

file 7 part 3

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IN THE CROWN COURT AT WOLVERHAMPTON

Case No: T20047026

Harbour Buildings,
Waterfront West
Wolverhampton.

Thursday, 1 July 2005

Before:

HIS HONOUR JUDGE W WOOD QC

R E G I N A

v

GRO

KARL ADRIEN PAGE

Transcribed from tape by Ubiquis Reporting UK
Official Court Reporters
Cliffords Inn, Fetter Lane London EC4A 1LD
Telephone: GRO

MR S JOHN QC and MR W TATFORD appeared on behalf of the PROSECUTION

MR J COOPER appeared on behalf of the DEFENDANT PAGE

MISS E NICHOLLS appeared on behalf of the DEFENDANT

GRO

EVIDENCE OF KARL ADRIEN PAGE, Continued

A

(Brief discussion in the absence of the jury)

(The jury enter court)

(Judge addresses jury re timing)

B

KARL ADRIEN PAGE

Cross-examined by MR JOHN (Continued)

C

Q. I just want to return briefly, Mr Page, to where we broke off last night because you swore an affidavit in the civil proceedings, did you not?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And exhibited to that affidavit was a copy of your trading accounts in relation to the business with which we are concerned.

D

A. The Rugeley Post Office, my retail side, sir?

Q. Yes, those accounts having been prepared by your accountants, Dean Statam?

A. Statham, sir.

Q. From information which you supplied to them?

E

A. Invoices and everything sir, yes.

Q. Yes, but certainly so far as trading income in terms of sales are concerned, the information you supplied was false.

F

A. No, not necessarily, sir, because I might have been thinking that in November 2001 I have sold my house and the proceeds went into a bank account with Nat West. However, I did sell some furniture and the cash for that went into the business and I bought some goods in the cash and carry, so when I turned round and said that I took some money out, thinking about it, I can do that because I put some myself, my own in.

G

Q. So, are you withdrawing your evidence yesterday that you in fact sold goods which had been bought for the shop and accounted for as purchases and then pocketed the money without putting it through the books? Are you withdrawing that evidence?

H

*This is part of saying he
he used to on his
not record
(didn't)*

- A A. No, I am not, sir. I'm just saying that that's the reason why I said that.
- Q. So, we can agree about this, can we: cooking the books is not something that is foreign to you?
- B A. It is foreign, sir, yes. I wouldn't class that as cooking the books. I was just taking out something I've already put in, sir.
- Q. Taking out money that is part of your trade and not declaring it in the accounts -
- A. But it's money I've already put in myself.
- C Q. You are changing your evidence from what you were saying at quarter past four yesterday, are you not?
- A. No, sir, I have thought about it, which I presume I'm entitled to do?
- D Q. Of course, you have thought about the impact of that upon this jury's view on your honesty and you are now giving a different version again, are you not?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. We will pass on. The account that you have been giving yesterday concerning the £282,000 figure, you accept, do you not, that that is not the account you gave in interview to Mr Patel in January 2003?
- E A. That is correct, sir.
- F Q. That, you tell us, and I am putting it in shorthand terms now, is because you were putting two and two together in that interview because of the £278,000 cheque?
- A. That is correct, sir. I was trying to be helpful.
- Q. Were you trying to be helpful or trying to be truthful?
- G A. Both, sir.
- Q. Were you succeeding?
- A. No, looking back, sir, I got it wrong.
- H Q. That was in January, was it not?

- A A. I presume so.
- Q. You were here and your expert accountant, who is here, I think, today -- is that right?
- A. I presume so, sir.
- B Q. You were both here hearing your interviews read through in full including on this issue.
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Now, when you gave an account about that £282,000 to Mr Patel in January, were you succeeding in being helpful?
- C A. Well, looking back sir, no I wasn't.
- Q. Were you succeeding in being honest?
- A. I was trying to be honest, sir. I could only try and be helpful. It was a voluntary interview and I was just trying to be helpful.
- D Q. That was in January.
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And you knew, of course, that you were going to be seen again by Mr Patel.
- E A. Not in January, sir, no. I was put on police bail and returned in April where I went to the police station in Stafford. I waited an hour and a half and Mr Patel wanted to interview me and I said, "I haven't got a solicitor with me. As a matter of common courtesy, if you had let me know I would have had a solicitor present because I couldn't afford a solicitor just to be sitting there" and I would have had an interview with him. He wanted to interview me but I said I had the -- I think it's called the local solicitor on call from there.
- F Q. The position is this, Mr Page, that when your interviews with Mr Patel finished in January, he told you in terms that there was a vast amount of documentation to be gone through and that he would want to interview you again.
- G A. He did say that(?) sir, yes.
- H Q. And in April, by appointment and with a solicitor present, Mr Carrington --

A A. Yes, sir.

Q. You were interviewed again?

A. Yes, sir, a voluntary interview.

B Q. So, three months had gone by, three months and more?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And you gave the same account about the £282,000?

A. I had no reason to not – I had no evidence to say anything other, sir.

C Q. What do you mean no evidence? You knew what had happened. You knew that the story you were giving to Mr Patel, and I say "story" because that is what I suggest it is, that you had sold another £282,000 worth of euros to Mr GRO. You knew that that story was false.

D A. No, I didn't, sir, at that time, no.

Q. Let us see exactly what you said, because let me make it quite clear to you, Mr Pate, so that there is no misunderstanding. My suggestion to you is this, that as time has gone on before this trial and during this trial it has become apparent to you that the story you gave to Mr Patel about selling £282,000 of euros to Mr GRO in January just would not wash and that is why you changed your story. You understand the suggestion?

A. I understand the suggestion.

F MR COOPER: Your honour, perhaps he could also be given the chance not just to say that he understands the suggestion, as to whether he wants to deal with it.

MR JOHN: I am about to deal with it.

MR COOPER: That is my submission to your honour.

G JUDGE WOOD: No, the question was perfectly proper. The answer has been given and the case should simply proceed.

MR JOHN: Could you have the interview folder before you, Mr Page, and we will see first of all what you told Mr Patel in January. It is tab 2, page 16. Do you have the page?

Tab 3

A A. Yes.

Q. I am so sorry, it is my fault, it is tab 3.

JUDGE WOOD: That page beginning at the top, "So, I get my own electrician"?

B MR JOHN: Yes, your honour.

JUDGE WOOD: Just to put it in context, Mr Page, we can see a few lines down that Mr Patel is asking you about a couple of cheques bouncing in the last couple of weeks, namely, in the last couple of weeks December 2002.

C A. Yes, sir.

Q. So that we see the context in which this is being asked and you said that it comes to £371,000.

A. Yes, but it wasn't that. It was 278.

D Q. All right. I am just giving you the context. Half way down the page: "He told me, Mr [GRO] told me, that he's got a bit of a problem because over the Christmas period people who deal with (something) calls wasn't paying in" and the interview then moves on to a 271,000 figure. Do you see?

E A. Yes.

Q. Let us take it up from there and see what you were telling Mr Patel under caution in January. The figure is corrected to 271, correct?

F A. (No reply)

Q. Do you see 271, not 371, and Mr Patel says, "271, okay" and you then volunteer this explanation, do you not? "But Mr [GRO] last week had some euros, £288,000 of euros". We will not quibble about whether it is 288 or 282; we are talking about the same sum, are we not?

