1	Tuesday, 15 February 2022	1		today on behalf of the Chair. Could you give your
2	(10.00 am)	2		full name, please.
3	(Proceedings delayed)	3	A.	Margery Lorraine Williams.
4	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Can I take it from that that now people	4	Q.	Ms Williams, in front of you there should be a witness
5	can see me as well, Mr Blake?	5		statement. Can I ask you to look at that witness
6	MR BLAKE: We can, yes.	6		statement. It should be dated January 11 of this
7	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, good morning to everyone and	7		year; is that correct?
8	I congratulate everyone involved with the technology	8	A.	Correct.
9	in ensuring that we're starting more or less promptly	9	Q.	And if you turn to the back page, there will be your
10	this morning. So that's very good. I think we have	10		signature; is that right?
11	four witnesses today; is that correct, Mr Blake.	11	A.	Yes.
12	MR BLAKE: That's correct, yes.	12	Q.	And can you confirm that that statement is true to the
13	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Then over to you to get going. Thanks	13		best of your knowledge and belief?
14	very much.	14	A.	Yes.
15	MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, Chair.	15	Q.	I'm going to start today by asking you a little bit
16	MARGERY LORRAINE WILLIAMS, sworn	16		about your background. Can you tell us how old you
17	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Before Mr Blake starts, Ms Williams,	17		are now?
18	very nice to see you from afar but I'm listening	18	A.	I'm 55 now.
19	intently to every word. I'm sure you'll understand	19	Q.	Can you tell where you're from?
20	that.	20	A.	Originally from the Llyn Peninsula but now I live in
21	A. Yes, thank you.	21		Anglesey.
22	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, Mr Blake.	22	Q.	Your husband is here?
23	Questioned by MR BLAKE	23	A.	Yes.
24	MR BLAKE: Good morning. As the Chair's explained, I'm	24	Q.	And I believe you have a daughter as well?
25	Julian Blake and I'm going to be asking questions	25	A.	Yes.
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- Q. And she's 21 years old now? 1
- 2 A. Yes, yes.
- 3 **Q.** Before becoming a subpostmistress, what did you do?
- 4 A. I was a warden for the elderly working for the local
- 5 council looking after 21 bungalows. I was also
- 6 fostering with my husband.
- 7 **Q.** You said you were a warden.
- 8 A.
- 9 Q. Did that involve living in the accommodation as well?
- 10 We had a house, yes, with work and it was like 11 a little estate with 21 bungalows.
- 12 Q. And you became a subpostmistress in April 2009.
- A. Yes. 13
- 14 Q. Where was that?
- 15 A. In the village -- in the same village where we lived.
- 16 Q. And how did you go about purchasing that? How much 17 money did you pay?
- 18 **A.** We gave £5,000 towards the subpostmistress that was 19 there just for the goods that were there.
- 20 Q. Can you describe for us the location, what kind of 21 a place it is?
- 22 A. It's only a small village. Bus goes through every
- 23 couple of hours and that's the only shop Post Office 24
- 25 Q. In your first few years of operating that Post Office,

- did you enjoy the job? 1
- 2 A. Yes. I loved being part of the community because 3 I used to work in the after school club, in the youth
- 4 club. So I was very much involved with the village.
- 5 Q. Did you receive training as part of --
- 6 A. At the beginning before I started and then when
- 7 Horizon came, I had, like, nearly five days, but it's
- 8 a very quiet Post Office, so it was just training if
- 9 and when customers would come in.
- 10 Q. We'll move on to the problems that you experienced 11 with Horizon. Horizon Online was installed in
- 12 July 2010. What did you use before that?
- 13 It was just the ordinary computer.
- 14 In simple terms, can you tell us the difference
- 15 between Horizon Online for you and what you used
- 16 before?
- Less paperwork, you know, dockets and stuff like that, 17
- 18 less of that. It was all on the computer. So you had 19 nothing to go back on.
- 20 We've heard yesterday about shortfalls. Did you
- 21 experience shortfalls?
- 22 Yes, I did, yes.
- 23 Initially, how often did you experience shortfalls?
- 24 Say, once a month, couple of months. A.
- 25 What did you do about that? Did you call the

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1 helpline?

- 2 A. I did call the helpline a couple of times. I was
- 3 experiencing problems with the electricity as well and
- 4 they said, "Well, it's your building, you're renting
- 5 the building, you've got to sort that out", and I was
- 6 trying to tell them, well, every time there was
- 7 a fault with electricity there was -- the system was
- 8 slow coming back on and it might be take half a day
- 9 before the system was back online.
- 10 Q. Did you find the helpline helpful?
- 11 **A.** No, not at all --
- 12 **Q.** Why not?
- 13 A. -- not in my experience. Because what they were
- saying it was a fault with the electricity. I was
- 15 renting a property so, in other words, you sort it out
- 16 yourself.
- 17 **Q.** I'm going to take you chronologically through one
- 18 particular shortfall, starting in February 2011. Do
- 19 you recall that shortfall and how much it was?
- 20 A. Briefly. It was between £2,000 and £3,000.
- 21 **Q.** And on that occasion, did you call the helpline?
- 22 **A.** No. From past experience, and I thought it must be
- 23 there. That amount, it's got to be there, so I'll
- 24 just try looking for it myself.
- 25 Q. By March 2011, what had happened to that shortfall?

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Q. Again, moving chronologically, on 27 June 2011 you met

- 1 2 **A**.
- 3 **A.** Yes.

with investigators; is that right?

- 4 Q. Do you remember where that was?5 A. Was that the one in Rhyl? Yes, that was the one in
- 6 Rhyl, yes.
- 7 **Q.** And where's that, sorry?
- 8 **A.** Rhyl.

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- 9 **Q**. "Tril"?
- 10 **A.** Rhyl.
- 11 **Q.** Can you tell us a little bit about that meeting?
- 12 **A.** I had to go on in there and they were just asking me
- 13 questions, where'd the money gone and if I knew
- 14 anything about it but, on the other hand, saying, you
- 15 know, "Don't worry about it, it will be sorted". They
- 16 kept telling me don't worry.
- 17 Q. How did you feel at that stage?
- 18 A. I was worried because I thought it's got to be
- 19 somewhere but the breakdown they gave me, that was
- 20 weird because it wasn't just in cash, it was stock as
- 21 well and I thought: there's something wrong here.
- Q. Is that because your Post Office was particularlysmall?
- 24 A. Yes, yes.
- 25 Q. You had a further meeting with investigators on

1 A. It had doubled -- more or less had doubled and, again,

- 2 the worst thing I did was not ask for help. I didn't
- 3 mention anything to my husband, to my family because
- 4 I thought -- I felt stupid because thought it must be
- 5 me, it must be something I'm doing wrong.
 - Q. Did you have any idea what was going wrong?
 - e. Did you have any laca what was going wron
 - A. No, not at all.
- 8 $\,$ **Q.** The audit and subsequent investigation, the auditors
- 9 arrived in June 2011. Can you describe the
- 10 conversation that you had with the auditors?
- 11 **A.** I remember that morning very well. They just turned
- up saying they wanted to do an audit and I mentionedto them "I think there is a problem". It was like
- to them "I think there is a problem". It was like
 a little locked up unit for the Post Office so they
 - a little looked up affil for the rost office so they
 - told me to go out and both of them went in there and
 - then they came up with this figure and they asked me
- 17 where it was and I said "I don't know, I haven't --
- 18 you know, I don't know where it is", and they just
- 19 took the keys off me, and suspended me there and then.
- 20 **Q.** Do you remember, in broad terms, what that figure was?
- 21 **A.** Just over 14,000.
- 22 **Q.** £14,000?
- 23 A. Yes, just over, yes.
- 24 Q. Just over. You said that you were suspended?
- 25 **A.** Yes.

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- 30 June. Do you remember where that was?
- A. That was in Bangor Royal Mail sorting office.
- 3 Q. Now, we know that, by that stage, 2009, there had been
- 4 reporting in, for example, the Computer Weekly about
- 5 problems with Horizon. Did you discuss any problems
- 6 with Horizon at that meeting with investigators?
- 7 A. I told them "It can't be me because I haven't taken
- 8 it". I did say "It must be a problem" -- I didn't
- 9 actually say Horizon, but the computer system.
- 10 **Q.** Were you led to believe that there were more people affected or not?
- 12 A. No, I was the only one. It's never happened before,
- so I was the only one; that's what they kept telling
- 14 me
- 15 **Q.** Things moved on from that location, I think they went
- to your home after that, is that right?
- 17 A. First of all, my car was parked outside, they searched
- my car and then they followed me home to search the
- 19 home we were at the time. They both came in and
- 20 I remember -- I know it's a bit daft -- but I remember
- 21 them sitting down and one having a cup of tea and the
- 22 other one having a squash. They came to look through
- 23 my house supposedly, they never moved from the living
- 24 room. They did ask for bank account details and,

25 again, they kept telling me not to worry, it will be

- 1 sorted.
- 2 Q. Again, did you worry?
- 3 A. Of course I worried because there was figures and they 4 were trying to say that I'd taken money but, on the 5 other hand, they were saying don't worry about it.
- 6 Q. In terms of your contract with the Post Office, what 7 was the result of that investigation?
- 8 A. I think they terminated my contract, was it in July? 9 Yes
- 10 Q. What happened to your shop?
- 11 A. Well, I kept the shop going and I phoned the
- 12 Post Office and I begged them to get somebody in to
- 13 run the Post Office because I knew how important it
- 14 was for the village because, like I said, there was
- 15 only buses going every couple of hours. You had a lot
- 16 of pensioners who depended on the Post Office and they
- 17 said they would get somebody in and, because I was
- 18 paying rent for the building and it was like a little
- 19 unit, whoever took the Post Office over would pay
- 20 a bit of rent to help me with -- but they never paid
- 21 me a penny. But I just left it. 22

And it took them two weeks to get somebody into 23 the Post Office for me.

- 24 Q. Were you still paying for the rent?
- 25 A. Yes, yes.

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- A. I didn't want to go to jail because I knew my friend
- 2 Noel had been and I didn't want to leave my daughter
- 3 and I thought, at least, you know, I'll be coming 4 home, hopefully.
- 5 Q. So you took that bargain, in effect?
- 6 A. Yes, because I knew I hadn't taken the money.
- 7 Q. On 3 May 2012, you were sentenced?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 **Q.** Can you tell us what punishment you received?
- 10 A. Do you know, I don't remember a lot of this.
 - I remember being in this cubicle with this lady. My
- 12 husband told me a bit about what they've said. He did
- 13 say that I was of good character and I had quite a few
- 14 references and he knew that I'd never be in court
- 15 again and he did mention, apparently, that he did ask
- 16 the Post Office people if this was the Horizon system 17 again.

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And when he did sentence me, I just turned round to this lady and said "What does that mean?" and she said "It means you're going home".

- 21 Q. So you recall the judge actually mentioning the 22 possibility that it was Horizon again?
- 23 A. I personally don't. My husband does, because he 24
- 25 Q. Did you think that you might go to prison?

Moving on to the prosecution, October 2011, do you 2 remember what you were charged with?

3 A. Theft. That was in Holyhead, after my first court 4 appearance.

- 5 So your first appearance was in Holyhead?
- 6 Α.
- 7 Q. What other courts did you go to?
- 8 We went to Caernarfon and I went to Mold and the final
- 9 one was in Caernarfon.
- 10 Q. Was that the Crown Court?
- 11 A. Yes.

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- 12 Q. You have mentioned in your statement a plea bargain
- 13 and we've heard a little bit about this yesterday.
- 14 Can you tell us what happened there?
- 15 A. Well, on my first visit -- not visit -- to Caernarfon
- 16 I had Judge Roderick and he read my statement and he
- 17 looked at me and he said "Money's gone" -- because
 - I was pleading not guilty, and he goes "Money's gone,
- 19 go out and have a rethink about your plea".

So I had to go out and my barrister had talked to the Post Office people and she came back and she

- 22 said "If you plead guilty to false accounting and
- 23 fraud they will drop the theft charge and hopefully
- 24 you won't go to jail".
 - What did you think about that?

