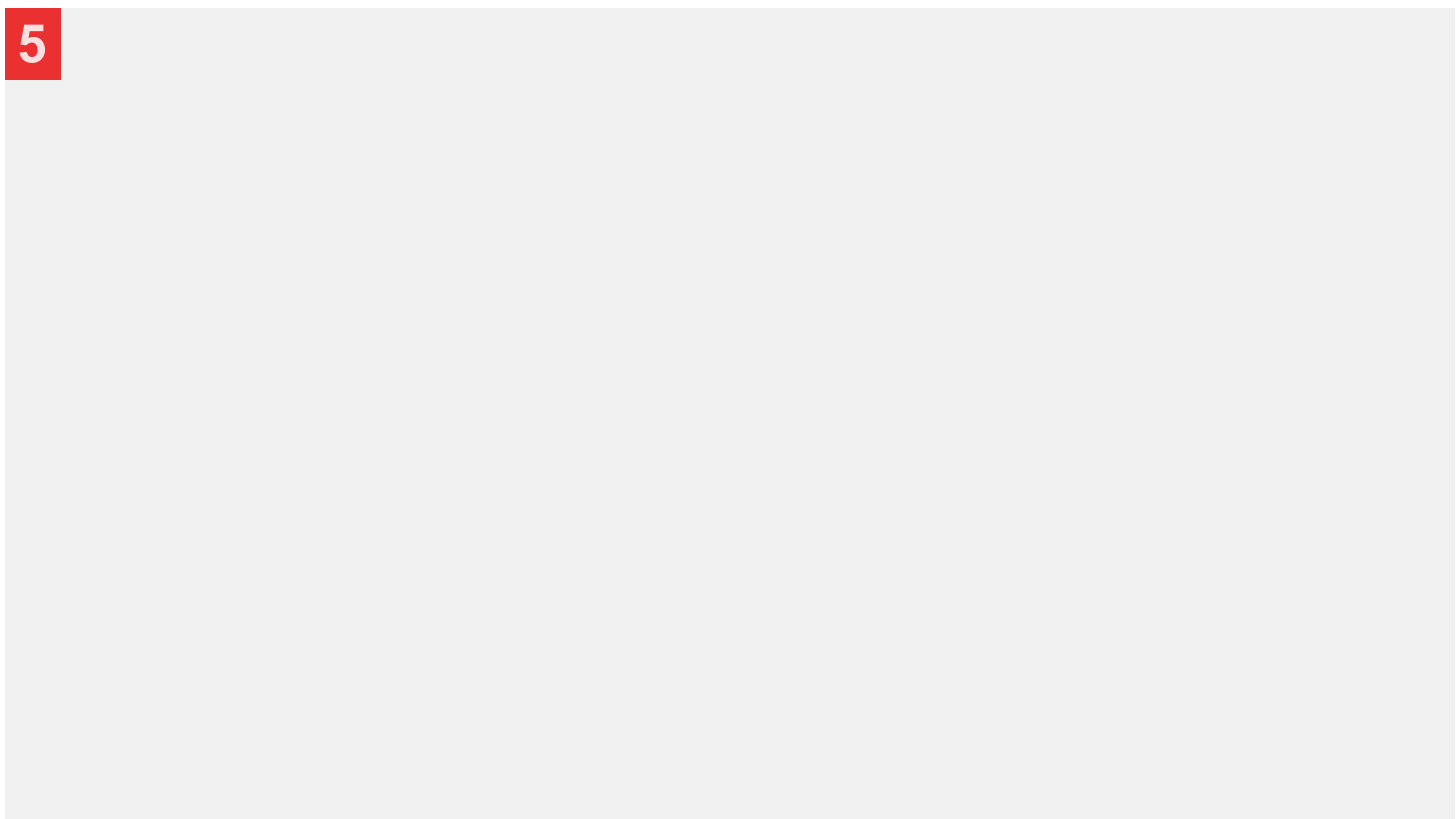
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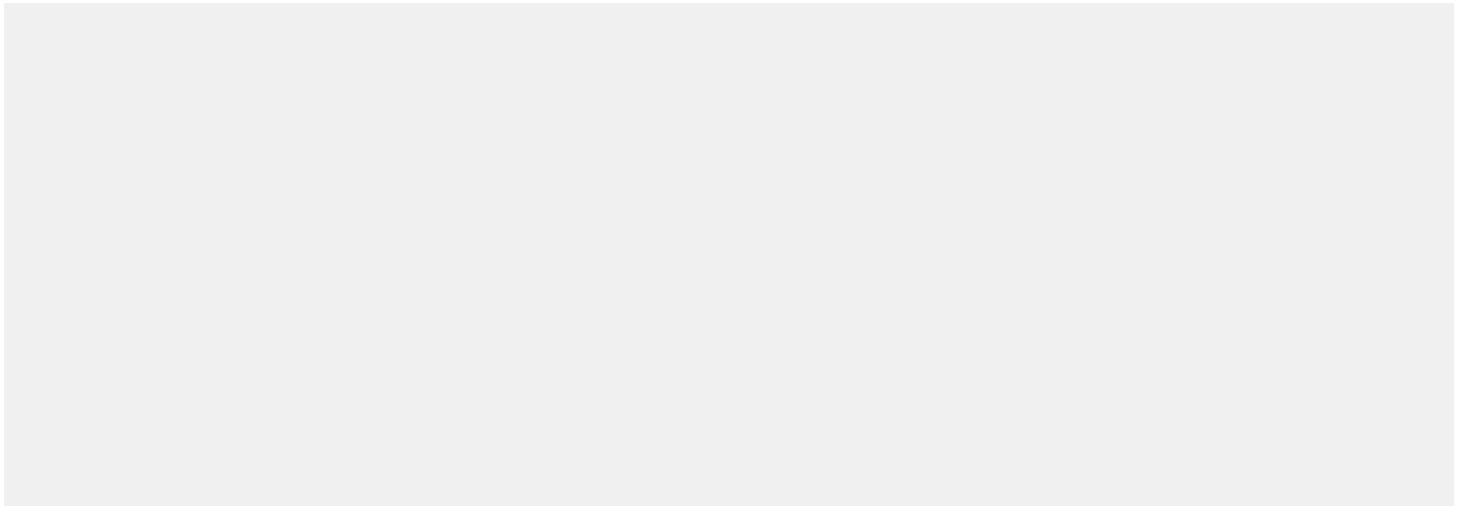




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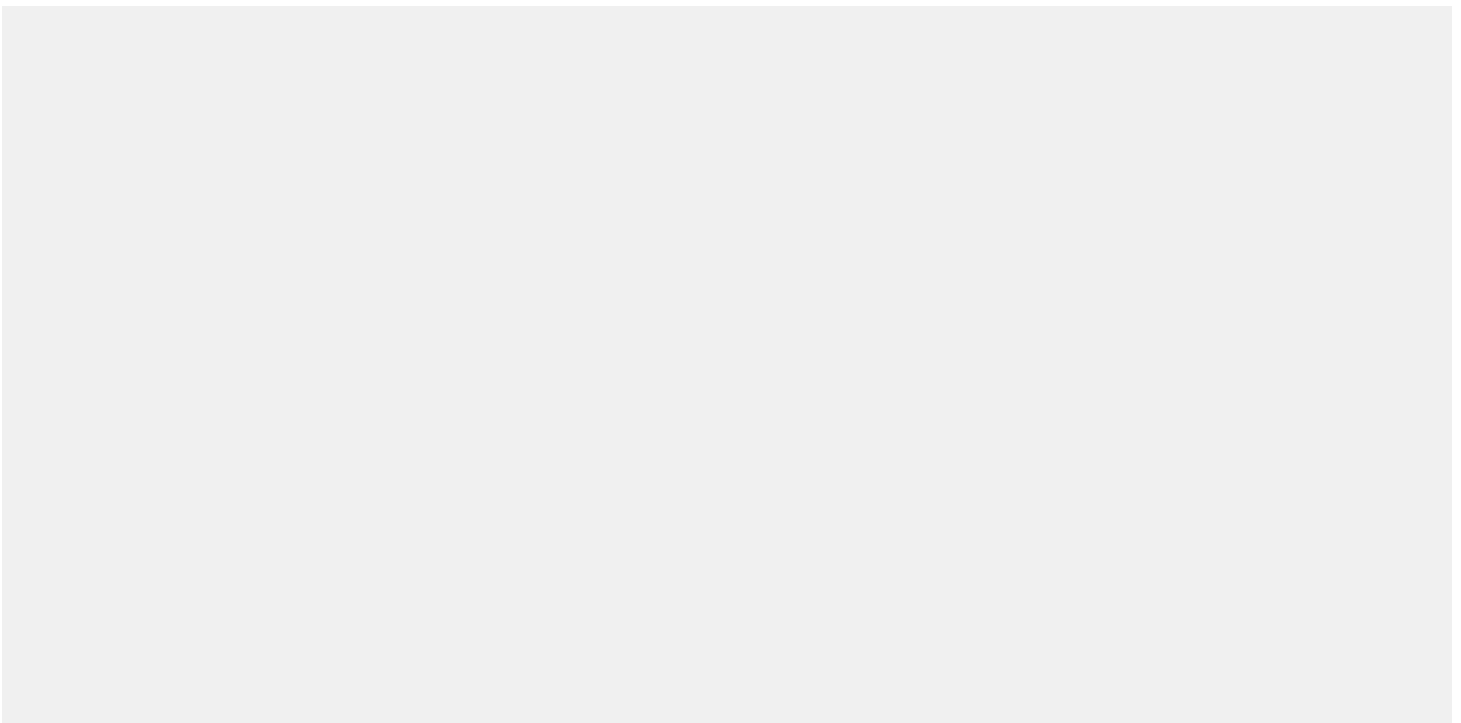
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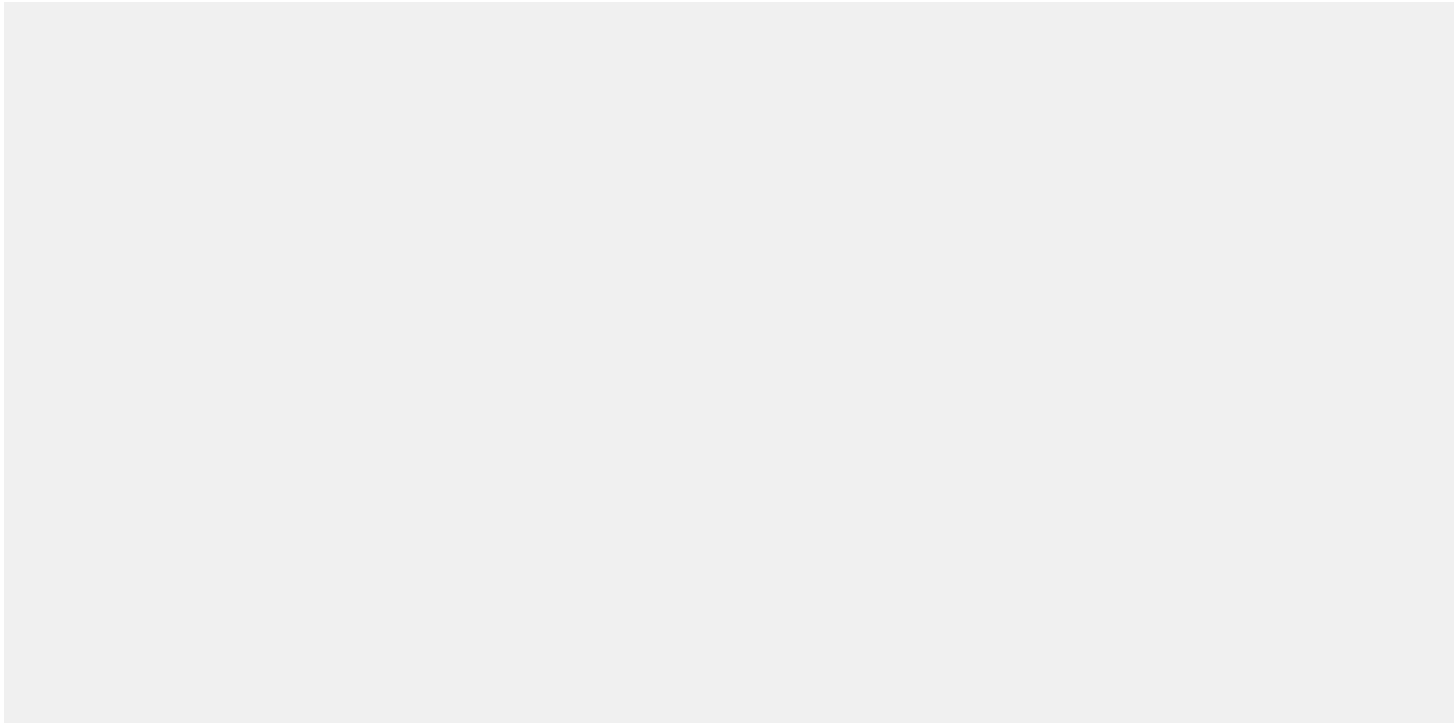
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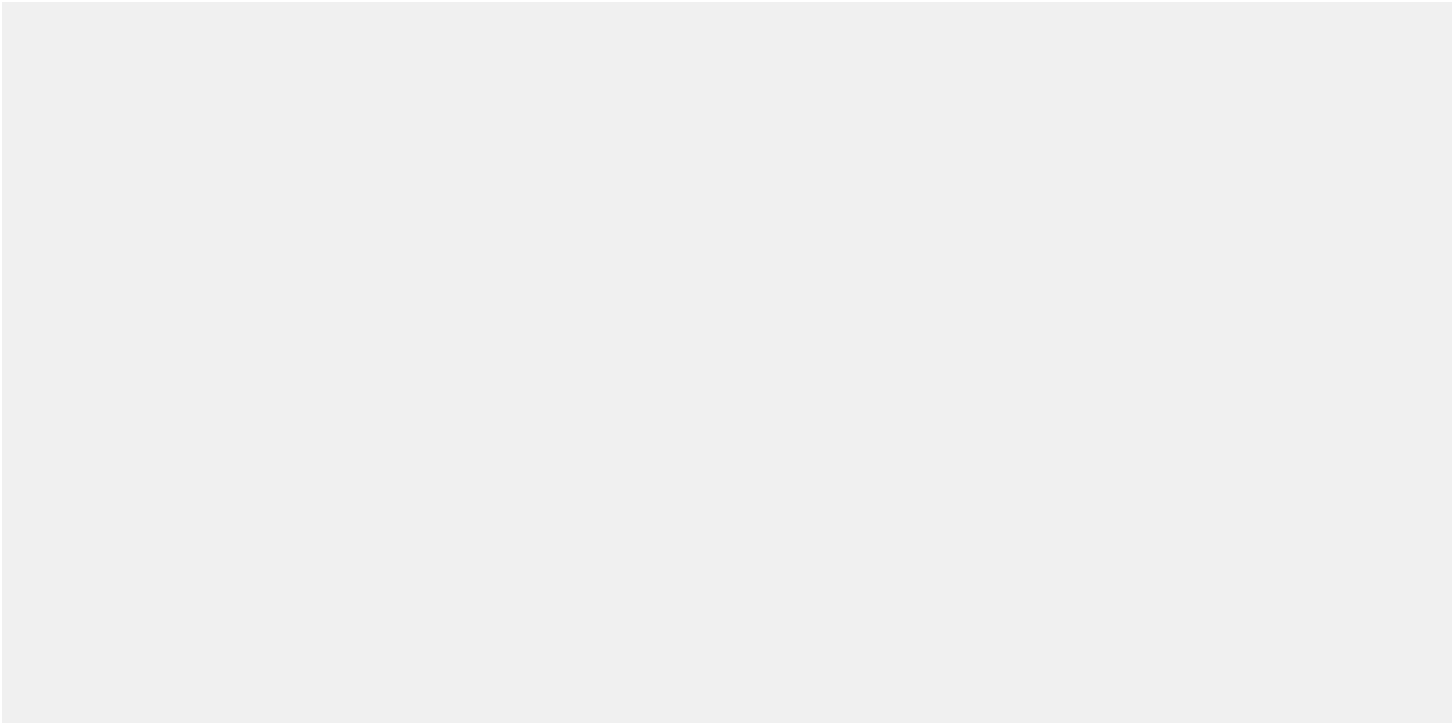
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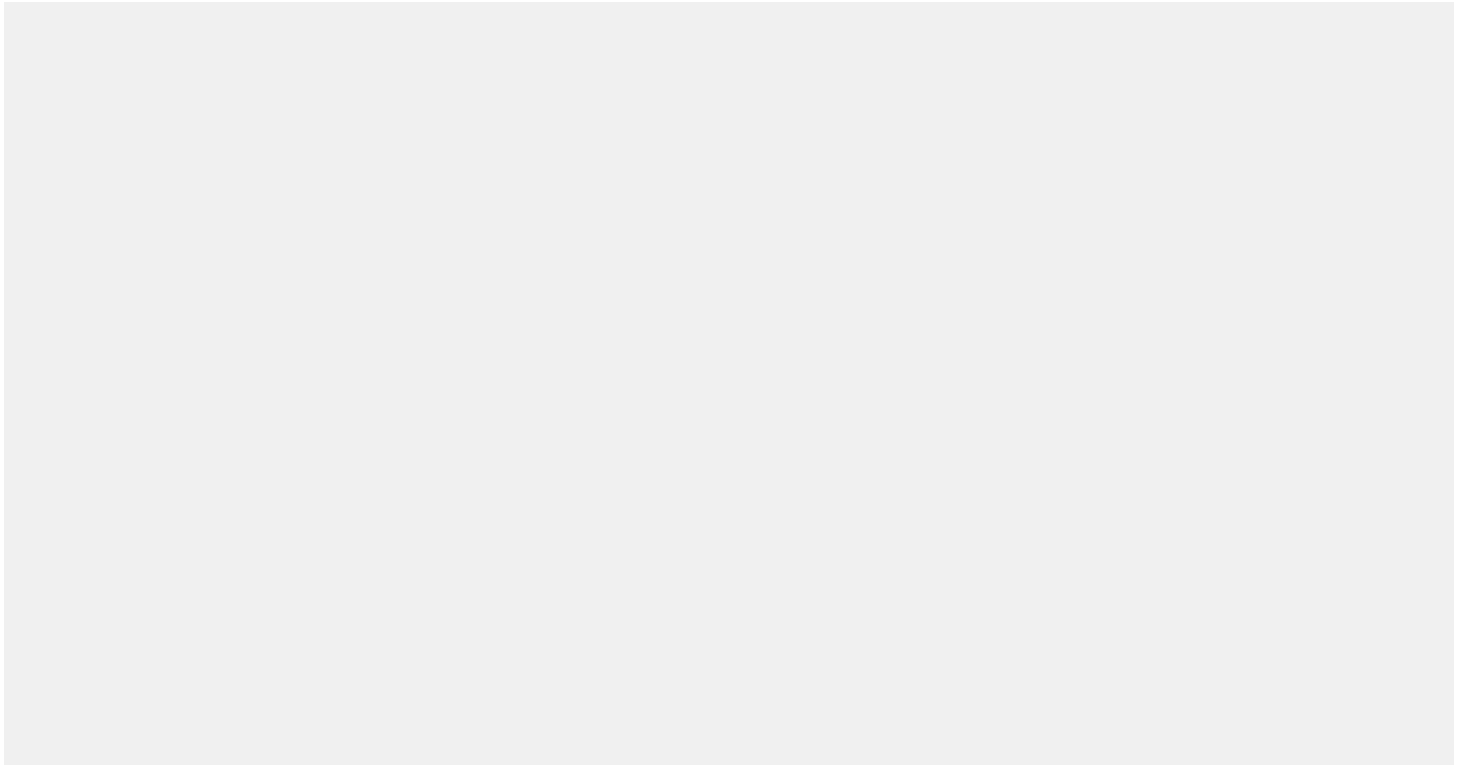
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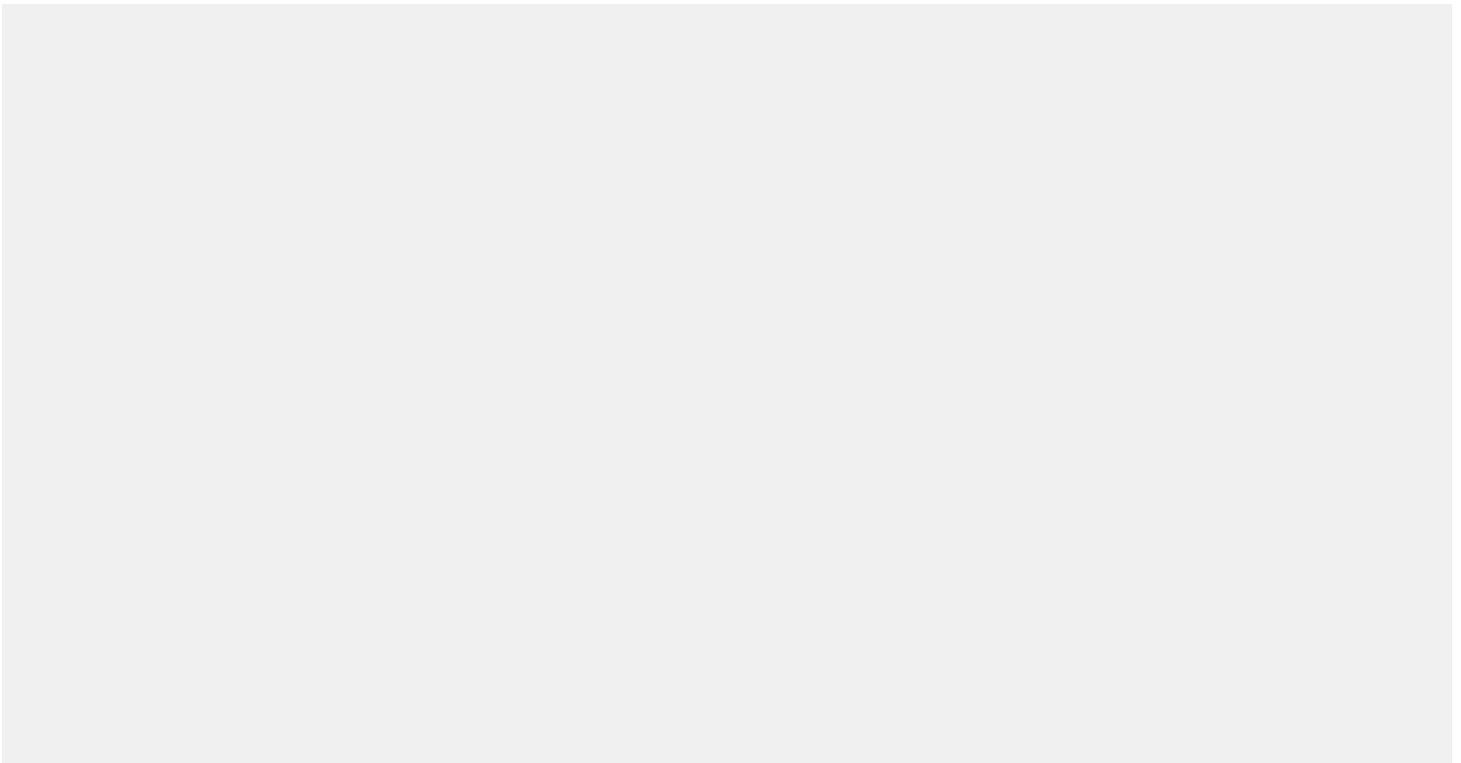
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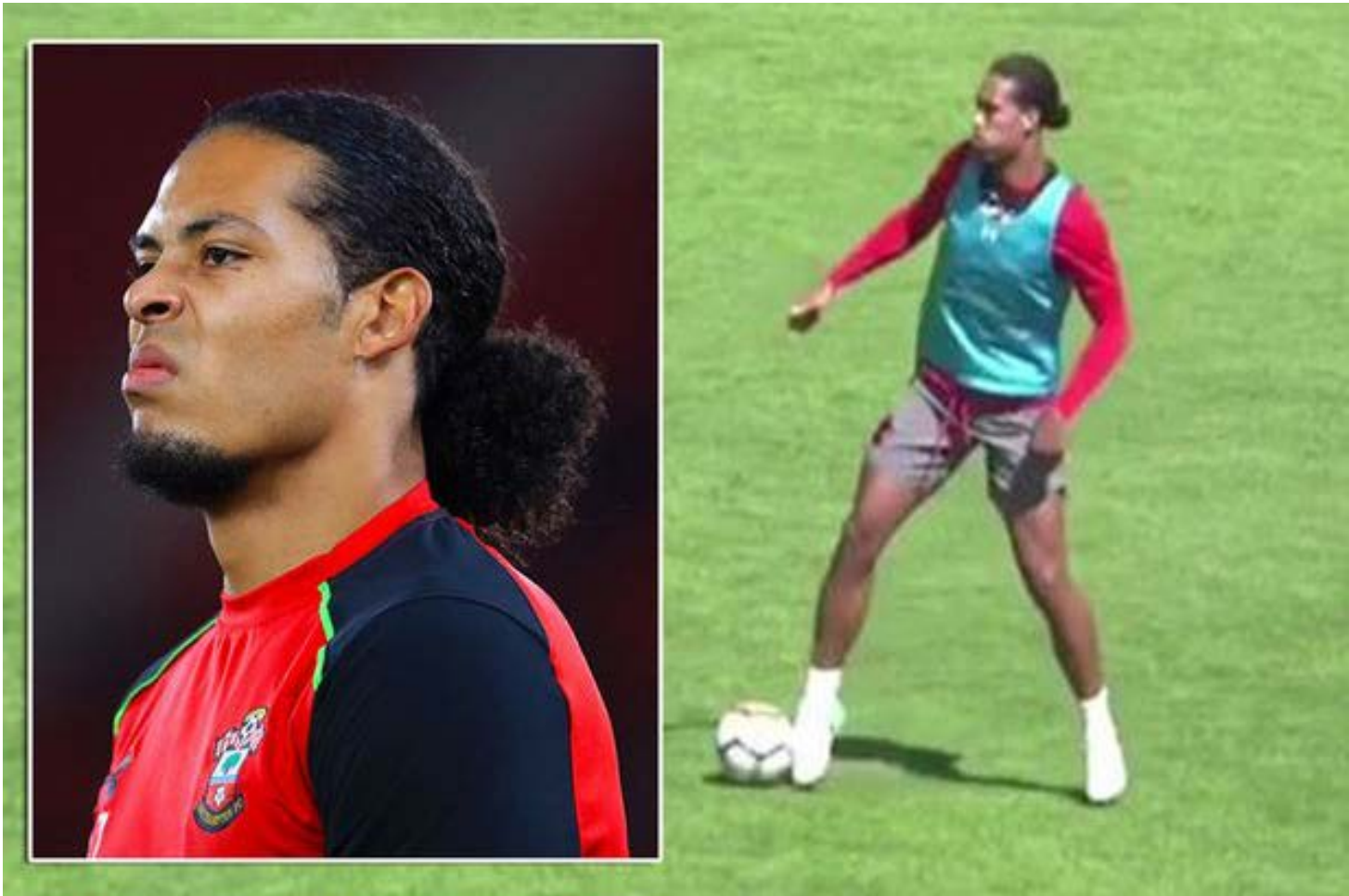




