

## The Latest News

# Lord Sewel Is Far From The Worst Of His Kind



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By Alexander Baron

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After being filmed apparently using cocaine and doing other unmentionable things, Lord Sewel requested a leave of absence from the House. He has **since resigned**. This was apparently an entrapment operation by a well-known, scurrilous tabloid newspaper. There is now a police investigation into the cocaine aspect of his *faux pas*; don't expect the people who arranged the transaction to be investigated likewise.

This embarrassing incident raises the obvious question, has he done anything like this before, is he perhaps a serial offender? The answer is possibly, but it is just as likely that he *lost it* temporarily. In this increasingly mad world, even those of us who are not **taking psychiatric drugs** do bizarre things now and again. There can be any cause for this or none, sometimes a death in the family, a change in personal circumstances, or whatever, can lead men and women to behaving foolishly. Whether or not that is the case here, higher standards are required from a Member of the Upper House at all times, so it was right that he go.

Where on the scale of infamy is Lord Sewel's *crime*? As most readers will probably know, other Lords have acted far more outrageously at times. In 1987, Jeffrey Archer won a libel action against a tabloid newspaper. Accused like Lord Sewel of consorting with a prostitute, although not of snorting cocaine with her, he was awarded a staggering half a million pounds in damages. He was elevated to the peerage in 1992 as Baron Archer of Weston-super-Mare, but after he decided to run for Mayor of London, an old friend and ally turned against him with a vengeance and it was revealed not only that he had perjured himself in his successful libel action but that there was a paper trail.

Archer ended up back in court, but this time as a defendant in a criminal trial rather than a plaintiff in a civil one. He received a four year sentence in addition to an enormous financial penalty, and of course a double helping of shame and disgrace. Where is he today? Still in the House of Lords!

Another peer who went to gaol and then back into the House was John Taylor. A man of extremely limited abilities who was elevated to the peerage in 1996 primarily due to the colour of his skin, he was one of the few politicians to serve hard time due to the expenses scandal. He was given a 12 month sentence for false accounting. Although this scandal caused much public outrage, it was basically a storm in a tea cup; here is [an objective view of it](#). Nevertheless, as a barrister and indeed a deputy district judge, he should have known better, especially as he was making though not necessarily earning a decent living at the time.

Far more scandalous than either Taylor or Archer was Lord Moynihan. An hereditary peer, he led what might be described as a colourful life. He served with the Coldstream Guards, married an actress/model, left her for a Malaysian dancer, marrying her and converting to Islam. Moynihan entered the Upper House in 1965 on the death of his father, but five years later he fled the country facing fraud charges, moving first to Spain and then to the Philippines where he ran a brothel. Becoming involved in drug trafficking, he ended up working as an informant (ie a snitch) for the DEA. He died in Manilla from a heart attack aged 55.

Finally, the worst of the lot. England's most notorious peer by far was and remains [the enigmatic Lord Lucan](#). Like Lord Moynihan, Richard John Bingham was an hereditary peer, like Moynihan too he served with the Coldstream Guards, but while the former was merely a right dodgy character, Lucan was an upper class waster *par excellence*. In 1963 he married Veronica Duncan with whom he sired three children.

As well as being born into privilege, Lucan made the most of [social networking](#) at the upper end of society. Tall and handsome as well as rich and well connected, it was once mooted that he would be recruited to play James Bond. Alas! Lucan developed a taste for gambling, and rather unluckily won £26,000 playing *chemin de fer* in one night, a tidy sum in those days. This led to him quitting his bank job and becoming a professional gambler, at least, that was what he called it, but although he was one of the best backgammon players in the world, he was a very bad gambler, squandering his inheritance.

Undoubtedly due partly to this, his marriage fell apart, and he hatched a plan to drive his long-suffering wife mad, a plan that nearly succeeded. When their marriage broke down, he hatched an

even more evil plot, and decided to murder her. Like everything else he did in his life, Lucan failed spectacularly, and on the night of November 7, 1974 he ended up bludgeoning to death not Countess Lucan but the children's nanny, Sandra Rivett. After realising his mistake, he attacked her too, but the small, slightly built woman managed to get the better of the 6 foot 4 former soldier, and escaped to raise the alarm.

By the time the police arrived, Lucan had driven to the home of a friend whose wife, unaware of what he had done, helped him to escape. He has never been seen alive since although there have been false sightings of him everywhere from Africa to Australia. He was declared dead officially only in 1999 although it is most likely that he threw himself into the Channel shortly after his escape. His car was found at Newhaven with the murder weapon in the boot. Although he was of course never tried, he was declared a murderer by an inquest jury; the law has since been changed to stop this happening again.

All this puts the *crime* of Lord Sewel into its proper perspective, at the end of the day he was simply a foolish old man, one who should have thought twice and thrice before falling for such an obvious undercover sting.

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