



Engaged: Carrie Symonds and Boris Johnson Donor: Lord Brownlow

Mail exposes No 10's frantic scramble on makeover cash

PANICKING Tory chiefs are considering returning £60,000 to a rich donor to gloss over the way the party secretly funded the makeover of Boris Johnson's Downing Street flat, it was claimed last night.

After handing the money back to multi-millionaire Lord Brownlow, they reportedly plan to ask him to pay the same amount directly to the Cabinet Office.

It will then allegedly be declared as a donation not from him but from a new Downing Street trust he has been asked to lead by the Prime Minister.

The aim is to gloss over where the money really came from – and enable Mr Johnson to publicly declare that cash for new décor ordered by fiancée Carrie Symonds has come from a trust, not the Tory party or directly from donors.

The alleged proposal follows a row over the Daily Mail's disclosures about the refurbishment of Mr Johnson and Miss Symonds' 11 Downing Street apartment. It is believed the refit, said to have been 'inspired' by upmarket interior designer Lulu Lytle, cost a six-figure sum.

The Cabinet Office is thought to have contributed around

EXCLUSIVE

By **Simon Walters**

£30,000 of taxpayers' money, with Mr Johnson unable to pay all the rest despite his £150,000 salary as Prime Minister. Friends say an expensive divorce and maintaining at least six children led him to rely on Conservative HQ funds being used to settle a £60,000 debt.

This newspaper revealed last week how Lord Brownlow paid £60,000 to Tory HQ six months ago seemingly to reimburse it for the same amount it gave to

the Cabinet Office last summer for the refurbishment.

It sparked a backlash from Conservative donors furious to learn cash intended for political campaigns could have been used to buy new wallpaper for Mr Johnson, 56, and Miss Symonds, 32.

Their protests were echoed by Sir Alistair Graham, the former chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, who questioned the propriety of the arrangement.

Now the Conservative Party is said to be considering reversing the money trail, despite having

already paid the bill covertly last summer.

According to No10 sources, it would lead to a three-way financial switchback whereby:

- The Cabinet Office pays back to Tory HQ the £60,000 it sent them last summer for the new décor;
- Tory HQ pays back the £60,000 Lord Brownlow gave them six months ago – in the original attempt to reimburse the party's payment to the Cabinet Office;
- Lord Brownlow pays £60,000 to the Cabinet Office – and it is declared as having come from the trust he is in the process of establishing to 'save Downing Street for the nation'.

A No10 spokesman said Conservative Party funds 'are not being used' to pay for the refurbishment of the flat.

All 'reportable donations' to the Party were declared to the Electoral Commission in line with the law. The spokesman said Mr Johnson had not broken Whitehall's code of conduct and followed Cabinet Office advice at all times.

Asked if Conservative funds had been used at any stage to fund the makeover, the spokesman declined to comment.

There is no suggestion of wrongdoing by Lord Brownlow, a former vice-chairman of the party, who declined to comment.

Uber drivers get minimum wage

UBER drivers in the UK will become the firm's first in the world to be guaranteed the minimum wage and holiday pay, it announced last night.

The ride-hailing app will also enrol them into a pension plan as they become classified as workers – not independent contractors.

More than 70,000 drivers will receive an additional 12 per cent of their earnings every two weeks in holiday pay and Uber will pay towards pensions.

The move followed a ruling by the Supreme

Court last month that the drivers were entitled to the benefits. The decision sparked fears that costs could be passed to customers. But Uber said 99 per cent of drivers already earn more than the National Living Wage – £8.72 an hour for over-25s.

It said the minimum rate will act as a floor, not a ceiling. Lawyers said the ruling could see drivers get backdated pay of up to £12,000 each.

Revealed: Content of vile message 'cop sent' from Sarah crime scene

Image 'shared with 7 officers' is sick parody of the Highway Code

By **Rebecca Camber** and **Amelia Clarke**

THE sickening message allegedly sent by a rookie policeman joking about Sarah Everard's murder emerged yesterday.