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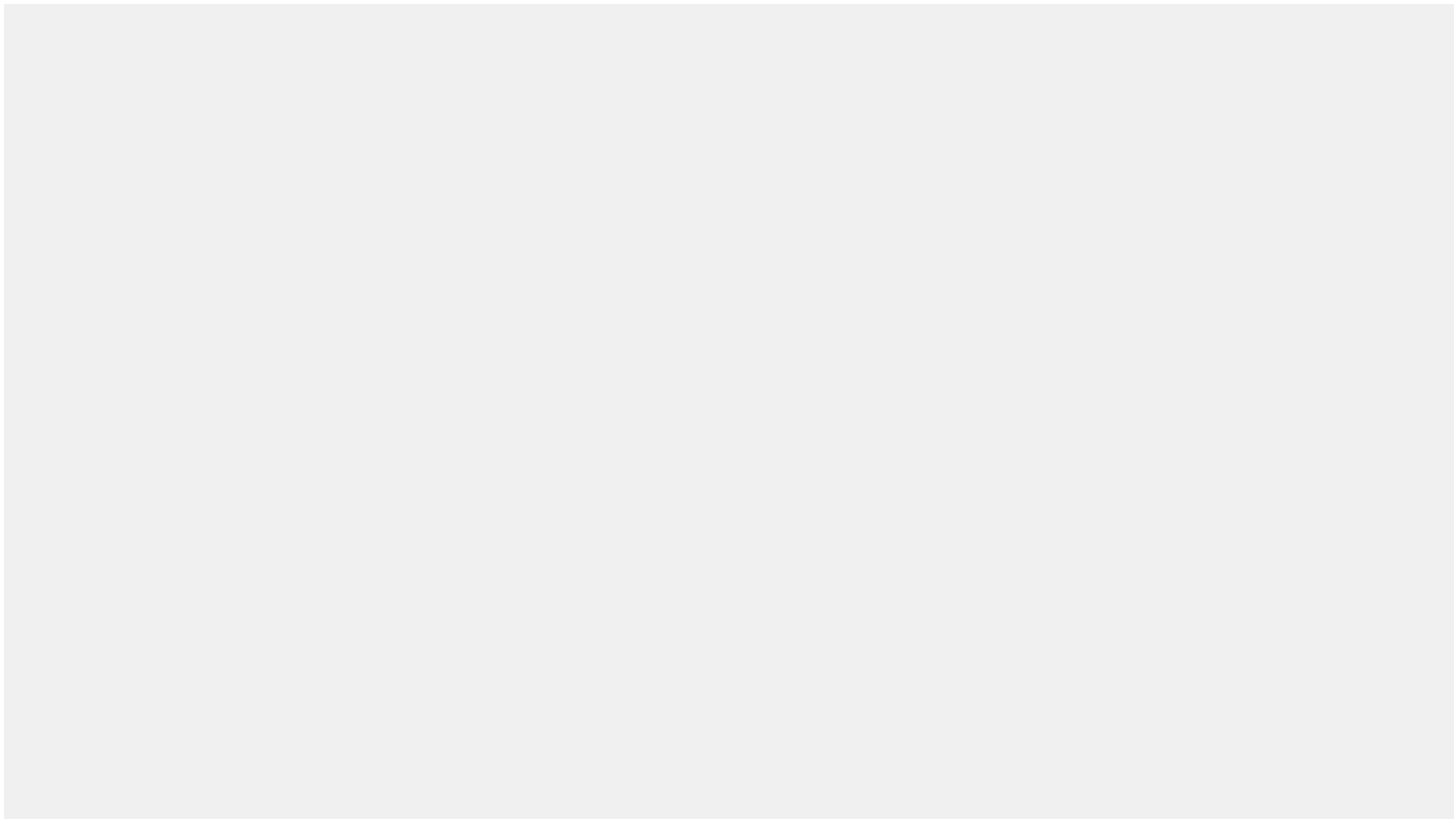
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NEWS

Lord Hanningfield expenses scandal: 'There are 50 other peers doing it that I could name'

In a heated exchange in the car park of Ingatestone train station, in Essex, at 1pm on Monday, we confronted him with our dossier of evidence

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BY DAVID COLLINS
07:50, 17 DEC 2013 | UPDATED 11:29, 17 DEC 2013

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Lord Hanningfield has defended himself over a “clock in, clock out” row and said: “I could name 50 other peers that do it.”

Defiant Hanningfield admitted there was a culture within the House of Lords of peers turning up just to claim their £300 tax-free allowance.

But he insisted the money was used by Lords for “entertaining and meeting people”, as well as paying staff.

Despite our overwhelming evidence that he was spending just minutes inside Parliament in exchange for the £300 attendance rate, he still insisted he had done nothing wrong.

In a heated exchange in the car park of Ingatestone train station, in Essex, at 1pm yesterday, we confronted him.

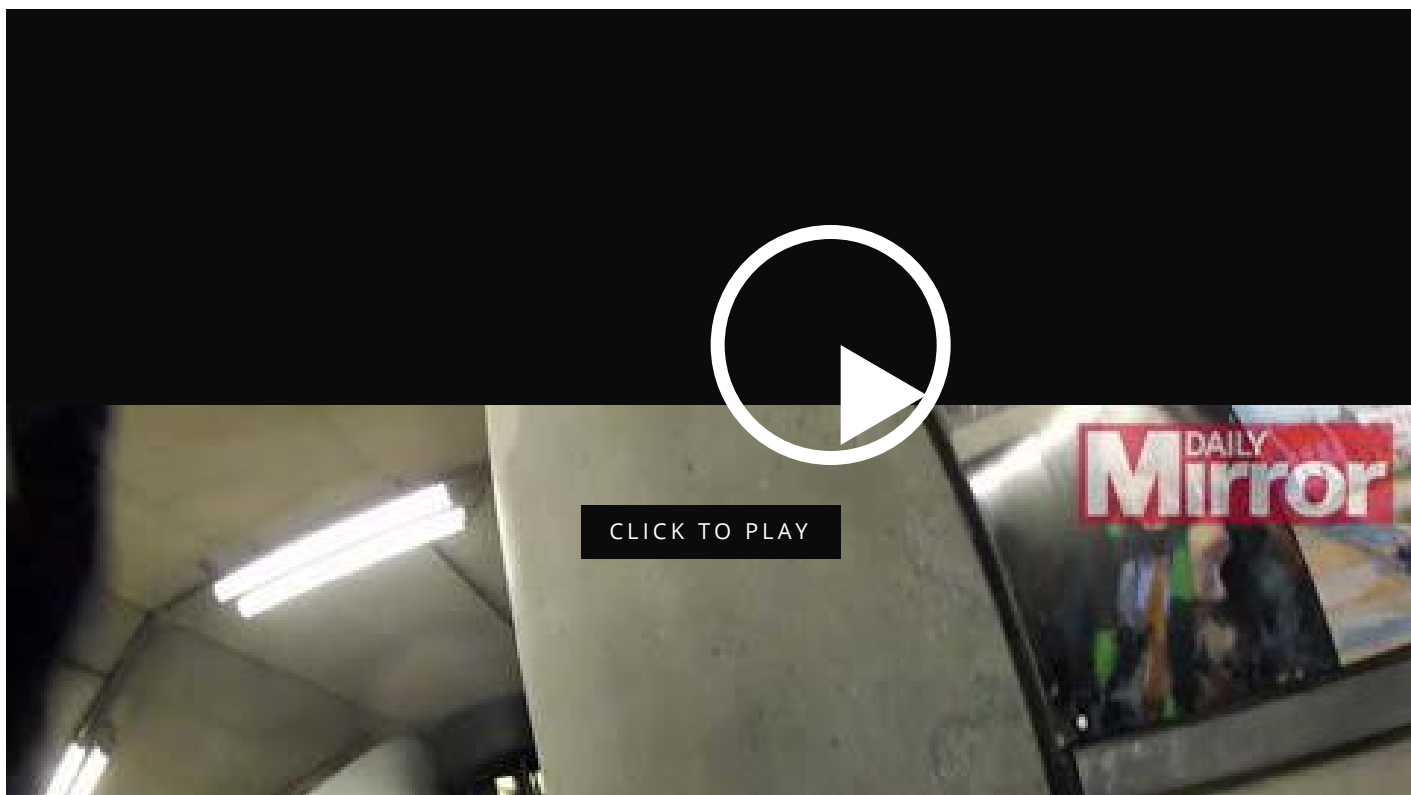
After hearing our undercover team followed his movements throughout July, he gave a series of bizarre excuses, such as it being a “hot month”, that he “has to eat” and “hasn’t been well”.

At one point he even blasted: “Clocking in and out of Parliament is only part of being a peer.”

He told the Mirror to examine his career in public service, saying he had “worked for 40 years for nothing”.

He even said he “shouldn’t have been jailed” in July 2011, despite a jury finding him guilty on six counts of false accounting following the last Parliamentary expenses scandal.

Labour’s John Mann said Hanningfield must now identify the other peers. The MP said: “He needs to name them, all of them. It is an absolute scandal.”



Here we print an edited transcript of the exchange between Lord Hanningfield and our reporter:

Q How do you explain claiming £300 pounds per day for each of the days you were in for minutes?

A It's cost me, by the time I have people at home to help, time I have people in the House of Lords to help me, I actually spend something like £150 per day on expenses, so I don't really make any profit,

Q But, Lord Hanningfield, do you understand how the British taxpayer may see a £300 claim for an attendance allowance in which you are supposed to attend Parliament and you have come out after just minutes? People may see that as not a good use of taxpayer's money?

A No not really because I've actually spent my whole life serving the taxpayer, and I am now trying to get back again. I've spoken twice recently, I'm getting very involved in transport, I have been through a very traumatic time, a terrible time. I still don't believe I'm that guilty of expenses problems initially at all.

I've made some mistakes, and I've paid back everything I've ever claimed before. I've paid back £70,000 and I'm now trying to get myself going again. When you're in the Lords, most of my Lords work is actually in post, it's meeting people and things like that...