G A. Yes, sir.

Q. "And he covered it with that cheque" and you go on to say, "There's a cheque in there so that 271 covers what's on my AM stock in the bureau."

H A. Yes, sir.

A Q. So, pausing there can we be satisfied about this, that the explanation that we have been given here for the shortage that you knew was being shown on the office accounts is volunteered by you?

A. In what way, sir?

B Q. Well, it is in front of you, Mr Page.

JUDGE WOOD: I think that it is the use of the word "volunteered" perhaps that may not be easy.

MR JOHN: I will rephrase it if it is ambiguous. It is not as if Mr Patel was suggesting to you, well, did Mr **GRO** buy £280,000 odd worth of euros. The suggestion does not come from Mr

C Patel, does it?

A. No, sir.

D Q. It comes from you. To use the most neutral term I am going to at present, what you said there on any view was completely inaccurate.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Because there never was any such transaction with Mr **GRO**

A. Well, I thought there was at that time, sir.

E Q. But there never was.

A. Looking back, sir, no.

Q. And, of course, we remind ourselves that this interview is 14 January and you were being asked here and giving information about this transaction with Mr **GRO** ie, a transaction which you were saying had occurred only the previous week.

A. I presumed it had, sir.

G Q. So, it is not as if you were being asked to cast your mind back months or years; you were only being asked about the previous week.

A. Yes, sir, but in between that and that previous week I had been arrested and kept in gaol overnight and I didn't know what was going on.

H Q. But you elaborate on it, I suggest. Can we go over to page 17, roughly by the second hole in

A the lever arch where Mr Patel says, "I may be losing the plot here slightly. When did he do the transaction? Forget the bouncing of the cheques for a minute. When did he do the transaction for the 271?" Your answer, "Last week". Correct?

B A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, you are focusing there, are you not, on your dealings with Mr GRO only a matter of days before this interview?

A. Yes, sir but as I said, I took the cheque off him because he gave me three bounced cheques and I was under the impression—I didn't know why I was took overnight into gaol and the only thing I could think of was that it was something to do with the bounced cheques.

Q. But you are focusing on the previous week. That is my point.

D A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you are saying that it could have been Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday; it could have been Wednesday or Thursday. All right?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. So, we can see that it is the previous week, not months or years before that you are talking about. Let us see where you take it up, please, on page 19. You mention about a third of the way down the page the possibility of an error notice coming through in relation to bouncing cheques.

F A. That is correct, sir.

Q. Let us take it up from there, if we may. "Sometimes it takes a month or two months. You know it as well as I do" and you carry on, "so I've used that cheque to buy some more" and you correct yourself, I suggest: "He has used that cheque to buy some more currency".

G A. Yes, sir. At that time I was under the impression that I didn't want to keep a high value cheque in the safe because in case the auditors came down and I was going to buy some more euros but obviously I didn't do that.

H Q. What you are saying here, because you appreciate that part of the safeguard of this kind of

A interview is that it is on tape, do you see?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, that there is a safeguard for Mr Patel who is asking the questions and there is a safeguard for you so that no one can twist your words afterwards. Do you follow?

B

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What you are telling Mr Patel here on page 19 is that Mr GRO used that cheque, the 271 odd cheque, to buy some more currency. Now, that is not something you could possibly have

C

been mistaken about, is it?

A. I was mistaken, sir.

Q. How could you have dreamt that he had used that cheque and that you had given him

D

£282,000 worth of euros only a matter of days before? How could you possibly have made a mistake about that?

A. Because I was unclear what was going on.

Q. You had come up with an answer for the fact that you knew that Mr Patel had discovered a hole in your accounts and this is what you had jumped on, was it not?

E

A. No, sir, I'm not jumping. I'm the one who raised it, not Mr Patel.

Q. Exactly. You had to come up with an answer and this is the one that you elected to give -

F

A. That is incorrect, sir.

Q. A false answer.

A. That is incorrect, sir.

Q. Let us move to April because by April, of course, you had had three months to think about this. Tab 4, page 16, please. So that we have the context you can see, Mr Page, can you not, that where we are looking here a number of sentences are in italics because they are direct quotes from the transcript that we have just been looking at, so that we understand. You are being given the

G

H opportunity to comment again on the exact words that were used back in January.

- A A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And that is rehearsed in Mr Patel's question towards the bottom of the page ending with you saying, "Mr **GRO** last week had some euros, 288,000 of euros". All right?
- B A. Yes, sir.
- Q. So, we have the context there. Over the page we see more italics quoting back to you what you said in January. All right?
- A. Yes, sir.
- C Q. Can we take it up, then, please, at page 18, because of course you had already said in relation to that £271,000 cheque that it was --
- A. It was 278, sir. You said 271, I think.
- D Q. 271.
- A. I might have said 271 but I think it was 278, sir.
- Q. Yes, it does in fact say 271, but we will not fall out about that. What you have said was that Mr **GRO** had given you a cheque for an odd sum of money, if I can describe it like that, 270 something, to cover three cheques which might bounce over Christmas.
- E A. That's what he informed me sir, yes.
- Q. So, again, so as to give us the context let us look at page 18, and Mr Patel, where we see tape counter time 35:50, asked you this: "Do you think that that was a wise decision to accept a cheque from him to cover the error notice when it materialised ... and yet allow him to have more euros on that cheque?" Your answer: "Well, as you've said, I've had no problems in the past. I mean hindsight, if everybody acts in hindsight, no I shouldn't have done". And it goes on: "If you suggested it, why did he -- how did you know he wanted euros that day?" so we are talking about exactly the same thing, are we not, £282,000 worth of euros on the back of that cheque?
- G A. Yes, sir.
- H Q. And you give an answer. "He comes in, he has the euros nearly, not every day, every other,

A every two or three days or whatever". And further down, Mr Patel: "He wasn't expecting to go home with 280 grand's worth of euros, I imagine?" Your answer: "Yes, but he's already wrote a cheque for the money. He came out with it, didn't he?" So, you are giving the same account, are you not?

B A. I had no reason to make it any different, sir.

Q. But you had had three months to think about whether what you said to Mr Patel to explain that very large gap in your accounts with an accurate account.

C A. Hmm.

Q. And three months down the line, you are giving the same account.

A. I didn't know that that was an issue, sir. I thought that the account I gave was truthful and correct at that time.

D Q. Well, you thought Mr Patel had swallowed it, did you not?

A. What I told him was what I thought was correct at the time and truthful.

Q. Can we go to the bottom of page 19, please? You asked about a schedule. We will turn it up if we need to but it may not be necessary for this purpose. At the bottom -

E A. Page 19?

Q. Yes. Mr Patel, "At the very bottom, the bottom of the schedule, I have separated the 13th transaction for 584,000." That is euros, yes?

F A. Yes, sir.

Q. "Can you tell me then, when he walked out with 280 grand's worth of euros?" "Now, I'd say between the 7th and 13th, I'm sure".

G A. At that time, sir, I presumed it was correct, yes.

Q. It is not a question, Mr Page, with respect to you, of assuming or presuming anything; you knew, and all you were doing here was pinning down the date to between the 7th and the 13th. You

H are actually elaborating your story and narrowing the timeframe down to a period of between, well,

A less than 7 days before your first interview.