- Yeah. 1 A.
 - Had you prepared for prison that day?
- 3 Yeah, packed a bag, which my husband had and, in my
- 4 coat pocket, I had a locket with my daughter's
 - picture.
- 6 How old was your daughter at that time?
- 7 Α, Ten, ten.
- 8 What sentence did you receive?
- 9 It was a 52-week jail sentence, 18 months' suspended
- 10 with probation, and 200 hours. But when I went
- 11 from -- after I was sentenced, I was going into
- 12
- another room with the barrister and she said to me 13
- "When you go to probation, remember, don't tell them 14 that you're not guilty, because if you tell them that
- 15 they'll take you back and they'll put you in jail".
- 16 So you had regular meetings with probation services?
- 17 Yes, it was supposed to be weekly, then every
- 18 fortnightly and every month for the time. I was going
 - weekly because I was always breaking down because
- 20 I was having to lie to them and they thought I wasn't
- 21 coping, which I wasn't coping, but they didn't know
- 22 why, really, about it. I was humiliated because they
- 23 were trying to teach me how to budget money and stuff
- 24 like that, and it just felt awful.
- 25 Another part of your sentence was that you had to do

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- 1 some unpaid work?
- 2 A. Yeah.

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- 3 Q. Where did you work?
- 4 A. Well, when I went to probation, one of the ladies 5 there, the first lady I saw, she looked at my case and 6 she said "You won't be able to go into any charity 7 shops to work or anything like that after what you've 8 done". Luckily, this lady that lives in our village, 9 and she was the HR manager of a charity. It's a farm 10 on the island that work with disabled people, young 11 disabled people, and she phoned probation place and 12 she asked if I could go and do my hours there with
- 14 Q. So what kind of work did you do?

them, and that's what I did.

- 15 A. It was just a lot of recycling, looking after the 16 disabled people and it was just working on the farm.
- 17 **Q.** Now, your conviction and sentence were overturned in 18 April of last year. We're now going to talk about the 19 impact on you: first financial and then personal. In 20 terms of financial, can you remember approximately how 21 much you had to pay back to the Post Office?
- 22 Α. Think it was, like, 14,660-something.
- 23 **Q.** So about £14,000?
- 24 A. Yes, yes.

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25 Q. How did you manage to pay it?

- 1 Well, we had a little house that we bought in the 2 village but, at the time we bought it, I was the only 3 one that was employed so it was in my name, so my 4 husband had to buy me out. Anyway, I wasn't allowed 5 to be on the mortgage because I was deemed as a risk 6 and with him being old as well, we had to take -- he 7 had to take the mortgage for shorter years, so our 8 mortgage payments quadrupled.
- So if we think about one of the things we don't often 10 think about, in terms of impact, you actually had to pay more for your mortgage because you were seen as 12 more risky?
- 13 A. Yes, yes. I wasn't supposed to be in the house 14 because it was deemed a risk and then my husband had 15 to work all the hours taking overtime because he was 16 worried we'd lose the house if he couldn't make the 17
- 18 You have mentioned before that you had a job as Q. 19 a warden. What happened to that?
- 20 I was suspended while the trial was going. I was allowed to stay there and then I was reinstated but, 22 within a month, one or two of the residents weren't 23 happy that I was still there because I didn't have 24 a clean DBS, you know the CRB, and it wasn't a cleared 25 one. So I lost my job in the October.

- 1 Q. So you had lost your job because you had a criminal 2 conviction?
 - A. Yes, yes, and we lost our home as well.
- 4 Q. I was going to say, what was the impact of losing that 5 job because you have told us that you lived on-site?
- 6 A. Yes, it was horrendous, because it was like a little 7 village for us and my daughter had grown up from the 8 age of one, until nearly 11. Yes, so we had a little 9 house in the village that we were renting out, but it 10 was only, you know, a small little house. Luckily, we 11 had that because the council people didn't want to 12 know, they just wanted us out.
- 13 **Q.** Did your conviction impact on obtaining a future job? 14 Yeah, yeah, because didn't have a clean DBS. 15 I honestly thought nobody would ever employ me again. 16 My sister-in-law was at a local pub one weekend on 17 a Sunday, and they were advertising for drivers for 18 meals on wheels, and she said I was looking for work, 19 and these people were good friends with Noel Thomas, 20 so they knew what had happened and they knew the 21 truth, really, and they employed me, to start with 22 15 hours a week, which ended up doing over 40 hours 23 a week, seven days a week, just to get money in to try
 - Q. Did you have any other jobs?

and help my husband financially.

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1 The charity that I worked for advertised a job for 2 a support worker. I applied thinking "Oh, they won't

3 employ me", but fair play they did employ me, even

4 though they did have trouble with the council because 5 of my CRB. They were very good with me and I worked 6

there for five years.

Moving on to the personal impact, what impact has this all had on your physical health?

9 A. I've got type 2 diabetes now and I've got -- it 10 doesn't look like it but I've got scarring alopecia, 11 which means when the hair's gone, it won't be

12 replaced. That's why I'm ages in the morning trying

13 to get my hair just right. I was a recluse,

14 I wouldn't go out. I still don't feel I'm the same 15 person and I do get angry at times.

- 16 Psychologically, what's the impact?
- 17 I just don't trust anybody anymore. It's really 18 difficult.
- 19 Q. You have described the local community -- some of the 20 local community, the local council especially --21 taking a different approach to you. What about more
- 22 broadly amongst friends and --23 Α. No, no. They've kept away. They have kept away.
- 24 I have a couple I used to babysit for. They have
- 25 backed me all the way and he said to me,

- 1 1 "Unfortunately, it doesn't matter what happens now money. I want them to feel the way I felt and the way 2 people have made up their minds". 2 we suffered financially. 3 Q. We've heard that you had a young daughter. What was 3 Q. Is there anything you would like to add at all? 4 the impact on her? 4 A. I just want somebody to be accountable because it's 5 She was bullied in school and she self-harmed as well. 5 just gone on for so long and people are hiding. 6 6 **Q.** How about your husband? Somebody's got to be accountable for this. 7 7 A. He was obviously -- no problems at all, then he was MR BLAKE: Chair, do you have any questions? 8 diagnosed with cancer. We've had to go through that, 8 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, thank you, Mr Blake. I think you 9 9 have covered everything that was in Mrs Williams' all the treatments, and he's still on treatments. 10 10 Q. Have you received compensation? statement that I'd like to hear about. 11 **A.** I've had the interim payments, yes, but we haven't 11 Mrs Williams, thank you very much for taking the 12 touched it. We've had advice and we've put it --12 trouble to come to give evidence. It's a long way 13 saved it because we're scared because it says on that 13 from Anglesey to London, as I know from personal 14 piece of paper from the Post Office in little writing 14 experience, but I'm very grateful to you for the 15 15 evidence you've given. Thank you. that if they decide I'm not -- I've only been awarded 16 half of this, they'll want it back, and we're 16 A. Thank you very much. 17 petrified because we've had to struggle financially 17 MR BLAKE: Thank you, Chair. We'll take a 15-minute break 18 and we don't want -- you know, we don't want to touch 18 now .so we'll come back at 10.45. 19 it at the moment. 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, certainly. That's fine by me. 20 **Q.** A question that was asked of witnesses yesterday: what 20 (10.27 am) 21 would you like from the Post Office? 21 (A short break) 22 22 (10.46 am) A. This is a very difficult, in a way, question to 23 answer. At first, yes, I want them to go to jail for 23 **DAMIAN PETER OWEN (affirmed)**
- A. It's Damian Peter Owen. 1
- 2 Q. You have in front of you a witness statement, dated 3 13 January of this year. If I could ask you to have

what they've done but then that would be an easy life

for them. They'd come out and they'd still have their

- 4 a look at the final page of that witness statement, is
- 5 that your signature on the final page?
- 6 A. Yes.

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- 7 Q. Can you confirm that that statement is true to the 8 best of your knowledge and belief?
- 9 A. Yes, to the best of my recollection and belief, yes, 10
- 11 Q. I'm going to start with your background. Can you tell 12 us where you were born?
- 13 A. I was born in Wrexham in 1983. Shortly afterwards, my 14 parents moved to Anglesey, where their families lived 15 anyway, where they originated from and just lived in 16 a small village there in Menai Bridge for the first
- 17 30-odd years of my life.
- 18 **Q.** What did your family do for a living?
- 19 A. My Dad managed a shop and then, for a couple of years, 20 my Mum went to work with him and then she took over
- 21 a Post Office, which is how I ended up in the
- 22 Post Office in the end and it kind of went on from 23 there.
- 24 Q. When Mr Beer opened and he mentioned that some 25 witnesses have close connection with the Post Office,

- 1 yours goes back to your childhood; is that right?
- 2 A. Yes, yes certainly my teenage years onwards, yes.

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MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give us your full

3 **Q.** When did you start work?

name, please?

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- 4 A. I started helping -- what Post Office-wise or in 5 general?
- 6 In general. What was the first job that you had?
- 7 I was probably about ten or so. I started working,
- 8 delivering papers for my Dad's shop. I delivered
- 9 papers, I'd clean the windows. You know, by the time
- 10 I was 14/15 I had enough for a car when I was 18 so
- 11 that all helped out. I was earning more money at that
- 12 kind of age than I could spend, which was nice. But
- 13 I didn't really have any grasp of the value of the
- 14
- money then, so it was just like, meh, stick it in 15
- 16 Q. What did you do after that?
- 17 After that, well, I played a lot of rugby, I kind
- 18 of -- as soon as I turned 18, I went to work in
- 19 an off-licence, worked in some pubs while I was still 20 studying as well.
- 21 Q. I think in 2010 you got married?
- 22 Α. Yes, sounds right.
- 23 Then, at some stage, you took up the role of branch
- 24 manager; is that right?
- 25 A. Yes, yes.

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- Q. Where was that and when was that? 1
- 2 That was in Glanadda Post Office, it was one of the 3 four or five branches in Bangor, North Wales, at the 4 time, yes.
- 5 Q. We've heard a lot about subpostmasters 6 subpostmistresses, what does a branch manager do?
- 7 A. Exactly the same but for a fraction less money and you 8 haven't got -- you're not directly contracted to the 9 Post Office.
- 10 Q. I'm going to ask you about an audit that took place 11 and an investigation. You were audited in 2010?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. The auditor found a shortfall of nearly £25,000; is 14 that right?
- 15 A. Yes.

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- 16 **Q.** What was your reaction to hearing that news?
- 17 A. It wasn't good. Not words that I would use here, 18 apparently, but I was, like -- I was annoyed because 19 two weeks before that we'd had the new system put in, 20 someone had been out, checked everything and I --21 I would say I was there pretty much couple of pennies 22 to a pound, either side. So I knew it was all there 23 because I spent hours with this fellow counting 24 everything, all the stock, all the cash, absolutely
 - everything, and it was all there, all ticked off and,

- you know, it all balanced brilliantly.
- Q. You said that the new system had been recently put in. What system was that?
- 4 **A.** It was the updated Horizon Plus, or whatever they 5 called it at the time -- Horizon Online. So they come 6 in to put that in. So they counted me the night 7 before, switched on the new system. He came back for 8 the next morning, so I met him at 8.00. The branch 9 didn't normally open until 9.00. It used to be 8.30 10 before I started working there and I wasn't really for 11 that.

But then he met me there, done another count of everything with the new system being now online, everything again matched up and, fine, left it at that up until the audit. It was within two weeks, someone came round, a security fellow, and he said we're here to do an audit.

I thought, okay, well, you know, I've got a lot to do, so we'll just crack on and then, you know, I'll get open and get sorted. But we never did open again after that -- I never did open again after that.

- 22 Can you tell us about the conversation you had about 23 that money with the auditor?
- 24 A. With the auditor? Well, it's a branch that we never 25 held that amount of money there. It's a small branch, 22

small -- one of the quieter branches and I was mainly there because there was a lot old people's homes -not old -- like people's flats on that road, and it was right opposite some of them. So they'd just come in get their pension it wasn't a massive -- there wasn't a need for any massive cash holding there. As far as I'm aware, the most money that I had in the branch ever was about 13,000. So for him to tell me I'm, like, 25 grand down I'm like, "No, mate, come on, check it again".

So my parents' accountant had read something about this in Computer Weekly, as you mentioned earlier, and he said he was more than willing to go and do a forensic accountant --

- **Q.** So let's talk about that and the actual investigation by the police. I think you were interviewed at a police station in 2011?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. How was that?
- 20 It wasn't one of my better days but they woke me up 21 early in the morning. At the time, I ran a community 22 centre, so I was working in the Post Office, I ran 23 a community centre, did a bit of pub work as well. 24 You know, at the time I had a pregnant
- 25 girlfriend/wife, so I'd work day and night, didn't

really bother me, but I was thinking I want to be as prepared as possible. So my job in the community centre afforded me a flat, so that kept costs down, so anything I was earning then, I could just tuck away.