Q But don't you see how people will see this as the system being used by Lords as clocking in and out of Parliament for minutes, simply to claim £300 pounds?

A Well, you will see at least half of the people doing that actually.

Q Half of the Lords in the House of Lords are doing the same thing?

A Many go in...let me explain, again, it isn't (just) what you do you in the House. I am now speaking more in the House of Lords. When you go in the House of Lords, if you speak you are there a lot longer.

Q But Lord Hanningfield, for that month of July you didn't speak, you didn't say anything, you didn't attend a committee?

A I have been trying to get myself on track again, I have spoken twice, I have now been to some committees since October...

Q So why were you attending Parliament?

A Because I am a member of Parliament and I want to be back again, what I was trying to do was was get myself on track again, which I've done

Q On track by turning up and claiming money though?

A Yes, because I was doing things there you see

Q You weren't doing anything there were you?

A I was.

Q I can show you the 16th of July right here, where you arrived at 14.36 and then you left at 15.02, that isn't doing anything though is it, that's turning up claiming £300 and going back

home?

A You are talking a load of rubbish quite honestly because being a Lord is not just going in the House of Lords, it's the post you have. I have 15 letters a day, I have all sorts of things like that. I can do some of it at home, some of it at my office in the Lords.

Q You are effectively clocking in and out of Parliament?

A You are talking a load of rubbish quite honestly . . . Shut up. I have worked my heart out for the taxpayer.

Q You are spending more time on the train than you are in Parliament, aren't you?

A You are talking a lot of rubbish.

Q Don't the rules clearly state as a fact, that you can claim that money if you vote, if you attend a committee or if you attend the main chamber of Parliament? You are effectively going into the main chamber of Parliament, staying a couple of minutes so a clerk ticks you off on a register and then you are coming home?

A Well I admit I don't go much into the main chamber, if you look at my records since October it's changed dramatically because I've spoken twice...let me explain again I was trying to get myself organised after a nervous breakdown... I have been exhausted by this and I find you pretentious and talking a lot of utter rubbish

Q Are you going to pay back any of the £5,700 pounds you claimed for July?

A No, because I've spent that on what I did there, you misunderstand. I am absolutely fed up with people like you lying about it. . . I have given the British taxpayer hundreds of thousands of pounds in my life, I have worked for 40 years for nothing, I have done a jolly good job under pressure

Q And yet you have been jailed for your expenses?

A That is wrong, it was wrong, I shouldn't have been jailed.

Q A jury found you guilty though?

A I didn't stand a chance though did I? Being the last one I didn't stand a chance, I could have carried it on through the European court. I didn't realise how much effect it would have afterwards.

Q Just on a wider thing, what you're saying, it's not just you, there are lots of peers doing it?

A Lot's of peers just go in and check in for their expenses I agree, but they are using their expenses for a lot of things, entertaining, meeting people, employing people. Lots of peers like I do have an assistant

Q So you are saying that perhaps the rules need to change, because what you have been doing is not in the spirit of the rules?

A I have to live don't I? I don't do anything else. How do you think I am going to eat, how am I going to pay my electricity bills?

Q I realise that, but people won't see that as good enough though, you're a Lord, people hold you to a very high standard.

A I have to eat, other people have to eat. My income from the Lords will be about £30,000 a year, I pay about that in £18,000 in expense to other people, I'll end up with 12000 a year.

Q I don't think the taxpayer will see what you have done in July as value..

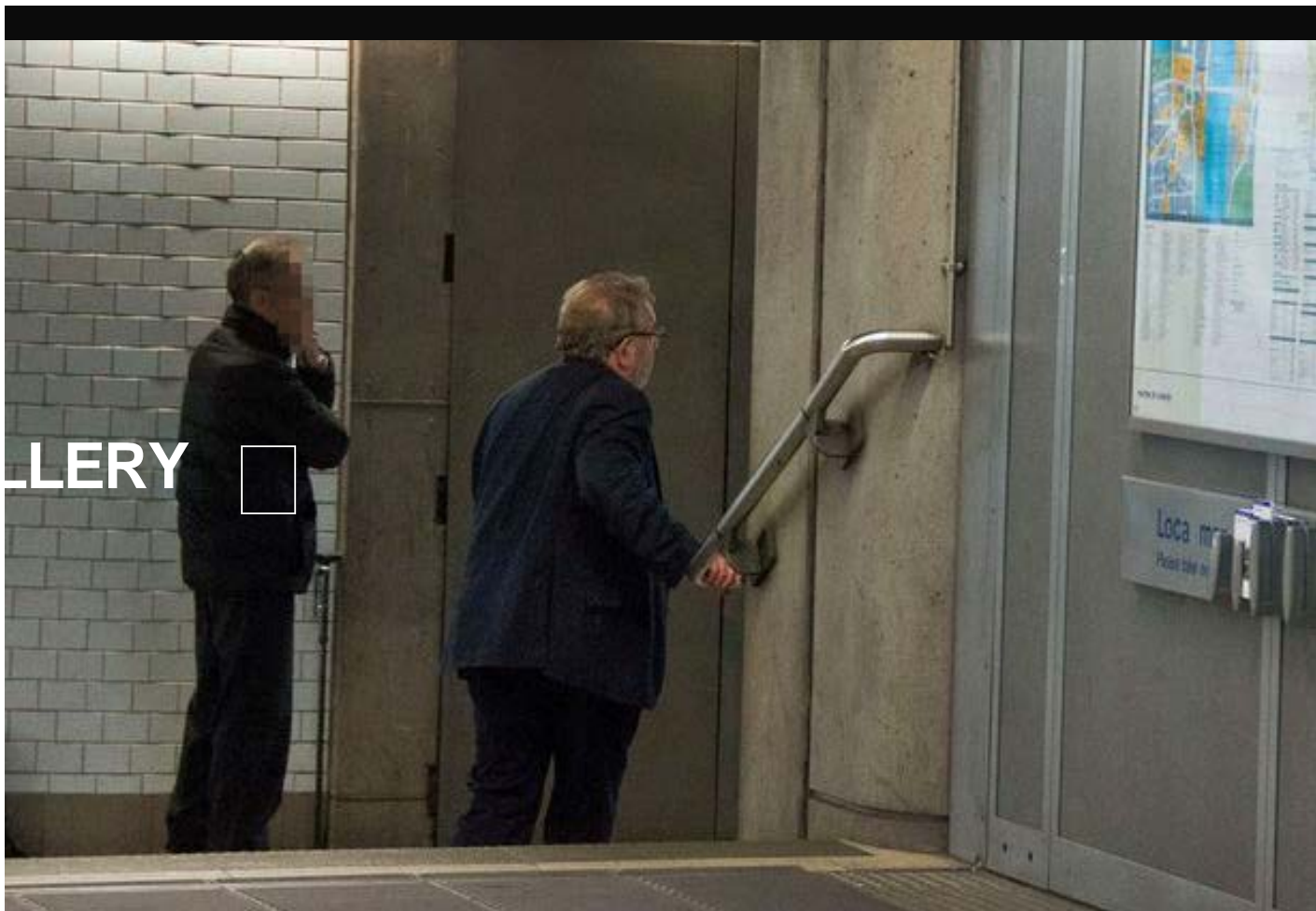
A Well no, why don't you choose October?

Q The fact that Lords clock in and out is a thing that annoys people, I don't think it's just you, I think it is a wider thing.

A No I can name 50 that do it.

Q Right, would you like to do that now?

A I see the same people go in and out as I do. I don't want to be persecuted.



Mirror Associate Editor Kevin Maguire says the time is right to abolish the House of Lords

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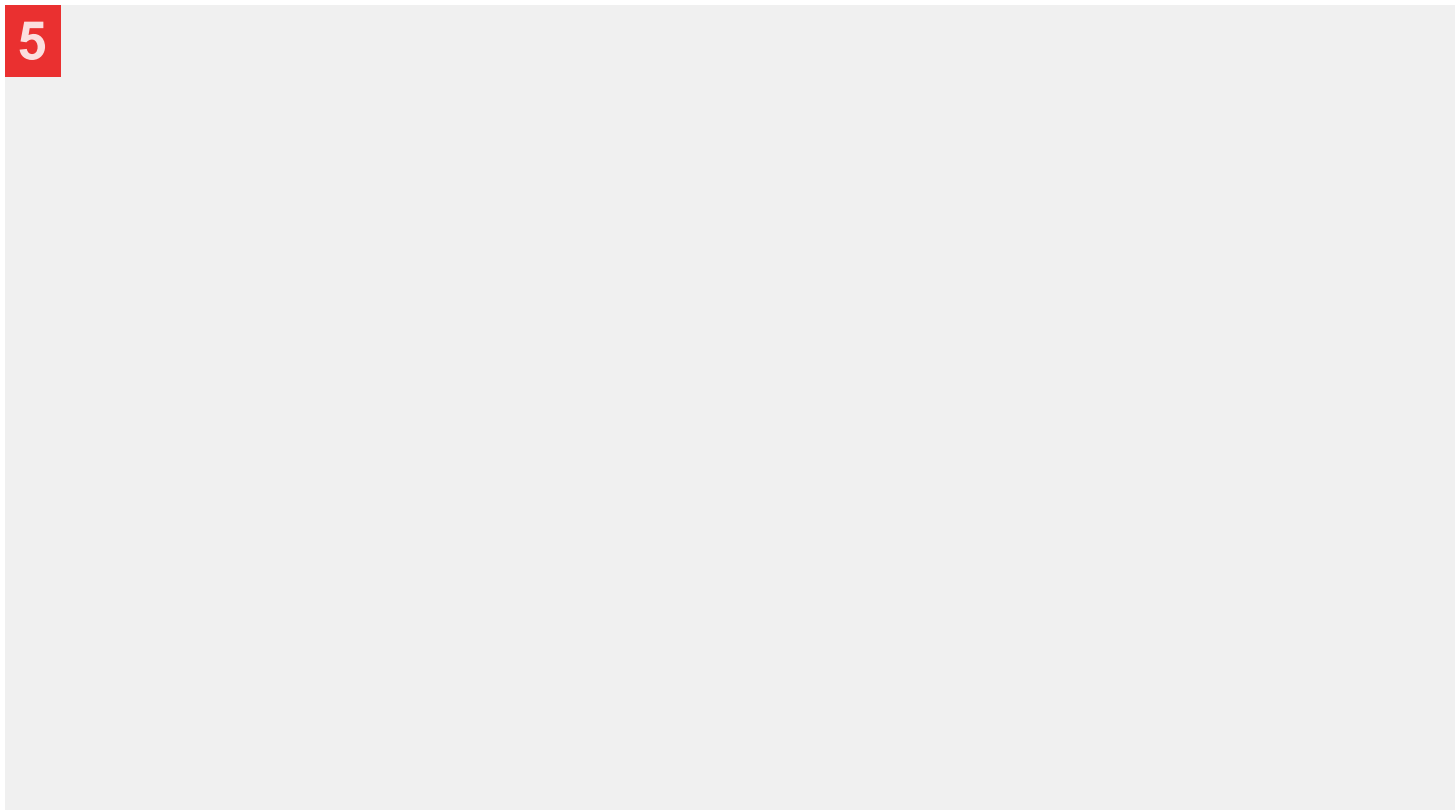
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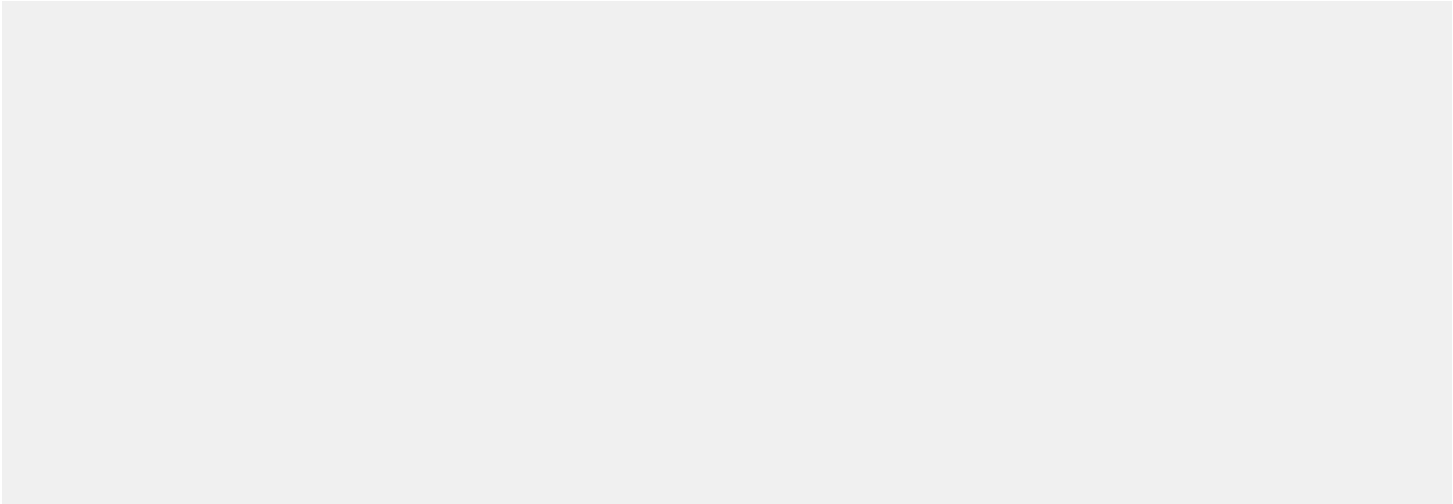




