

Twitter Thread by Dr Catherine Pemble is #SocialDistancing



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@CatherinePemble



Right, screw it. Here's a thread on *that* FBLive by Alex Cairnie about #Govanhill. Lets do a watch-through shall we? (Mind, I'm a resident of Govanhill, and a sociologist. I'm also 5'3, and a visibly queer woman so if half his claims are true I should be living in terror)

00:30: Welcomes viewers and uses points out that his videos are only getting attention b/c they're 'horrific'. Directs folk to his Youtube page. So already clout hunting.

1:08: "I've been warned to stay out of Govanhill. I'm a marked man" (proceeds to use a beanie as a disguise)

1:30 "Laughing and joking aside, here's somebodys front garden." Proceeds to show litter and claim its thrown from windows and this is 'common'. I know a handful of streets with litter issues like this, but its neither common nor unique to #govanhill and other deprived areas.

2:10 "Don't be under any illusion I'm only showing you the bad bits" - only shows you the bad bits.

3:45: He's had offers of help, but hes said no because hes not responsible for 'anybody elses safety' Good lord.

5:01: "Its not that bad. But its not all good either" -Correct

6:00: TW: child abuse - He starts claiming to have been contacted by a health professional and told about child abuse 'in the area'. Huge ethical issues here as the 'professional' who has 'been in the game a long time' is reporting to Facebook Dude and not authorities.

IF healthcare workers are seeing children with these kinds of injuries, there are reporting channels for this. Non-partisan channels. Non-political channels. The purposes of this anecdote is to make the viewer upset. "If thats not making you sick [...] there's something wrong"

"Thats why I'm down here." So lets be clear. He's now claiming that he's a p*dophile hunter. "It's probably happening everywhere, in every street in Scotland and England." Then moves from this straight into reports that engineers, tradies, gasmen etc cant go to #Govanhill alone

Apart from the fact that the tradies I've had in must be livid they none of them had their safty buddy, lets look at why these two points are slammed together. One is a high emotion claim re: child abuse (not specific to GH) the other is specific "Its a part of the culture"

And then we're straight into "Now I'm not racist but...".

Let critical thinking prevail here. If we accept that child abuse is everywhere- why focus on Govanhill? Why pivot to "the culture"? Its an attempt to tie two factors together and tanish BME residents by implication.

(We pause at 8:22 to make a big deal about 'two guys pointing at me at the same time, eh?'. Mate. You're making huge accusations about their community thats being passed around social media. No f'king wonder they're pissed. *IM* pissed.)

8:45 we can all take a break to have a laugh, because its not safe in Govanhill because "they're all carrying blades and theyll use them in 2 seconds flat". As if knife crime isnt a (well publicised) problem across Glasgow. So again lets think about why he's emphasising this HERE

9:36 we do actually get a good point- there have been huge litter issues in the area since lockdown, mostly due to reduced collections and a complete stop on bulk uplifts until very recently. Glasgow City Council are *finally* working on it now... so its good to the them out

He tries to 'have a chinwag' with the binmen. By blocking the lorry moving forward, and wanting to chat (all maskless) in the middle of COVID. Funnily enough, they're working and not up for that. He leaves. Claims the driver said they cannae talk about this" (no audio of this)

11:05 a young person is seen heading into the a close. Claims they're running away' as they're 'selling crack'. You hear the alarm of the close door when he approaches- not sure why this is played as a sign of ellicit activities and not someone heading in as normal?

12:15 he picks up on something that I did find odd when I moved to GH; men do often meet outside and hang around chatting for hours. He links this to crime- I always suspected they'd been kicked out while kids came home & were fed, and they potentially didnt want to be in pubs...

Yanno. Given the number of Mosques in the area and Islam's stance on alcohol.

So a difference, yes. Did I (a 5'3" white woman) ever have any issues living in the exact area he's in? No. Never. Doesn't mean it never happens (right enough) but its not as hes painting it.

"They live in intimidation. This is what these guys practice" He knows the guy in the centre of the group due to his "distinct eyes". We move from here to "He's got piercing [...] eyes. Almost vampire eyes". So we're shifting hard to cast BME residents as 1) a threat 2) monsters

Which he then links to "But I'm not the one selling children." and then the link back to rubbish in the street.

So we've made the link between rubbish in the street -> BME Communities -> Monsters -> Child abuse -> Child sex trafficking.