So early in the morning, I think it was about 6.30/7.00-ish, there was like a bang on the door, like banging, banging. So I'm like "must be important". So I go down to the door. There's the police and there's one of the two security people from the Post Office. The name escapes me but -- well, it's not really important. But they came into my house. They did a quite thorough search, actually. There was an attic and I said to them, "Look, do you want to go up there", that's the only place they didn't search, was the attic.

- 16 Q. Did you stay at your house or did you move on with 17
- 18 **A.** I was there until they'd finished conducting a search 19 but they kind of kept me in there, up until they'd 20 finished doing -- but I didn't find out at the time 21 they were also searching, at the same time, my mother's house next door, which had a Post Office 22 23 underneath, because she'd had similar issues not 24 six months before when she changed over to the new 25 system.

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1		So, yes, they took me and my mother in at the
2		same time.
3	Q.	That was to a police station?
4		To a wall as atation in Oceanical

- To a police station in Caernarfon. 4 Α.
- 5 You have mentioned the Computer Weekly article that 6 you were aware at that time of some issues with 7 Horizon. Was that something you mentioned to the 8 investigators?
- 9 A. I didn't mention it myself because, by the time I'd 10 been kind of picked up on it and taken to the police 11 station, it wasn't -- I hadn't discussed it in that 12 depth with the accountant but my Dad had.
- 13 Q. What did the accountant offer to do?
- 14 **A.** He offered to go in and do a proper thorough, not only 15 computer search but everything search, so that we 16 could ascertain, well, what's showing the anomalies on 17 the system but they flat out refused that.
- 18 Q. Moving on to the prosecution, can you tell us about 19 your first court appearance?
- 20 **A.** Okay, the first court appearance.
- 21 Q. Where was it?

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- 22 A. That would have been in the Magistrates' Court in 23 Caernarfon. There was two or three times that I went 24 there. My Dad went with me also, so he's like got
- cover in his shop and he's come with me for the day 25

and we've got there and we waited all day for our case to be drawn and no-one from the Post Office had turned up at all, and there was two or three cases like that and my solicitor had a pop at trying to get it thrown out there and then because, if they're not going to bother turning up, how can they possibly -- you know, why should I be here.

> So that was refused there. I think it was like the third or fourth time that they did turn up and then it was escalated to the Crown Court.

- 11 Which Crown Court was that?
- 12 Α. That was also Caernarfon.
- 13 You had a trial?
- 14 A. I had a trial, which was in Mold, which is somewhat 15 40/50 minutes down the dual carriageway from there on 16 a good run.
- 17 Q. So you had entered a not guilty plea --
- 18 A.
- 19 Q. -- and they had fixed a trial?
- 20 Α. Mmm.

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- 21 Q. When it came to the trial were people aware that you 22 were being prosecuted in your local community?
- 23 A. Up until the second day of my trial, no? But on the 24 second day of my three-day trial, I was staying at my 25 parents' house at the time, I come downstairs through

the shop, Daily Post, national -- you know, national newspaper of Wales, I was on front of it, a very unflattering picture with "Bangor postmaster steals 25 grand", or whatever it was at the time, because the figure kept changing each time I went to court. So, well, you know, just trying a figure and run with it, really.

So that day on -- so I said to my brief at the time, well, "Are they allowed to be doing this and influencing the jury mid-trial", you know. So it's a case of I'm there to be judged by my peers, not based on the story that the Post Office had given to the Daily Post. So I thought that was a bit unfair.

- Q. How did you feel seeing that story where you were
- 16 A. Well, I felt a bit destroyed actually? You know what 17 I mean? Last time I was in the papers it was for good 18 reasons. Before that, I would be you know playing 19 rugby or whatever, or running, or something, you know, 20 I used to be very physically active. The only time in 21 the paper would have been a positive thing. But not 22 from then on.
- 23 Q. You were ultimately convicted of theft and how did it feel to you on receiving that news? 24
- 25 A. To be fair, I was prepared for it but I was prepared

- 1 for it because my original barrister, from the first 2 day I met him in the barrister's chambers in Chester, 3 he said "Look, there's no hope, just plead guilty, you 4 know, just get it over and done with quickly and, you 5 know, just take four or five years on the chin and 6 iust do that". 7
 - We've heard from previous witnesses about plea bargains but that didn't take place in your case?
- 9 That didn't take place, no, but that solicitor then 10 went to the Post Office barristers and said "If he 11 pays the money back what will happen?" Well, (1) 12 I was in no financial position to pay any money back 13 and (2) I was very against that in the first place, 14 just on sheer principle. It was like: I've not had 15 any benefit from that money, there's not a chance in 16 hell you're getting any money out of me at all. But 17 they said to him "Look, if he pays the money back, he 18 can still do his four or five years", and then -- yes. 19 So there was no kind of real offer for anything, 20
 - Can you tell us what sentence you did receive? Q.
- Α. When I went to sentencing, for some reason it was in 23 Chester. I received -- I'm pretty sure it was 24 eight months' custodial. I received that on -- my 25 original trial was the start of December, something

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- 1 like the 4th, 5th and 6th possibly. It's either that
- 2 or that's when my wedding day was, but it's somewhere
- 3 around that area. So I was sentenced on 23 December.
- 4 Q. So you were sentenced just before Christmas --
- 5 **A.** Yes
- 6 Q. -- and presumably you spent Christmas in prison?
- 7 A. Yes, yes.
- 8 Q. Which prison was that?
- 9 A. Altcourse in Liverpool, it's in Fazakerley.
- 10 Q. How was that experience?
- 11 A. I'd been on better holidays.
- 12 **Q.** Can you tell us a bit about your experience in prison?
- 13 A. It's just not a -- it's not a kind of place I want to
- be. It's not somewhere that is -- I don't -- I don't
- 15 know really. It's what you make of it, isn't it?
- 16 Q. I appreciate it's difficult to talk about.
- 17 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 18 **Q.** How did it affect you?
- 19 A. I lost an awful lot of weight. As you can see now,
- 20 I'm a nice trim gentleman but, at the time, I was --
- 21 I was probably about the weight I am now, actually,
- 22 just about 14/15 stone, and I came out and I was in
- 23 there, what, ten weeks and in that ten weeks I'd lost
- 24 four/four and a half stone. Yeah, so it didn't
- 25 really -- it didn't sit well with me.
 - 20

- Q. Could you sleep at night?
- 2 A. I slept off and on. I just tried to keep myself busy,
- 3 really. I did a few courses. I don't know, just --
- I did what I could to pass the time, as quickly as I could.
- 6 Q. Moving on to the impact on you generally --
 - SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Blake, before you do that, could
 - I just clarify one aspect of Mr Owen's evidence?
 - You said, Mr Owen, that when you got the banging
- on the door early in the morning it was the police and
- 11 Post Office investigators and then you went to the
 - police station?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Was it police officers or Post Office
 - investigators who interviewed you under caution?
- 16 A. It was two of the Post Office security.
- 17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right.
- 18 A. So following that then, when I went to answer bail at
- the police station, I was told by the police that any
- 20 investigations had led to nothing and, as far as they
- 21 could see, that money didn't exist in the first place.
- 22 So I felt done, dusted, until I discovered that the
 - Post Office has powers of prosecution themselves,
- 24 which was an eye-opener.
- 25 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: When you were being -- before that
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- interviewed under caution began, were you offered theopportunity to have legal representation?
- 3 A. I was
- 4 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Did you take up that offer or did you remain on your own?
- 6 A. I remained on my own because I felt I was there, they
- 7 were wasting my time and -- yeah, I wasn't with the
- 8 whole thing that, okay, they are going to try and
- 9 manipulate me in any way. I was quite naive. At the
- 10 time, I didn't struggle for confidence so I just
- 11 thought, "pfft".
- 12 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Then just one last question.
- 13 You told Mr Blake already that you were not offered
- 14 a plea bargain. That simply didn't arise, did it,
- 15 throughout the whole court proceeding?
- 16 A. No, no. The only kind of back and forth we had
- 17 between them was I wanted to know whether or not they
- will be chasing the figure for me to pay back.
- 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. So the only discussions between
- 20 your lawyers and their lawyers related to whether or
- 21 not there should be a repayment, not whether there
- 22 would be a plea bargain.
- 23 A. Yes, to which case they said that, no, they weren't
- 24 going to be seeking any, what's it called,
- 25 malicious -- prosecution -- proceeds of crime.

- 1 MR BLAKE: Yes, proceeds of crime.
 - SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So even though you were convicted of
- 3 theft, of quite a large sum of money, they didn't
- 4 actually seek to recover the money from you; is that
 - correct?
- 6 A. That is correct, to me, which I thought that spoke
- 7 volumes at the time, the fact that -- if someone stole
- 8 from me, one way or another, I'd be getting it back
- 9 from them, whether or not I go down the courts route
- 10 or take it into my own hands I would seek that back,
- 11 which made it quite clear that they knew something was
- 12 wrong
- 13 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** All right. Thank you very much,
- 14 Mr Owen.
- 15 Sorry to interrupt, Mr Blake. Back to you.
- 16 **MR BLAKE:** Not at all. It's right to say you weren't
- 17 a subpostmaster, so there wasn't a contract between
- 18 you and the Post Office?
- 19 **A.** No, there wasn't, no.
- 20 $\,$ $\,$ Q. $\,$ On impact, generally, what was the impact on your $\,$
- 21 mental health? I think you have received a diagnosis
- 22 of some sort; is that right?
- 23 A. Yeah, yeah. I can't remember exactly what -- I don't
- 24 think I read his whole report but it didn't -- it
- 25 didn't reflect too well on my mental well-being. I'm

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- 1 not sure if you have got the report there.
- 2 Q. I don't have the report. We don't need to go into --
- 3 A. No, good. Yeah --
- 4 Q. You have sought help and you have received a formal5 diagnosis?
- A. Yeah, yeah, and they sent me for more counselling
 following that, which, over the whole Covid thing, was
 all Zoom meetings and -- there's only so many times
 someone can ask you over a Zoom call "Well, how did
 that make you feel?" before you're like "Do you know
 how that made me feel? Gone, that's how it made me
 feel". I just kind of sacked it all off.
- 13 Q. I'm sorry to add to that today. What about your jobprospects?
- 15 A. Now or then?
- 16 Q. Then and now.

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- A. Now, since -- they're looking up as of kind of last
 April when I got my conviction overturned, but the
 last ten years have all been the most menial of bottom
 of the rung jobs because who else is going to employ
 someone with a criminal record for theft, or whatever
 it was?
- Q. How about your relationships with other people? Did
 it affect your family relationships, your brother, for
 example?

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1 Yeah, yeah. Well, we haven't spoken in -- since about 2 this time. There's been some friction there and, 3 yeah, you know, just kind of brought it to a head and 4 there are times where I can be quite fiery, so you 5 cross the line and, that's it, I'll be off. And, 6 yeah, so he brought it to one of them stages and we 7 don't speak and, as far as us not speaking, for 8 example, my daughter's turned 11 at the weekend. 9 She's 11, and she found out -- she found out something 10 last summer, wasn't it -- she found out last summer 11 that I had a brother because we were staying at my Mum 12 and Dad's house and his kids were there and she was 13 like "These kids are always here, who are they?" 14 I said, "I don't know". But then she found out then 15 that they're her cousins and, yeah, I had a brother.

Q. How did that affect your daughter, finding out that you were going to prison?

A. She didn't -- she doesn't know. The part of the story
l've told her is that I worked for the Post Office, it
didn't end well and I've come here today. So
that's -- she doesn't know about the whole story and
I think that's probably something I'm going to try and
put off for a couple more years, if I can.

24 Q. The local community?

25 **A.** Well, I don't live where I used to anymore. I live in

Stafford now. Local community, I suppose on the whole, mostly to my face, were fine but it's that little village kind of thing, you know. When I go back now, I get very positive -- well, you know what I mean, kind of "Oh, well, you were right after all". Well, I know I'm right but what gets said in small village life, I suppose Noel will know, it's kind of that thing, isn't it, where everyone talks about everyone anyway, so you've got a reason to talk about you, it's just going to perpetuate the situation.