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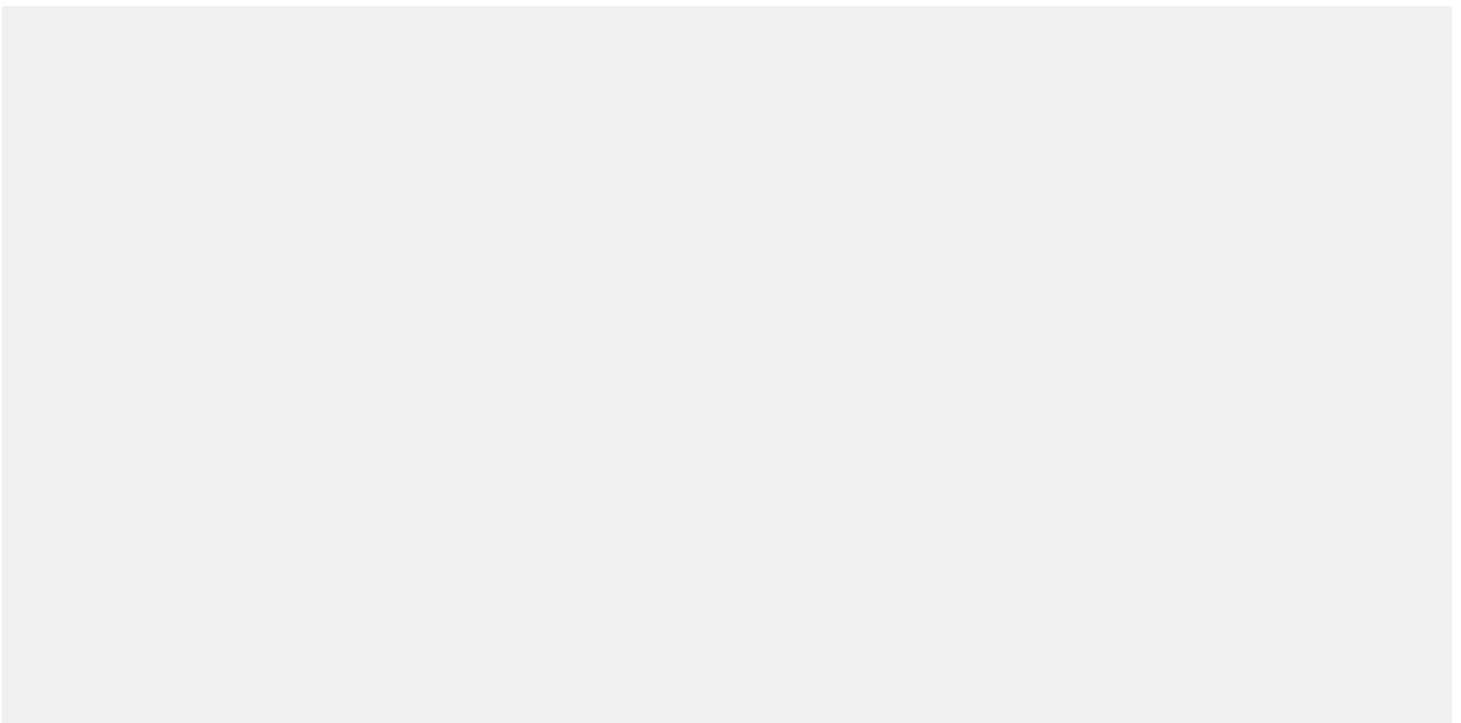
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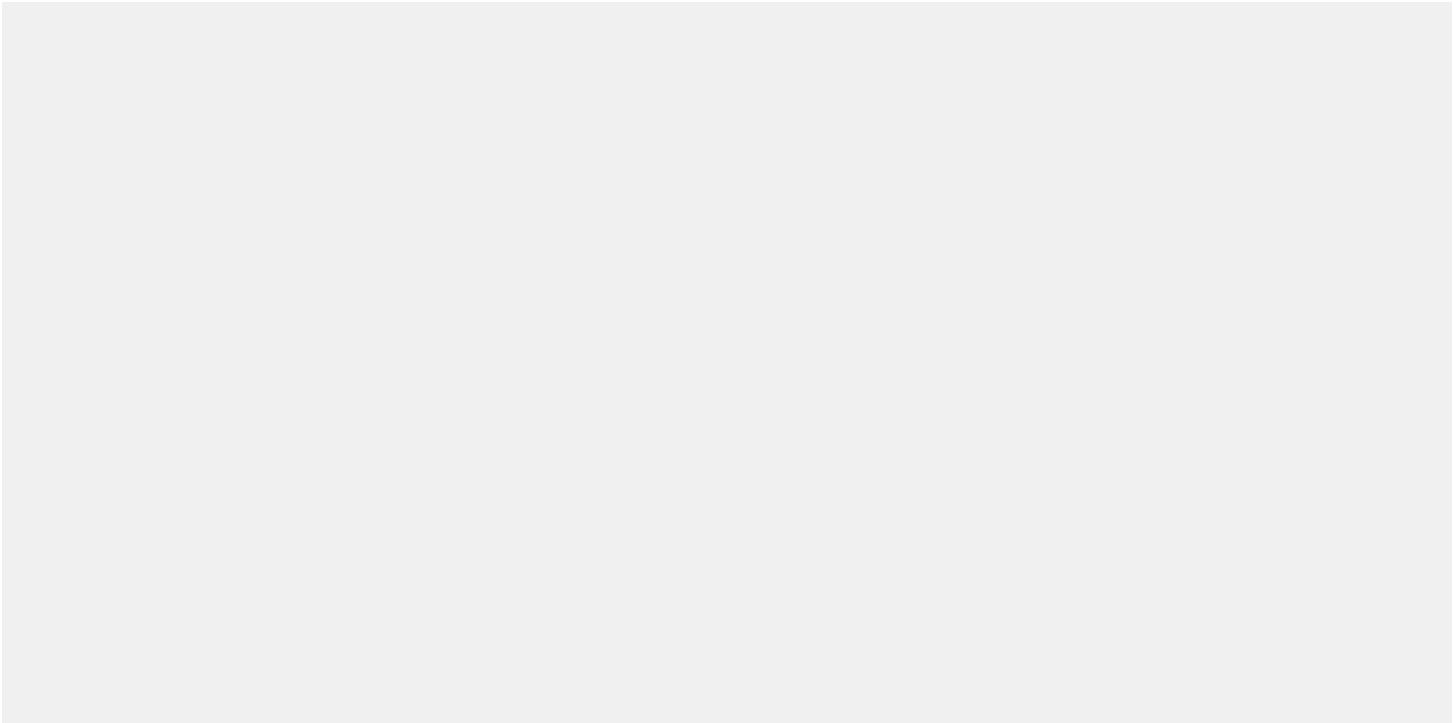
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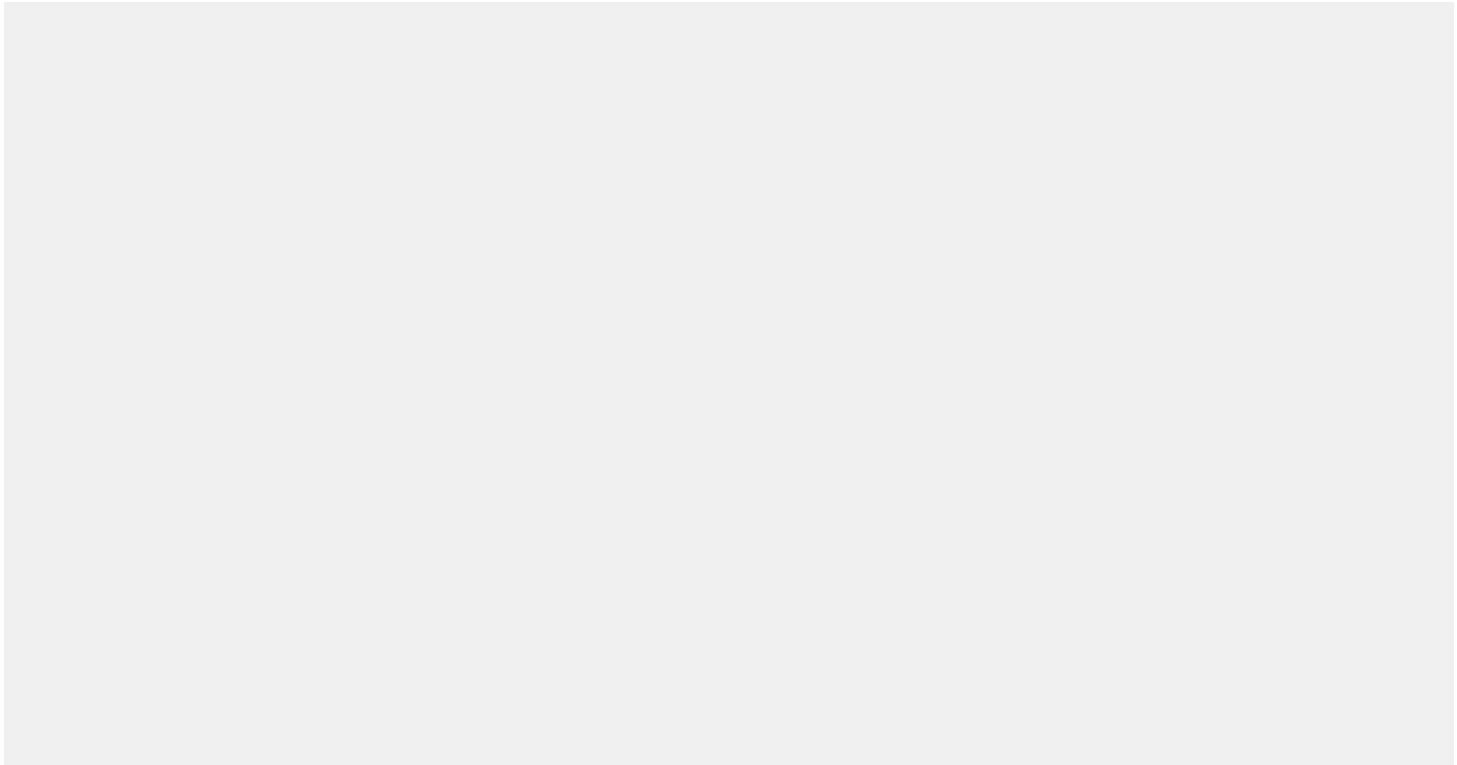
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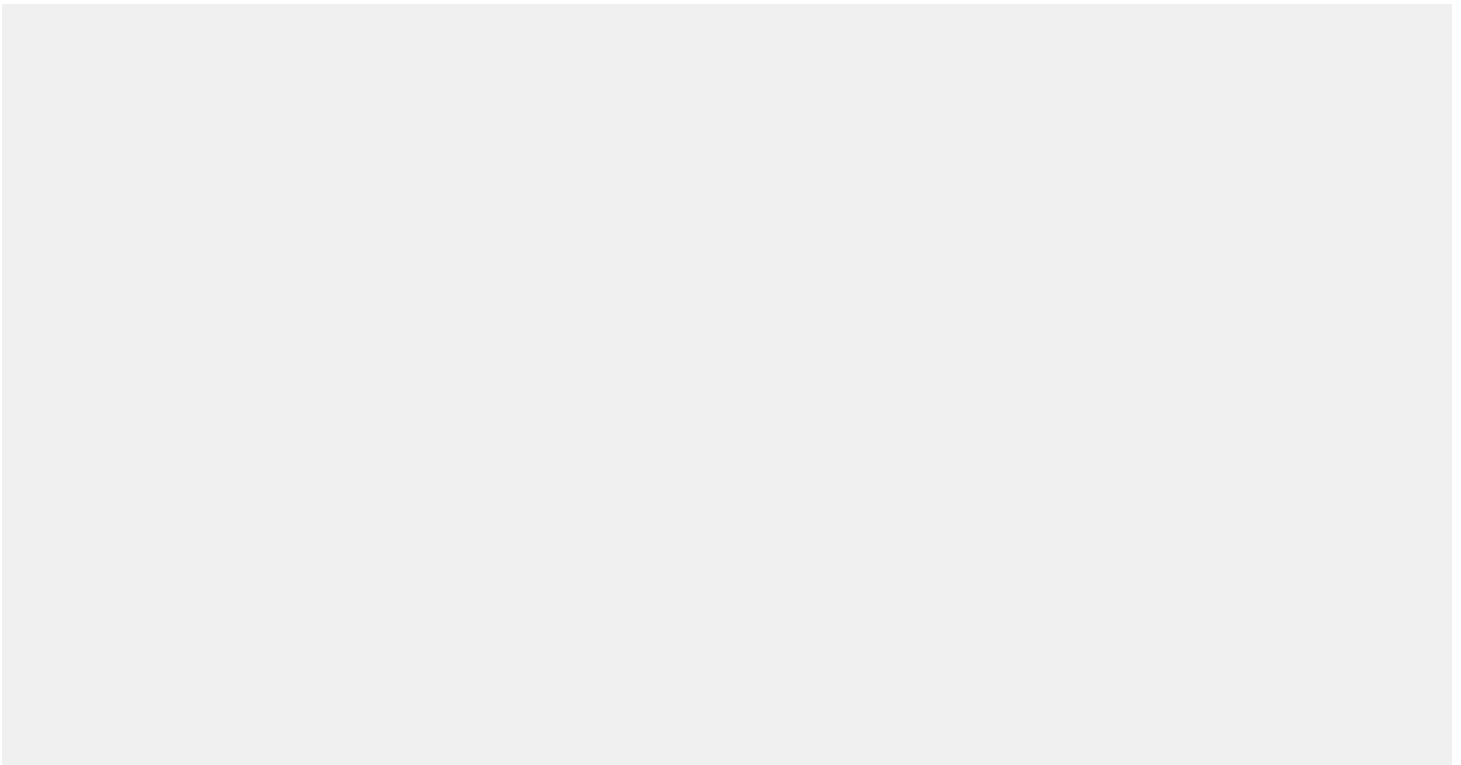
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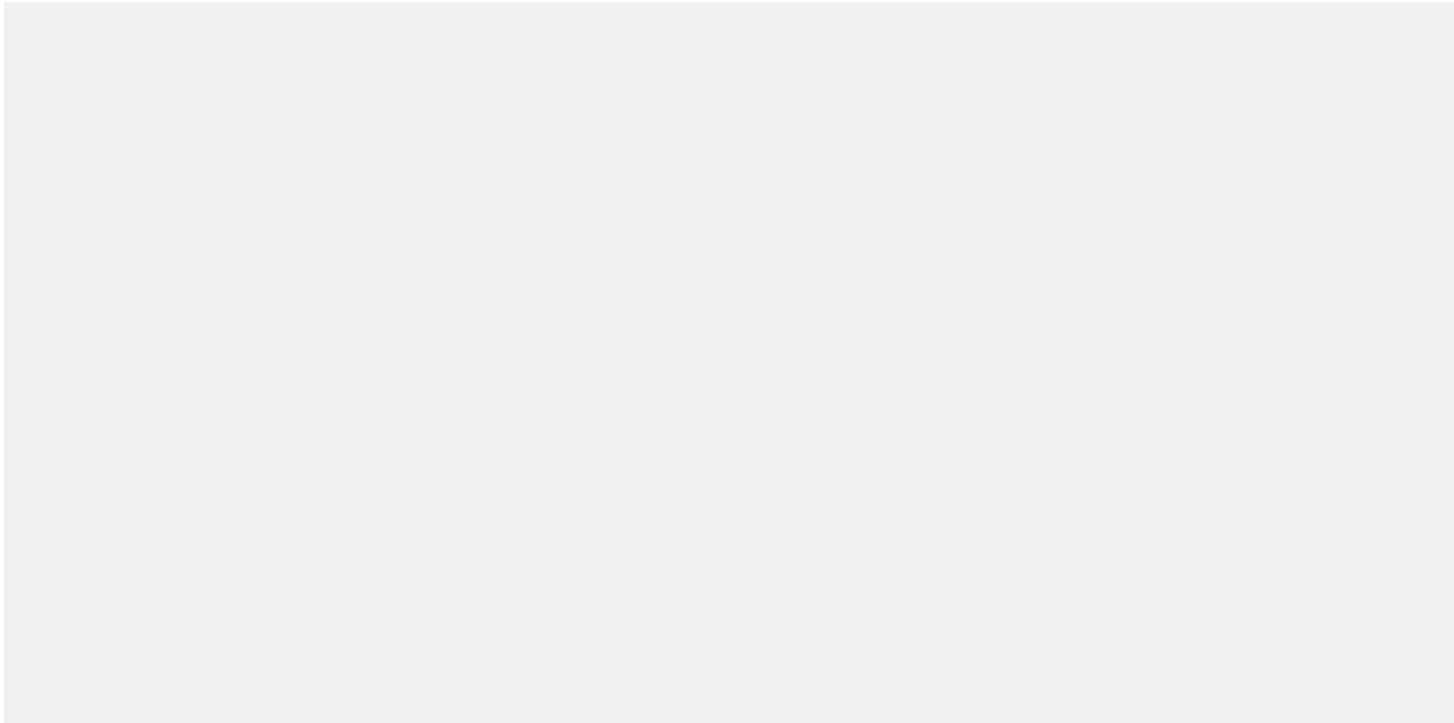
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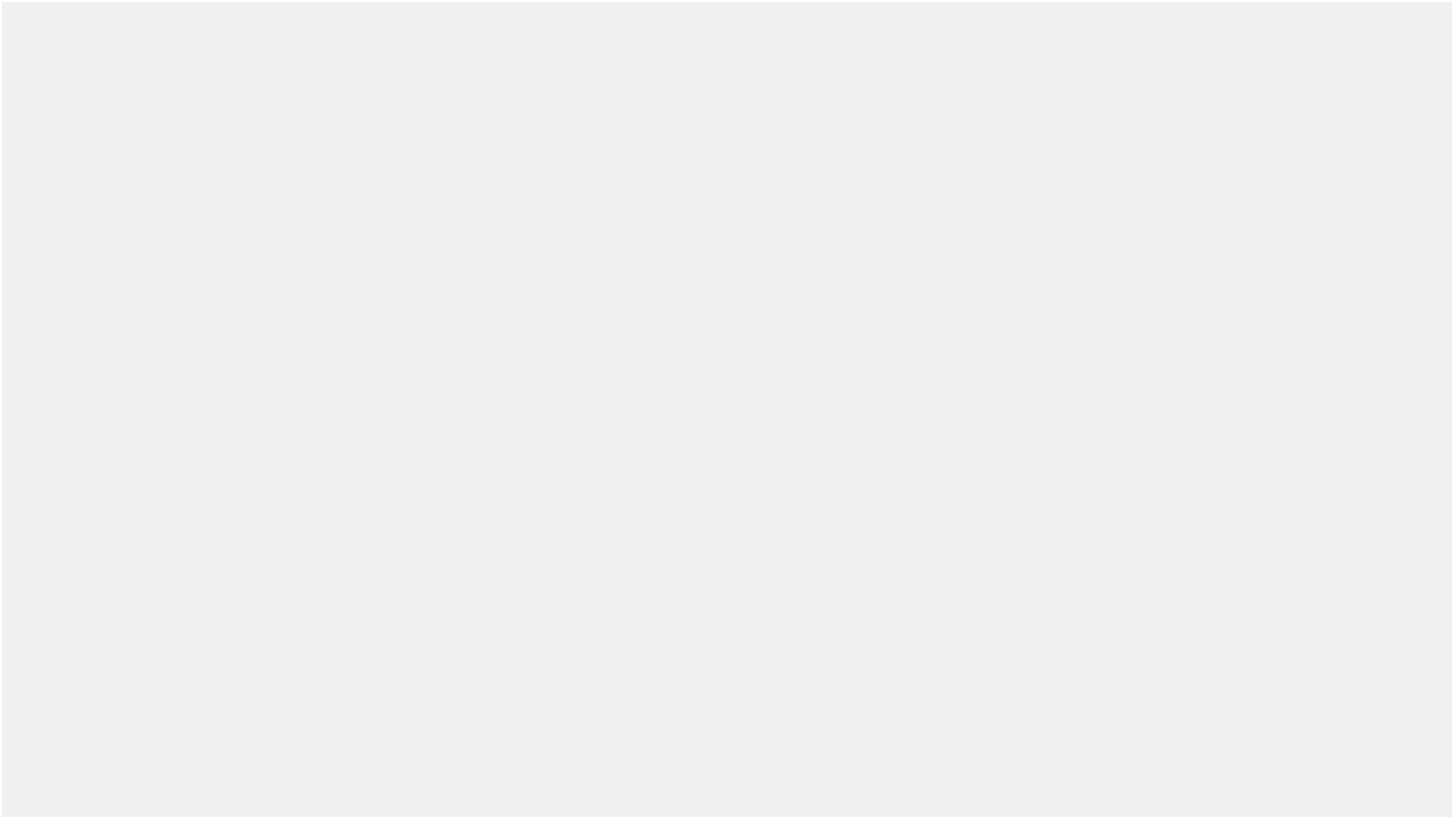
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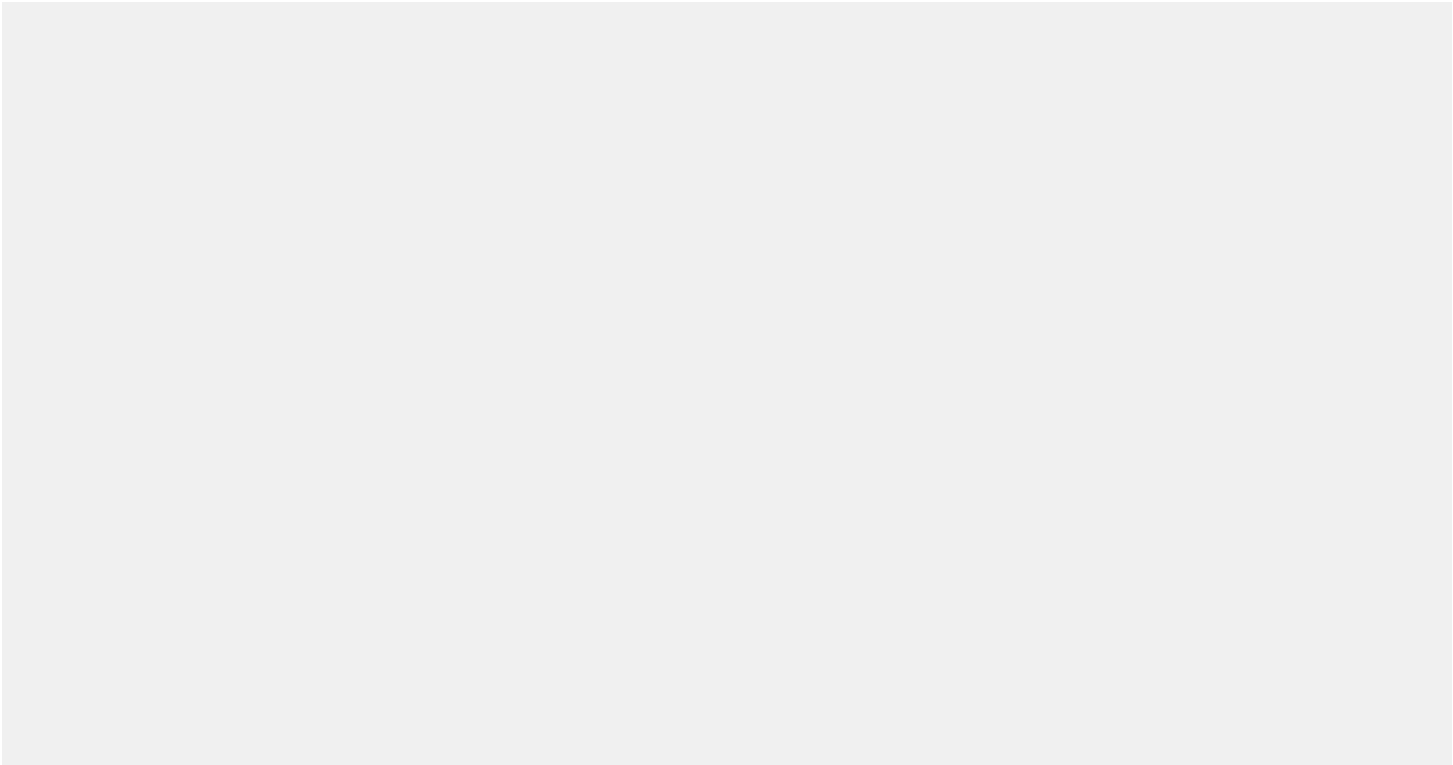
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NEWS

VIDEO: Ex-Tory Lord Hanningfield exposed in 'clocking in' scandal ripping off taxpayers for thousands of pounds

The 73-year-old peer has previous for milking the system. He spent nine months behind bars for fiddling his accounts in the last Westminster expenses scandal

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BY DAVID COLLINS
07:44, 17 DEC 2013 | UPDATED 12:58, 17 DEC 2013

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Picking up £300 a day for doing virtually nothing usually goes like clockwork for money-grabbing baron Lord Hanningfield.