A. I was just trying to be helpful, sir.

Q. You were trying to help yourself, were you not, Mr Page?

B A. No, sir, that's incorrect.

Q. At the bottom of page 20, please, Mr Patel says this: "I don't understand where this transaction is then. Did you put it through the Ford money changer?" "Yes, I'm sure I did". Well, you accept that that is wrong, do you not?

C A. No, sir. If I said I thought I'd done it, I thought I'd done it.

Q. You accept that as a matter of fact that is nowhere shown on the Ford money changer.

A. The Ford money changer has a roll and the roll should be duplicated but what we had from the stores delivered to the Post Office was only a single one some of the time, so the copy that the customer had is the only copy we have.

Q. Let me see where we are getting here, Mr Page. Are you now saying that -

E A. No, sir, I'm just saying that sometimes that's what happens but I am sure that if I did do that transaction, that when I said that there and then he would have had a receipt.

JUDGE WOOD: Are you inviting the jury to consider as a possibility that you did do this transaction or are you not inviting the jury to consider that?

F A. At that time, sir, I thought I did the transaction issue on it.

Q. And what are you saying now?

A. Exactly the same, sir. At that time I thought I did the transaction.

G Q. No, are you saying now that it is possible that at some time in early January you did sell this additional collection of euros to Mr GRO

A. Yes, sir, I am.

Q. You are saying that?

H A. When I was in interview, sir, that's that I thought.

A Q. No, no. I want to be quite clear because it may be that there is a misunderstanding. You understand that you have said in the interviews that you did the transaction with Mr GRO and did sell him this final large amount of euros.

B A. Yes, sir.

Q. That is in the interview.

Q. That is correct, sir.

Q. You said that when you said it in the interview you were telling the truth as you understood it?

C A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you have been cross-examined about that.

A. Yes, sir.

D Q. But what I would like you to do is, if it is possible for me, please, is to say whether you now say to the jury that that is possibly what had happened.

A. No, sir. Looking back it couldn't have happened, sir. I do apologise.

Q. Right. I am going to write that down just so that we have that absolutely clear. I am writing:

E "I am not saying that there is any possibility that the final cheque was used to buy an additional quantity of euros as I said in interview".

A. Yes, sir.

F Q. Thank you.

MR JOHN: You see, you have had many months, Mr Page, have you not, with probably your own full set of papers in this case, statements?

A. From January to April, sir.

G Q. No, no, leading up to this trial.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you have no doubt had an opportunity to reflect upon what the documents show and do not show?

H

A A. Yes, I believe so, sir.

Q. In particular, you have come to the realisation that there is no documentation whatever which would support the account that you are here giving?

B A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And you have come to the realisation, have you not, that there would not be any chance of Mr GRO telling this jury that he had bought £282,000 worth of euros when he would have no documentation to support that either?

C A. No, that is correct, sir.

Q. Yes. That is why you have changed your story, is it not?

A. No, sir. At that time I thought that that was correct.

D Q. Just to make it absolutely clear how firm you were being at that time in April, can we go finally on this issue to page 21?

A. Yes.

E Q. I am sorry, we should start with the last answer on page 20, in fairness to you. You ask Mr Patel, "Have you asked him", plainly meaning Mr GRO "for the receipt?" "Have I asked him for the receipt?", says Mr Patel, "Yes". "No – well, I wasn't aware that that's what you'd done" said Mr Patel, and of course he would be right about that, would he not?

F A. At that time I thought I answered the questions correctly, sir.

Q. Mr Patel would be right though, would he not? He was not aware that you had done that because you had not done it.

A. Looking back, sir, no.

G Q. He knew it already but you still had not remembered. Is that it?

MR COOPER: Your honour, it is what this witness remembered and what Mr Patel knew, in my submission.

H THE WITNESS: What must be pointed out that Mr Patel had all the documentation in front of me

- A and just throwing pieces of paper at me and asking me questions there and then.
- MR JOHN: Very well. Let us follow it through and see whether you exhibit any doubt, any lack of certainty about this transaction. "I did note, I did tell you, I told the police and I told you on the 14th". Patel: "Well, I wasn't fully aware that he'd purchased more euros with this cheque" and you come back, "I did tell you". "Well, that's why I clarified that". "Okay". And Mr Patel goes on, "I wasn't sure but now I know but I still can't find where that transaction took place". Do follow it with me. And Mr Patel is asking you, "But you", meaning you, Mr Page, "you are absolutely sure he purchased more euros using that cheque?" "Yes, he did, yes". So, you are not telling him, "I can't be sure about it now, it's months ago. I haven't got the documents." You are not saying anything like that. You are telling Mr Patel that you are absolutely sure that he purchased 282 grand's worth of euros the previous week.
- D A. At that moment in time when I was interviewed, sir, that's what I believed was true. All I know is that there were no euros left in the office after Mr **GRO** left on the Monday.
- E Q. I suggest to you that that was a bare faced lie and one which you have persisted in in January and in April until with months to look at this documentation you realised that the story simply would not wash.
- A. It's no different from the theory that Mr Patel comes up with.
- F Q. This is not a theory. Here you are stating to Mr Patel as a fact something which as a fact never happened. That is the difference, is it not?
- A. (No audible reply)
- G Q. Let us move on. Can we have the jury bundle open, please, at 1128?
- A. Can I put the interviews down?
- Q. For the present. You are familiar with this schedule, Mr Page, as we all are. is that right?
- A. That is correct, sir.
- H Q. I am going to start, please, at the beginning of our indictment period because we know that the

- A Ford money change figures have not been extracted for the earlier period because of missing till rolls and so on. So, we will start at week 50; is that right?
- A. Week what, sorry, 15?
- B Q. Week 50, 6 March 2002, at 1128. Do you have that?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. I just want us to orientate ourselves on this schedule to see whether you agree what it should reveal if the office accounts were being properly and honestly kept. The figure in the foreign
- C currency on hand declared column should equal the figure in the Ford money change column, should it not?
- A. Yes, sir.
- D Q. The figure in column 4, foreign currency on hand figure declared, that is the sterling equivalent figure, 15,000 odd, if all is well with the office accounts should be exactly the same figure as the one we see in the next column, the figure that comes off the Ford money changer.
- A. Yes, sir, unless I put it in somewhere else.
- E Q. If necessary, we will go back to basics, Mr Page, but the position is this, is it not: foreign currency, when it is booked in from Hemel Hempstead, is going to be sold in the bureau?
- A. That is correct, sir, yes.
- F Q. So, it should be booked in as the bureau stock, should it not?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Not as AM stock?
- A. No.
- G Q. Right. And if at the weekend, the end of the accounting week, I mean, if all is well with the accounts and there have been no errors and no false accounting, then the figure in the foreign
- currency on hand column, column 4, should be the same as the FM figure, should it not?
- H A. Yes, sir.

A Q. And in week 50 we see that it is.

A. Yes, sir.

B Q. So, all is well. Week 51, you remember the explanation that has been given there, and we can look at the document if need be – there is a figure in the inflation column because there is a difference between the two columns we have been looking at. Do you remember?

A. Yes, sir.

C Q. And we know, do we not, how that should be explained because somebody has keyed in the revaluation figure?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you want me to turn that up so that you are sure about that?

D A. I am sure.