Q. How do you feel now your conviction's been quashed?

A. I think it's good it's been quashed but, for me, since
it has been quashed, I haven't really done an awful
lot of anything because of medical things, anyway. So
I've literally been stuck at home anyway. So
I haven't yet done anything that I couldn't have done
prior to it being quashed.

- 18 Q. What do you want from the Post Office?
 - A. I would possibly -- just that end one ...

I would like an apology for what they've done to me and then this rubbish from Tim Parker. It is the most feeble apology I've ever received for anything in my life, which I did — I did seek him out, actually. It says at the end of this:

"If you have any questions about this letter or

there are any other matters we are able to assist you with, please feel free to contact me", of which there are -- there are no contact details on this.

So being quite single-minded, I sought him out and I've contacted him personally with a copy of this to elaborate on that -- what that further meant for him, which is nothing, nothing at all. They will not do anything to, kind of, help in any way and they don't want to assist in any way.

He's now left, hasn't he, last week? Tim
Parker? Yeah? I would like a proper apology.
I would like -- I tell you what, I'd like -- I'm not
going to beat around the bush, I'm going to say I want
a decent amount of money out of them. I spent ten
years doing menial jobs, which, I'm an educated
person, are massively beneath me. Sounds big-headed
but, well, it's true. It's true.

I can't spend the rest of my life doing that and I can't bring back them ten years and, yeah, I want some decent money, decent apology and I want -- I have said that I want there to be convictions, not only for the people who have perpetuated the -- I'll call it what it is -- the whole conspiracy inside the Post Office. You know, everyone from the top down that knew and were still pushing charges. I want --

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I want charges against not only the people in my court case that came to give their "evidence", who have lied under oath, I want each of them to receive a perjury charge.

I don't know. I do feel as well, seeing as

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there's quite few people from the media here today but, as well, I want it to be given a proper, thorough account of what has actually gone on. Nick Wallis has done an awful lot. He's been brilliant in his radios, his TV programmes and his book, which is a good read.

But it almost seems like a lot of these media outlets here have been too afraid to put anything in their — anything out there. I'm wondering why that is. I'm wondering has there been pressure from somewhere else? If not, why? You know, it's — correct me if I'm wrong — is this not the largest miscarriage of justice in British legal history? And, what, there's like a page every day or two, every week or two, very month. I think we deserve better. I think we do.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr Owen.

Chair, do you have any further questions at all?

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, thank you. I asked the questions

that I wanted to already.

So it just remains, Mr Owen, for me to thank you

1 for taking the time and trouble to come to give

evidence to me. You will have heard me say yesterday

3 or no doubt will have been told that I attach very

4 considerable importance to all of this evidence, so

a special thanks to you and everyone else who's coming

6 to give this evidence to me.

A. Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate it.

8 MR BLAKE: Thank you, Chair. We're going to be back at

1.30. We're going to take an early lunch and we're

going to come back at 1.30 to hear from Lisa Brennan.

So this afternoon's witnesses have been brought

12 forward by half-an-hour.

13 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I understand that and I'm very glad

that you are able to operate so flexibly, Mr Blake,

and I think that one witness this afternoon is giving

16 live evidence in the building with you and the second

one will be remote like me, so to speak.

18 MR BLAKE: That's correct.

19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Well, we'll reassemble at

20 1.30 and thanks very much to everyone.

21 (11.16 am)

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(Luncheon Adjournment)

23 (1.28 pm)

24 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon everyone. I can see

Ms Hodge has taken over from Mr Blake, so welcome to

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- everyone this afternoon and I'm ready when you are
 Ms Hodge.
- MS HODGE: Sir, we can hear you but we can't see you yet.
 So I think if we just wait a moment for that

5 connection to resume. Thank you.

6 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** It's very deceiving, Ms Hodge, because 7 I can see myself so that makes me assume that others can see me but obviously that's not a justified

9 assumption. (Pause)

10 **MS HODGE:** Sir, we can see you now.

11 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Well, better late than never, eh? All right, over to you, Ms Hodge.

13 MS HODGE: Thank you, sir. Our first witness this14 afternoon is Ms Lisa Brennan.

LISA MARGARET BRENNAN (affirmed)

Questioned by MS HODGE

17 **MS HODGE:** My name is Catriona Hodge. I ask questions on18 behalf of the Inquiry.

19 **A.** Okay.

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20 Q. Please could you state your full name?

21 A. Lisa Margaret Brennan.

Q. Ms Brennan, you should have before you a copy of yourwitness statement --

24 A. Yes

25 Q. -- that was made on 14 January 2022; is that correct?

A. Yes.

2 Q. Could you please turn to the final page of your

3 statement, which should be at page 15?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Is that your signature which you can see there?

6 A. Yes

7 Q. When you made that statement on 14 January of this

year was it true to the best of your knowledge and

9 belief?

10 **A.** It was.

11 Q. Thank you. I'm going to start by asking you a few

12 questions about yourself.

13 **A.** Okay.

14 Q. Where did you grow up?

15 **A.** In Liverpool.

16 Q. Both of your parents worked; is that right?

17 A. Yes, they did, yes.

18 Q. What did they do?

19 **A.** Mum worked in a tights factory and Dad was

20 a supervisor in the gas board, British Gas.

21 Q. You had siblings, I believe?

22 $\,$ **A.** I did, yeah. I've got one sister, Kim.

23 Q. Was your childhood a happy one?

24 A. I had a lovely childhood, yeah, really did.

25 $\,$ **Q.** You started working at the Post Office as a counter

- 1 clerk at the age of 16; is that right?
- 2 **A.** I did.
- 3 Q. Can you recall which year that was?
- 4 A. Would have been 1984.
- Q. Could you please describe for us what the role ofa counter clerk was at that time?
- 7 A. It was just serving the pensioners in the local area.
- 8 I worked in the local Post Office called Childwall
- 9 Valley, where I grew up. My Nan was one of my
- 10 pensioners and Grandad, Nan and Grandad, they used to
- 11 come in and get their pension off me. Yeah, it was
- 12 just a local shop where I worked until I was 21.
- 13 $\,$ Q. So the first branch you worked at was
- 14 Childwall Valley?
- 15 A. Yes, Childwall Valley.
- 16 **Q.** How long did you stay working there?
- 17 **A.** I was there until I was 21. So five years.
- 18 **Q.** By the time you'd left what role had you obtained?
- 19 A. I was the officer in charge. I'd been promoted to it
- 20 for the last year to -- well, just overseeing the
- 21 Post Office, it was, sort of the like, a little
- 22 manager role that the subpostmaster made for us. We
- 23 were just called officers in charge, so we did all the
- 24 balancing of the books and everything for them. So,
- 25 yeah, that was basically it.

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- Q. When you left Childwall Valley, you went to work for
 the Crown Post Office?
- 3 A. I did, yes, passed the exam and went into the Crown
- 4 Post Office on my 21st birthday, I think it was, the
- 5 following week, I passed the exam and got into the
- 6 Crown Post Office.
 - Q. Where were you initially required to work?
- 8 A. I was known as a floater. So we did our training on
- 9 the Wirral and then we just floated around different
- 10 offices. So I've seen the majority of Post Offices
- 11 all over Liverpool. I worked in most of them.
- 12 Q. You later came to work at -- is it Huyton?
- 13 A. Huyton.
- 14 Q. Huyton Post Office, thank you. When did you first
- 15 start working there?
- 16 A. It was about '95. Something around '95. Not long
- 17 before Jess was born, my daughter.
- 18 Q. You were working as a counter clerk there, as well?
- 19 A. Counter clerk, yes.
- 20 Q. Did you enjoy your work for the Post Office?
- 21 A. Yes, I loved it. That's all I can say. I did,
- 22 I loved it. I love my job.
- 23 Q. You received a salary --
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. -- for your work. Do you recall how much that was?

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- A. I don't know. In my head, because it was 20 years and
 I'm just -- I try and remember in my head.
- 3 **Q.** Don't worry.
- 4 A. It was around 300 or 400, maybe, a week or something
- 5 like that. I can't remember the exact amount. I'd
- 6 forget
- 7 **Q.** It's fine, thank you. Were you eligible for a pension?
- 9 A. Oh, I was, yeah. Used to pay into a pension, yeah.
- 10 **Q.** Would you have regarded yourself at the time as quite11 comfortably off?
- 12 A. Yeah, I was, yeah. I had a good life, yeah. Lots of
- friends and a really good life, a nice house, husband,
- daughter in school and, yeah, life was lovely, lovely.
- 15 **Q.** You mention in your statement that you had received awards and bonuses?
- 17 A. Yes, we used to have mystery shoppers. So I'd won
- them quite a few times when they used to come round
- 19 and you didn't know who they were and they'd come in
- 20 the office and get served by you. If you were polite
- and offered them all the upsales and what not they'd
- go back and you would get a, sort of, recognition for
- 23 it, for the staff in the office. So yeah, I won that
- 24 quite a few times.
- 25 **Q.** You've mentioned your husband and daughter. You were

- 1 married whilst working in the Post Office?
- 2 A. Yes
- 3 **Q.** Your daughter is here today to support you.
- 4 A. Jess is with me now, yes.
- 5 **Q.** In which branch were you working when the Horizon
- 6 system was installed?
- 7 **A.** Would have been Huyton.
- 8 Q. Did you receive any training when Horizon was
- 9 installed?
- 10 **A.** Not that I can remember. It was just sort of all set
- 11 up and on you go.
- 12 **Q.** Without any training, how did you manage to operate
- the system?
- 14 **A.** You just got on with it. We all mucked in together.
- 15 It was like ten staff in there so we just, sort of,
- 16 probably helped each other out. It's hard to remember
- 17 because it's ages ago. It's 20 years ago. I wish
- 18 I could. I wish could remember everything but didn't
- 19 think a day like today would come when I'd have to
- 20 remember everything, and I wish I did.
- 21 Q. How many staff -- can you recall how many staff were
- working at the branch at the time?
- 23 A. Probably about ten staff and a few management. It was
- 24 inside -- it was connected to a sorting office in
- 25 Huyton. It was a big office, yes.

- 1 Q. Was there just a single Horizon terminal there or 2
- 3 A. No, we all had our own. We all had remote ones that 4 you worked on, different ones each day.
- 5 Q. How did you record who was working on the terminal at 6 any time?
- 7 A. It's a long time ago. We just used to log in,
- 8 I think. From what I can remember, we just used to
- 9 log in. I just wish I could remember. We all had our 10 own log-ins, I think.
- 11 Q. What would happen if discrepancies arose?
- 12 A. We just carried over to the next day. If anybody was
- 13 short or over. I think if we were sort of like
- 14 a fiver out, more than a fiver, you would have to go
- 15 through all the dockets and count them all and
- 16 everything, so you'd be there until whatever time,
- 17 until it was all done. If someone was like 70/80 guid
- 18 out, or whatever -- whatever amount, you'd have to
- 19 just keep checking the dockets until hopefully you
- 20 find it all, hopefully you didn't find any more
- 21 mistakes, which was quite often that you would find
- 22 these mistakes.
- 23 Q. I'd like to ask you about an audit that occurred in
- 24 your branch on 2 June 2002. Was it unusual for the
- 25 branch to be audited?

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- No, it was randomly. They used to come round -- you
- 2 know, you'd expect the auditors to come periodically,
- 3 you know, throughout the year.
- 4 Q. What occurred on this occasion on 2 June?
- 5 They came in, we all turn up at the office, they're
- 6 there before you. No-one can go near the drawers or
- 7 anything, and then they started doing the audit and
- 8 then, the next thing I know, my life got turned upside
- 9 down
- 10 Q. What did they find when they carried --
- 11 That I had a shortage in my till and then I was
- 12 interviewed.
- 13 Q. Do you recall what the amount of the shortage was?
- 14 I can't. I can't remember what it was.
- 15 Would a figure of approximately £3,000, does that
- 16 sound about right --
- 17 **A.** I think I've said that in my statement but I really
- 18 can't remember. I don't think it was that much but
- 19 it -- well, it was something like that in the end
- 20 I think when they checked everything because he went
- 21 over things, he carried on looking -- sorry, I'm
- 22 jumping ahead here. He carried on looking, the
 - fellow, who was looking into --
- 24 Q. You mentioned being interviewed?
- 25 Yes.