The 73-year-old peer is ripping off taxpayers to the tune of thousands of pounds by simply turning up and clocking in to the Lords.

He often spends barely half an hour there before turning on his heels and leaving again – racking up his £300 daily attendance allowance without taking part in any votes, discussions or meetings.

But now he was facing a Parliamentary probe – after the Mirror exposed his shameless scam.

On one occasion we photographed him arriving at the Lords and leaving again just 21 minutes later – earning him more than £14 a minute.

It is barely time to walk to the chamber for his attendance to be officially noted.

Shockingly in just one month this year he claimed £5,700 with his quick “clock in, clock out” technique.

Hanningfield has previous for milking the system. He spent nine months behind bars for fiddling his accounts in the last Westminster expenses scandal.

Now he has his snout in the trough again – claiming more than £50,000 since he returned to Parliament in April 2012.

But up until the start of October this year he attended NO committee meetings, made NO

speeches and asked NO questions in the House despite his lucrative expenses claims.

The former Tory front-bencher, who had the party whip withdrawn when he was jailed, was followed for 19 days in July by our undercover reporters.

And they compiled a Diary of Disgrace revealing that for 11 days out of the 19 he spent less than 40 minutes each time inside of Parliament.

The Lord turns up each day to have his attendance noted by a clerk – but there are no checks on how long he stays for him to qualify for his allowance.

Our expose raises serious questions over whether other peers are claiming excessive amounts simply for popping in and out of the 300-year-old chamber which costs more than £100million a year to run.

It also piles pressure on Westminster watchdogs to hold peers more accountable for their expenses claims.

Although the Mirror completed its investigation at the end of July, we had to wait six months until Hanningfield's claims were made public on the Parliamentary website.

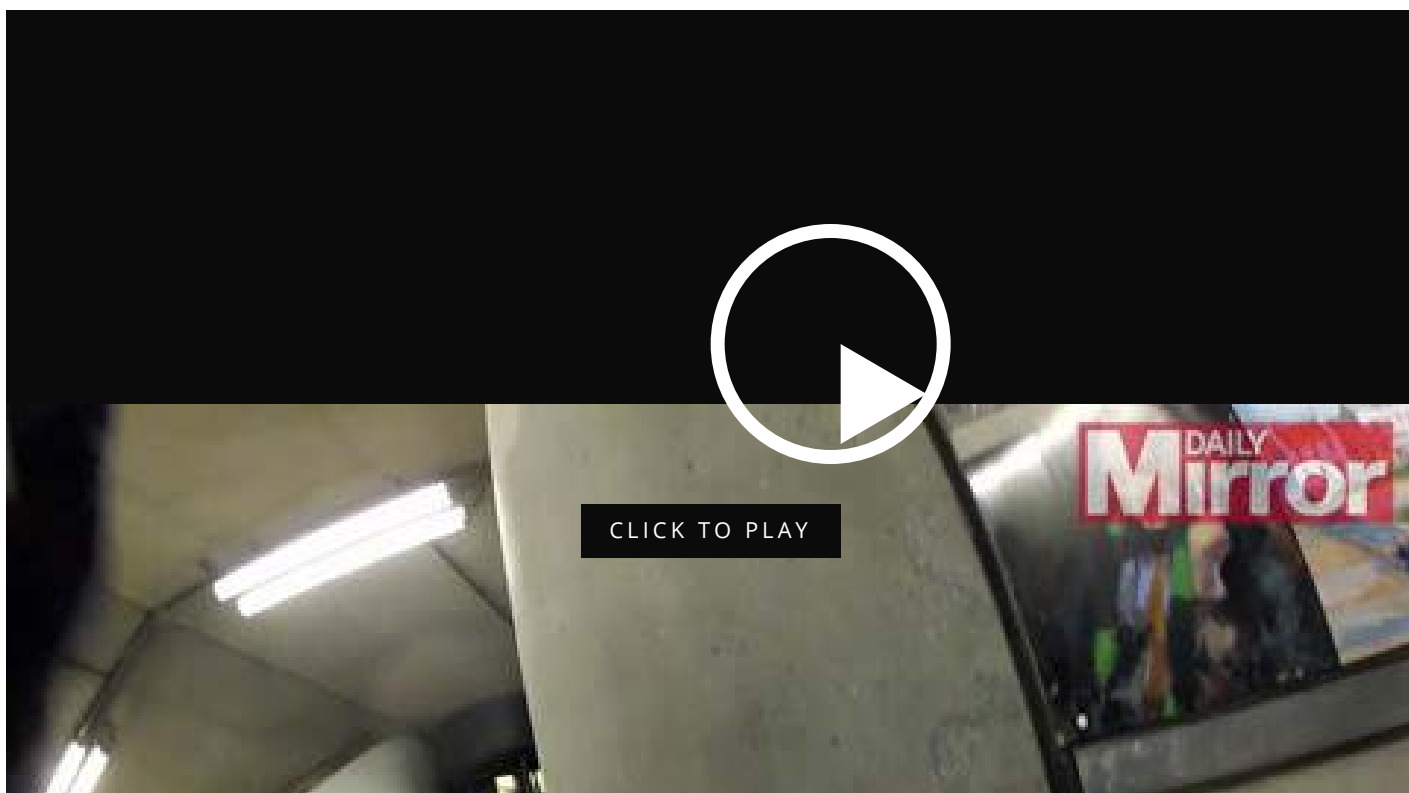
Hanningfield – real name Paul White – has claimed he is working to “rebuild his political career” following his prison stint.

But on July 16 our reporters secretly shot video footage of his normal daily routine.

We saw him drive 15 minutes from his home in West Hanningfield, Essex, to Ingatestone station where he parked his blue Audi A3 at 1.20pm.

He bought a £25 return ticket at the automated machine on the platform and caught the 1.32pm train to London, where he switched to the Underground. We filmed him arriving at Westminster Tube station at 2.36pm.

Hanningfield accessed Parliament by ducking into a private door inside the station leading to an underground passage to the Houses of Parliament at 2.37pm.



He appeared smart and professional, looking like he was ready to take on a day's work, possibly joining in an important debate in the main chamber.

But after strolling through the House and getting his attendance recorded by the Journal Office, he was off again – leaving via the same entrance at 3.01pm.

Our video proves Hanningfield was inside just 24 minutes and five seconds to qualify for his £300 fee.

He slowly walked through the tube station, with the clock overhead clearly showing the time as 3.03pm.

He then jumped on a Circle and District line train to head home.

At 4.15pm we saw him arrive back at Ingatestone, get in his car and return to his £700,000 bungalow up a leafy lane in West Hanningfield village, in Essex.

It was a packed schedule in the Lords that day, but Hanningfield played no part in affairs of state including a statement on Northern Ireland, discussion of the Care Bill by the entire House, and a debate on the Congo. The House of Lords finished for the day at 10. 27pm -

more than six hours after Hanningfield arrived home to put his feet up.

But that didn't stop Lord Hanningfield claiming a full day's attendance rate of £300.

Our reporters witnessed this same pattern occurring again and again throughout the month of July.

The longest time he spent in Parliament was on July 30th - the final day of the summer session - and it lasted 5 hours and 12 minutes.

Parliamentary records show Lord Hanningfield "absent" for eight votes which took place during July.

These were votes on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill on July 8th, Offender Rehabilitation Bill on July 9th, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill on July 10th, Local Audit and Accountability Bill on July 15th, Mesothelioma Bill on July 17th, Intellectual Property Bill on July 23rd, EU: Police and Criminal Justice Measure on July 23rd, and the Local Audit and Accountability Bill on July 24th.

On July 8th Lord Hanningfield spent 34 minutes in Parliament on the day of the vote on the Marriage Bill, arriving at 2.35pm and leaving at 3.09pm.

The next day he stayed for just 27 minutes when there was a vote on the Offender Rehabilitation Bill. He arrived at 2.35pm loaded down with Marks and Spencers shopping bags, and left at 3.02pm.

He arrived back at Ingatestone train station at 4.15pm, missing the vote as well as statements on the National Curriculum.

The main chamber of the Lords finished at 10.17pm - more than seven hours after he left.

But he always made sure his attendance was noted to qualify for his £300.

On top of that he also claimed £471 in travel costs for July, covering the price of his train ticket and the car park charge at Ingatestone train station.

The House of Lords Guide to Financial Support for Members clearly states: "Members who

certify that they have carried out appropriate Parliamentary work are entitled to claim a daily allowance of £300 for each qualifying day of attendance at Westminster."

► Lord Hanningfield 'clocking in' expenses scandal exposed



Hanningfield began claiming expenses upon his return to Parliament in April last year after his time behind bars.

He claimed £51,300 in attendance allowance between April 2012 and July 2013 but made no speeches in any parliamentary debate.

His silence was finally broken in October by taking part in a debate on East Anglia's rail network.

Lord Hanningfield was caught in the last expenses scandal that exposed parliamentarians for claiming public cash for duck houses, flatscreen televisions and cleaning out moats.

In July, 2011, he was found guilty of wrongly claiming nearly £14,000 after the jury heard he claimed £174 for overnight stays in London when he was not in the capital.

He was released in September 2011 after three months before being placed on a home detention curfew.

Lord Hanningfield has paid back around £70,000 for false expenses claims on the orders of a court.

The system of overnight stay allowances for peers was scrapped after Lord Hanningfield and Lord Taylor of Warwick were jailed.

The new £300 attendance fee was bought in to simplify the system and pay peers for their work in Parliament on behalf of the taxpayers they are supposed to serve.

The system of "clocking in" was introduced by the Senior Salaries Review Board which promised to shake up the system at the Lords.

Hanningfield began his working life as Britain's youngest pig farmer at the tender age of 15.

He was educated at the King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford and earned a farming scholarship in the US before returning to Britain.

He joined the National Farmers' Union and by 22 was president of its quality pigs committee.

His career with the NFU gave him a taste for politics and, aged 29, became an councillor for Essex County Council, which he went on to lead between 2001 and 2010.

He was made a life peer in 1998 after a long career in local politics, and took the title of Lord Hanningfield from his home village, West Hanningfield in Essex, where his family still own a farm.

He stepped up to the House of Lords and entered national politics, keeping his role as council leader whilst representing the Tories in Parliament.

Between 1997 and 2001 he was deputy chair and Conservative group leader of the Local Government Association.

He rose to become a shadow minister in 2005.

He was behind a parliamentary question that same year revealing how Tony Blair spent more than £1,800 of public money on cosmetics and make-up artists.

The peer claims to live a normal lifestyle, shopping in Marks & Spencer, and living home alone with his dog.

It was in 2009 when he found himself under the spotlight due to his expenses claims whilst serving in the Lords.

Last night Labour MP John Mann, who campaigned to clean up the Commons, called for Hanningfield to be booted out of the Lords.

He added: "There needs to be a full investigation into how he has been allowed to get away with it. We need to give the House of Lords a proper, transparent spring cleaning."

[Read the transcript of the Mirror confronting Lord Hanningfield here](#)

[Mirror Associate Editor Kevin Maguire says the time is right to abolish the House of Lords](#)

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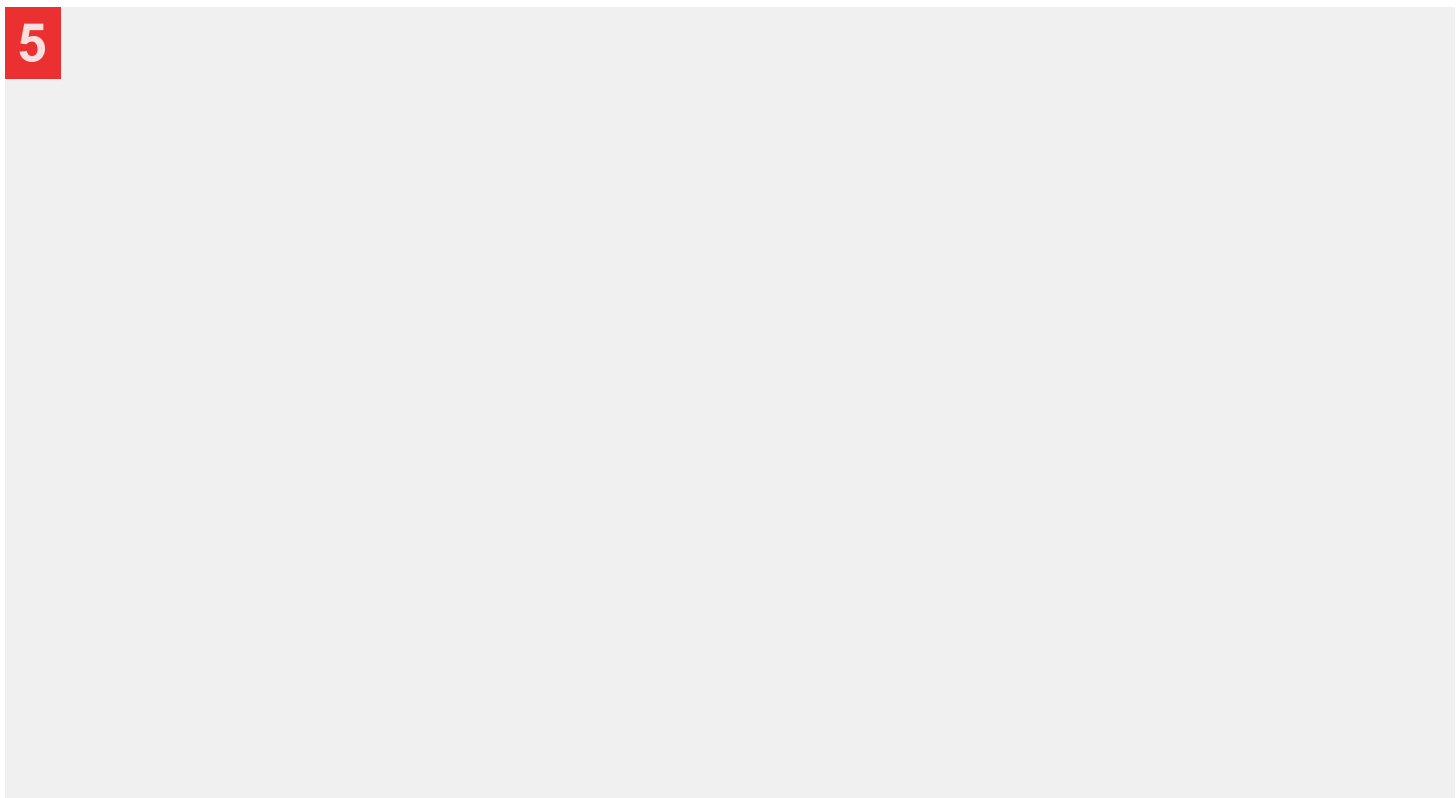
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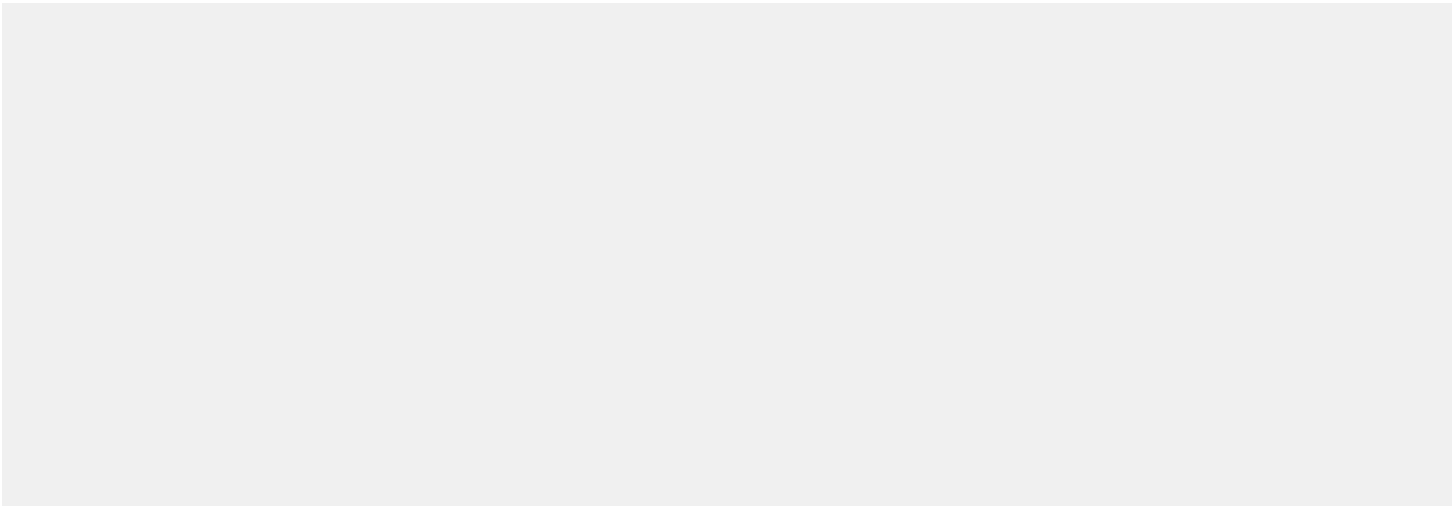




