

CCTV on the incident

I watched the CCTV courtesy of the BTP yesterday morning.

The CCTV is normally shot at 48 frames per second. The CCTV provided by Govia Thameslink to the BTP (which I saw) was poor quality footage, from only one angle, at only one frame per second, and then slowed further. It was like watching stop motion footage. About 20 seconds of footage covered up to 2 minutes of actual time, from 11.22am to 11.24am.

In effect each second you watch covered about 2-5 seconds of real time. So two people could stand together and then one could do a rapid handstand and then stand back in their starting position and all I would see two people stood together, not moving.

Further, it is impossible to work out any detail, facial expression or whether or not the suspect was coughing or spitting.

We see the action side on (side profile only), and it is grainy, with no sharp definition, looking towards the ticket office windows.

We only see the action from one camera (no 7). This is apparently the oldest and poorest quality camera on the station.

The police could not tell me if I was watching the original CCTV raw footage or a video made of it (by Govia).

The police said they could have done more enhancement of the images if they had the original CCTV footage and would have been able to see more if more footage from more of the 180 cameras on the concourse, but I was told that the Network rail CCTV footage is deleted automatically after 28 days - on about 18 April 2020.

The police have admitted that were not alerted to the incident until about 11 May 2020 and after the footage was deleted.

The camera faces towards the ticket office (I rely on that being "north" for the purposes of this account)

The footage

I noted this shortly after viewing the CCTV footage which the police would not allow me to record, and what follows is to the best of my recollection, having viewed the harrowing but very poor quality footage.

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A white male, 57 years of age, white hair, white beard, big stocky bouncer build, 5 foot 10 or above, walked into camera shot. He enters from the west.

He walks upright like someone who went to public school or served in the police or army. He wore jeans, trainers and a smart brown Parka type coat.

Three GTR workers are stood outside the ticket office on the east side, stood fairly close together. Belly is next to M with Sh closest to the camera.

The man stops and speaks to the two female employees, Belly and M, as if Sh is not there [Either Sh pops out and back into shot or he is there the entire time, and the man ignores him]. [The man is looking at them to the north east. Sh appears/is stood south of him and them]

[Belly and M say he said he had the covid 19 and becomes angry at them. They say he then starts coughing, shouting and spitting at them].

All three workers flinch when he becomes angry. His arms are by his side and he makes no attempt to cover his mouth.

[This is the first incident or assault].

He said the coughing was involuntary.

You cannot see his mouth on the CCTV footage.

He then walks away from them to the west pointing at them with an outstretched arm. This appears to be aggressive conduct. I assume he is still berating them.

He joins the one other customer waiting to be served in a queue of one (the station is very quiet, virtually empty and there is no queue. There is clearly no need for customer service staff to be outside that day, let alone three of them, as there is no queue to reduce and no one asking for help).

The man then decides to return to Belly and M walking to the east and appears to be shouting [and coughing] at them. Sh is present. He stands slightly further away than the first time [the police suggest the distance is about 1.5 metres]. They all back away again in reaction to what appears to be him shouting and coughing at them.

They look anxious/concerned.

[This is the second assault]

[One police officer originally told Lusamba something definitely happened at that time, "no doubt" – because they flinch and/or back away from him (twice), and there would be no other reason for Belly to leave her station].

The man then returns to wait behind the other customer in the queue, walking west.

He then eventually ends up at a ticket window [and apparently spoke harshly to the black female employee who served him].

Belly moves away from M and Sh to watch the man for a while from the south west, and then she leaves the area walking to the east [you cannot tell the speed at which she is walking/moving due to the time distortion).

[Apparently, she went to reception to wash the spittle off her clothes and face].

The police officer with me said he has been spat on and that they did not react as if they had been spat on. Quite what he meant by that, is anyone's guess. Motolani reported the incident to management and asked management to call the police. What did he expect them to do? Make a citizen's arrest of a bouncer, small mountain, sized guy, twice their size?

Further, the allegation was the man coughed and shouted at them, did not cover his mouth or look away, and spittle was projected as he did that; "like an old man without teeth" spitting. The allegation was never that he simply spat on them.

The footage runs on after that but I was told the senior officer said that I was only allowed to see the shorter footage. So it ends with the man at the ticket window, and I was not permitted to watch him exit the station, or see where he went next.

The police said that they had about 12 minutes of footage.

The police apparently traced the white male perp through his credit or debit card when he purchased the ticket allegedly for his mother to travel up north.

Call for Witnesses

There was a man waiting to be served, a woman in a lilac puffa coat, and two student aged females with small backpacks who entered the ticket office area at that time from the south east, seeking to purchase tickets.

The incident happened at the Victoria Station ticket office on the concourse between 11.22am and 11.24am on Saturday 21 March 2020.

Were you there? Did you see anything?

Please contact me if you did.

Lawrence Davies

9 October 2020