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- 1 Q. Were you allowed any representation?
- 2 A. I could take a friend in with me. I took a friend,
- 3 Maureen, who I worked with, in with me and she just
- 4 sat with me because we didn't have a clue what was
- 5 going on. It was frightening.
- 6 Q. Were you offered the opportunity to consult a lawyer?
- 7
- 8 Q. You've described the interview being conducted by two
- 9 men; is that right?
- 10 A. Yes.

19

20

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23

- 11 **Q.** Can you describe how you felt during the interview?
- 12 A. It was horrible. They were just, you know -- they
- 13 were quite derogatory"s the word. It was -- you know
- 14 "Got a car, have you?" you know. This is how they
- 15 spoke to me and I was sitting there thinking -- "Got
- 16 a car, oh, look at the earrings you've got in. Bit of
- 17 a big girl, do you like going out for meals? Have you
- 18 got lots of money".

It would be sort of along them lines, and I was sitting and I was thinking "What are they getting at here?" because I didn't understand this was going to be the beginning of the end of my life, because that's what it was from that day and from that moment.

24 Did they ask you what had happened to the money that 25 was shown to be missing?

- 1 A. Yeah, in the end, after saying all those things, it 2
 - was sort of -- I think it was a case of, you know,
- 3 "You've got this money, haven't you?" and I was like
- 4 "I don't know what you're on about", and I didn't know
 - what they were on about.
- 6 **Q.** What happened after the interview concluded?
- 7 They said I had to leave, so they escorted me out of
- 8 the building, and that was it. I just stood outside
- 9 Huyton Post Office thinking "What the hell happened
- back there?" 10
- 11 Q. Were you suspended from your role at that point?
- 12
- What did you do when you were told that you'd been 13
- 14 suspended?
- 15 A. I just went to my Nan's. I got the bus and went to my
- 16 Nan's, and my Uncle Joe was there, trimming Nan's
- 17 hedges and he said "Oh, you're early", and I just said
- 18 "I think I've lost my job, they're accusing me of
- stealing?" "Did you do it?" I said "No", and then 19
- 20 I just went into my Nan and --
- 21 Q. Did you return home later that day?
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Why not? Q.
- 24 A. I felt ashamed. I just -- I wasn't expecting my day
- 25 to go like that and the day just -- was just

- 1 horrendous, that day was just horrendous and, yeah, it 2 was just like the end of the world to me.
- 3 Q. I'm going to ask you some questions now about the 4 prosecution that was brought against you. You were 5 charged with 32 counts of theft; is that right?
- 6 Α. Yes.
- 7 Q. You were sent a summons to attend Liverpool
- 8 Magistrates' Court; is that right?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. On what day did the summons arrive?
- 11 A. The Magistrates, I think that was Christmas Eve.
- 12 Q. How did that make you feel?
- 13 A. Awful. It's not that I'd lost my job -- they'd had
- 14 sacked me from 2 August, so that was it. Then I had
- 15 nothing, I had no job or anything from 2 August and
- 16 then, on the Christmas Eve, I got this -- it just come
- 17 out the blue, because I thought it was over and that
- 18 was it, I was sacked and that was it. But then I was
- 19 summonsed. Then it began.
- 20 Q. When you received your summons, did you seek any
- 21 support from a union or trade association?
- A. I'd been going to the union periodically from the 22
- 23 August until then, asking them to try and get my job
- 24 back for me because I just wanted my job back. So
- 25 I kept going to a union rep, I can't remember, I think

- his name was Steve. I kept going to see him, saying
- 2 "Do you think they're going to give me my job back",
- 3 because I really did think I was going to get my job
- 4 back.
- 5 Q. Do you recall which union that was, which
- 6 organisation?
- 7 A. The Post Office union.
- 8 Q. Was it the Communication Workers Union?
- 9 A. CWU, yeah, yeah. Yes, I was with them. They were
- 10 trying to get my job back. I think I was a lost cause
- 11 in the end.
- 12 Q. You obtained legal representation, is that right, from
- 13 a firm of solicitors and a barrister? How did you
- 14 plead to the charge of --
- 15 Not guilty. Α.
- 16 Q. As a result of your not guilty plea, your case was
- 17 transferred to the Crown Court at Liverpool?
- 18 A.
- 19 Is that right? Did you change your plea at that
- 20 stage?
- 21 No. Α.
- 22 Why not? Q.
- 23 A. Because I wasn't guilty.
- 24 Your trial commenced, I think, on 2 September 2003; is
- 25 that right?

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- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. It was listed to last for three days. Who attended 3 court with you?
- 4 A. My Mum and my step-dad.
- 5 Q. What evidence of your character did you produce?
- 6 A. Well, I got a lot of letters off the girls from work
- 7 and people who knew me but they were told that they
- 8 couldn't have any contact with me after that. So I,
- 9 sort of, kept hold of the letters that they had sent
- 10 me originally and took them in with me but then they
- 11 were told "You can't speak to Lisa anymore", so I lost 12 all contact with them.
- 13 But I did take letters in from them and from,
- 14 yeah, lots of people. My brother-in-law's a
- 15 policeman -- he's passed since -- but, you know,
- 16 letters from himself and that, and I took all them in
- 17 and the judge had all them, Judge Phillips had all
- 18 those letters to read. I had a good -- yeah, they 19 were good testaments for me.
- 20 On the final day of your trial you had a conversation Q. 21 with your young daughter --
- 22 A. Yeah.
- 23 Q. -- is that right? Can you describe that conversation, 24 please?
- 25 A. Yeah. Sorry, Jess.

- 1 If they were going to send me to prison, 2 I wasn't going to -- I was going to take my own life.
- 3 I couldn't have gone to prison. I couldn't.
- 4 I just -- I felt ashamed my life was just ruined
 - and -- I'm sorry.
- 6 Is that what you told your daughter on that morning?
- 7 Α.

- 8 Q. How old was she at the time?
- 9 A.
- 10 Q. You were found guilty by the jury --
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. -- and convicted of 27 of the 32 counts of theft,
- 13 correct?
- 14 A.
- 15 **Q.** Can you please describe for us the reaction in court 16
 - when your verdict was read out?
- 17 A. I had -- well, that wasn't then. The court clerk
- 18 cried because she'd been sitting with us and we
- 19 thought it would just be not guilty, really sincerely,
- 20 we just didn't think it was going to be a guilty
- 21 verdict, because she used to sit with us the court
- 22 clerk, and she just had tears in her eyes.
- 23 The judge was -- I felt like he was gobsmacked.
- 24 He turned round and said -- you know, when they said
- 25 "We want the money back off her", he said to them

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15

- 1 "Stick a penny on a stamp".
- 2 Q. Was that when the Post Office asked for their legal 3
- 4 A. Yeah, and he said "Put a penny on a stamp, you won't 5 get nothing from Lisa".
- 6 **Q.** So no order was made for costs against you?
- 7 A. No.
- 8 Q. How did it make you feel to be convicted of theft?
- 9 A. Awful, awful. Just the end of the world. To me it
- 10 was just the end of the world. That was my life. All
- 11 I'd known was the Post Office from 16 and then just to
- 12 be told "You're a thief", is horrible, because
- 13 I wasn't and I hadn't took anything. Just ...
- 14 Q. The sentence you received was one of six months' 15 imprisonment, is that right --
- 16 Yes. A.
- 17 Q. -- but suspended for two years?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. That meant you were able to return to your daughter?
- 20 A. Yes, to go home to Jess.
- 21 Q. What conditions were imposed on you as a result of 22 your conviction?
- 23 A. No-one really reached out to me. I didn't know what
- 24 I had to do. I went with my Mum a few times for
- probation and I had to go to a place called NACRO, 25

- 6

with people -- criminals and everything.

Is that a charity which helps ex-offenders?

Yes, something that helps you get a job, apparently,

and they're probably really nice people but I just

- 5 didn't think I should have been there but I was, so
- I did go because I had to.
- 7 Q. Your conviction, of course, was overturned last year.
- 8 Α.
- 9 Q. Before we come back to that, I'd like to ask you some
- 10 questions about the impact this has had upon you and 11 your family.
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Ms Hodge, can I just interrupt? 12
 - Just one question from me, if I may, Ms Brennan.
 - We've heard quite a lot so far about people being
 - offered plea bargains or plea deals.
- 16 Α. Okay.
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Were you ever offered a plea bargain? 17
- 18
- 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: You obviously never sought to suggest
- 20 that you'd plead guilty to a lesser offence because
- 21 you were maintaining your innocence.
- 22 Α.
- 23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I've got that right, yes?
- 24 A. Yes.

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25 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine, thanks very much.

- MS HODGE: Ms Brennan, dealing first with the impact these 1
- 2 events on you and your mental health and your
- 3 emotional state, you've described in your statement
- 4 that the impact was severe.
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. When you were first suspended and accused of stealing,
- 7 you have explained that you attempted to take
- 8 an overdose; is that correct?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Did you seek any help or support from a doctor at that 11
- 12 A. I'd gone to the doctors and he put me on beta blockers
- 13 for a short while but I had a criminal record. Nobody
- 14 really cared. I think, nowadays, you get more help
- 15 for your mental health. Back then, there was just
- 16 nothing. There was no-one. No-one reached out.
- 17 I just had a criminal record, and it was just -- I was
- 18 just left. I was just left. There was nothing.
- 19 It was a long time ago. And there was nothing,
- 20 there was no help. I was a criminal and that's all
- 21 I knew, and that's all I've known for 20 years, that
- 22 I've got that criminal record and it's only now I'm
- 23 not, it's -- it's -- it was just so different back
- 24
- 25 Q. Did you experience problems with alcohol at that time?

- Yeah, I used to drink a lot. 1 A.
 - How much were you drinking?
- 3 Vodka, wine, anything -- anything just to numb it.
- 4 Q. For how long did that go on?
- 5 Probably a good few years. Α.
- 6 Q. Before you were suspended from your position as
- 7 a counter clerk, you had shared a home with your
- 8 husband and your daughter.
- 9 A.
- 10 Q. You've told us that you felt unable to return home
- 11 after you were suspended.
- 12 A.
- 13 What impact did that have on your marriage?
- 14 Well, we split up. I just never went back home.
- I just went to Mum's and I had no job, I couldn't 15
- 16 afford to pay the mortgage so had to sell the house
- 17 and sofa surf with Jess, when she was a baby -- well,
- 18 a little girl, and we just sofa surfed. I just felt
 - ashamed and couldn't go back there. Everybody knew
- 20 me. I was popular. Everyone knew me, so ...
- 21 You've explained that the Post Office terminated your 22 contract on 2 August --
- 23 Yes. Α.

- 24 Q. -- 2002. What effect did that termination of your
- 25 contract have on you financially?

- A. Couldn't afford to pay for things. I had no money,
 I had no job.
- 3 Q. You've explained that you and your husband had owned 4 a family home together?
- 5 **A.** Yes
- 6 Q. You said you ended up homeless.
- A. Yes.
- 8 Q. How did that come about?
- 9 A. We had to sell the house. Couldn't afford to pay the10 mortgage.
- 11 **Q.** Is it right that you were declared bankrupt, as well,12 at this time?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 **Q.** Where did you and your daughter live after you were15 forced to sell your home?
- 16 A. Stayed in Mum's and just stayed on the couch, and Jess17 had the little spare room, and then we were waiting
- for a council flat, or something, to come along, which
- 19 luckily we did get a council flat in the following
- 20 year, yeah.
- Q. What did you do with your possessions when you lostyour home?
- 23 A. If anybody wanted them. I couldn't take them
- 24 anywhere. I had no storage. I couldn't afford to pay
- 25 for storage, so I just said to people "Help yourself",

- 1 just left it.
- Q. Without any income, how did you pay for food for youand your daughter?
- 4 A. We used to rely on Mum and Nan a lot and my Dad, and
- 5 had to go to the Salvation Army as well. They were
- 6 helpful. Back then they didn't -- I didn't ever
- 7 recall food banks or anything, otherwise I'd have used
- 8 things like that. But there didn't seem to be
- 9 anything like that at that time, so Salvation Army
- 10 were not far from where our flat was, so made friends
- 11 with a lovely lady called Fiona who prayed with us and
- 12 helped us along our way.
- 13 Q. Were there times when you went hungry?
- 14 A. Yes, so Jess could eat.
- 15 **Q.** Some time in 2003 you obtained a council flat; is that right?
- 17 **A.** Yes.