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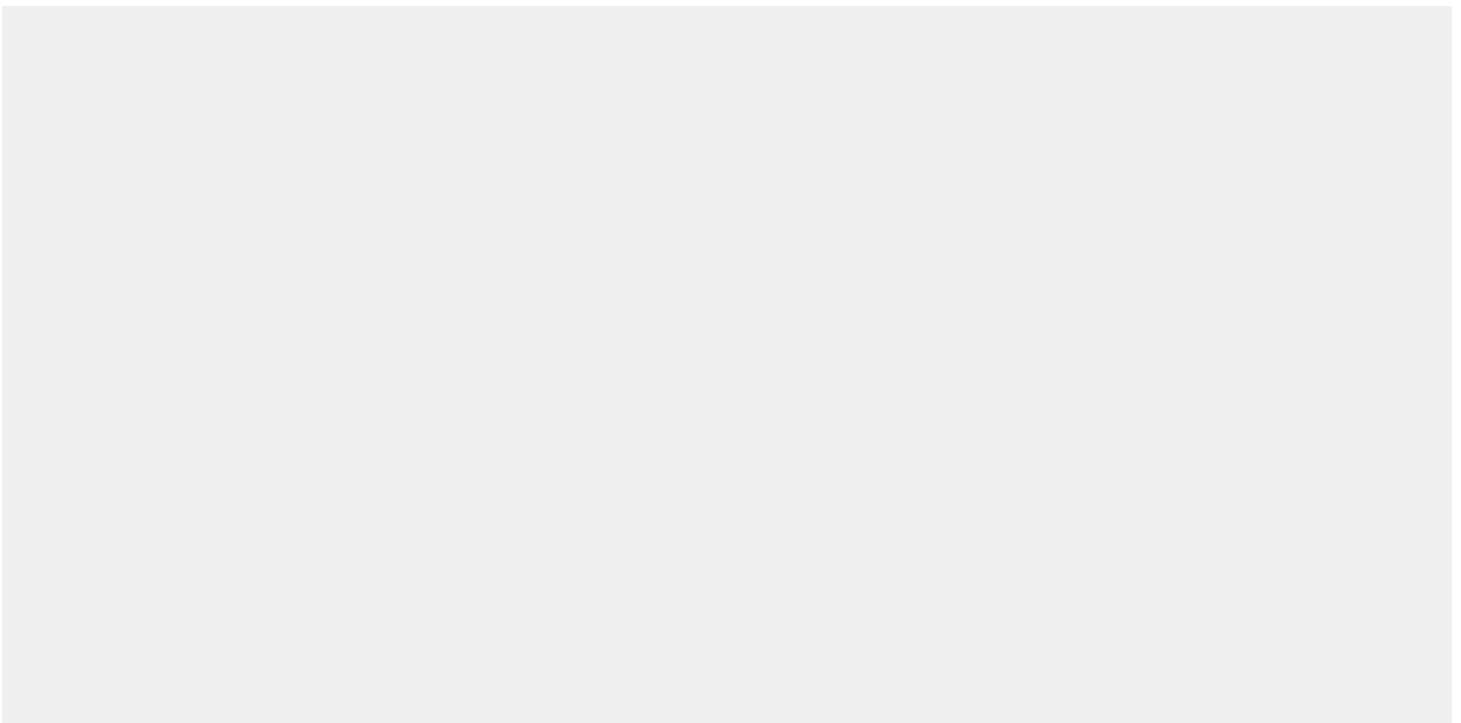
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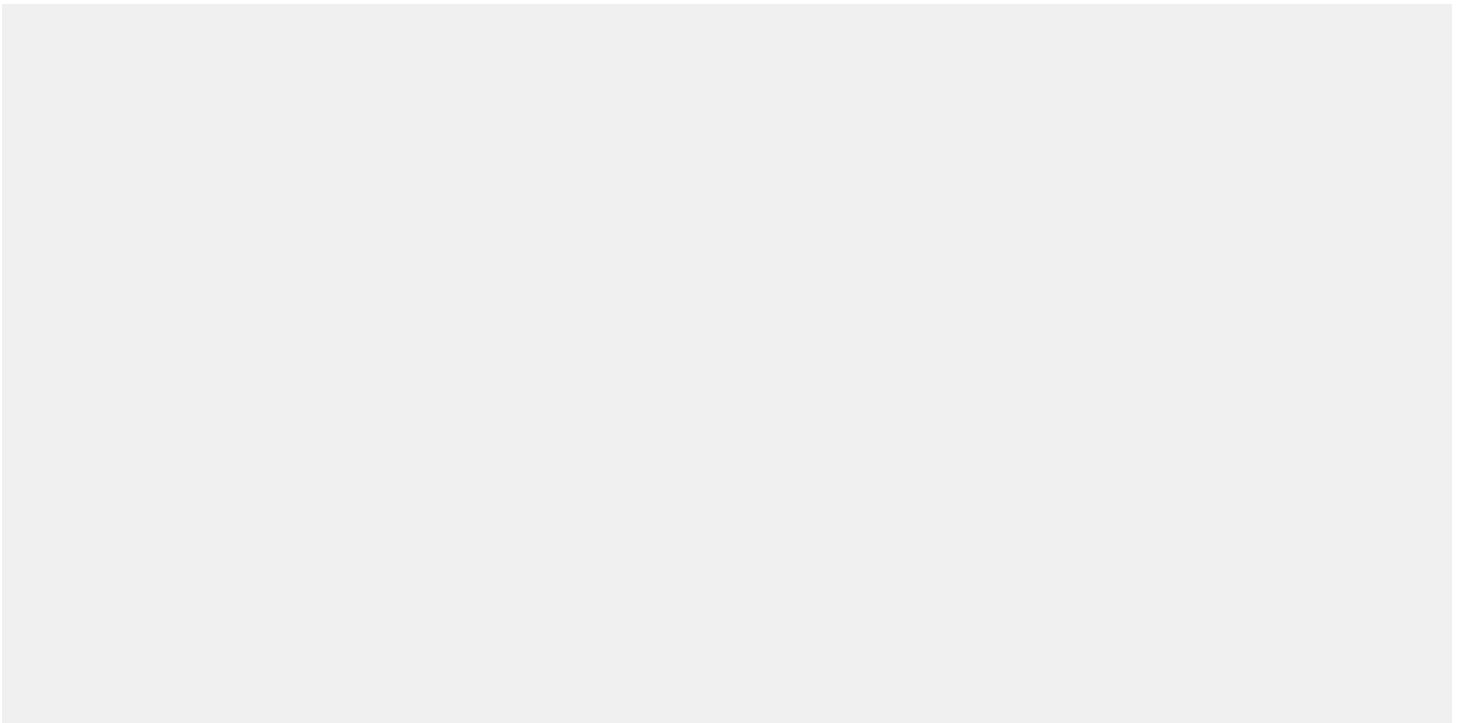
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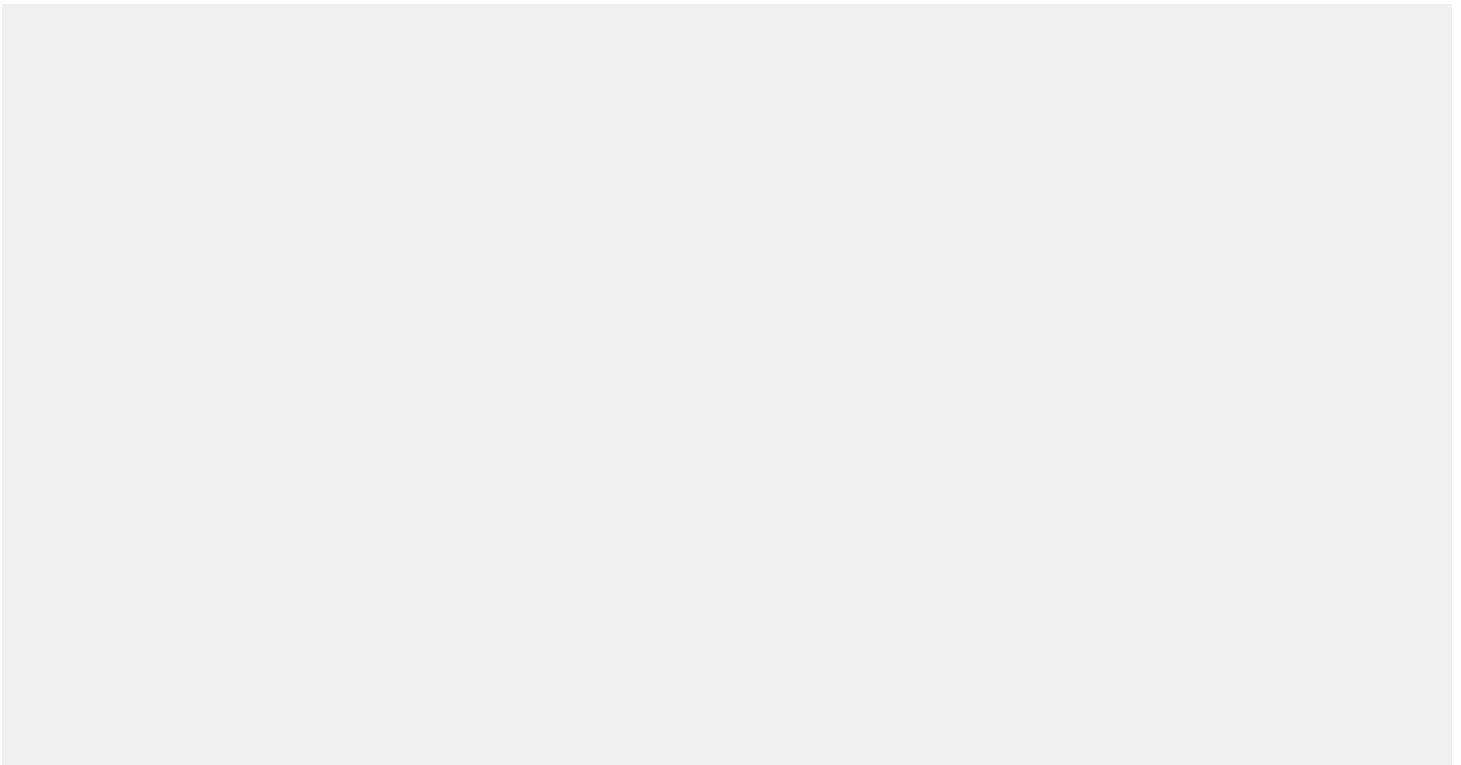
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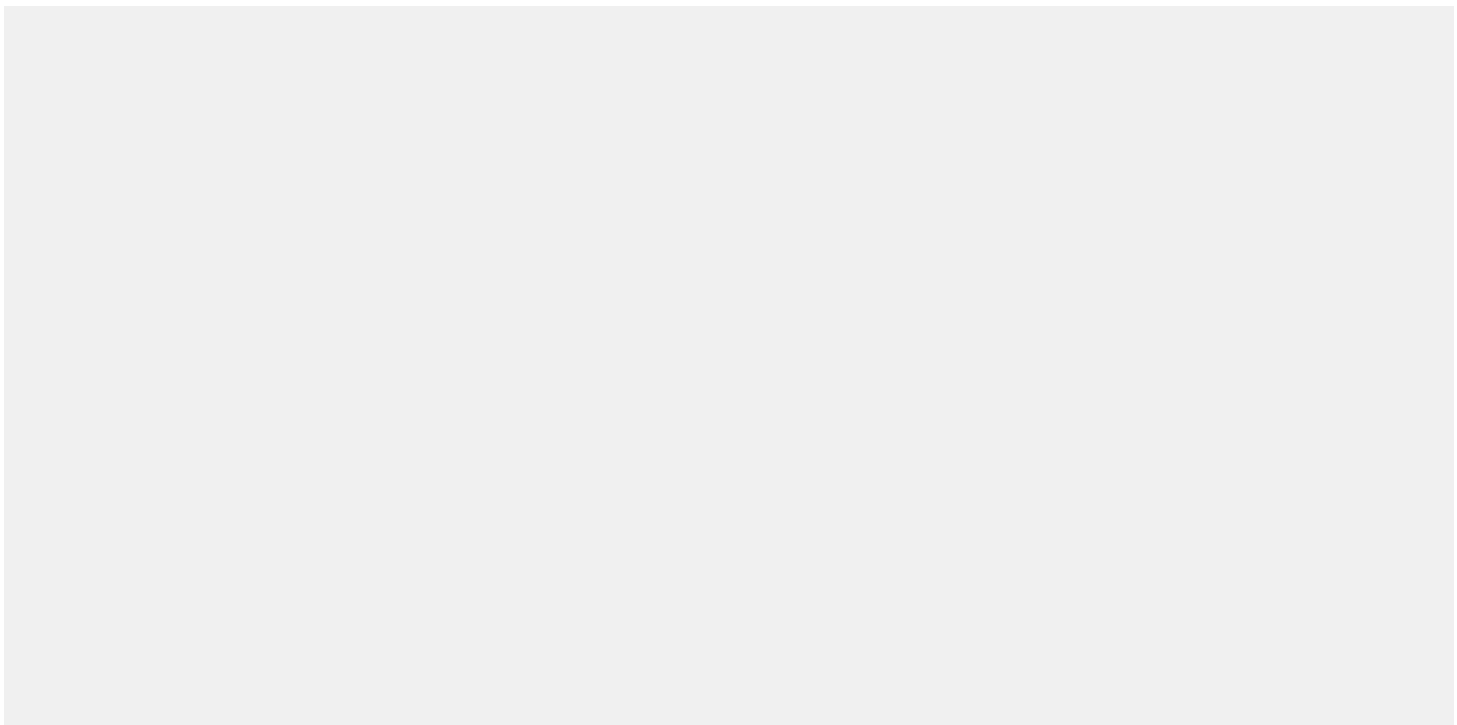
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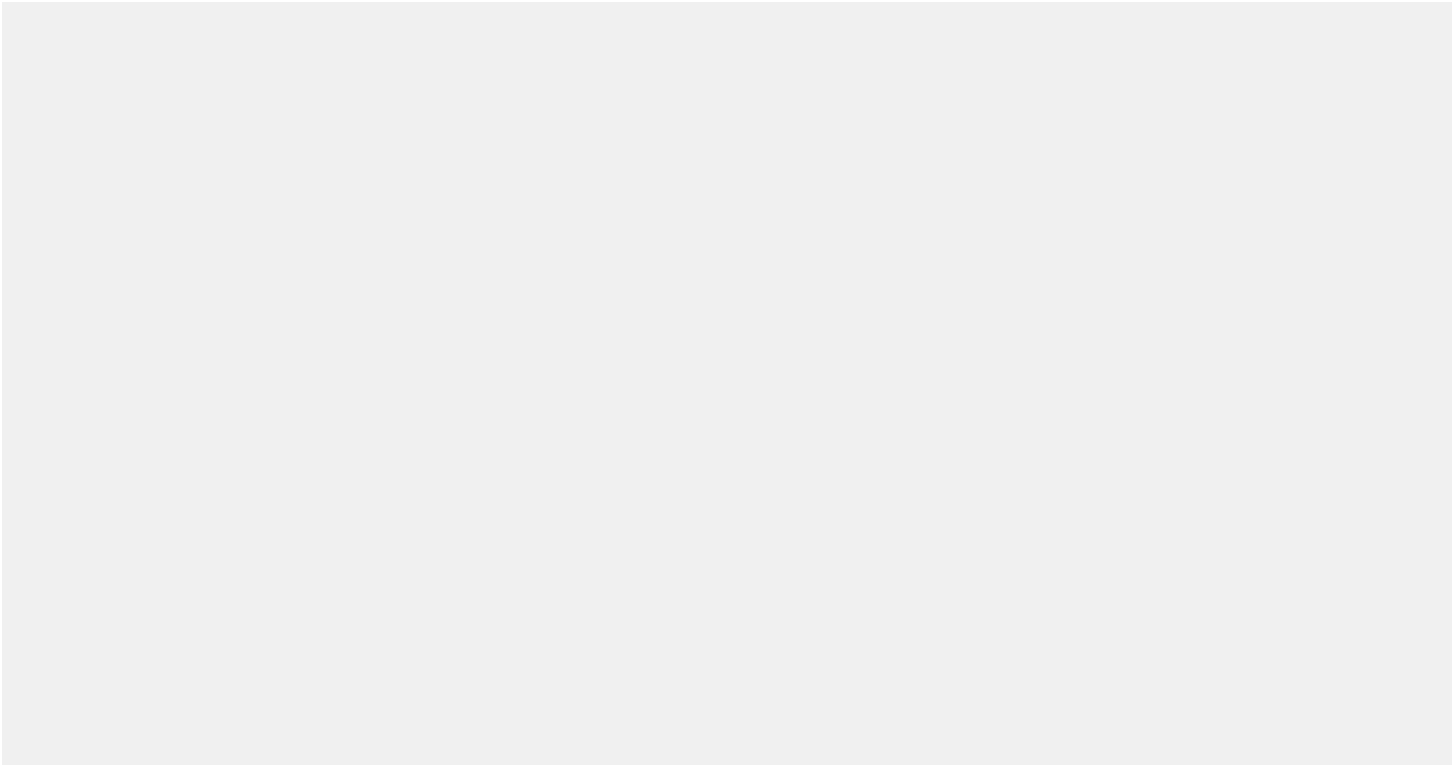
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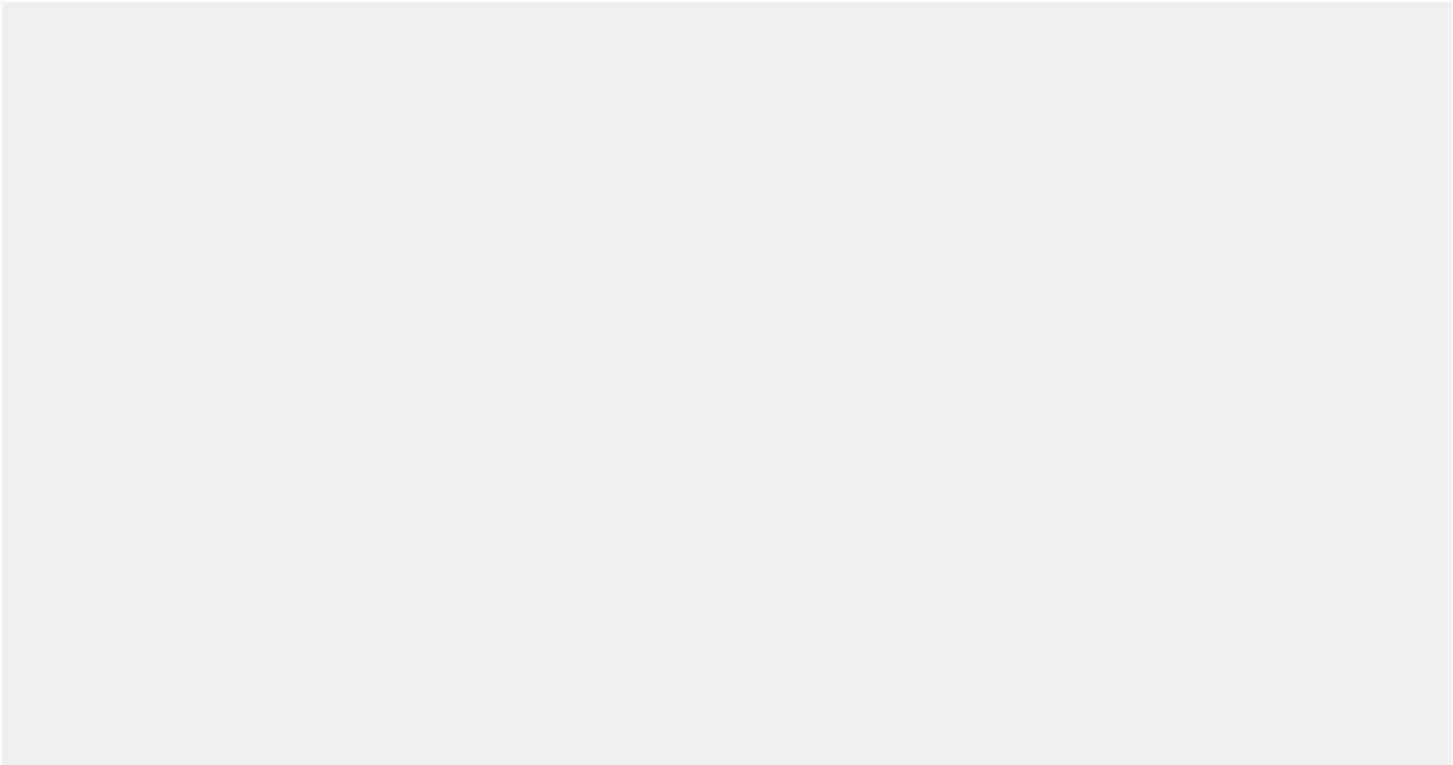
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Lord Hanningfield expenses scandal: Peer tells Mirror reporter - YOU should be in prison for exposing ME

In what could be a thinly veiled reference to attempts to bring in new laws to stifle the press after the Leveson Inquiry, he said: “Thank goodness people are going to stop people doing things like that.”

