

**ROYAL MAIL GROUP (POST OFFICE LTD) – CASE REVIEW**

**R. v Linda Christine Wrigley**

**Grimsby Magistrates Court and Grimsby Crown Court**

**Offence and Case history**

1. On 18 June 2010 at Grimsby Crown Court, the defendant pleaded guilty to one count of Theft of £98,137.56, contrary to section 1 of the Fraud Act 2006 and a second count of Fraud, contrary to section 1 of the Fraud Act 2006. On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010 the defendant was sentenced to 26 months imprisonment on each count concurrently.
2. The defendant first appeared at Grimsby Magistrates Court on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The case was adjourned to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010 for committal on which date it was committed to Grimsby Crown Court. The PCMH was listed on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 on which date the defendant pleaded guilty with no basis being submitted. On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010 the defendant was sentenced as above.

**Prosecution case**

3. The defendant, Linda Wrigley, was during the relevant period, a subpostoffice assistant at Humberstone Sub Post Office. Her daughter Corriane Wrigley was the subpostmaster.

4. On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2009 a branch development manager attended the Humberstone SPO as the branch appeared to be holding too much cash. When she announced that she was to conduct a verification exercise she was approached by Linda Wrigley who told her that the branch would be short to the tune of around £60,000 as she had been taking POL cash to support her own business which was experiencing cash flow problems. The defendant signed a record of this conversation.
5. The contract of Corriane Wrigley was immediately suspended and cash and stock were secured in readiness for a complete audit.
6. On the date of the audit, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2009, the auditor found a total shortage of £98,137.56 made up as follows:
  - £96,188.68 (-) identified as a difference in cash figures
  - £563.33 (-) identified as a difference in stock figures
  - £2.69 (-) identified as a difference in postage figures
  - £1,382.97 (-) identified as a difference in foreign currency figures
  - £98,137.56 Total shortage
7. The cash in stock AA was £61838.68 short and the cash in the ATM stock was £34,350.00 short.
8. Mrs Wrigley in her interviews, conducted under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the relevant Codes of Practice, on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 said that:
  - She confirmed that she agreed the note of the written conversation on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2009.
  - She had used £10,000 of POL money in May/June to pay her suppliers for her other business in the belief that she could pay it back.
  - She then got stuck in the rut that if she didn't keep the other business going she would not be able to pay the £10,000 back. She carried on taking more to keep it running.

- Her daughter was ill with an abscess and was not at the post office. The defendant was able to cover the figures being used for the TP.
- She was leaving cash in the 4 minute safe so that it would look like it was suppose to. She would take the cash from the 40 minute safe.
- She was taking money from the ATM.
- She used her daughter's username on occasion
- She thought that the loss had got to about £65,000 and was surprised to hear that it was so much higher.

### **Defence case**

9. In interview the defendant accepts stealing POL money although she was surprised at the final total.

### **Discussion**

10. This case was dealt with by way of a guilty plea at the PCMH hearing. There was no basis of plea entered. The defendant has admitted at the earliest stage that she stole post POL funds albeit she in interview she stated that she thought that the amount was in the region of £65,000 (£5,000 higher than her original admission!). This contention was not continued by way of a defence statement, basis of plea or in any correspondence from her solicitors to POL.
11. This discrepancy would not affect the defendant's conviction on either count nor would it have affected the sentencing bracket that she found herself in which ranges from £20,000 to £120,000. The starting point for this bracket is 2 years with a range of 2-3 years. Offences in a high degree of trust find themselves in the bracket above with a starting point of three years and a range of 2-6 years.
12. It is my view that had we been in possession of the Second Sight Interim Report at the relevant stage of these proceedings we would have not disclosed it.

### **The Second Sight Interim Report**

13. This is a pre Horizon on Line case but comes within the scope of this review as the defendant was sentenced after January 2010. It is difficult to see how this defendant could possibly be assisted by its disclosure now.

### **Conclusion**

14. This is a case in which, had we been possessed of the material at the relevant time, we would not have disclosed to the defence the matters identified in the Second Sight Interim report. This case requires no further disclosure.

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**Harry Bowyer**  
**Barrister**  
**Cartwright King Solicitors**

**7<sup>th</sup> April 2014**