- 18 Q. Can you describe to us what it was like to live there?
- 19 **A.** Very different from a three-bedroom house but, you
- 20 know, it was a home for me and Jess. Cold, metal
- 21 windows, they were due to be demolished. Quite a bit
- 22 of antisocial behaviour. Just different but I had
 - to -- well, we had to fit in.
- 24 Q. How did you and your daughter get by whilst you were
- 25 out of work?

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- 1 A. I was on benefits. I think it was about three or
- 2 four years before I could -- you know, before I got
- a job with my cousin. So, yeah, we just got by with
- 4 help from people, really. You know, that was it.
- 5 Q. You made efforts, I think, to obtain another job --
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 **Q.** -- is that right?
- 8 **A.** Yeah.
- 9 Q. What challenges did you face, as a result of your10 conviction, when looking for work?
- 11 A. Well, CRB checks. It couldn't be a job that I'd have
- 12 loved to have down, which was the Post Office or banks
- or anything like that. I couldn't go applying for
- 14 jobs like that. It was more shop work, not that
- 15 there's anything wrong with it because that's what
- 16 I've done for the last 20 years or so, worked in
- 17 shops. Any type of work that I could get where they
- 18 wouldn't do a CRB check.
- 19 Q. Did you at one point want to train as a teacher?
- 20 A. Yeah, I did. I actually -- well, when I was out of
- 21 work I took a teacher training course and I passed
- 22 that with flying colours and then went to work in
- 23 Jess's school helping out, voluntary, and then
- I passed, so they kept me on there, and then they did
- 25 a CRB check and then they said, "Sorry, Lisa, you'll

- 1 have to leave", because I had a criminal record. So
- 2 I thought "What did I do this for?" Pointless,
- 3 pointless, but ...
- 4 Q. You did ultimately find some work in retail?
- 5 A. I did, yeah.
- 6 Q. There came a time when things improved and you were
- 7 promoted --
- 8 **A.** Yeah.
- 9 Q. -- to a manager; is that right?
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- 11 **Q.** You were later approached by a customer, I believe,
- who offered you a job; is that right?
- 13 **A.** Yes.

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- 14 Q. Are you still working there now?
- 15 A. I am, yeah, yeah. And I can actually tell them the
 - truth. I actually told them on 23 April that I'm free
- 17 and then everyone was like "How'd you keep that
- 18 a secret for 19 years?" I just said "I had to
- 19 because, otherwise, I'd never have got on in life",
- 20 you know. People now, if they see this, there's still
- 21 people that I'd love to have told, friends that I've
- 22 met along the way. They never knew me. No-one knew
- 23 me. And now I can be me and it's lovely.

Maybe I was a happier person but I haven't been able to be and now I can be, and I'm happy and that

4

- 1 feels really bad that I'm happy, because I've been so
- 2 sad and so angry for years, and now I've turned
- 3 a corner. It's lovely.
- 4 Q. You mentioned, previously, Ms Brennan, that you were 5 eligible for a pension with the Post Office?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. What effect did the termination of your employment 8 have upon your pension?
- 9 A. They took it away. In court, I think they said
- 10 something about "We're taking the pension back", so 11 they took everything, so ...
- 12 Q. Are you eligible for a state pension?
- 13 A. I think so. I presume I would be, yeah.
- 14 Q. Can you describe the impact that your conviction had 15 upon your young daughter at the time?
- 16 A. Yeah, she's seen it all and I'm truly sorry but it
- 17 happened, and why it happened to us, I don't know, but
- 18 it's really affected Jess.
- 19 Q. You and your daughter receive a lot of support from 20 your mother; is that right?
- 21 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 22 **Q.** How did your conviction impact upon her?
- 23 A. On Mum, just tragically, you know. Mum's only got one
- 24 lung, as well, and she's been my best friend and,
- 25 yeah, she just looked after us and she had me with

- 1 a criminal record, and my sister lost her husband ten
 - years ago, he was a policeman and, you know, he died
- 3 in active service, so it's very sad. Mum's had to put
 - up with that and it's -- yeah, it's hard.
- 5 Q. As you have mentioned, very happily your conviction
- 6 was quashed in April?
- 7 Α.
- 8 Q. Not all of your family members lived to see your name
- 9 cleared --
- 10 A. No.
- 11 -- did they? Q.
- 12 No. My Dad and my brother-in-law and my Nan. They A.
- 13 believed me and they know but, yeah, they never, ever
- 14 got to see it happen for real.
- 15 Q. You mention in your statement that your father had
- 16 fallen ill after you were convicted; is that right?
- 17 Α.
- 18 Were you able to care for and support him in the way
- 19 vou hoped to?
- 20 No, and I feel like that was stolen away because if
- 21 I'd had still had my job and if it had still been for
- 22 the Post Office and everything, I'm sure they would
- 23 have given me compassionate leave, but I had to be
- 24 grateful for what I had. So the jobs that I were in,
- and they didn't know about my criminal conviction, 25

- 1 I couldn't say to them "Oh, can I have compassionate
 - time with Dad". My Dad had several cancers and
- 3 dementia, so my sister had to do all the caring and
 - I'd just do it on my days off because I was terrified
- 5 that they'd find out.
 - Every job I was in I was terrified they'd find
- 7 out that I had a criminal record and I'd lose my job. 8 That was always -- that's just the way I've been for
- 9 a long time, for years.
- 10 Q. You've mentioned relationships with friends. Your 11 conviction impacted on those as well; is that right?
- 12 A. Yes.

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- 13 Q. Did you continue to socialise with your friends after
- 14 you were convicted?
- 15 A. No, no, partly for myself. I just -- I couldn't face
- 16 people, so I sort of built a wall and just -- yeah, it
- 17 was just me and Jess against the world, and that was
- 18 it. I don't do social media or anything. That's why
- 19 I've never done anything like tell my story. This is
- 20 the first time I've ever really spoken about it,
- 21 knowing that there's people here and I know I'm
- 22 getting filmed, it's quite scary but it's time. It's
- 23 time.
- 24 You have mentioned that your colleagues weren't 25 allowed to support you during your prosecution.

1 Α. No.

- 2 Q. Did you lose touch with those colleagues and friends?
- 3 Everyone, everyone, yeah. Α.
- 4 Do you know if your conviction was reported at the
 - time in the press or --
- 6 It was in the Liverpool Echo.
- 7 How did it feel for you to see it reported like that?
- 8 Horrible, but I was guilty -- I was found guilty.
- 9 There was, you know -- as far as I was concerned,
- 10 until all the, you know, Alan Bates and all the
- 11 Justice for Subpostmasters came along, I think I'd
- 12 still be in that situation. It took me a long time to
- 13 join up with them. It was up to like Jess and my Mum
- 14 and my sister, you know, "Get yourself on board there,
- 15 Lisa". I was terrified to bring it all up again but
- 16 thank God for them because, without them, this all
- 17 wouldn't have happened. So yeah, hats off.
- 18 As you have said things have improved a lot --
- 19 A.
- 20 -- since those early years, post conviction. You have
- 21 a new partner; is that right?
- 22 Α. Yeah, Andy.
- 23 You have a job that you enjoy?
- 24 A. Yeah, I do, yeah.
- 25 How do you feel now looking back about your experience

- 1 with the Post Office? 1 A. Yeah. 2 A. Oh, it's just scandalous. Just -- it should never 2 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: You'll probably be aware that the 3 3 have happened. I wasn't the only one and every one of number of people who've had their convictions guashed 4 us say the same thing "You're the only one", that's 4 is significantly less than the number of people who 5 what we were told: "it's only you". I just remember 5 are actually convicted on the basis of Horizon? 6 6 them saying that to me in the room, "It's only you, A. Yeah. 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I'm wondering if you could help me by 7 nobody else is making these mistakes, it's only you". 8 Q. Sorry, who told you that? 8 explaining to them, however difficult it is, it's much 9 9 better to come forward. So what made you come forward A. The -- when we were in the interview room, back in the 10 10 June, "It's only you who's doing it", and it wasn't in the end? 11 only me. 11 A. Persistence from my Mum. My Mum, my sister Kim, Jess, 12 12 Q. There are no further questions that I wish to ask you, and Andy, they said, you know, "Go for it, Lisa". 13 Ms Brennan. Is there anything that you would like to 13 I said, "Well, say it all falls apart and then I'm out 14 14 there and I lose this job?" It was always the 15 15 terrifying -- and it was terrifying going up against A. Just thanks. Thanks for listening and, yeah, just 16 16 thank you. the Post Office again. 17 **MS HODGE:** Sir, do you have any questions for Ms Brennan. 17 You know, I was scared and I can imagine that 18 18 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I haven't got any questions, people would be scared. Coming here today, I felt 19 Ms Brennan, but I wonder if I could ask for your help, 19 scared. I felt like I was coming up against the 20 all right? 20 Post Office again until I met all the people and I was 21 21 eased. It's like coming up against them again. A. Okay. 22 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Because you've just told me how 22 Don't be frightened. Do it. Do it. You know, 23 difficult it was for you to get on board to have your 23 you've got the likes of Jo and Alan. You know, 24 24 conviction guashed because you felt that, you know, everyone will help you that -- you know, just talk to 25 things might go wrong or it might be too difficult. 25 them. I joined a WhatsApp group with Jo and some of 1 1 the ladies and it's just lovely to know you're not on questions on behalf of the Inquiry. 2 your own. Please, you know, talk to someone, get some 2 Please could you state your full name. 3 3 Janine Marie Powell. 4 You know, it's out there now. They're wrong and 4 Q. Ms Powell, you made a witness statement on 14 January 5 5 it's out there. of this year; is that correct? 6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I hope that's very helpful to 6 A. Yes. 7 7 some people who are listening but who haven't yet come Do you have a copy of that statement before you? 8 forward. So thank you very much, Ms Brennan. 8 Α. I don't, no. 9 9 A. Well, thank you and I hope they do. Thank you. Q. Sorry, if we just pause a moment, we'll make sure we 10 MS HODGE: Thank you. You are welcome to return and sit 10 get one to you. (Pause)
- 11 with your daughter. Thank you very much. 12 Sir, our next witness is appearing remotely, 13 Ms Janine Powell. I wonder if we may take a short 14 break to get her connected and let everybody have 15 a brief rest. 16 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's fine. Thanks very much, 17 Ms Hodge. 18 MS HODGE: Shall we resume at 2.15?
- 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, that would be fine.
- 20 MS HODGE: Thank you.
- 21 (2.04 pm)
- 22 (A short break)
- 23 (2.15 pm)

- **JANINE MARIE POWELL (affirmed)**
- 25 MS HODGE: Ms Powell, my name is Catriona Hodge. I ask

- 11 A. I've found my copy, sorry.
- 12 Not at all. Thank you very much. Could I ask you,
- 13 please, if you can, to speak up a little to ensure
- 14 that your evidence is heard?
- 15 A.
- Q. Thank you very much. So that statement before you was 16
- 17 made, I think, on 14 January of this year; is that
- 18 right?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Could you please turn to the final page of your
- 21 statement. It should be page number 16.
- 22 A.
- 23 Do you see your signature in the middle of that page?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. When you made the statement on 14 January, was the

- 1 content true to the best of your knowledge and belief?
- 2 A.
- 3 Q. Ms Powell, I'm going to begin by just asking a few
- 4 questions about you, if I may. How old are you?
- 5
- 6 **Q.** You're the mother of three children, is that right?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Are they grown up now?
- 9 A. They are.
- Before you worked for the Post Office, you had worked 10
- 11 in retail for a number of years; is that right?
- 12 A.
- 13 Q. You also spent some years out of work caring for and
- 14 raising your young family; is that correct?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. Please could you describe to us the circumstances in
- 17 which you came to work for the Post Office.
- 18 A. I'd seen the job advertised as a counter clerk, just
- 19 applied for it and --
- 20 Q. Do you recall when you saw the advert?
- 21 A. (Shook head).
- 22 Q. I think in your statement you dated it to around 2005
- 23 or 2006, is that --
- 24 A. Yes 2005/6, yes.
- 25 Q. That was for the role of the counter assistant. Do

- 1 you recall in which branch?
- 2 Cowleymoor Post Office.
- 3 Was that to support the subpostmaster of the branch? Q.
- 4 Α.
- 5 What attracted you to the role of counter assistant in
- 6 that particular branch?
- 7 A. Just being back in work. I enjoy working and I'll try
- 8
- 9 The Cowleymoor branch is in Tiverton, is that right? Q.
- 10 A. It is, yes.
- 11 In Devon. Is that where you lived at the time?
- 12 A.
- 13 Q. So it was located in your home town?
- 14 A.
- 15 Q. Is that correct?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. It would have afforded you a chance to work in your
- 18 community?
- 19 Yes, and it was within my area of where I was living
- 20 and with the children at school, in the same area so
- 21 it was all convenient.
- 22 You describe -- you say in your statement that, at
 - that time, you were a sociable and confident person
- 24 and enjoyed interaction with the public.
- 25 A. Yes.