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BY DAVID COLLINS

08:19, 17 DEC 2013

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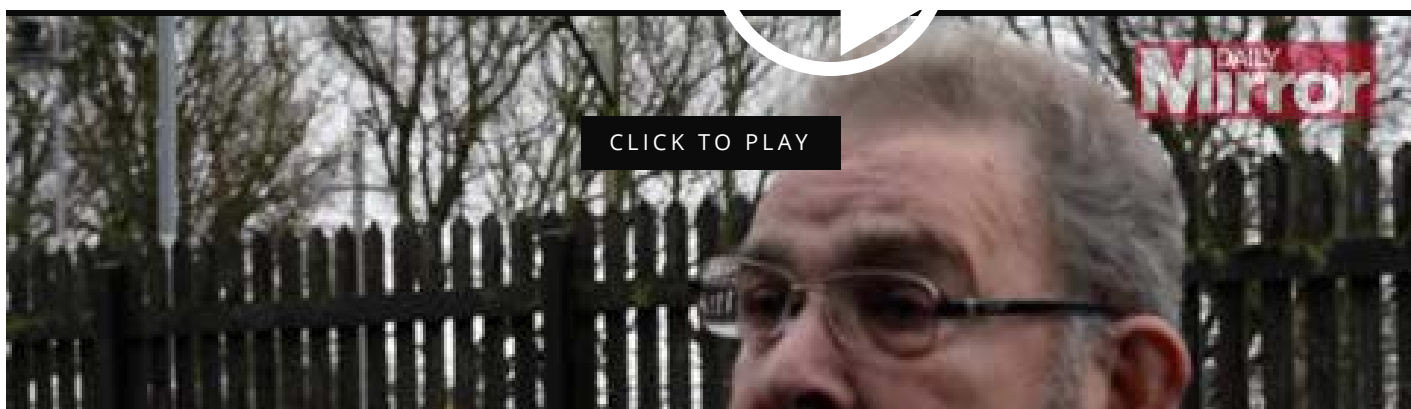


Brazen ex-jailbird Lord Hanningfield told our reporter he should be sent to prison for exposing his expenses fiddle.

In what could be a thinly veiled reference to attempts to bring in new laws to stifle the press after the Leveson Inquiry, he said: "Thank goodness people are going to stop people doing things like that."

Earlier he stormed: "I am trying to get back on track again... and if people like you put me off track again you deserve to be in prison."





Peers jailed for serious criminal offences cannot be permanently removed from the House of Lords.

MPs lose their seats if they are sentenced to more than a year in prison. But archaic rules mean peers are simply banned from the Lords for the duration of their sentence or for the period when they are bankrupt.

Tory peer Lord Archer was jailed for four years for perjury and perverting the course of justice in 2001.

He had lied under oath during his 1987 libel case against the Daily Star over allegations he had sex with a prostitute.

Yet he is still a peer and has been allowed to keep his seat.

Former media tycoon Conrad Black spent three years in a US jail for defrauding investors. He was released in May last year and may return to the Lords.

[Lord Hanningfield and Lord Taylor of Warwick, both jailed for fiddling their expenses](#), have kept their seats in the House of Lords.

They are all eligible for a £300 attendance rate.

The House of Lords costs taxpayers more than £100million per year.

More than £2million of public money goes on subsidising peers' restaurants and bars alone.

Annual accounts for 2012-13 show the Lords cost a total of £101,896,000. This covers Members' expenses and allowances, staff salaries, pension and admin costs, as well as security for the House.

More than one fifth, roughly £21million, is paid out to cover the expenses for the 760 Lords, bishops and baronesses.

They can also dine in their fancy restaurants on a subsidised rate, costing the taxpayer £2,361,437 per year, or £63,823 for each of the 37 weeks the Lords were sitting.

Each of the House of Lords' 760 peers benefits from an £84 discount on their food every week so they can eat foie gras and steak on the cheap.

That is on top of the £300-a-day "subsistence" allowance to cover food and accommodation for each day they attend.

[Read the transcript of the Mirror confronting Lord Hanningfield here](#)

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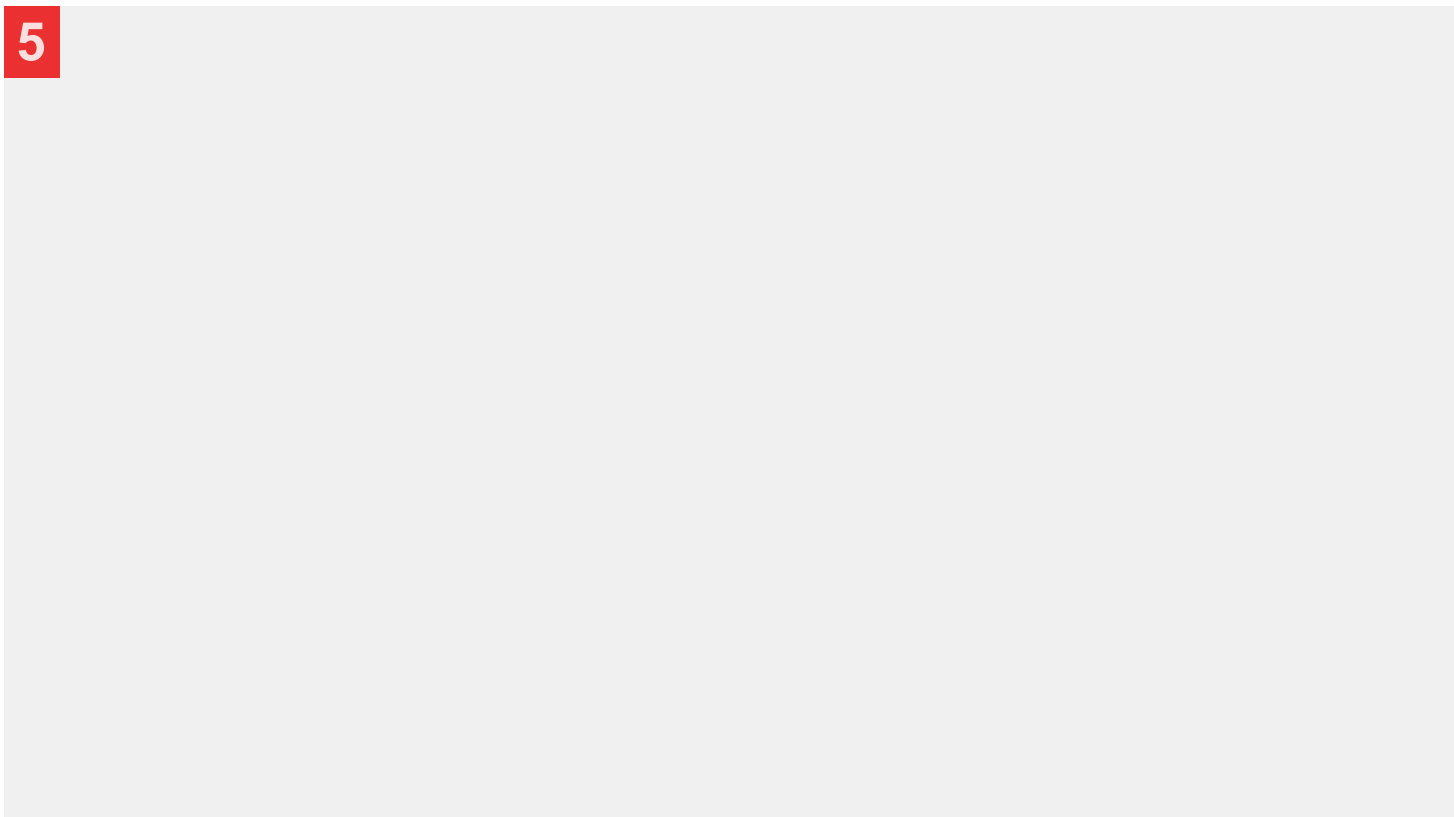
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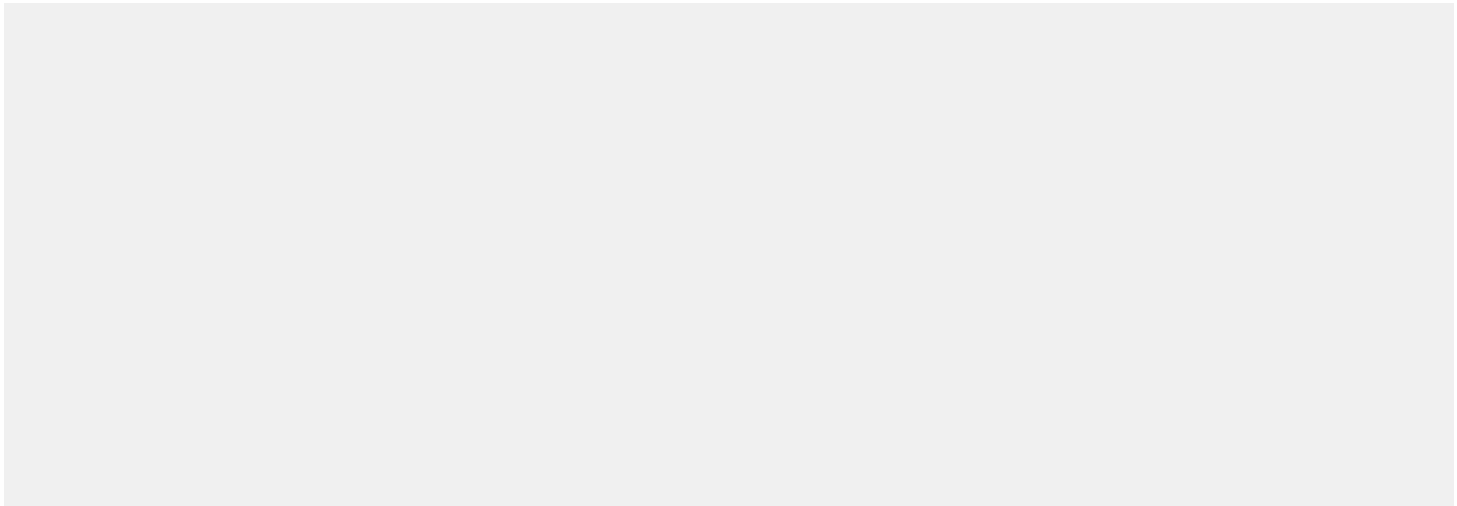