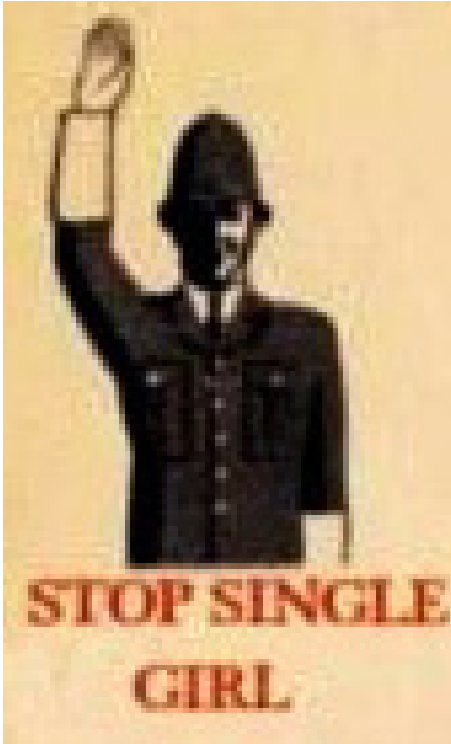
The probationary officer, aged around 22, is said to have sent the 'meme' – a shared joke image – to seven colleagues as he manned a cordon in woods near Ashford, Kent, where the 33-year-old's body was found.

It shows a policeman going through six stages from abduction to murder in a pastiche of the Highway Code.

In one image, it shows the officer directing traffic holding a hand up to say: 'Stop single girl'. He then gives various signals for different sickening actions, culminating in the murder and disposal of a body.

Yesterday there were calls for the officer who allegedly sent the appalling WhatsApp message to be sacked. Miss Everard's family are already reeling from the arrest of Metropolitan Police firearms officer Wayne Couzens, 48, on suspicion of kidnap and murder.

The meme was sent last Thursday – a day after Miss Everard's body was found. She had disappeared from a street in Clapham, south London, as she walked home from a friend's house on March 3. Horrified police colleagues



Tasteless: The first image in the meme allegedly sent. The others get progressively worse

how much sympathy I have for Sarah's family. To hear the level of disrespect for their daughter is horrific and it's another example of the toxicity of the Met Police. Of course there are good policemen out there, but actually, as an institution, there's misogyny.'

Harriet Wistrich, director of the Centre for Women's Justice, said: 'We are never going to tackle violence against women if we have got police officers demonstrating this level of misogyny and hatred towards women. It is sick.'

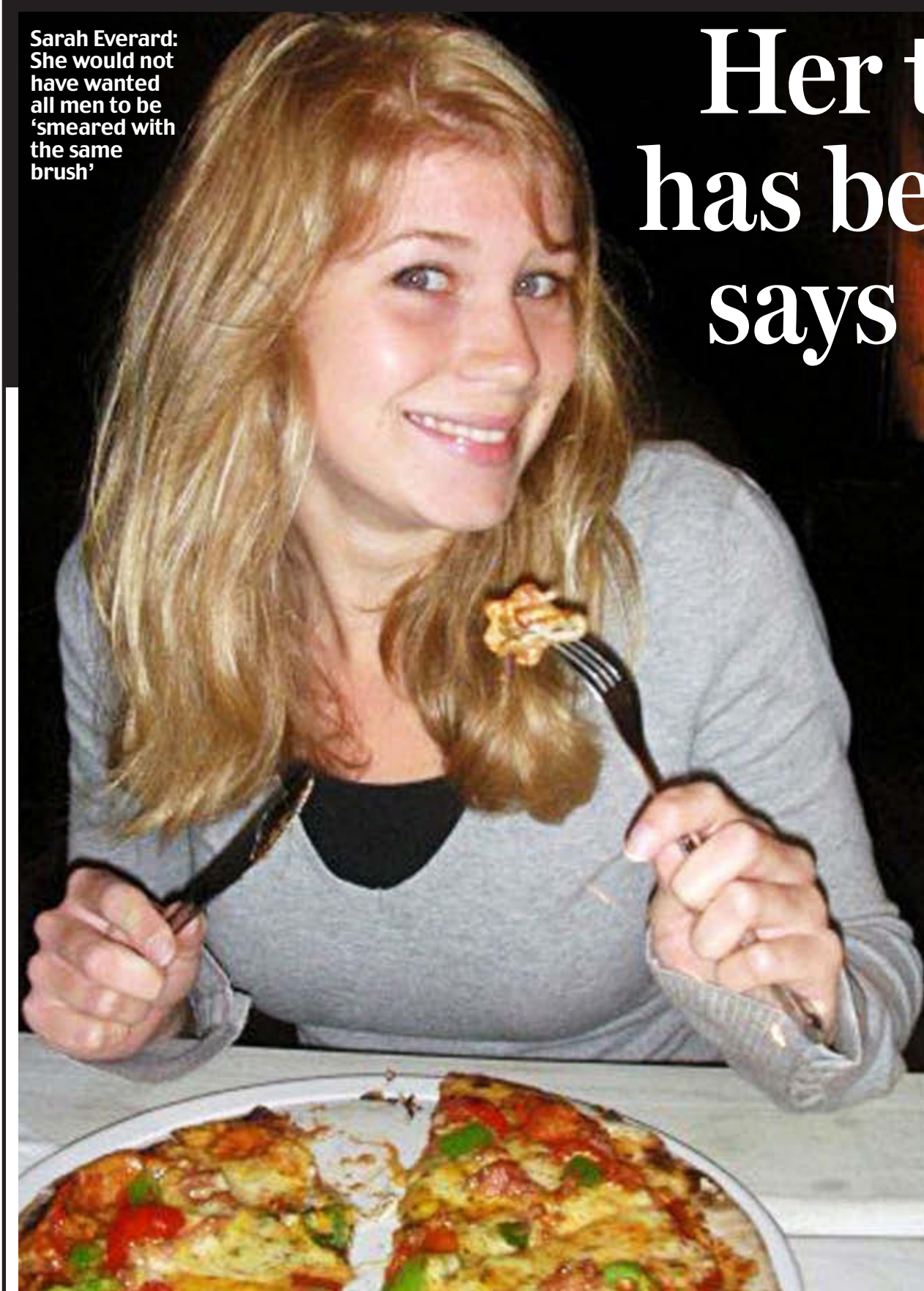
Sir Peter Fahy, former chief constable of Greater Manchester, told Good Morning Britain: 'This is obviously another dent to potential confidence in policing but it mirrors my experience that police officers actually are very intolerant of misconduct by their colleagues and when they see things that are unacceptable... they are immediately reporting it and swift action is being taken.'

