

9EN0 04

GCE English Language
Coursework

Folder 3

Blues and twos (first draft)

12th December 1988

The 12-hour shift started with scraping away the ice from the windscreen on my Corsa at 5:45 on a bitterly cold winter morning, the radio crackled with news of more spending cuts by Thatcher's government, this time to public transport, I just shrugged, the NHS had already been savagely hit with a number of close friends being laid off.



I changed into the fetching green getup of the London Ambulance Service (LAS), checked the equipment in our big white 'taxi' and shared some friendly banter with my crew mate, Richard. At that hour of the morning, banter and coffee are the only things that keep you going and make counting fresh blankets, checking bandages and measuring out shots of adrenaline into intravenous drips bearable.

We picked up our call sign for the day, Romeo201, and headed out for our first call of the day. Collecting a well-known drunk who'd passed out in the road and delivering him back to his open care home. See, ambulances and taxis have more in common than you think. Once a quick pit stop at McDonalds to renew the coffee supplies had been completed we radioed back expressing our availability again. It was a quiet morning and LAS HQ had nothing for us to deal with so we were stepped down and allowed to return to base once again giving the perfect opportunity for coffee refuelling.

The tranquillity was not to last long however, at 7.25 we received a shout of a train incident at Clapham junction. The call initially come through as a code yellow which meant there were injuries. Mainly minor, but we still had to get there. Once on our way we received an update that we were not to be the first on scene as a crew from Sutton had beat us to it and declared the emergency a new code red which translated to suspected major injuries, this was alarming but still nothing out of the ordinary as Richard who was driving put his foot down and started blasting the blues and twos, the tranquillity had been abruptly ended. We had not travelled more than 500M from the last update when our radio burst into life again. "code black, major incident declared" come over the cab, this was worst case scenario, code black meant that many fatalities were suspected and that major incident procedures were to be followed such as all turning up from the same direction so that it is easier for cars with patients on to get away quickly as well as leaving all keys in vehicles for the same reason, a priority list of patients was also being devised so the most urgent cases were dealt with first.

In my entire career I had never had a code black outside of training and have since not had another.

Despite mentally preparing myself for what I believed I might see, nothing could prepare me for what was about to engulf my senses.



A que of emergency vehicles stretched as far as the eye could see with flashing blue lights and thick black smoke filling the air, in the distance towards the tracks there was not the screaming I expected but instead silence, not even a bird squawk could be heard it was weirdly eerie. It became clear very quickly that this incident was going to be messy, as the smell of burning flesh filled my nose we met with the station officers and fire service to devise an evacuation plan, they explained that two commuter trains had collided at high speed with a third train being affected by debris. My job that day had changed dramatically. I was now dealing with dead and dismembered bodies. Once that particular sticks in my mind is a young man roughly 30 years' old who looked as though he was asleep holding his briefcase but as I crouched down beside him and spoke to him it was clear he was not asleep, I gently pushed him back by his shoulders and the sight will never leave me, the front of the man's upper body was missing and he no longer owned a face, once again instead of reaching for my green treatment bag I found myself reaching for another black body bag, however we had none spare so the poor man had to share his body bag with a leg and arm of the women sitting adjacent to him in the burnt out carriage, the rest of this women we couldn't find other than a lock of hair and a shattered pair of glasses. It wasn't yet 9 in the morning and my life had been majorly effected, it came as relief to me to see a body in one piece rather than pieces of one body scattered down the carriage, this wasn't just the case for me but for all emergency services there that day who worked as hard as they could to evacuate survivors and deal with the unrecognisable bodies of victims. We were told to transport them to a pub cellar on Spencer Road which was being used as a temporary mortuary, I barely touched a living body all day and just transported the dead from the train to the pub cellar. We removed the last accessible body around 5 o'clock in the evening but continued searching through the wreckage for any salvageable individuals well into the night.



- 15 ambulance crews,
- 14 fire crews,
- Two thirds of the police in London were at the crash site,
- The police helicopter was being used to air drop doctors and surgeons,
- The salvation army set up canteens as well.

The day after I saw a picture of myself in the daily mirror carrying half of a young woman away from the crash, the paper had blurred the image of her for respect but nearly 30 years later I can remember what she looked like as clearly as I can remember my children's names.

A total of 35 people were killed that day, with a further 69 seriously injured and on life support machines 425 other were taken to hospital for the injuries they had sustained. December 12th (two days after my 18th birthday) 1988 is a day that will long live on in my memory and not for anything related to my 18th birthday to which celebrations came to an abrupt halt due to the reality of my job. The crash was caused by faulty wiring, which a few months earlier Margaret Thatcher's government had deemed too expensive to fix. I wonder how expensive the victims and victims' families find that cost cutting now.