Q. Or are you happy with that?

A. I am happy with that, sir.

E Q. So, that explains why, on the face of the schedule, there is an inflation whereas in fact there was not. All right?

A. Yes, sir.

F Q. Let us follow it through. Week 52, putting it in layman's terms, if I may, the office balances, does it not, because again, column 4 equals column 5, which is as it should be. Yes?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And similarly, week 53, week 54 a trifling difference and in a way –

A. There is no week 54, sir, on this.

G Q. I am sorry, of course not week 54; week 01, yes?

A. Yes.

Q. A trifling difference of 40 pence and anyone can make a mistake at that level. Yes?

H A. Yes, sir.

- A Q. Week 02 again, the officer balancing perfectly in terms of foreign currency?
- A. It equals the Ford money changer, sir, yes.
- B Q. It is exactly what you would expect to happen, is it not, if the accounts are being accurately kept and if the accounts are being honestly kept. That is right, is it not?
- A. All my accounts are honestly kept, sir.
- Q. We will come back to that. If we go over the page we can see exactly the same pattern is shown in weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Correct?
- C A. Correct, sir.
- Q. And in week 10 again we have a difference but a similar explanation which Mr Patel found out from the documents?
- D A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And week 11 and week 12, similarly the figures match. So, taking it from 6 March 2002, week 50, right the way through to 19 June 2002 at week 12, so it is about a 14-week period, it does not look as if you had any problem in balancing the office.
- E A. In what way, sir? The Ford money changer agreed with the foreign currency.
- Q. Yes. You see, yesterday you were giving an explanation for the inflation figures that we see starting from week 18 onwards.
- F A. Week 13 onwards, sir.
- Q. Week 13: no one has yet provided an explanation for that. Can you provide one?
- A. I wasn't there, sir. The auditors were there.
- Q. All right. Week 14 I think we have already dealt with, so I believe the jury have written something in there. I hope I am right because again the revaluation figure was used in error. So, right the way down then until week 15, again the two columns show what they should. That is right, is it not?
- G
- H A. Yes, sir.

A Q. Week 16: a different error is made but again explained: the revaluation figure has been used for the currency on hand figure.

A. Yes, sir.

B Q. Week 17 again, all is well. Help me out about this, please. Let us just be clear about the dates. You see that week 18 has been shaded on our schedules to make it stand out for us?

A. Yes, sir. That's when Mr Cartwright came in.

C Q. Exactly, and just so that we have the dates clearly in mind, Mr Cartwright came and "remmed" out of the office £160,000 in cash, in sterling, on Friday 26 July.

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. Take it from me that it was a Friday.

D A. Yes it was. I was there, sir.

Q. And at the end of that week the difference between the figure in column 4 and the Ford money changer column has gone wildly out of kilter, has it not?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. How is that?

A. Because I was putting bulk stock in the AM, bulk euros into the AM stock.

Q. And that is your explanation for all the figures that we see in the inflation column thereafter?

F A. Yes, sir, not only did I used to count it but as you can see there, Margaret Pearce used to as well.

G Q. We will come to Margaret Pearce and what she was actually signing up to when she signed off accounts in a moment; rest assured, but I want to understand quite clearly so that the jury know what your evidence is about this, that quite coincidentally, immediately before the very first accounting week after Mr Cartwright takes 160 grand out of the office, quite coincidentally it is that week and all the weeks that follow right up to your arrest that you start booking in foreign currency not into the bureau stock, where it should have been, but into the AM stock?

- A A. But if you look at week 20 and 21 sir, all the euros have been sold out of the AM stock.
- Q. All right. Let us leave 20 and 21 to one side. I have an argument about that which the jury will hear later. Let us stick with your account first of all. It is a coincidence, is it, that after Mr Cartwright remmed out 160,000 that week, it is from that week on with the exception of 20 and 21 that you use the AM stock to book in euros?
- B A. Because I was getting a large amount of euros, sir, yes.
- Q. But you were getting large amounts of euros before.
- C A. Not to the quantity that Mr **GRO** was buying, sir.
- Q. So, it is a coincidence, is it, on your evidence, Mr Page, that at this stage, week 18, that is when he started buying large quantities of euros?
- D A. No, as I said, he was always large amounts but I decided to put them into that --
- Q. So, the answer you gave a moment ago was a little misleading, was it not?
- A. No, sir. In what way?
- Q. Because you were suggesting to the jury a moment ago that the reason why you started at week 18 to book bulk euros into your AM stock was because that was when Mr **GRO** started buying large quantities, your words a few minutes ago.
- E A. Yes, but he was always buying large amounts, sir.
- F Q. Do you want me to have the tape played back, Mr Page?
- MR COOPER: Let him finish answering the question, please.
- JUDGE WOOD: Let us just have a pause. Your barrister has intervened because it is thought that you were cut off before you had completed your answer.
- G A. Yes, can I have the question again, my Lord, please?
- Q. Very well.
- JUDGE WOOD: Are you happy to put the question again?
- H MR JOHN: Yes, certainly. (To the witness) Just two minutes ago I suggested, Mr Page, that you

A were giving this explanation to the jury for why you started booking bulk currency into the AM stock. Two minutes ago the explanation you were giving for why that occurred at week 18 and onwards was because that was the stage when Mr **GRO** started buying larger quantities of euros. Now, did you say that to the jury a few minutes ago?

B A. Yes, I did sir.

Q. You did, but you now accept that in fact he had been buying large quantities of euros for months before this date.

C A. Well, it was getting larger and larger, sir.

Q. Why is it this week, this week of all weeks, that is a matter of five days after all that cash is remmed out of the office by Mr Cartwright, that you decide that you are going to totally alter the way you deal with bulk euros?

D A. Because that's what I decided, sir.

Q. Why that week?

A. Because I did.

E JUDGE WOOD: I would like, just to see if you can shed any further light on that.

A. Yes, I've got an office – a gentleman coming in and remming 160K worth of cash out, sir, and I thought it was about time, especially after being audited and told, I put the office into – well, made sure the office runs properly, I decided after having another kick up the rear end that it was best to do it that way, sir.

F Q. You are telling us that it was your decision –

A. Yes, sir.

G Q. – no longer to book bulk euros that came in as foreign currency in the bureau; you would book them as AM stock instead?

A. I booked them in the Ford money changer, sir, but I kept them as bulk into the AM stock, sir.

H MR JOHN: But you cannot book them both as bureau stock and as AM stock, otherwise you would

Not sure if under that Counsel says Leo?
Read on →

this number added hrs

A duplicate.

A. Yes, sir, but I've already sold them as well.

Q. There is not a word about this in your interview, is there?

B A. I don't think I was asked that, was I, sir?

Q. You had not thought up this story then, had you?

A. (No audible reply)

Q. Let us look, please, at the figure we arrive at when the office is audited on the 14th, page 1130.

C MR COOPER: Whilst we are pausing, I deliberately waited because I did not want to interrupt Mr John's flow — I am in your honour's hands — Mr John mentioned that on weeks 20 to 21 he has an argument which he is putting before the jury on that. I am in your honour's hands.

D JUDGE WOOD: Can we deal with that when the jury are not here?

MR COOPER: It is simply whether a question should be put to the witness to hear the argument and respond to it, that is all.

E JUDGE WOOD: If you would like to raise it when we take a break, that is when we will deal with it.