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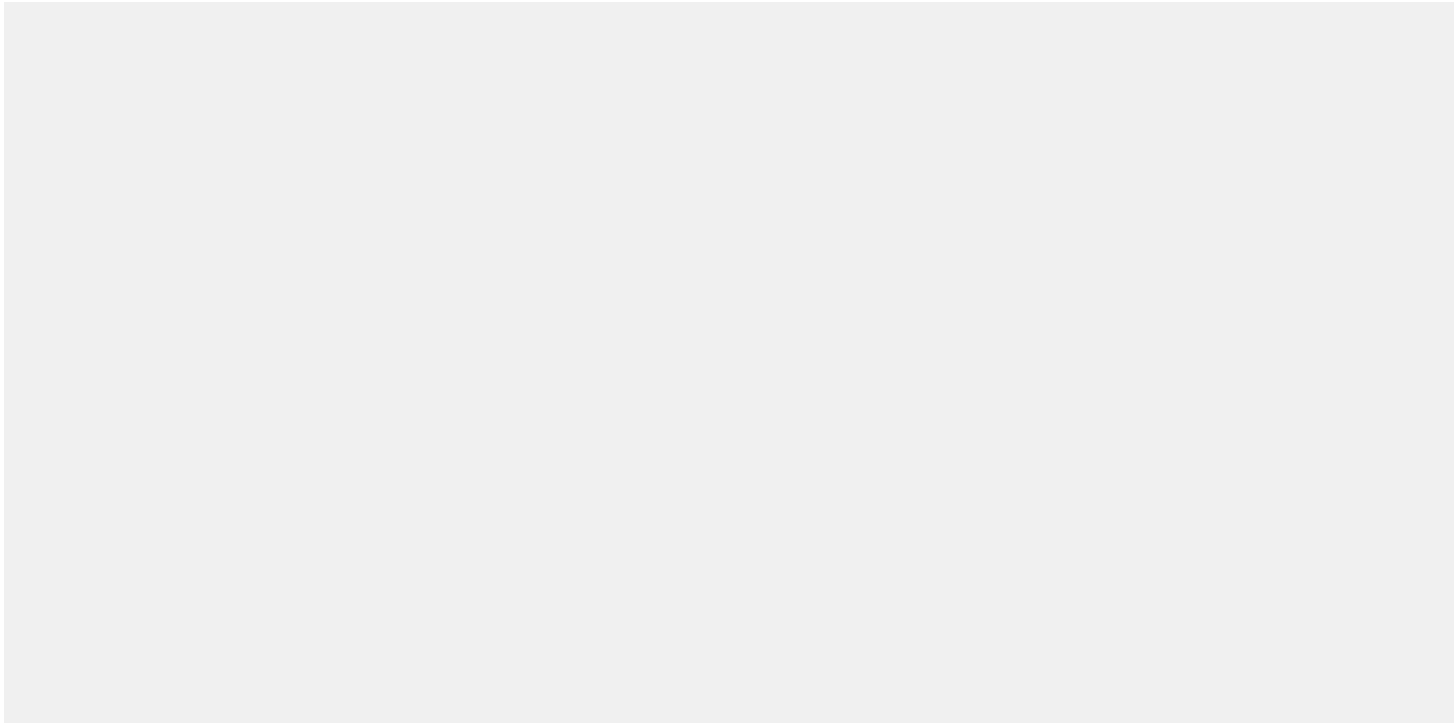
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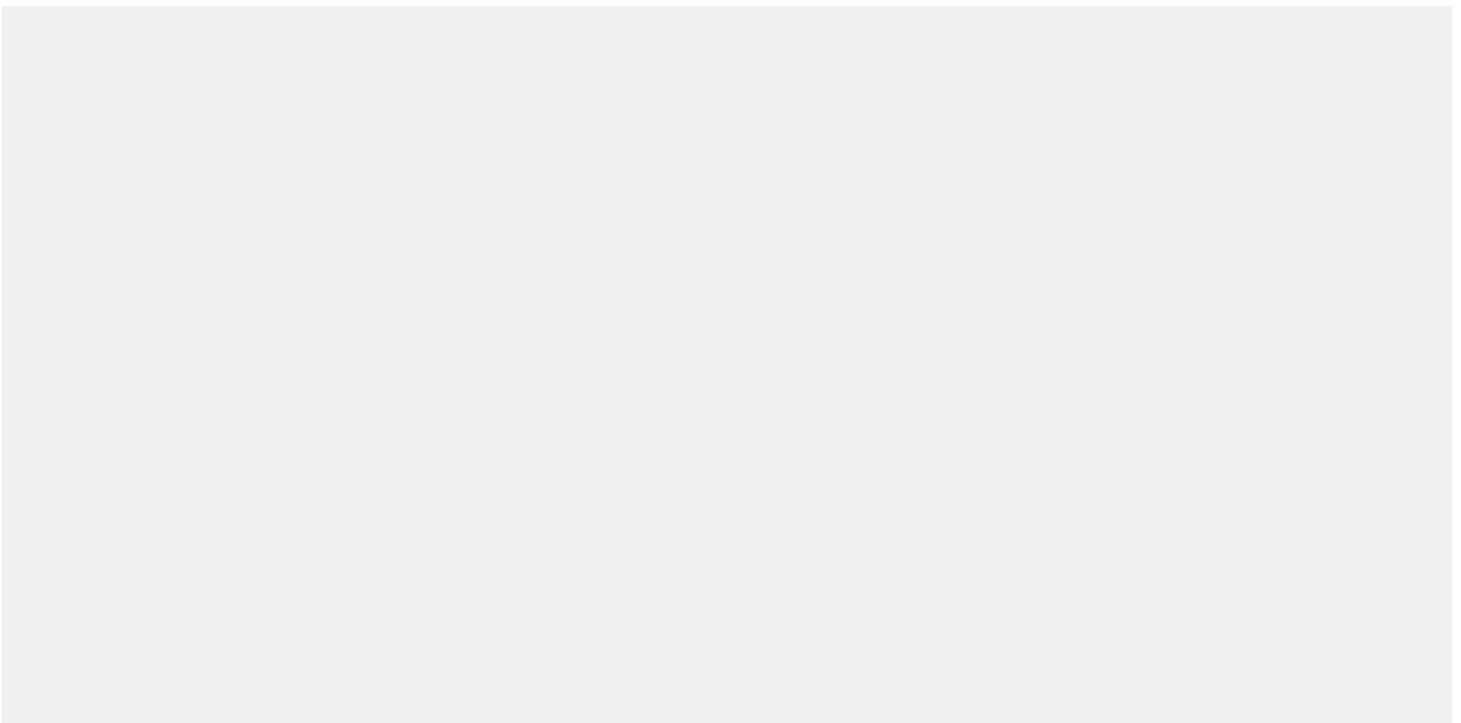
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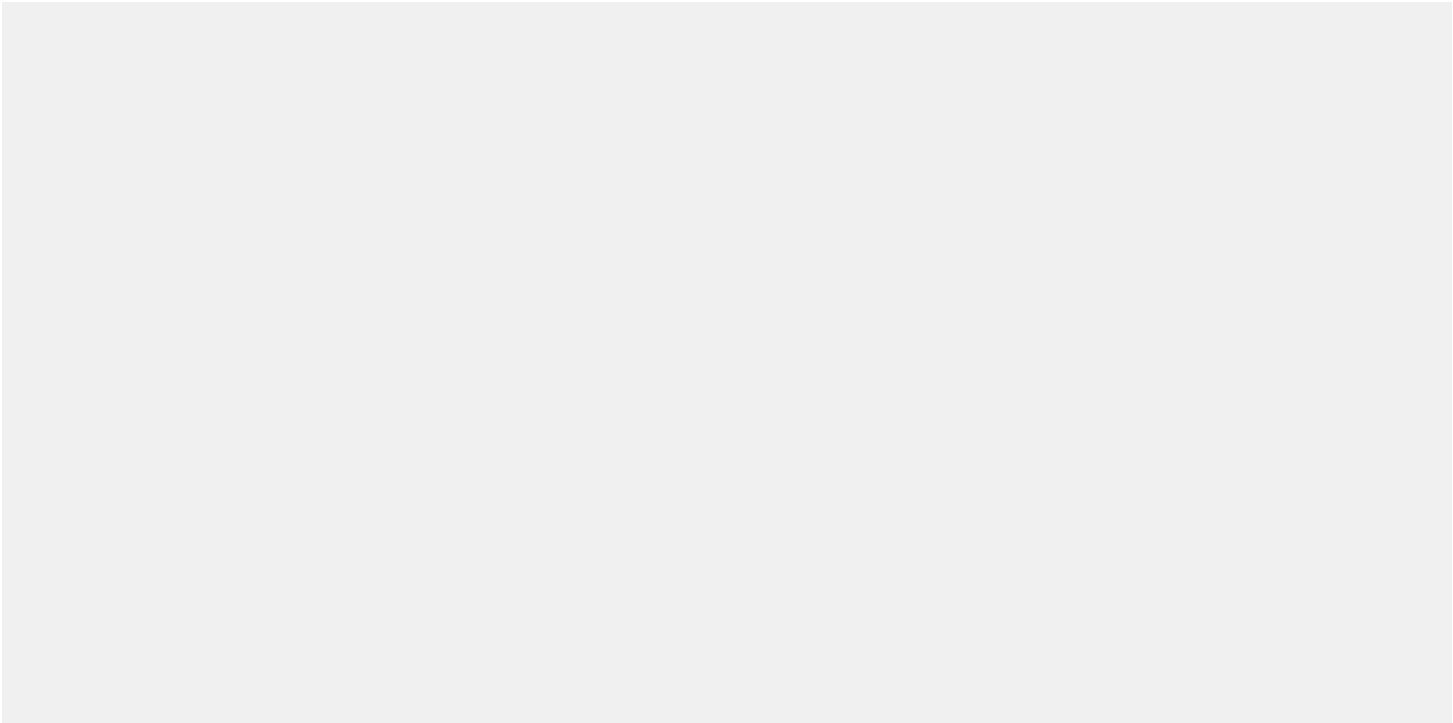
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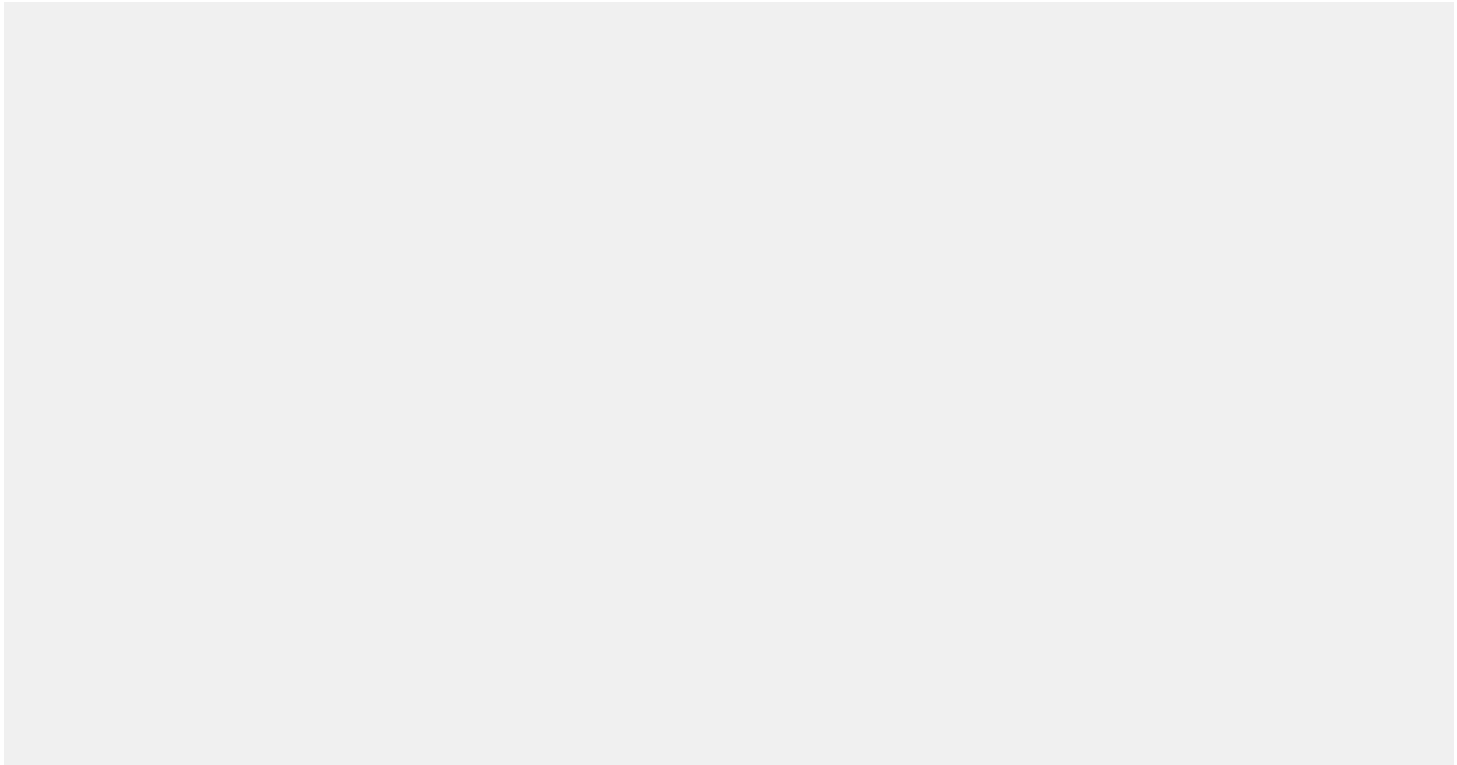
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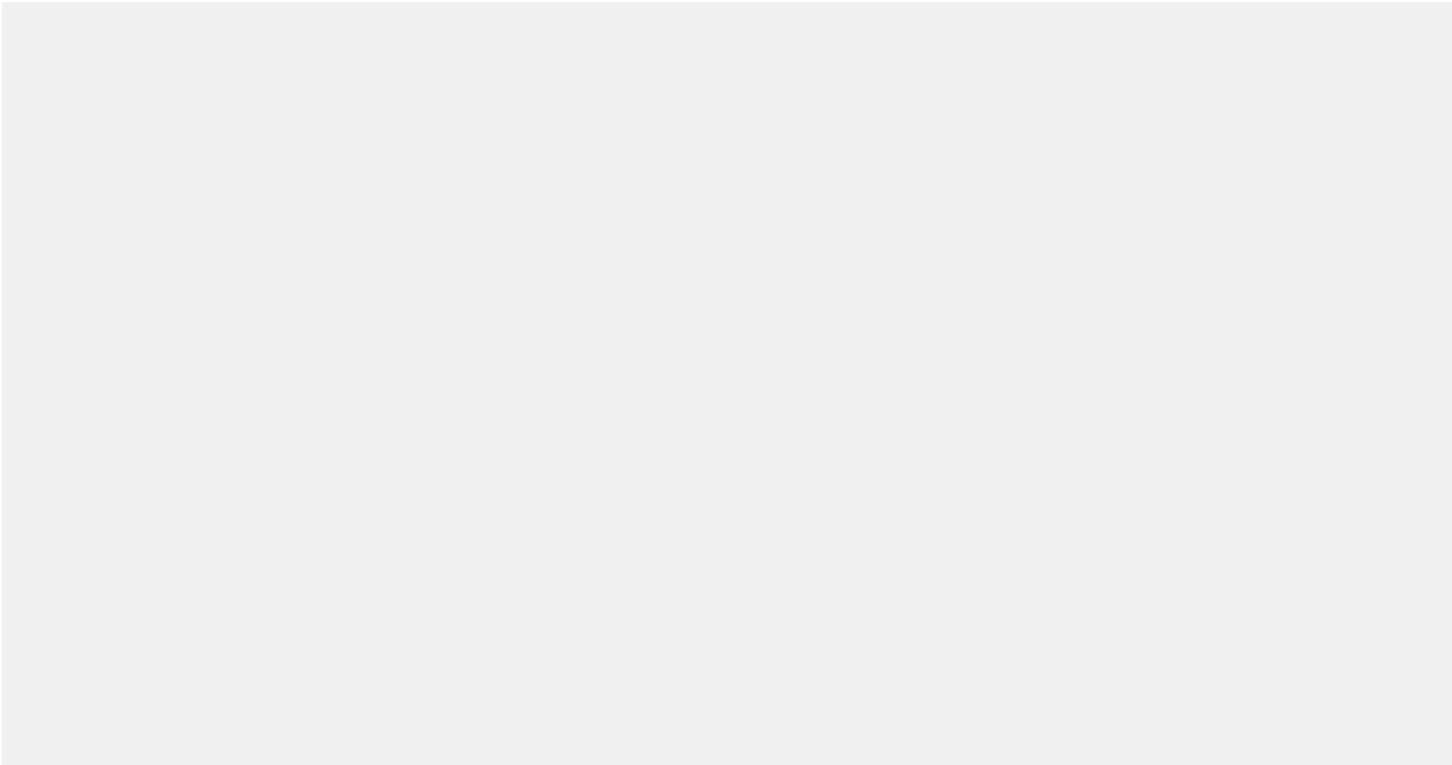
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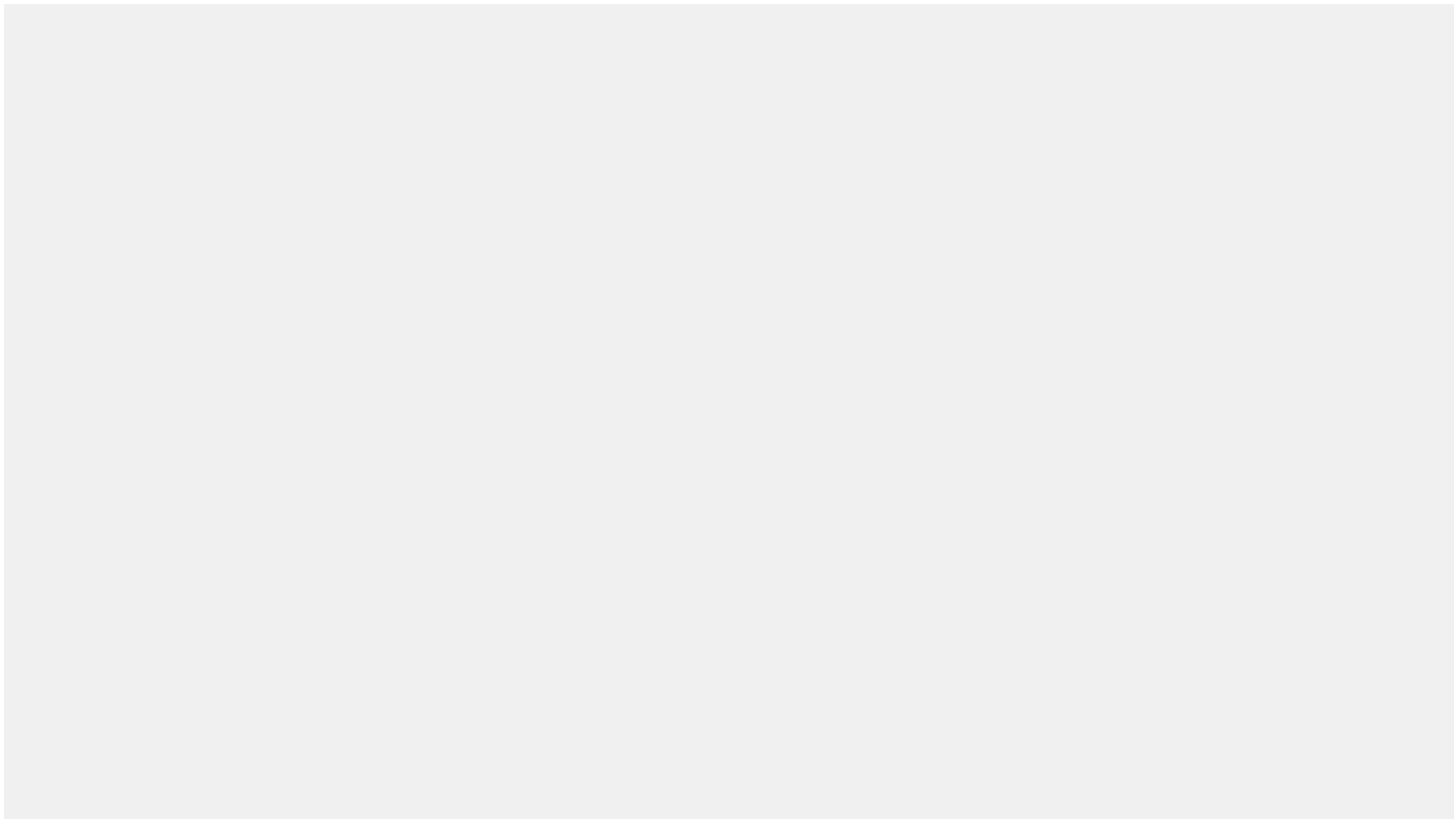
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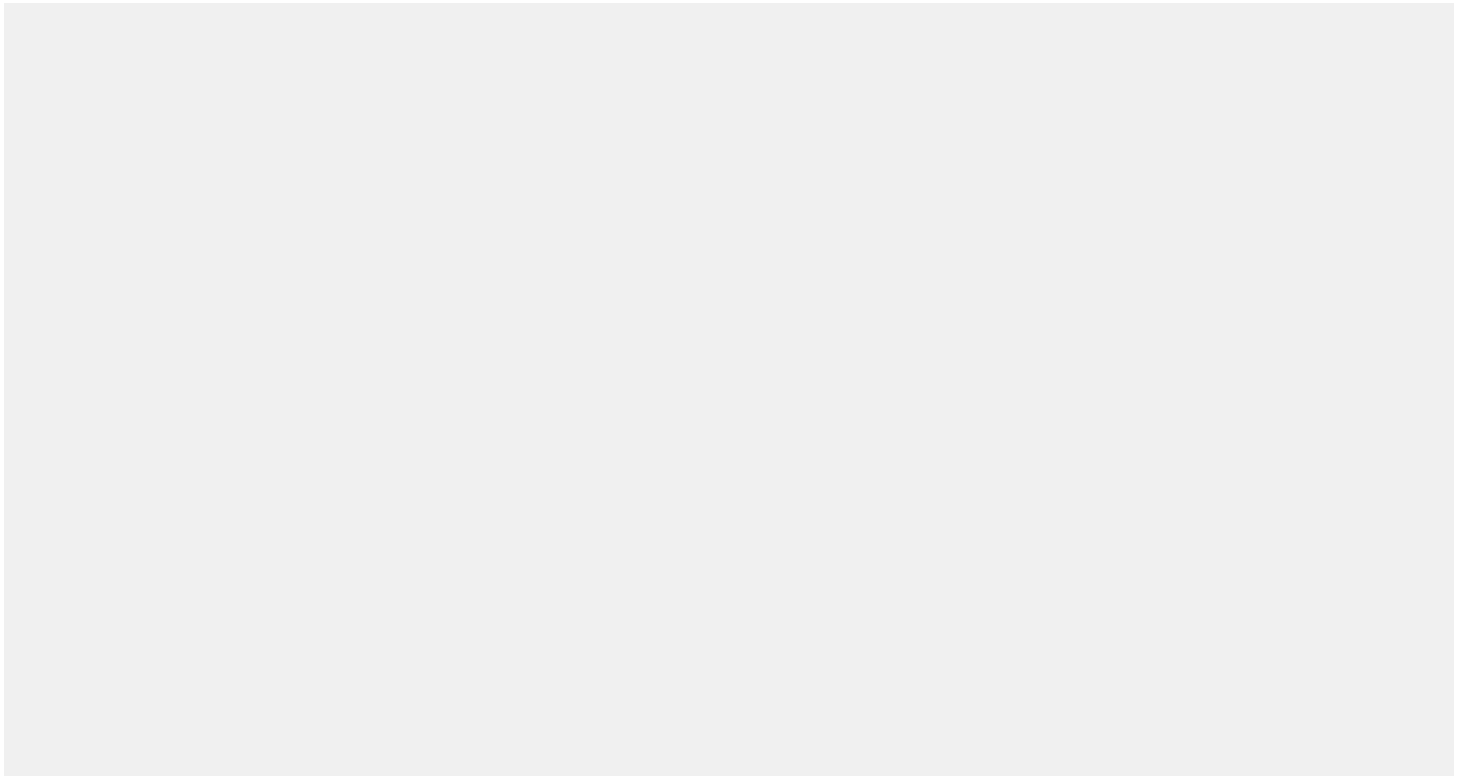
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