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Catherine Churchard LLB
Solicitor & Legal Services Director

Royal Mail

8 October 2004

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For the attention of Andrew W Broome
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Our Ref: CRM/23950-1/DH/dmt
Your Ref: AB/VK/10161

Dear Sirs

REGINA –v- CARL ADRIAN PAGE
STAFFORD CROWN COURT – TRIAL – 4 JANUARY 2005

I write concerning unused material held by H M Customs & Excise in Birmingham which relates to GRO.

Although the material held by Customs & Excise had previously been inspected by both the writer and the Head of Criminal Law on behalf of this office, in the light of earlier correspondence I asked Counsel to review all the material held by H M Customs & Excise Birmingham Office.

I have very much in mind the earlier correspondence, and the contents of your client's Defence Statement dated 3rd August, and in particular paragraph 6. However, following his inspection, it remains the view of the Prosecution that none of this material falls for disclosure. However, in the interests of transparency, I wish to advise you of the following, which is largely by way of amplification of the information contained in my letter of 24th September:

(a) The Customs & Excise surveillance operation centred on GRO and, as previously stated, commenced on 10th December 2002.

(b) Surveillance was carried out at varying times on 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th and 30th December 2003, and on 2nd, 8th, 11th, 12th and 13th January 2003.

(c) Mr GRO was observed at Bureau de Change outlets on 10th, 13th, 17th, 28th and 30th December 2002 and on 2nd and 13th January 2003. All were at Thomas Cook in New Street, Birmingham, with the exception of 2nd January 2003 which was at HSBC, Waterloo Street, Birmingham.

(d) The first and only surveillance of Customs & Excise which showed GRO at the Rugeley Post Office was that on 13th January 2003, the date of arrest.

As indicated in my letter of 24th September, Mr Page was at no stage a target of either Customs & Excise investigation, although his identity as the Sub Postmaster at Rugeley was known as from 12th December 2002. With reference to the paragraph numbered (5) on page 2 of your letter of 20th September, the only knowledge which Customs & Excise had of Mr Page prior to his arrest was his identity as the Subpostmaster at Rugeley. I have to repeat that GRO was the target of an

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investigation into suspected money-laundering, and that there is no information save for the above which relates to your client.

I consider that I should make the following further observations at this stage in the light of your continuing requests concerning Customs & Excise involvement:

(a) Many hours have been spent by the Investigation Manager, two lawyers from this office and Counsel in carefully considering your correspondence and all the documents held both in London and Birmingham by Customs & Excise;

(b) Your expressed concerns relating to the knowledge of Customs & Excise in relation to your client have been looked at in the light of your correspondence and your client's Defence Statement;

(c) As the Defence Statement correctly points out, it is clear on the papers that there was surveillance by Customs & Excise, but there has never been any question of your client being a target of that surveillance;

(d) There is no basis for suggesting in relation to your client that "the investigations of Customs & Excise into this matter will provide vital information as to his conduct." The disclosure which has been given makes it quite clear that his conduct was not under investigation.

(e) It is also incorrect to assert that "on the face of the papers, the Prosecution authorities and in particular Customs & Excise were aware of potential criminal activities and allowed them to continue." The references to *Boyne* and other cases bear absolutely no relation to an investigation of this kind.

This office is doing its level best to respond to detailed and extensive requests for disclosure in this case. We will continue to do so. However, a stage must come, in the interests of all concerned, when you either accept that we are properly complying with our disclosure obligations or you take steps in relation to the third party material which we have carefully considered. We are alive to your concerns, but hope that you will be prepared to accept that we are doing our best to assist you whilst not going far beyond the bounds of our obligations.

Yours faithfully

GRO

Debbie Helszajn
[redacted]
Senior Lawyer
Criminal Law Team