MR COOPER: Your honour, that is all I have to say.

JUDGE WOOD: That is quite all right.

F MR JOHN: (To the witness) Let us just go back to 1129 so as to see whether you agree with this proposition. Would you start from week 22, please, go to the inflation column at 18 8000 and just run your eye down that, please, Mr Page and follow it down on 1130 as well.

A. Yes.

G Q. Now, what we see there with the exception of week 35, where the figure is an odd one, 259,2204.

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. What we otherwise see is an exact number of thousands — I am sorry, with one minor

A exception, week 27 -- it is 204,200, but that apart there are two features, are there not, about this column if we follow it through from July 2002 down to the time of your arrest when the office was audited. There are two features, do you agree -- firstly, the figure each week either remains the same as the previous week, weeks 25 and 6 for instance?

B A. Hmm.

Q. But that apart, it moves up every week. There is a continuing inflation.

A. Yes.

C Q. It is always up, it is never down.

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

Q. And the other feature is, apart from the two that I have just highlighted, is that these are exact, round figures of thousands.

D A. That is correct, sir.

Q. Sterling equivalent?

A. What do you mean, sterling equivalent?

E Q. You tell me. What is this figure supposed to mean on your evidence?

A. It is sterling equivalent of foreign currency.

Q. Always rounded up to an exact number of thousands of pounds?

F A. Yes, sir. I explained that yesterday.

Q. And your explanation for what is in that column is that if you found that when on balance day the accounts did not balance -

A. You usually end up having a surplus, sir.

G Q. But you are talking about amounts such as £450. Yes?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, you would round that up or you would round it down?

H A. Yes, to the nearest thousand, or -

*This is the
what I said yesterday,
for the accounts!*

A Q. To the nearest thousand?

A. Yes.

Q. Any explanation that you can come up with for the fact that the inflation figure gets bigger and bigger every week?

A. Inflation figures because there are more euros in stock, sire.

Q. So, this shows the volume of euros in stock, does it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are you sure about that? Do you want to hang your case on that answer, do you?

A. Yes, well the bulk stock that I've got in the AM.

Q. So, when we see on 8 January at 2003 in the inflation column 282,000 -

A. Yes, sir.

Q. That means, does it, that there was £282,000 worth of foreign currency in the office?

A. If it says so on there, sir, yes.

Q. But we know that it is not. That is why you are here, in part, Mr Page, because when the auditors were there they did not find that money.

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

Q. So, why is it here?

A. Because it was in the AM stock. I presumed it was in the AM stock as bulk foreign currency.

Q. But it wasn't in the office. It wasn't there to be found.

A. I've got no explanation for that.

Q. Because you had nicked it.

A. No, sir. I deny that.

Q. Even on your own account we have this position, do we not, that if we go back to the beginning of this schedule, with the exception of the week of the audit, 26 June 2002 when Mr

H Davies tells us that the office was in a mess, right up until Mr Cartwright's visit, your office was

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A balancing beautifully, was it not?

A. It always balanced, sir, as best I could.

Q. Well, that is not right, is it? You have been telling us yourself that from week 19 onwards you were endlessly rounding up or rounding down so as to make sure that the office did balance when in fact it did not.

A. I've shown a surplus, sir, and the majority of times in the Post Office you don't show a surplus. Obviously, somebody's gone away without receiving the money.

Q. Can I come back to the question that I was asking? If we look at 1128 and start at week 50 as we have done once already, and run right the way through to week 16, with the exception of the week when the office was in a mess, when Mr Davies sits there on 26 June, the office is balancing, is it not, because there is nil inflation.

A. Yes, sir, but whether I've shown a surplus in my cash account, I can't remember.

Q. You are shifting your ground yet again, are you not?

A. No, not at all.

Q. You can't keep the same story going for five minutes at a time, can you?

A. (No audible reply)

Q. But on your own account, Mr Page, what then happens is that from July onwards, with the exceptions of week 20 and week 21, every week when you did your final cash account there was a surplus or a shortage.

A. That's correct, sir, the majority of weeks there was.

Q. Which you then adjusted?

A. Yes, sir --

Q. So that the office would declare a clear balance?

A. What do you mean by a clear balance, sir?

Q. So that the office would balance perfectly.

A JUDGE WOOD: No discrepancy?

A. No, you can never balance the office to nil, not the size of that office.

MR JOHN: Yes, but that is what you were trying to do, was it not?

B A. Yes, sir, but we never could do that.

Q. Your explanation to the jury for these inflation figures in round thousands of pounds is that if you found there was a shortage when you balanced the office -

A. A surplus, sir. The majority of times we ended up having a surplus.

C Q. All right, a surplus - you would round the figures because your anxiety was to see that the office accounts balanced.

D A. Balance to a couple of hundred pounds, sir, yes, but four or five hundred pounds. It's what I said yesterday.

Q. So, in other words, on your own account - which, let me make it clear if it is not clear already - I do not accept a word of - each week if there was a surplus, shall we say, of £450, you would adjust that figure?

E A. Yes, sir.

Q. In other words you would falsify it?

F A. I would not put the surplus in knowing that somebody, an old lady, or whatever, would come back and pick the money up.

JUDGE WOOD: I am just going to pause there. "I would not put the surplus in" -

A. I would not show the surplus, sir.

Q. "Knowing that a customer would come and ask for the money back".

G A. Because we were individually stocked sir, and the members of staff would probably realise when they balanced that they're over and they would probably realise who they hadn't given the money to or whatever.

H Q. "Because we were individually stocked and the staff would probably recall the transaction"?

A A. That is correct.

Q. I have written that down.

B MR JOHN: When you do your final cash account for each week, if an error has occurred or a series of errors resulting in either a shortage or a surplus, your final cash account is required to show that shortage or surplus, is it not?

A. It is, sir.

Q. Yes, because otherwise when you sign off that cash account it is a false document, it is not?

C A. No, if I knew, if the ladies were telling me on the tills that they thought there was x amount over because of this, I wouldn't put in, sir; I'd round it down.

Q. Did you ever say a word of that when you were interviewed?

D A. I don't think I was asked those questions.

Q. No. Let us be quite clear about this – we will perhaps look at some cash accounts later – the purpose of the final cash account is to show the office as it is not as it ought to be, but as it actually is, what is on the records and what the physical check shows. Yes?

E A. Yes, sir.

Q. To show that honestly, decently and truthfully?

A. That is correct, sir.

F Q. And let us leave little old ladies out of it. When you do your final cash account, if there happens to be a shortage, however it has arisen, the shortage should be revealed, should it not, on that cash account?

A. It should do, or the surplus.

G Q. Shortage or surplus, whichever it is, needs to be revealed. It needs to be on the face of that cash account?

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. Because that is the only honest way of doing it?

A A. Well, I only took the money, round it off or put the money down knowing that one of the members of staff had told me that somebody had had the money.

B Q. So, are you telling me that for every one of these weeks that we see from July 2002 until January 2003, one of your members of staff came to you and had an explanation for every time there was a surplus?

A. The majority of time, sir. We used to turn over at least £600,000 per week and had a footfall of around 5,000 people. We are going to make mistakes.

C Q. During the period that is covered by the indictment that this jury are trying, who were the members of staff at your office?