The hardest job in football

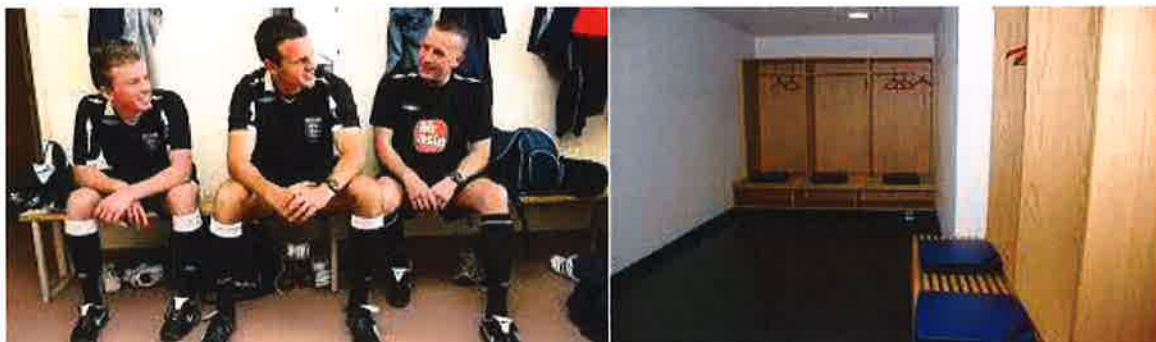
Now you're probably thinking this talk is going to be some tedious explanation as to how being a director or coach is the toughest thing to do ever in the whole wide world, and that's where you would be wrong. I plan on giving you an insight into what I believe to be the most challenging aspect of a football match and that is the job of the referee.

Using my own previous experiences as a match official on the Southern Combination, Ryman U21 and Academy Football Leagues, I aim to give you a "behind the scenes" look at what it is like as referee on a match day starting from the moment you receive confirmation of the match up until to when you hit the whistle to signal the game to commence

So, as many of you expect confirmation of a match taking place come via email by Wednesday latest if the match is to be played on a Saturday. Now the first challenge often comes from here as football coaches find it somewhat difficult to send an accurate postcode to plug into a satnav, instead preferring to send you on some glorified treasure hunt ranging from "do you know these shops" or "just down by that turning". This lack of definite location means that many hours are often spent traipsing through some area or around the same ring road of a town you have never heard of before looking for some hideaway of a football ground.

Once the adventure has been completed and you arrive at the venue the nerves really start kicking in for me personally, however I know of some referees who can just nod off to sleep on the physio table and take no thought of the magnitude of the match.

The next thing to do is to go out and have a walk round and check the pitch, this is also where I will brief my assistants and in the occasion of an exceptionally big match, we would receive a safety brief from the chief steward and the leading police officer. Here is where it is confirmed the action plans and decided courses of action should crowd trouble or any other outside interference occur.



Once satisfied with everything we ~~will~~ go back into the dressing room and receive team sheets from the coaches of either side. This is where you can first gauge the sort of afternoon that lies ahead as a simple judge of character and mood will be testament to whether or not the benches will give you a quiet afternoon or alternatively make it very

hard. Seeing certain individuals with give you that sinking feeling as regardless of what you do they will be on your back

Next up before kick-off is the warm up; I personally enjoy the warmup as the crowd start to filter in causing the atmosphere to build as the buzz of chatter fills the air, it also allows the opportunity to run off some of that nervous energy. My warm-up lasts generally for 20-25 minutes before I then return to the dressing room, which in the case of the official's dressing room is often some converted cupboard which in no way is big enough for 3 large men. On my way in I will try to start some 'banter' with a few players as a friendly face is always welcome on the pitch as the importance of being seen as a human and a friend rather than a robotic enforcer of football laws with no personality. Plus if you're not smiling and having fun then why are we doing it to start with



The quietest and the longest time of all follows as we get changed from our warm-up shirt into our match kit whilst contemplating what is to lay ahead, this time passes deceptively slowly as we are all desperate to get out onto the field and doing what believe we do best, previous witnesses to our games might say otherwise. However, after what feels like an eternity it falls to the referee to push a bell which goes off in the players dressing rooms signalling the time to line up in the tunnel ready to walk out the clatter of studs causes the heart to start pounding as the waiting is nearly over.

This is by far the most exhilarating part of the afternoon when you, as the referee, take the first few paces onto the turf and hear the excitement of the supporters, once the requirement of handshakes is completed and the captains have been briefed, the fun really starts as the expectant crowd and playing staff fall quiet and the whistle makes its debut for the afternoon, I patiently wait however for the barrage of abuse to begin, and trust me when I say that some things said do not belong anywhere near a football pitch.



English coursework commentary

For my coursework, I have written two magazine style articles aimed at different audiences. The first piece is aimed at adult women, who read chat magazines, these magazines have a focus on real life stories which are high action instead of celeb gossip' whereas the second is aimed at young men. The second piece is targeted at football specific magazines such as 'Four Four Two' due to its style.

The first of my two pieces of coursework is named "Blues and Twos" and is a first-hand account of a paramedic at the Clapham rail crash of 1988. The piece was written in the style of a magazine article, as can be seen with features such as images and bullet pointing of major facts. I used this style as it was similar to the features I had seen in publications such as 'Pick me up' and 'Take a Break' magazines.