(Sidebar, he makes a note here he 'makes a habit of walking into random closes'. As a resident this behaviour makes me EXTREMELY anxious and is one of the things that tends to get flagged quick on community FB pages as people assume folks are prowling for homes to hit)

(His argument that you're 'allowed to do this because they're multiple occupancy so you're not committing an offense' might be true (legally speaking) but as a close dweller this is rage inducingly rude. Dont do this.)

We then move into claiming that problem neighbours lower property values in GH. This is true- but given his construction of the BME community thus far we can assume he means BME folk = bad.

He also says Govanhill 'used to be a good area'. Which. Honestly. What.

He then has a wee rant about how we shouldn't have sympathy for the residents of GH because they don't clear up their gardens. Because human compassion is contingent on behaving in a certain way and not owed to people as a f'king standard.

Here's where we hit the racism. "They'll destroy anything thats good." "This is a culture" "For anyone whose not been in Romania- its a culture" So he's now picked a particular group to blame. Note this comes out of left field even in his own train of thought.

"Every single close has had its secure entry kicked in" - not true. I lived on Langside road (where he saw the group of men) and our door was never kicked in. Not once. So does it happen? Sure. 'Every close'? No.

"Its a distructive place" for "good people" ... uhuh.

"They're unsellable" "Whose going to spend 30-40-50k on a two bedroom flat down here." I was legitimately on Alison Street (in the video) for a 2 bedroom flat being valued at over 90k. At least do a cursory zoopla check before spouting off.

Lets be clear- there's no guarentee you wont have problematic neighbours WHEREVER you are. There are whole TV shows that hinge on this. (Also 'all the security doors have been kicked in' falls over as he approaches one & cant get in).

"I'm thinking about trying to get a resident to speak. Some older people or a lollipop lady" But given as he's already passed plenty of residents, we know he doesn't just mean a resident. He wants a sympathetic white person to try and make a victim out of. (Reminder: I LIVE HERE)

"I'm coming back at night time" "Night time is the time to be here" "Like rats. They love the dark. The rats that live down here come out in the dark and they congregate." But he's already shown us the 'congregating' he's worried about. So we're now solidly on BME folk -> Vermin.

(He notes again that there are men staring at him. He implies its because they've seen the video. Remember he's also a guy whos been filming and trying random close doors for 15 minutes at this point. So could there be a reason for the watchfulness? I'd say aye. I'd be watching)

19:10 "This is basically every street" (he's talking about rubbish again) and pivots to blame Nicola Sturgeon. Then says 'but thats not my agenda'. (Odd to bring it up then, but ok.)

He then goes on to repeat that residents dont care & dont deserve sympathy b/c of trash

"The giveaway is the locals walk past this stuff and dont shake their heads."

So not only are GH residents bad because there's litter, but they're bad because they dont put on a performance every time they see it. They're not 'doing' being sorry in the right way.

We then get a bizzare claim that takeaway owners pour oil into gardens (???).

He then focuses on the Property4You signs that have been up for months. "I dont think landlords are the problem."

This is a great example. He doesnt care what residents think. Hes has The Answer.

(The answer is 'stop having a BME community' apparently).

He then starts a nice line on 'wont you think of the children' because the front gardens have trash "they're expected to play here." No they're not. Multiple parks & green spaces in the area.

Also remember that he hasn't managed to show us a bad back court- only messy front courts. He claims this waste comes from above & isnt at least partly from passers by. (Which it is- esp. on the corners with a takeaway. You can see the containers on the video. But no matter.)

22:30 he shows what looks like construction waste and shakes his head. (Again, we've only just had bulk uplift services restart after being stopped in March.)

"In every single block in this area there are children being exploited". Think about the sheer scale of this claim. Just for a minute. Think about the sheer SCALE of what he's saying.

Is there child abuse? Yes. Will there be abuse in GH? Yes- its everywhere. More & less visible.

Does it need awareness, and action? YES. /But/ given that he's spent his time linking trash -> BME folk, BME folk -> Monsters we can assume he's not intending to take city wide action. He's coming for the BME residents of GH & hes not subtle about it.

24:00 is his convo with bin men. He tries to press them on child abuse but gets a vague "oh aye". But the evidence they give is (surprise surprise) about cleanliness.

(Also, its a 'one old guy saw someone taking a \$hite out a top flat'. Which might be true but feels like the kind of tale that grows legs as it does the round.)

"There's brothels in every street" - This is a new claim for him but I cant pick out the response (24:15ish)

He also claims the binmen have to wear special gloves because of needles etc- I feel like this is probably true, but also probably standard attire to keep binmen safe? (I'd love to know from someone who knows regs on this one though)

We then head into a tangent about human waste and a pile of nappies, and how long that must have taken to build up. He *imagines* this has been the work of months, stored 'in the landing' then thrown from top story flats.

