



The Railway Forum

12 Grosvenor Place
London SW1X 7HH

Press Release

4 November 2004

Telephone: 020 7259 6543

Facsimile: 020 7259 6544

email: railinfo@railwayforum.com

For immediate use

'WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLETELY FAILS AS SERIOUS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING' SAYS THE RAILWAY FORUM

'BBC HAS GOT TO CONSIDER BASIC STANDARDS OF JOURNALISM FOR SAKE OF OWN CREDIBILITY'

The Railway Forum is deeply disturbed at the way in which the BBC has failed to communicate with the railway industry in the preparation of Thursday's *Whistleblower* programme.

Ahead of the programme *Whistleblower* has made some deeply disturbing allegations, the most profoundly serious of which is that the maintenance of the railways is putting 'passengers' lives at risk'.

The railway industry has not been given any serious opportunity to reply to these allegations. Network Rail, in common with the rest of the industry, has safety as its number one priority. Indeed *Whistleblower* journalists, even when told by qualified staff during their time on site why perceived faults did not create safety hazards, brushed these assessments aside and chose to use their own subjective judgement.

The *Whistleblower* production team seem to have only one priority: to grab the headlines whatever the facts. This is not journalism; it is just shoddy work that would make a good *Whistleblower* subject in itself.

'Courageous investigative reporting has a long and honourable history' says Adrian Lyons, Director General of The Railway Forum. 'The *Whistleblower* team have completely failed to live up to these standards. They have brushed aside genuine and honest attempts by Network Rail and others to deal with their very serious and damaging allegations. This has brought *Whistleblower* to a point where its credibility must be called into question'.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors:

1. *Whistleblower* is broadcast at 9.00pm on BBC ONE on Thursday 4 November. The comments and analysis in this press release are largely based on Danny Penman's article in the Daily Mail on Tuesday 2 November and a BBC press release of 2 November embargoed until 0001hrs 3 November. This is as a result of the industry being refused adequate access to the content of the broadcast.
2. The Railway Forum is an industry-wide body sponsored by the majority of the train operating companies as well as Network Rail, all three major rolling stock leasing companies, the Passenger Transport Executives, London Underground, most of the infrastructure maintenance companies and many manufacturing and other businesses serving the UK rail industry. In all we have some 50 members. Our key role is to act as a think tank, information exchange and point of contact for those committed to and interested in our industry.

For more information call:

Adrian Lyons at The Railway Forum

Tel: 020 7259 6543 or 07775992348 Fax: 020 7259 6544

Email: railinfo@railwayforum.com