A. Margaret Pearce, Jane Batey, myself, Ian Graham, Barbara Carey and Helen Rogers.

D Q. Right, all of whom have been called by the prosecution?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Not one of whom has had that suggestion put to them. Any explanation for that?

A. No, sir. I don't ask the questions.

E Q. No, you give the instructions, though, do you not, to your lawyers?

A. Yes, sir.

F Q. And this explanation about rounding up and rounding down and little old ladies and the staff telling you about mistakes, you have thought of that since you have been in that witness-box.

A. No.

G Q. Then explain why Mr Cooper did not put that to any of your office staff to explain this schedule.

A. No, sir.

Q. You have been changing your account even as this trial has been going on, Mr Page, have you not?

H A. I don't think so, no.

A Q. We will then move to another topic.

JUDGE WOOD: If that is the case I am going to ask if Mr Page would like to take a break. I realise that it is very hard work answering questions, particularly in cross-examination and you have been doing that for quite a long time now.

B A. I will carry on if you want to carry on, sir.

Q. Are you quite sure?

A. I am, sir.

C Q. If you feel like a break between now and one o'clock, just say so.

A. No, unless the jury want a break.

Q. I am sure that the jury, as it were, are used to it. You are the person who has to give the answers, but we will carry on if that is all right, members of the jury. I hope that it is. Very well.

D MR JOHN: So far as the bureau was concerned, the bureau in common with --

A. Have you finished with this, sir?

E Q. Yes, put it to one side for now. We will have to open it up later on but put it to one side if it is easier for you. At the end of each week, each of the stocks had to be balanced.

A. Yes.

Q. That, of course, would include the bureau stock?

F A. Yes.

Q. Recording all the transactions, sales and purchases that week?

A. Yes.

G Q. And generally speaking, bureau stock was balanced by you?

A. No, Jane Batey used to balance the bureau stock, check all the money and everything.

Q. Sometimes she did but more usually it was you, was it not?

H A. We ended up doing most of it together because I was training Jane up, and nearly before I got arrested she was doing it herself.

A Q. Margaret Pearce did not normally do it, did she?

A. No, sir.

Q. No, because she hardly knew how to, did she?

B A. She was not trained up, no, sir. She knew how to do the transactions, sir, but not how to balance.

Q. And Jane Batey started to be trained up really quite late in the day, did she not?

A. I would say it could have been mid-2002, I should think.

C Q. Mid-2002, yes, so in the summer?

A. I would say so, sir.

D Q. So, up until then, certainly for the first few months that we are concerned with, the bureau balancing would be done by you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And we can be quite certain about this, can we not, that there is only one person who would balance the AM stock?

E A. Up to them until I trained Margaret up, yes.

Q. Well, the AM stock was yours.

A. It was our office stock, sir.

F Q. The AM stock was yours.

A. No, sir. When I trained Margaret up, the AM stock is the bulk office stock and Margaret used to start looking after that.

Q. When do you say that that started?

G A. When Margaret started getting trained up which, as I said, maybe the same time as Jane started doing the bureau, about mid -- because I was struggling in the office after my ex-wife had left.

H JUDGE WOOD: You have been asked for a time. Can you try to help us?

A A. I think midsummer, the same time that Jane Bates started during the bureau.

Q. And by midsummer do you mean midsummer of -

A. 2002.

B MR JOHN: Let us just see whether that makes any sense. Taking any individual counter clerk - let us just take Barbara Carey at random - at the end of the accounting week, normally a Wednesday afternoon or evening, she would be required to balance her own stock, would she not?

A. Correct.

C Q. And the other clerks would be required to balance their own stocks.

A. Correct, even myself, sir.

Q. Those were numbered stocks, were they not?

D A. Yes, I had a stock myself.

Q. What was that?

A. Off the top of my head, I don't know, sir. It could have been 02001, I think.

Q. You had 02001, did you? That is not the evidence we have heard from the staff.

E A. I can't remember the exact number, sir, but I did used to sit at my till.

Q. But there is one stock that was certainly yours, and certainly during March and April and May and into the summer, and that would be the AM stock.

F A. The bulk one, yes, sir.

Q. And whoever actually signed off the final cash account would rely upon the figures that you had cleared on balancing the AM stock, would they not?

A. And also the office snapshot, sir, yes.

G Q. They would take your figures on trust, would they not?

A. Well, yes. We used to share accounting, the bulk stuff, sir.

H Q. But if you had balanced our AM stock you would not expect Margaret Pearce to go back and check it again. She would take your figures, would she not?

6
A A. If I got it correct, sir, but nine times out of 10 I didn't. She had to check it with me, especially after when I was audited in July. I started to double check everything.

Q. Is that something you have just thought of as well?

B A. No, sir.

Q. Because again she was not asked about that. Let us see what you said about it in interview, shall we? Can you take up the interview file and put away the jury bundle for a moment? It is tab 7, page 22. Do you have that? This is part of your April interview with Mr Patel.

C A. Page 22, tab 7?

Q. Yes, do you have that?

A. Yes.

D Q. Do you see a reference to Chesterfield in the middle of the page?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Just further down there you are being asked here about the cash accounts; do you follow? In fairness to you we should start a little further up the page. Counter time 30:20 in the margin. You are asked by Mr Patel, "Now, the cash accounts, then, are they done on the Thursday morning? Who produces the cash accounts, the final cash account?" Your answer: "I produce the final cash account". Is that a truthful answer?

E A. Yes, sir.

F Q. "You do? Does any of your staff know how to do that?" "Margaret knows how to do it, yes", and you go on to say that sometimes she does it.

A. That is correct, sir.

G Q. And you then explain that there are two copies, one that goes to Chesterfield and one that stays in the office.

A. That is correct, sir.

H Q. And the two should be identical.

A A. Yes.

Q. Yes?

A. Yes, they would be identical and I'd print two off at the same time, sir.

B Q. That is one thing that you cannot adjust, is it not? What goes to Chesterfield has to be the same as the one in the office because it is printed at the same time?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. You cannot adjust that?

C A. Why would I want to adjust it, sir?

Q. I am not answering your questions, Mr Page. Let us go on. Mr Patel: "Right, and do you sign them? Does Margaret sign them? Who signs them?" "Margaret sometimes does and I sign them as well." Question: "But do you produce the cash account itself?" "The majority of the time, yes". Is that accurate?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. And where on our schedules we can see that from time to time on the final cash account Margaret Pearce's signature actually appears, that does not mean, does it, that she has verified each and every one of the stocks? It means that she has completed the final account. That is right, is it not?

F A. (No audible reply)

JUDGE WOOD: I am just going to write this down, Mr Page, and I need to know if you agree.

"When Margaret signs, it means she has completed the final weekly account" --

A. Yes.

G Q. "But not that she has checked" --

A. She would have checked it, sir.

Q. "Not that she has checked the individual stocks."

H A. Yes, sir.

A Q. Do you meant that?

A. Yes, we wouldn't - it's down to the individual to balance their own individual stock, sir.

Q. Quite.

B A. It's down to me to check that if I need to.

Q. "The individual stocks would be balanced by the till staff". Is that the right way of putting it?

A. Yes, sir, and then can I carry on, sir?

Q. Please so carry on.

C MR. JOHN: I am sorry. I did not realise that you had not finished.