(We'll ignore other ways binbags get ripped open, like vermin etc. He might be right, he might be wrong, we don't know). He does raise the tiniest bit of a good point though. Environmental health should respond & help in GH.

Do I think they don't because of intimidation? No. Where's my evidence? 1) lived experience, but 2) he's already spoken to the bin-men. Clearly GCC sends people into the area for (at least) some tasks. But that doesn't fit the narrative he's weaving so he ignores it.

I'd actually love to hear from [@GlasgowCC](#) about his claim at 26:00 that business owners aren't approached about waste practices. (This is presumably easy to shut down with records etc.) (Also if they're not, GCC that's a matter for action. But anyway).

By 27:00 he's turned back to child abuse- but it's important to note his claims are NOT specific to Govanhill. He's furious about high profile cases (Rolf Harris, Jimmy Saville etc)- and quite rightly. Abuse SHOULD be a priority. We SHOULD act. But his link to GH is nonsense.

He says child abuse in GH is run by "the type of criminals at a level that they basically control this entire community" and that the police "don't have a handle on it".

He links this back to the men standing watching him. "I'm supposed to feel fear".

Remember he's looped this area at least twice now (given the shops he's passed). He's filming, streaming live, and claiming they're vampires, rats and child abusers- all straight onto FB. But obviously they're looking at him for 'exposing' them, not due to his activity or his claims.

By 29:00 he's showing off one of the fruit shops in the area. We have A LOT of these. But of course he suggests this is ONLY possible because they're paying for protection. His evidence for this is... ?

The end of the video he emphasises he's not scared, and walks back past the group he's described before. (The guy with supposedly vampire eyes) - he says he's going to 'go back'. Which only makes sense if you don't know Govanhill is pretty much a grid.

Then he closes by turning his focus back to the Roma community. He's going to 'reveal more interesting stuff' about the vans (there's 10 in every street apparently which... what?) They supposedly arrive at 7am, 20/25 guys climb out. "Where have they been all night?"

So if we take aside the fact that this guy clearly has a very specific axe to grind with the Roma community in GH- do the math on that. 10x25 is 250 people. In every street in Govanhill. Every morning at 7am. Aye. Ok.

Now there actually (maybe) a point here about BME folks in GH being taken advantage of by employers. Maybe they are working cash in hand in shite jobs overnight for "£3/£4 an hour". BUT then it's an issue of abusive and predatory employment practices.

If residents in GH are so strapped as to be relying on that kind of wave working overnight, still stuck in overcrowded homes as he claims Then they need HELP. They're being exploited and I have 0 time for this victim blaming.

(Interesting that he's looped back to predatory/abusive renting practices. We know that IS an issue- but remember earlier in the stream he laughed at the community's effort to raise awareness to it via the Property4You flyer. Again, HE has the answer. GH folk clearly dont)

And then hes back to the child abuse. But (again) think about this claim. He says there's 20/25 people in 2 bed flats and this leads to child abuse. But we know abusers work by keeping things secret & private. They deal in shame and silence.

I'm actually more concerned that he thinks there's such a straight link between adults and children being in proximity to one another and child abuse. He implies that alcohol use will automatically lead to abuse- but we know logically not every adult who drinks behaves this way?

If the arguement really that the *only thing* standing between most adults and committing sexual offenses against children is opportunity, then... I dont even know what to say to that. He says it as if this link is common sense. It isn't. Christ.

So thats it. Someone else can do the next breakdown. Key takeaways though.

Works hard to link uncleanliness -> BME people to show a lack of 'decency'.

He links that lack of decency to child abuse.

He claims that the men in the street are evidence of intimidation

These are the same men he vilifies and dehumanises throughout.

He wants to draw a link between the litter in Govanhill, the presence of BME minorities, and child abuse. But he has no evidence of these links- all of his claims are designed to play on emotion. All of them.

And why is this important? Because if he legitimately had evidence of mass child exploitation and abuse, and he was stotering around #Govanhill smirking into the camera rather than talking to [@GreaterGlasgPol](#) or volunteering with activists/charities to take direct action...

Well. I don't have any polite words for what kind of person that would make him.

Child abuse is a crime. We are all responsible, we should all take meaningful action. What we shouldn't do is farm peoples emotions for clout & pour hate on BME folk to do it.