The target audience for my first piece, being adult women who read chat magazines, uses occupational jargon such as LAS HQ and major incident procedures, which children wouldn't understand. However, adults would have some level of understanding due to media influence and television programmes such as 'Casualty', this benefitting the realism of the piece, and the reader's opinion of my knowledge is strengthened. I don't just rely on member resources however; I use glossing so that all readers are able to understand what I am talking about an example of such glossing is the London Ambulance Service (LAS).

In addition to the occupational jargon I have incorporated occasional graphic descriptions such as "dead and dismembered bodies" and "unrecognisable bodies of victims" the use of lexis such as this, these would not have been suitable for a child audience, however I felt it necessary in order to make the article a true reflection of what it was truly like on the day of the crash. This was a style that I recognised from previous reading of such magazines as by using terminology of this intensity, the story will be more thrilling for the reader and this style of publications often have graphic stories so I know I will not be upsetting anyone.

Also the medical profession uses mainly French Latinate terms to create overt prestige within the service however due to my target audience and the nature of my desired publication I have made the conscious decision to simplify terms so that the text is easier to read without needing to be an expert in medical terminology, this was changed from the first draft where French Latinate terms were used.

In preparation for writing my article, I informally interviewed my dad, who is a paramedic and was called to the incident on the day. I decided not to change many of the more detailed descriptions he gave me in order to keep the piece a true representation of the first hand description. I did however re word so that the article would read as a first person narrative rather than an interview, this is a typical feature of the publications my article is aimed at. These magazines usually have a female narrator to create a bond however on this occasion I have used a male narrative as there were very few women in that line of work at

the time and women are stereotypically attracted to heroism and I decided to use this relationship instead.

I also added a sense of emergency to the text by writing in short paragraphs in chronological order, this is similar to how major incidents are recorded by the emergency services and is a style I have witnessed in other short stories within magazines in order to create a fast paced narrative. This adds a sense of realism but also makes the reader aware of how fast paced the incident was and how quickly new problems were developing. This too would make the text suited to my desired publication due to the additional excitement it causes.

I wanted to include an underlying message which was aimed at government cuts and the Thatcher government. This was achieved through the circular narrative within the piece where the opening and closing exchanges, the first line reads "the radio crackled with news of more spending cuts by Thatcher's government, this time to public transport" and the closing exchange "Margaret Thatcher's government had deemed too expensive to fix. I wonder how expensive the victims and victims' families find that cost cutting now" both are on the topic of government cuts and the consequences of savage cost cutting. This message, I feel, has been carefully weaved within the entertainment and informative functions of the article and can be related to with the cuts of the current Tory Government.

My second article was named "The Hardest Job in Football" and is a behind the scenes look at the world of football refereeing. The target audience for the second piece is young men interested in football; this is because the article is aimed at the football specific magazine "Four Four Two" which shares this target audience. The title uses a superlative by claiming it is the "hardest". This will help generate interest and personify the text. In preparation for writing my article, I read articles from the previously mentioned magazine's website as well as reading the sports pages of a number of tabloid newspapers. By doing this, I learnt what style to write my article in and consequently feel that I have been successful in making the piece suitable for the target audience and desired publication.

Throughout the article I have used humour as I feel that was important in retaining the interest of young men. The humour elements that I have used are not overly complicated and help the piece keep its 'easy read' style whilst maintaining interest and showing some of my own personality within the text, it is also a style that I have observed in my research as dry humour is very common in publications aimed at men. "Using my own previous experiences as a match official" is a good example of my own experiences and personality being the basis for the article. I felt that my personality coming through was also important as the article is based on my experiences and occupation so it is important that the audience can associate with me in order to take the most enjoyment from the piece. I used Tannen's theory here by awarding myself status so that men will admire and respect me.

I have used football specific jargon throughout the piece such as "Southern Combination, Ryman U21" as these are phrases which rely heavily on member's resources in some

instances which the target audience should understand but those who do not follow football closely may find it hard with some connotations, this makes the piece more descriptive and informative despite making it slightly exclusive for those who do not follow football, this wouldn't have been a problem however due to the articles placement in a football magazine. This use of jargon can create convergence between myself and the football followers' subgroup and diverge from the general population.

I decided to finish the article with a play on words (expectant crowd and playing staff fall quiet and the whistle makes its debut for the afternoon I patiently wait however for the barrage of abuse to begin), I decided to use this metaphor as I feel that referees are seen more as a whistle than a human. In order to keep the text entertaining and humorous throughout but if you look deeper it was written to show the expected abuse referees get. I feel that my text has been successful in achieving its function of entertaining and in its secondary objective of helping the audience to sympathise with referees.

Finally, during my text, I have used direct address such as "I aim to give you" in order to interact on a personal level with the audience but also to ensure that my personality is consistent throughout the text as appears as though I am directly talking to the readers. This would help maintain interest in the article as the readers would feel personally involved which was my desired outcome.

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