

Witness Statement

(CJ Act 1967, s9; MC Act 1980, ss 5A(3)(a)
and 5B, MC Rules 1981, r 70)



Statement of	Graham BRANDER		
Age if under 18	Over 18	(If over 18 insert 'over 18')	

This statement (consisting of four pages four each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe true.

Dated the 03 day of January 2007

Signature **GRO**

I am the person named above and I am employed by Post Office Ltd, part of the Royal Mail Group Plc, as an Investigator based in Eastleigh, near Southampton. I have worked for Post Office Ltd since 1984 and spent the last six years as an Investigator. Part of my responsibilities is to investigate possible criminal offences against our business and its clients.

Post Office Ltd, has some 14,000 retail outlets throughout the country and each of these offices operates a computerised accounting system, which is commonly known as "HORIZON" and up until October 2005 would balance once a week on a Wednesday. This means that all the transactions carried out at that outlet, during that week, are input into the HORIZON system and then, at close of business, on Wednesday, amalgamated into one weekly balance.

This weekly accounting period was known as a Cash Account Period (CAP) and a Cash Account Final would be printed each week and signed as representing all transactions conducted during that week and the amount of cash and stock on hand.

During October/November 2005, the Post Office Ltd accounting system changed from weekly Cash Accounts to monthly Branch Trading Statements. A Branch Trading Statement would be produced at the end of each Branch Trading Period (BTP). Each BTP comprises of either four or five weeks, with a week being all business transacted from Thursday morning to close of business on the Wednesday. Each outlet still has the option to perform a weekly balance within each BTP. Each Post Office outlet should have a Branch Trading Calendar that indicates when

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to produce a Branch Trading Statement.

Each operator at an outlet should have a unique Log on code, which is normally made up of the first letter of their Christian name, followed by the first two letters of their surname and then followed by 3 digits, usually 001. This log on code identifies the system user at any time throughout the day. For security purposes each operator also has a personal password, which should be kept secret and has to be changed every 28 days.

At 08.45 hours on Thursday 09 March 2006 I attended South Warnborough Sub Post Office Branch (SPOB) with Mr Alan Stuart, Senior Auditor and Mrs Elaine Ridge, Area Intervention Manager. Mrs Ridge advised me that the Postmistress, Mrs Josephine Hamilton had been signed off on sick leave and would not be attending the Post Office.

I took away from the Post Office a number of envelopes containing Post Office accounting documentation, together with some loose items relating to the Post Office accounts. The documentation included a number of Cash Account Finals and Branch Trading Statements within the period 25 November 2004 - 08 February 2006. I also obtained a copy of the Branch Trading Statement produced by Mr Stuart covering the Trading Period 08 February 2006 – 09 March 2006. All the obtained accounting documentation is currently held at my office in Eastleigh.

At 10.50 hours, together with Mrs Ridge, I attended GRO

GRO There I introduced myself and showed my identity card to Mrs Josephine Hamilton and her mother. I advised Mrs Hamilton that an audit was taking place at South Warnborough SPOB and it appeared that there was a deficit in the accounts in excess of thirty thousand pounds. I explained that the audit was still in progress and that an exact figure had yet to be obtained. I advised Mrs Hamilton that I would not be discussing the audit shortage at this time but would be seeking to conduct a voluntary interview with her when she

GRO to attend. I explained that the interview would be tape-recorded and conducted under caution. I explained to Mrs Hamilton her legal rights. I gave Mrs Hamilton one of my business cards and asked her to contact me when she GRO to be interviewed.

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Mrs Hamilton made no significant statements. Mrs Ridge and I left Mrs Hamilton's abode at 11.00 hours.

I have completed a schedule detailing the cash on hand figures between CAP 36 (w/e 01/12/04) and BTP 11 (period ending 09/03/06). On this schedule I have included the cash remittances in and out of the office as well as the declared discrepancies. Cash Account Finals for CAP's 23 (w/e 31/08/05) and 15 (w/e 06/07/05) have not been obtained and page 1 of the Branch Trading Statement for period 7 (period ending 09/11/05) is missing, thus it does not show the cash on hand figure or the declared discrepancy.

From this schedule it can be seen that between CAP 36 (w/e 01/12/04) and CAP 01 (w/e 30/03/05) the declared cash on hand figures remained fairly constant, generally fluctuating between £15,000 and £18,000. Between CAP 02 (w/e 06/04/05) and CAP 14 (w/e 29/06/05) it fluctuates between £18,000 and £20,000. From CAP 16 (w/e 13/07/05) to BTP 10 (period ending 08/02/06) it gradually rises from £22,000 to £35,000. I now produce a copy of this schedule as item reference **GDB/1**.

Together with Mr Colin Price, Investigator I attended the offices of Tanner & Taylor Solicitors, Aldershot at 10.45 hrs on 05 May 2006. Prior to the commencement of an interview with Mrs Josephine Hamilton, Ms Kate Taylor, solicitor gave me a copy of a prepared statement, signed by Mrs Hamilton and dated 05 May 2006. I now produce that copy of the prepared statement as item reference **GDB/2**.

At 12.13 hrs I commenced a tape-recorded interview with Mrs Josephine Hamilton. Also present was Ms Taylor and Mr Price. The interview was conducted under caution and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Codes of Practice. After the initial introductions and voice verification I explained to Mrs Hamilton her legal rights and completed the relevant CS001 form which I now produce as item **GDB/3**. Two master tapes were used during the interview, which have the serial numbers 042769 and 042770 and I now produce these as item references **GDB/4** and **GDB/5** respectively. I have since prepared summaries of those interview tapes, which I now produce as items **GDB/6** and **GDB/7** respectively. The interview was

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concluded at 13.32 hours.

On 13 November 2006, I posted by Recorded Delivery, a summons addressed to Mrs Josephine Hamilton at her last known abode, to appear before Aldershot Magistrates Court at 10.00 hrs on Wednesday 06 December 2006.

Signature

GRO

CS011A

Signature witnessed by