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- 1 **Q.** Were these qualities that you felt made you suitable
- 2 for that role?
- 3 A. Yes, I've always believed in good customer service.
- 4 I feel I can give that.
- 5 Q. To whom did you apply to take up this role?
- 6 A. I just -- I just went to the Post Office and then just
- 7 filled out an application form and just went from
- 8 there.
- 9 Q. Were you required to attend an interview?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Do you recall when you took up the new role? Roughly 12 when that was? Was it in early 2006?
- 13 A. Yeah, I believe it -- I think it was about August time
- but I can't --14
- 15 Q. You cannot now recall?
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. Was Horizon installed in the Cowleymoor branch when
- 18 you first started working there?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Did you receive any training on the system when you
- 21 began work?
- 22 A. Just -- yeah, just your basic --
- 23 Q. Who trained you?
- 24 A. -- training. It was the postmistress that was there
- 25 at the time. There was only, like, one other member

- of staff. 1
- 2 Q. Do you recall how much training you received? Was it
- 3 a day or two, or more?
- 4 A. It was a couple of days. It was just like when you
- 5 went in, when you come across things and different
- 6 things at different times, just --
- 7 Q. Did you feel confident using this system after the
 - training you'd received?
- 9 A. For the basics. I felt I could do the basics, the
- 10 daily, you know, serving the customers, selling
- 11 a stamp, you know, paying out the benefits.
- 12 Q. Whilst you were working as a counter assistant, did 13 you experience any discrepancies in the branch
- 14 accounts?
- 15 Α. As just a counter assistant? No, because I didn't
- 16 have any dealings with anything else, the cashing up
- 17 or anything. It was dealt with by the person that was
- 18 in charge.
- 19 Q. So the subpostmistress was responsible and dealt with
- 20
- 21 At the time, yes. A.
- You've explained in your statement, you didn't stay in 22
- 23 the role of counter assistant for very long; is that
- 24 right?
- 25 Α. Yes.

- 1 Q. Can you explain how you came to become the
- 2 subpostmistress yourself of the branch, please?
- 3 A. The previous postmistress had handed in her notice and
- 4 left and it just -- I was the only one there and just
- 5 sort of got left.
- 6 **Q.** Did you apply to be the subpostmistress of the branch?
- 7 **A.** No, no.
- 8 Q. Were you asked to take up that role?
- 9 A. I think when the area manager had come to visit,
- 10 I think it just sort of led into me taking over the11 role.
- 12 Q. Can you remember how soon after you started working as
- a counter assistant that you took on this new role asthe subpostmistress of the branch?
- 15 A. It was within weeks. I couldn't give you an exact
- time.Q. Did you know why the previous subpostmistress had
- resigned?A. No. She'd been there for a number of years and
- A. No. She'd been there for a number of years andiust ...
- Q. How did you feel about taking on this newresponsibility?
- 23 A. I was happy. I enjoyed my work but I did feel there
- 24 was very little training, but just tried to get on
- with it and do the best that I could.

- 1 Q. When you accepted the role, were you required by POL
- 2 to sign any contractual documents?
- 3 A. Not that I recall. I really can't remember what.
- 4 Q. Did you employ anyone to assist you in running the
- 5 branch when you took over?
 - **A.** The area manager, yes, employed another counter clerk.
- 7 Q. Did you experience accounting discrepancies after you
- 8 took over running the branch?
- 9 A. Yes.

6

- 10 **Q.** What action did you take to try to resolve these?
- 11 A. I would quite often interact with the area manager and
- 12 head office to try and work out where the problem was
- 13 lying.
- 14 Q. Did you yourself check the accounts?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 **Q.** You've mentioned you liaised with your area manager.
- 17 **A.** Yes
- 18 Q. What action did your manager take, to your knowledge,
- 19 when you reported these issues?
- 20 A. If it was something we couldn't really resolve over
- 21 the phone, he would come to visit and try and work out
- 22 where the problem was lying.
- 23 Q. Was the manager able to work out what the source of
- the problem was?
- 25 A. In some instances but it wasn't always the case.

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- Q. Were you required to pay back any shortfalls in that
 initial phase?
- 3 **A.** No
- 4 **Q.** Did you ever contact the helpline for advice or assistance?
- A. Yes, when I say I contacted head office, it would have
 been the helpline.
- 8 **Q.** How many times do you think you contacted the helpline to seek assistance?
- 10 **A.** I couldn't say because it was such a long time ago and ...
- 12 **Q.** More than once?
- 13 **A.** Yes, yes, it would have been more than once.
- 14 Q. Do you recall what advice you received?
- 15 **A.** Again, it was just trying to resolve the matter over
- 16 the phone to see, you know -- but it wasn't always
- 17 resolved and then that's when the area manager would
- 18 also come back in.
- 19 **Q.** I'd like to ask you some questions now about an audit20 of your branch that took place in early 2007?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. Where were you living at this time?
- 23 A. I was living in a flat above the Post Office.
- Q. Can you describe what happened on that day that theaudit took place?
 - 75

- A. I received a phone call asking me to go down with my
- keys, which I did. I was asked to hand over my keys
- 3 and that I was being suspended, pending further
- 4 investigation.

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- Q. Who asked you to hand over your keys?
- 6 A. It was the area manager who was a different one to the
- 7 one -- she had just recently taken over.
- 8 Q. Was an audit carried out of your branch, to your
- 9 knowledge?
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- 11 Q. Were you present when that audit took place?
- 12 **A.** No
- 13 **Q.** What were you told as to the reason you were being
- 14 suspended?
- 15 A. That there was a big discrepancy. I mean, I couldn't
- 16 tell you exactly but I think I was just, like, shocked
- 17 to hear what I was hearing and the fact that I was
- 18 being suspended.
- 19 **Q.** You said it was a large discrepancy.
- 20 **A.** Yes
- 21 Q. In your statement I think you said it was
- 22 approximately £74,000. Does that sound correct?
- 23 A. I think it was 71,400 and ...
- 24 $\,$ **Q.** How did you feel when you were told that you were
- 25 suspected of stealing that money?

- 1 A. Numb. I just -- I can't explain how I felt.
- 2 Q. Were you given an opportunity to explain to the
- 3 auditors, to put your side of the story forward?
- 4 **A.** No. I was next called by Post Office investigators to attend an interview at the police station.
- 6 Q. Do you recall now when that interview took place?
- 7 A. No, but it was -- I believe it was just like days
- 8 after being suspended. I couldn't put a time because
- 9 it's ...
- 10 **Q.** You were asked to attend a police station, you said.
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 **Q.** Who conducted the interview at the police station?
- 13 A. There were two Post Office investigators.
- 14 Q. Can you describe the interview for us, please?
- 15 A. Just -- they read me my rights, they just kept
- 16 repeating "Quite a discrepancy", and what had happened
- and if I'd taken the money or if I could explain where
- 18 it had gone.
- on the day of the audit?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. Some time later, your contract -- you were effectively
- 23 terminated as the subpostmistress; is that right?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. Did you try to obtain work after your contract was

- 1 suspended?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. Were you successful in doing that?
- 4 A. I was, yes.
- 5 Q. In September 2008, you received a summons to the
- 6 Magistrates' Court; is that right?
- 7 A. Yes
- 8 Q. You'd been charged with theft of £47,000?
- 9 **A.** 71.
- 10 Q. Forgive me, you are quite right. You said 71.
- 11 I think your statement says 74, but you recall it as
- 12 being 71,400?
- 13 **A.** Something like 71,400 and ...
- 14 **Q.** How did you react to receiving that summons?
- 15 **A.** Devastated. Absolutely devastated.
- 16 **Q.** How did you plead to the charge of theft?
- 17 **A.** Not guilty.
- 18 Q. Your case was transferred to the Crown Court as
- 19 a result of your plea; is that right?
- 20 A. Ye
- 21 Q. Were you legally represented at your trial in the
- 22 Crown Court?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. What advice did you receive?
- 25 A. They'd actually advised me to plead guilty to a lesser

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- 1 sentence because if I pleaded not guilty it would be
- 2 a higher sentence.
- 3 **Q.** Were you offered a deal by the Post Office?
- 4 A. Not that I recall.
- 5 Q. What action did you take on receipt of that advice,
- 6 that is to say to plead guilty to the lesser charge?
- 7 A. I refused and said no.
- 8 Q. Why did you reject their advice?
- 9 A. Because I did not want to plead guilty to something
- 10 I hadn't done.
- 11 Q. Although you pleaded not guilty, you were convicted
- 12 after your trial; is that correct?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 **Q.** You were sentenced to 18 months in prison.
- 15 **A.** Yes.
- 16 Q. How did you feel when your sentence was read out?
- 17 A. Broken.
- 18 Q. Had you prepared yourself for the possibility that you
- 19 might be sent to prison?
- 20 A. I think I had to. I had to think of the worst case
- 21 scenario.
- 22 $\,$ Q. Once your sentence had been read out, you were placed
- in handcuffs and lead out of court; is that right?
- 24 A. Yes
- 25 $\,$ Q. You had a son and daughter living with you at this

- 1 time, didn't you?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. What was the immediate effect of your sentence upon
- 4 them?
- 5 A. It was hard. It was hard knowing I had -- I was going
- 6 to have to leave them. Sorry.
- 7 Q. Not at all. Would you like a moment?
- 8 A. No, no, fine.
- 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Ms Powell, if at any time you feel too
- 10 upset, please don't be afraid to ask for a break, all
- 11 right?
- 12 **A.** Okay.
- 13 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: But it's obvious this is very upsetting
- and probably best, if you can, just to get on with it,
- 15 yes?
- 16 A. Yes, yes.
- 17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine.
- 18 **MS HODGE:** Your elder son, who had been living with you --
- 19 **A.** Yes
- 20 Q. -- he was forced to move into shared accommodation; is
- 21 that right?
- 22 **A.** Yes.
- 23 **Q.** Because you were sent to prison?
- 24 A. Yes
- 25 Q. And your daughter, who was ten years old at the time;

- 1 is that correct?
- 2 A. Yes, nine/ten. Yeah, she was just turning nine,
- 3 I believe.
- 4 Q. I think you said she turned -- I think you said in
- 5 your statement she turned ten two days before you were
- 6 sentenced?
- 7 **A.** Sorry.
- 8 Q. No, not at all. So she'd just turned ten?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 $\,$ Q. You were going immediately to prison and she went to
- 11 live with a friend; is that right?
- 12 **A.** Yes.
- 13 Q. Because she had to move, she was forced to change
- 14 schools; is that correct?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. You've said in your statement that there was some
- 17 coverage of your case in the press; is that correct?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. Where was it reported?
- 20 A. I believe it was in the local papers, on the news.
- 21 I didn't actually see it myself. It's just what I've
- 22 been told people had seen it -- social media.
- 23 Q. I think you've explained that some of the initial
- 24 reporting was before your conviction, so after your
- 25 first hearing in the Magistrates' Court, and then
 - 81

- 1 there was further reporting upon your conviction?
- 2 A. Yes

- 3 **Q.** How did you feel about that initial reporting of the charges against you?
- 5 A. It's hard because you -- you're walking down the
- 6 street, I was sat in a café waiting to go to another
 - day in the court and there's people reading the paper
- 8 and looking over at me and staring, and just -- it's
- 9 hard knowing that. Sorry.
- 10 Q. Not at all. No need to apologise.
- 11 You have explained that your sentence was of
- 12 18 months' imprisonment. How much of that sentence
- 13 did you serve?
- 14 A. It was six months in prison and then six months on the
- 15 tag.
- 16 **Q.** Where were you initially taken?
- 17 **A.** Eastwood Park in Gloucestershire.
- 18 Q. When you were sent to Eastwood Park, where did you
- 19 spend most of your time during your day in prison?
- 20 A. In the cell
- 21 Q. After about two to three weeks, I think you were
- 22 transferred; is that right?
- 23 A. Yes, to Downview in Surrey.
- 24 Q. What were the conditions like at Downview Prison?
- 25 A. It was a lot harder because you were -- they were
 - 82

- 1 short-staffed, so you were in your cell more often,
- 2 like 23 hours a day. You know, it was over Christmas,
- 3 it was -- again it was short-staffed and you had the
- 4 snow, so they were short-staffed again, because people
- 5 couldn't get in, so you were basically spending a lot
- 6 of time in the cell.
- 7 Q. Do you recall how much time you spent out of your cell during the weekends, for example?
- 9 **A.** At weekends you would have an hour association.
- 10 Q. Were you able to maintain contact with your children
- 11 whilst you were in prison?
- 12 **A.** Yes.
- 13 **Q.** Were they allowed to visit you?
- 14 A. Yes, but not very frequent because of the distanceobviously from Devon up to London.
- 16 **Q.** What impact did your transfer to Downview have upon
- 17 your children's ability to visit you?
- 18 **A.** It was hard. Like I say, they couldn't visit as
- 19 regular due to the distance and having to rely on
- 20 people to bring them to visit.
- 21 Q. I think you mentioned you were released from prison
- 22 and upon your release you were required to wear a tag;
- 23 is that correct?
- 24 A. Yes
- 25 $\,$ **Q.** For how long were you made to wear an electronic tag?