Met assistant commissioner Nick Ephgrave said: 'The Metropolitan Police Service expects its officers to behave professionally at all times and this includes how they use social media. I take allegations that any officer or officers have failed to observe these standards very seriously and have referred this matter to the IOPC.'

The development comes after the Met were accused of heavy-handed tactics while arresting women at a vigil to Miss Everard on Saturday.

Her tragic death has been hijacked says close friend

Sarah Everard: She would not have wanted all men to be 'smeared with the same brush'



THE death of Sarah Everard has been hijacked by politicians who are trying to 'smear all men with the same brush', her close friend has claimed.

Helena Edwards expressed dismay at how some campaigners have tried to capitalise on the shocking incident.

The discovery of Miss Everard's body after she was kidnapped while walking home in London has triggered a national outcry about how sexism in society fuels violence against women.

The debate deepened last weekend when Metropolitan Police officers manhandled and arrested several protesters during a peaceful vigil for Miss Everard. The unsavoury scenes, which led to calls for

finger of blame at all men and the police. She said that Miss Everard would not have agreed with how some have rushed to 'look for reasons and apportion blame', adding: 'Sarah was a victim of one of the most horrific crimes imaginable. She was extremely unlucky – that is all there is to it.'

'Her abduction and murder is not, in my opinion, a symptom of a sexist, dangerous society.'

Following Miss Everard's death, a Green Party peer called for a 6pm curfew to be introduced for men to 'make women feel a lot safer'.

Miss Edwards said that the suggestion was 'one of the most ridiculous things I have ever heard' and that Sarah 'would not agree with the circumstances of her disappearance being used to promote these kinds of ideas'.

Miss Everard had 'many wonderful men in her life' who 'are just as horrified as everyone else by what has happened', Miss Edwards said, adding: 'I don't think Sarah would have wanted them, or men in general, to be smeared with the same brush as her attacker.'

The fallout over Scotland Yard's disastrous handling of last weekend's vigil has led to renewed debate about the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. Labour said the proposed legislation, which passed its first parliamentary hurdle yesterday, does nothing to protect women.

On Monday, Boris Johnson pledged an extra £45million for the Safer Streets initiative, with better street lighting and CCTV.

By **Mario Ledwith**

Family look on as Met officer appears at Old Bailey

By **Emine Sinmaz**

THE family of Sarah Everard watched the police firearms officer charged with her murder appear in court yesterday.

Wayne Couzens joined the Old Bailey via videolink from Belmarsh Prison to face allegations that he snatched the 33-year-old as she walked home from a friend's house in south London on March 3. Bear-

only to confirm his name and date of birth. Prosecutor Tom Little QC told the court 'there has been a very significant and wide-ranging investigation' given the circumstances of the case.

Members of Miss Everard's family joined the hearing in court 10 of the Central Criminal Court by video link, according to court officials. Defence barrister James Sturman

QC did not make a bail application and Couzens, of Deal, Kent, was remanded into custody. The judge, Mark Lucraft QC, set a provisional trial date of October 25, with a plea hearing on July 9.

Miss Everard's body was found in woodland in Ashford on March 10. A post-mortem examination has taken place. The inquest into her death will open tomorrow.