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office

**SUMMARY OF FACTS PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 4(1)(b)
OF THE MAGISTRATES COURTS (ADVANCE INFORMATION) RULES 1985**

ROYAL MAIL GROUP plc v JOSEPHINE HAMILTON

The Defendant is 49 years of age born on the GRO She is the Subpostmistress at South Warnborough Sub Post Office for a period of 2 years and 5 months commencing on the 21st October 2003.

Enquiries in this case commenced when it was noted that the Defendant's Office was showing a high level of cash holdings. In the circumstances the Retail Cash Manager contacted the Defendant on the 6th March 2006 and asked her to return £25,000 on Wednesday 8th March 2006. Consequently the Defendant went sick on Tuesday 7th March 2006. Further information was received that on the 6th March 2006 the Defendant had telephoned a representative from the National Federation of Subpostmasters informing them that there was problems with the Post Office, however the problem was not specified.

An audit was conducted of the Office on Thursday 9th March 2006 which revealed a discrepancy in cash of £36,583.12, this included an identified shortage on the Horizon system of £61.77. = £36,644.89
Although a cash holding of £37,360.06 had been showing on the system only £1,933.48 was found to be physically on hand.

At 10.50 hours on the 9th March Royal Mail Investigating Officers attended at the Defendant's address and invited her to attend an interview under caution. She was suspended from duty by the Area Intervention Manager.

The Defendant was invited to attend an interview under caution and her right to have a Solicitor present was explained. A letter was sent to her informing her of this.

In the interim the Officer was able to obtain the Horizon Event Log for the period 26th January to the 9th March 2006 and also a number of cash account finals in the Branch Trading Statements.

Subpostmasters are aided in their daily accounting duties by the Horizon computerised system. This records transactions and acts as an aide to balancing at the end of the accounting period.

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The Post Office accounting week runs from Thursday through to Wednesday. Prior to the 5th October 2005, the Defendant was required to produce a weekly balance of her accounts. Subpostmasters are required to declare all losses and surpluses to the accounts. If a loss occurs this must be declared and then made good by the Subpostmaster. Likewise if a surplus is found this must be declared and may then be withdrawn and held by the Subpostmaster.

On the 5th October 2005 the South Warnborough Post Office migrated to the Branch Trading Account system. Under this system Subpostmasters are required to balance their accounts on a monthly basis.

After various attempts to make contact the Defendant was eventually interviewed on the 5th May 2006 in the presence of her Solicitor. At the commencement of the interview the Defendant produced a prepared statement in which she highlighted the problems she had experienced and claimed that she had received inadequate training and denied that she had stolen money or any dishonesty. She thereafter answered no further questions.

Between the period January 2005 and March 2006 GRO A statement has been obtained from her which is annexed. GRO stataes that the Defendant was responsible for balancing the cash accounts. GRO. The loss stands at £36,644.89

Enclosed herewith please find:-

1 Copy Notes of Interview
2 Copy Form CS001.
3 Copy Statement of Jo Hamilton.
4 Copy Notebook Entries.
5 Copy Cash on Hand Reports 20/1/05, 21/1/05, 25/1/05 and 26/1/05.
6 Copy Cash on Hand Schedules.
7 Copy Cash Accounts week-ending 1/12/04, 1/6/05, 7/9/05.
8 Copy Trading Statements for Periods 10 and 11.
9 Copy Cash Call Logs.
10 Copy Audit Report.
11 Copy statement of Mr Patrick Partridge.
12 Copy Antecedents.