A. I just thought you might be interested - we have individual stocks and all the reports then go to the back office Horizon system and that produces an office snapshot of everything that is done in the whole week, stock and all the transactions that are done and what would happen then, either myself or Margaret the majority of Margaret, when it was coming near to the end of 2002, that you put everything together and make sure that it balances with the office snapshot.

D JUDGE WOOD: Yes. I have written, "The reports from the stocks, from the individual stocks, go to the Horizon system, which allows us to check the total". Is that against the office snapshot?

E A. Yes, sir and once that office snapshot is balanced off we agree the figures, and if we agree the figures with the stock and everything else, that is when Margaret used to check the AM stock with me for bulk currency, bulk cash, and we used to keep bulk stamps in there and once everything agreed or balanced or we hadn't got any discrepancies after we'd totalled everything up, we then do a final cash account.

F Q. I have written, "Once that is balanced off, Margaret and I would check the AM stock and prepare the final balance".

G A. That is correct, sir, just bulk money, bulk euros and bulk stamps because we used to have a lot of stamps, product of the month, sir.

H Q. "This included bulk money and bulk stamps".

A A. That is correct, my Lord.

MR JOHN: Is this a fair shorthand way of putting it, Mr Page, so that we understand the final cash account for each week, that it is an amalgamation of what each individual stocks have declared?

B A. That is correct because we have individual policies, stock policy, where some offices just have an open till and just have one big office balance, but with that you can't trace where a mistake is made.

C Q. Yes. Just going off at a brief tangent for a moment so that we understand the common sense behind this, each counter clerk is responsible for their own stock?

A. That is correct, sir.

D Q. And it is important that they are because if you have either a dishonest counter clerk or a very careless counter clerk by them being responsible for balancing their own stock each week, you can find out which one it is

E A. That is correct, sir. Sometimes you may be £85.50 short because somebody's till – and you find out that that has happened to be a car tax amount, so you can go through their car taxes and say, "Well, he obviously hasn't paid his cheque or you've done the transaction but you forgot to take the money" which does unfortunately happen.

F Q. I see. Now where on occasions we see from our schedules that Mrs Pearce, in fact, signed off the final cash account, you do not suggest, do you, that she was involved in any stealing?

A. No.

Q. Or in any falsifying of figures?

A. No.

G Q. And if you had balanced your AM stock and declared the figure, she would accept that from you, would she not?

H A. She would. We would both go to the office snapshot and also count the bulk foreign currency, sterling and stamps, which she did say when she was on the witness stand.

1 - This would have been done already? In 80 balance of

A Q. Most of the time, Mr Page, you would balance your own AM stock just in the same way as the clerks would balance their own counter stocks.

A. I would balance it and get somebody to check it because of the amount of bulk currency and bulk sterling and stamps that were in.

B Q. Are you sure about that?

A. Yes.

C Q. So, in other words you trusted the counter clerk to balance her own stock but you would require somebody else, you being the boss, to check yours?

A. Yes. I trust the staff.

Q. You know what the suggestion is going to be, Mr Page, do you not?

D A. No, tell me.

Q. Well, let me tell you. The suggestion I make to you is this, that Margaret Pearcee would accept your figures for the AM stock and therefore if you had been falsifying them, where her signature appears on the cash account she would be none the wiser.

E A. That is incorrect.

Q. Before going back to the schedules, can we just deal with one matter and see what your account of this is? Did you regard yourself as being a thoroughly incompetent sub-postmaster?

F A. Looking back, yes.

Q. so, that is the picture you want the jury to have as to your competence, is it?

A. I wouldn't say I was very incompetent but I was a bit slapdash.

Q. A bit slapdash?

G A. Yes.

Q. Not way out of your depth?

A. I did struggle, sir, yes, after my wife left, my ex-wife, sorry.

H Q. Barbara Carey, in common, I suppose, with the rest of the staff, you got on with very well, did

A you not?

A. I got on with most of the staff very well, yes.

Q. I am not suggesting you did not. Did you remember her – I am just taking her as being one example – being asked about your competence?

B

A. Yes.

Q. And she said that she thought you handled things very well bearing in mind the number of tasks that you had to do.

C

A. Yes, I would say so but some of it was slapdash, sir, because I was too busy all along. You had to cut corners.

Q. So, a bit slapdash but the suggestions that were put to a number of witnesses that the documents and the audit showed you to be completely incompetent – that is a bit wide of the mark, is it not?

D

A. In what way, sir?

Q. Well, it is overstated, is it not? I want this jury to understand how you rate yourself. Don't run yourself down. Do not be over modest. How good were you?

E

A. I tried my best, sir.

Q. Yes, and by and large you were okay, were you not?

F

A. I would say about okay, sir.

Q. Yes.

A. I used to cut corners and be a bit slapdash.

Q. Yes. Let us take one example. You did not have any problem getting to grips with the Ford money changer.

G

A. I did, sir, yes, from the first off.

Q. How long before you were competent on that?

H

A. I would say, well, me and my ex-wife and the other lady, Muriel, we had to ask I think it was

27

A the retail network manager to go through it with us.

Q. Well, of course, when you see a new machine for the first time but when you have done a few transactions on that machine, it is dead easy, isn't it?

B A. It takes time to get there, sir, yes.

Q. When you have done a few score transactions, it is dead easy, is it not? It is a simple machine.

C A. The transactions are, sir, but balancing, no, especially half way through when they change all the commands.

Q. And Horizon is a great improvement on Echo, on which you were originally trained, is it not?

A. Yes, sir.

D Q. Touch screen?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Nice big buttons so it is difficult to press the wrong one by mistake?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. Yes. Much better than the one you were trained on and much easier to use?

A. Yes, better than manual, sir.

Q. Yes, and your staff could cope with it?

F A. After a while, yes, sir.

Q. And you could too.

A. After a while, sir.

G Q. Yes. I am going to go back to the schedule, so jury bundle, if you would. Could we go back, please, to 1129? I am going to ask your help, Mr Page, in conducting another exercise to see whether you agree with what I am going to put to you about some figures. Can we look, please, at weeks 11 to 17 and the cash on hand figure, column 3?

H A. Yes.

- A Q. That is the sterling, is it not?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And column 4 is the sterling equivalent of foreign currency?
- B A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Or, to use another phrase, the bureau stock?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. That is right, is it not? If we just focus on those seven weeks, 11 through to 17, is this a fair
- C comment, that the values of sterling shown as on hand and declared by you, of course, to Chesterfield, are very large?
- A. Yes, sir.
- D Q. Between 300,000 and half a million?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And the foreign currency amounts, bureau amounts, by comparison are trifling.
- A. Yes, sir.
- E Q. Two of them, moderately large, in fairness, 36,000 and 85,000 but otherwise, 2, 3, 4 7,000 that kind of thing?
- A. Yes, sir.
- F Q. A very small fraction of the sterling. If we then leave aside the week of 31 July, that is when the 160,000 is remmed out, do you remember?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Leave out weeks 20 and 21 for the present.
- G A. Yes, sir.
- Q. There is a complete shift in pattern, is there not?
- A. Meaning less sterling and more euros?
- H Q. Yes. In fact, let us not leave out weeks 20 and 21. Let us include them. Far less sterling.

A Week 20 is still a small amount of foreign currency but week 21, the sterling is now roughly a quarter of what it had been throughout June and July.