- A. If I recall, that was -- again, that was between four and six months -- I think it was six months. It's
- something -- I do forget days and times because I've
 tried to just block it out and move on.
- Q. In your statement, you've mentioned a period of threemonths. Does that sound correct?
- 7 A. Right, yeah. Again, it could be three months. It's
- just something I've just -- dates and times are not my
 strongest point.
- 10 **Q.** Did having to wear the tag cause difficulties for you?
- 11 A. Yes, it was constantly going off at -- they had to
- 12 keep coming round to check that I was in because it
- 13 was saying that I was not in the building. They would
- be knocking on the door at 12/2.00 in the morning.
- 15 Again, it restricted me from going to my daughter's
- parents' evenings and school plays.
- 17 $\,$ **Q.** You've described in your statement the efforts that
- you made to obtain work after your release from
- 19 prison. What effect did your ability -- forgive me,
- 20 what effect did your conviction have upon your ability
- 21 to find work?
- 22 A. It had a big impact. You have to declare obviously
- 23 that you've got a criminal record and then when you
- 24 try to explain it, you know, it's a no-no straight
- 25 away. I couldn't work with -- I wanted to go into

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- 1 midwifery. I'd done my access course. I couldn't get
- work in a hospital because of the conviction. I've
- 3 applied for jobs with the elderly, care work and,
- 4 again, it's restricted.
- 5 **Q.** You eventually left your home in the south-west of
- 6 England and moved to Durham; is that right?
- 7 A. Yes
- Q. Can you describe how you felt at the time when youmoved to Durham.
- 10 A. I just felt like I needed -- I needed to get away from
- 11 everything and start afresh but it just meant I had to
- 12 leave my children again behind, but I just felt it was
- 13 for the best.
- 14 Q. I'd like to, if I can, explore a bit more with you the
- 15 impact that these events had upon you emotionally and
- 16 psychologically.
- 17 You've described in your statement suffering
- 18 from depression and anxiety; is that right?
- 19 **A.** Yes
- 20 Q. You have also stated that you did at times self-harm
- 21 and experienced suicidal thoughts; is that correct?
- 22 A. Yes
- 23 Q. You have explained that your young daughter turned ten
- 24 just two days before you were sentenced.
- 25 A. Yes.

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- ____
- Q. Can you describe, please, what the lasting effect of
- 2 these events have been on your relationship with your
- 3 younger son.
- 4 A. Again, we're not -- we're not as close as we were.
- 5 We're not.
- 6 Q. Your elder son was living with you at the time. He
- 7 was aged 18; is that right?
- 8 **A.** Yes
- 10 into shared accommodation; is that correct?
- 11 **A.** Yes, yes.
- 12 **Q.** He didn't return to live with you after you were
- 13 released; is that right?
- 14 **A.** Yes.
- 15 **Q.** What impact did this conviction have upon your
- 16 relationship with him?
- 17 A. We were still very close but, again, it was hard
- 18 because he went through a lot and people were
- 19 attacking him in the street verbally because of --
- 20 because of me. And, again, he was also -- there was
- 21 also times when he tried to self-harm himself. I had
- 22 a call because he'd taken an overdose and he was
- 23 crying to me on the phone.
- 24 Q. Did you feel that you had been able to support him in
- the way you would have liked?

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- Q. What impact did these events have upon her?
- 2 A. A very big impact. She -- some of her friends at her
- 3 new school had discovered that her Mum was in prison,
- 4 and I didn't discover it straight away but after
 - a couple of years she'd been self-harming and -- yeah,
- 6 also had a big impact on our relationship.
- 7 Q. Can you describe how your relationship was affected by
- 8 your conviction and sentence.
- 9 A. We were all very close and we just felt like we were
- 10 just -- I think she blamed me for leaving her. We
- 11 just got to the point where we would just be arguing
- 12 all the time and falling out and, again, it was just
- hard to get that relationship back on track. Sorry.
- 14 Q. Please don't apologise. Your younger son was not
- 15 living with you at the time that you were convicted
- 16 but it appears from your statement you were very close
- 17 to him.
- 18 **A.** Yes.
- 19 $\,$ Q. Is that right? You have explained he was preparing to
- 20 take his GCSEs when you came under investigation and
- 21 the prosecution was brought against you.
- 22 A. Yes
- 23 Q. And that that caused him considerable distress and
- 24 worry; is that right?
- 25 A. Yes.

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- A. No, because I wasn't (inaudible).
- 2 Q. Your conviction was finally overturned on 22 November
- 3 last year; is that correct?
- 4 **A.** Yes.

1

- 5 **Q.** How did that make you feel?
- 6 A. Relieved. So much relief. I can now or my children
- 7 can now all move forward and ...
- 8 **Q.** You have started to move forward; is that right?
- 9 You're working as a bar manager in a hotel now?
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- 11 **Q.** Which you enjoy?
- 12 **A.** I do.
- 13 Q. And your children have grown up and started to form
- 14 relationships of their own; is that right?
- 15 **A.** Yes
- 16 **Q.** Is there anything you would like to say to the Chair
- 17 which we've not covered in the questions I've asked
- you and the answers that you have given this
- 19 afternoon?
- 20 A. No

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- 21 **MS HODGE:** Sir, do you have any questions for Ms Powell?
- 22 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, no questions for you, Ms Powell,
- 23 but clearly this has been very difficult for you to
- 24 come and tell me all this, and I'm extremely grateful
 - that you've done it because it is crucially important

1	that I hear from people who have been so badly
2	affected as you have. So thanks again, all right.
3	A. Thank you.
4	MS HODGE: Thank you, sir. That concludes the evidence
5	that we're going to hear this afternoon.
6	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. I take it we're going to
7	start again tomorrow at 10.00; is that right,
8	Ms Hodge?
9	MS HODGE: That's right, sir, yes.
10	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Well, thank you everyone
11	who's helped to facilitate these hybrid hearings as
12	lawyers call them, though I'm never quite sure what
13	the word "hybrid" is supposed to convey in this
14	context. But it is very important that people like
15	Ms Powell who would prefer to give evidence away from
16	the hearing arena has that opportunity. So I'm
17	grateful to all those who have made it possible. We
18	will meet again tomorrow. Thank you.
19	(2.53 pm)
20	(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)
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ſ		44.000	00 Name of the E41, 00/0		44/04 44/40 04/40
			22 November [1] 88/2	A	11/21 14/10 24/12
	MR BLAKE: [11] 1/6	13/22	23 April [1] 60/16	ability [3] 83/17 84/19	27/16 29/21 32/4
	1/12 1/15 1/24 18/7	14/15 [2] 20/10 29/22	23 December [1] 29/3	84/20	33/23 37/0 39/20
	18/17 18/24 32/1	15 [3] 20/10 29/22	23 hours [1] 83/2	able [9] 13/6 36/1	60/15 60/16 66/5
	32/16 38/8 38/18	40/3	25 [1] 23/9	38/14 53/19 60/25	78/25 81/21
		15 February 2022 [1]	25 grand [1] 27/4		add [2] 18/3 33/13
	MS HODGE: [14]	1/1	25,000 [1] 21/13	62/18 74/23 83/10	adjourned [1] 89/20
	39/3 39/10 39/13	15 hours [1] 15/22	27 [1] 52/12	87/24	Adjournment [1]
	39/17 55/1 65/17	16 [3] 41/1 53/11	27 June 2011 [1] 7/1	about [65] 2/16 3/16	38/22
	67/10 67/18 67/20	68/21		4/20 4/25 7/11 7/14	advert [1] 69/20
	67/25 80/18 88/21	18 [4] 12/9 20/10	3	7/15 8/4 9/5 10/13	advertised [2] 16/1
	89/4 89/9	20/18 87/7	3 May [1] 11/7	10/19 10/25 11/12	69/18
	SIR WYN WILLIAMS:		3,000 [2] 5/20 46/15	12/22 13/18 13/23	
	[40] 1/4 1/7 1/13 1/17	18 months [1] 79/14	30 June [1] 8/1	14/9 14/10 16/21 17/6	advertising [1] 15/17
	1/22 18/8 18/19 30/7	18 months' [1] 82/12		18/10 20/7 21/5 21/10	advice [6] 17/12 75/4
	30/14 30/17 30/25	19 years [1] 60/18	30-odd [1] 19/17	22/22 22/22 23/8	75/14 78/24 79/5 79/8
	31/4 31/12 31/19 32/2	1983 [1] 19/13	300 [1] 43/4	23/12 23/15 24/5	advised [1] 78/25
	32/13 37/23 38/13	1984 [1] 41/4	32 [2] 49/5 52/12	25/18 28/7 29/12	afar [1] 1/18
	38/19 38/24 39/6	2	4	29/16 29/21 29/22	affect [3] 29/18 33/24
	39/11 54/12 54/17			33/13 33/23 34/1	34/16
	54/19 54/23 54/25	2 August [3] 49/14	40 hours [1] 15/22	34/21 35/8 35/9 35/25	affected [4] 8/11
		49/15 56/22	40/50 minutes [1]		61/18 86/7 89/2
	65/18 65/22 66/2 66/7	2 June [1] 46/4	26/15	40/12 42/16 44/23	affirmed [3] 18/23
	67/6 67/16 67/19 80/9	2 June 2002 [1] 45/24	400 [1] 43/4	45/23 46/16 48/4 48/5	39/15 67/24
	80/13 80/17 88/22	2 September [1]	47,000 [1] 78/8	49/3 54/10 54/14 57/8	afford [4] 56/16 57/1
	89/6 89/10	50/24	4th [1] 29/1	59/1 61/10 62/25	57/9 57/24
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	'95 [2] 42/16 42/16	2.04 pm [1] 67/21	5,000 [1] 3/18	82/3 82/21	afraid [2] 37/12 80/10
	_	2.15 [1] 67/18	50 [1] 69/5	above [1] 75/23	afresh [1] 85/11
		2.15 pm [1] 67/23	55 [1] 2/18	absolutely [2] 21/24	after [31] 3/5 4/3 8/16
	.so [1] 18/18	2.53 pm [1] 89/19	5th [1] 29/1	78/15	10/3 12/11 13/7 13/15
	1	20 years [4] 43/1	6	accepted [1] 74/1	20/16 20/17 22/21
	1.28 pm [1] 38/23	44/17 55/21 59/16		access [1] 85/1	
		200 hours [1] 12/10	6.30/7.00-ish [1] 24/6	accommodation [3]	22/21 35/5 48/1 48/6
		2002 [2] 45/24 56/24	6th [1] 29/1	3/9 80/20 87/10	51/8 56/11 57/14
	38/20		7	account [2] 8/24 37/8	61/25 62/16 63/13
	10.00 [3] 1/2 89/7	2003 [2] 50/24 58/15		accountable [2] 18/4	/2// /3/12 /4// ///8
	89/20	2005 [1] 69/22	70/80 [1] 45/17	18/6	77/25 79/12 81/24
	10.27 [1] 18/20	2005/6 [1] 69/24	71 [2] 78/9 78/10	accountant [4] 23/11	82/21 84/18 86/4
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