A. Hmm hmm.

B Q. And the foreign currency is about ten times as much.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. If we trace down two weeks, 22 and 23, 24, 25 and look at the sterling figures, we see figures generally speaking in five figures, below 100,000 or thereabouts. Correct?

C A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And the foreign currency is now running at 200,000, 300,000 and more?

A. Yes, sir.

D Q. When you had your conversation with Mr Brown from Bristol about your overnight cash holdings being very large, he was asking you about sterling, was he not?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. And he was telling you two things: firstly, that you had not sent in your ONCH figures for weeks?

A. I think about six or seven weeks, yes.

Q. Seven?

F A. Yes.

Q. They were supposed to go every week, were they not?

A. Yes, sir.

G Q. But you were not sending them off. That is point one that he was raising with you, why not.

A. Yes.

Q. Was there an explanation?

A. No, sir.

H Q. No, and he asks you to send through, at any rate, your recent figures.

40

A

A. And I did that sir.

Q. And the jury asked a question about this, you may remember, and I was a bit snappy about it.

A. Yes, sir.

B

Q. Whether you had been asked to send through three weeks' figures or seven weeks' figures.

You sent through three, I think?

A. I think that is correct, sir, yes.

Q. And there is your fax through the same day?

C

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the result was that Mr Brown was, shall I say alarmed to see just how much ONCH you were holding?

D

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. But he was not asking you how much foreign currency you were holding was he?

A. No, sir.

MR JOHN: There is a jury note, I think.

E

JUDGE WOOD: (Same handed to judge) Thank you. The jury ask that the air conditioning be turned down a little, meaning that you are too cold? That is right, yes. I am afraid that we are going to have to do that. The barristers sometimes complain about being too hot, not that that

F

would excuse any heated moments that have arisen in the court over the past few weeks, of course. I can see that the clerk is going to seek to do what the jury have requested and we will carry on for the moment anyway.

MR JOHN: The unit at Bristol was only interested in what you were holding in Sterling.

G

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And you realised that, did you not?

A. What do you mean, I realised that?

H

Q. Well, you realised that the figures that you were required to declare weekly but in fact had not

A been doing for the previous seven weeks were only your sterling holdings.

A. That is correct, sir.

B Q. What I suggest, Mr Page, is that you had been routinely stealing money out of the office and hiding it in your cash on hand figures up until the time that Mr Cartwright had to come to the office in person to take out your excess sterling and that afterwards you started hiding your thefts by inflating the foreign currency figures. That is right, is it not?

A. No, that is incorrect.

C Q. And that is why it is, I suggest, that it is no coincidence that having no inflation bar the one week of the June audit for months before July we have these very large figures of inflation moving ever upwards afterwards because that is where you are hiding your thefts within the office, are you not?

D A. That is incorrect, sir. If you look at weeks 20 and 21 it is nil, nil.

E Q. Oh yes. Let us deal with that because Mr Cooper has asked me to and I will. In week 19 we see that there is 101,000 sterling declared and the foreign currency declared has jumped up -- we can accept, can we not, that the July week is special, if only because of the remming out? That is fair, is it not?

A. If you say so, sir.

F Q. But we can see that the foreign currency figure is nearly 100,000.

A. Correct.

Q. Were you waiting to see if there was going to be any query about your overnight holdings for the next couple of weeks?

G A. No.

Q. You sent in your ONCH figures in week 19, did you not?

A. I don't know, sir. I can't remember.

H Q. Well, having been brought up short by Mr Brown and told that you had not done so for seven

A weeks, I imagine that you were on your best behaviour telling Bristol your ONCH figures immediately afterwards, were you not?

A. I can't remember, sir. At that time my dad was in hospital. He'd just had a heart attack. I can't remember what I was doing. I don't think I was in. I was in and out of the office.

B Q. So, in week 20 and week 21, could this be right, that you were testing the water; you were waiting to see if anybody would check up on your ONCH figures?

A. That is incorrect, sir.

C Q. That is why we see that the office foreign exchange is balancing for weeks 20 and 21. You did not hear anything more from Bristol, did you?

A. As far as I know, sir, no.

D Q. No, and you then thought, I suggest, that it was safe to do what you had started doing to hide your escalating thefts by inputting false figures into the foreign currency on hand?

A. That is incorrect.

Q. And that is how we get up to the 282,000 is it not?

E A. (No audible reply)

Q. I am going to leave this in one moment but just help me in case I have misunderstood. How is it, Mr Page, looking at it sensibly, that when one looks at that inflation column starting in week 22, 188,000, week 23, 189,000, how can it be that these can always be exact round figures of thousands with only the two exceptions that I pointed out? How can that possibly be right because these are, on your evidence, Mr Page, sterling equivalent figures. How could your bureau stock, your AM stock as you are calling it, your bulk stock, always come out every week to an exact number when converted into sterling of thousands of pounds? How can that possibly happen?

G A. I have already answered that.

Q. Well, forgive me if I did not pick it up. Answer it now.

H A. I'd round the figure up or down according to what surplus was shown in the office.

3

A Q. Deliberately round it up or down to an exact number of thousands?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Why?

B A. Because it's easier for the office to balance and easier for myself.

Q. How is it easier for the office to balance when what you are doing is adjusting a figure that is wrong?

A. Well, I found it easier, sir, and that's that.

C Q. It is falsification of accounts apart from anything else. You know that, do you not? It is false accounting.

D A. I don't believe so, sir. I was just making sure that the surplus wasn't put in knowing too well that somebody may come back for it.

Q. Every week?

A. Most weeks, sir, yes.

E Q. Are we going to hear from any of these people who were endlessly leaving their money lying around and coming back for it?

A. I don't know, sir. I doubt it.

F JUDGE WOOD: I think that is a point that the jury might be interested in. You have raised the possibility. I am quite sure that it could happen that on a week, some --

A. We used to deal with --

G Q. Can you wait for the question? - some old-age pensioner cashes a giro for two week's money or six week's money or something or two giros and gets only half of what she is entitled to as a result of some error.

A. That is correct.

H Q. Or gets £100 less than she is entitled to but then after a bit, if that is what has happened, she is quite likely to come back.

few

A A. That is correct.

Q. And I fully appreciate that if at the end of a day one of your very nice staff were to think, "I never gave that old Mrs Smith the full money she was entitled to. I can see that I've got £142.30 over here and she is entitled to it", again, the jury and I might well understand that you might think, well, we'll stick that in an envelope, and not saying about the accounts.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I can quite understand that sort of approach.

C A. Yes.

Q. But I would then think that when next week she has had her envelope back, there would be nothing then to declare, would there?

D A. No, sir.

Q. And everything would go on balancing correctly?

A. I would keep going on and on and on --

Q. I cannot understand how it produces inflation. That is really the question asking you to --

E A. Well, if somebody came to me at the counter and I hadn't paid them money, sir, maybe £89 something, that means that the till would show £89 over.

Q. Yes, if they come back for it -

F A. But it might be the following week, sir, I don't know.

Q. But that would be corrected, would it not? What we are looking at, as I understand it, is increasing amounts and I am having difficulty, though the jury may not be having my difficulty, in thinking about these people leaving regular amounts in the Post Office and it not being returned to them. What do you say about that?

G A. It was returned. We used to put it to one side. Not just that, we used to pay out over a quarter of a million pounds a week in pension allowances, one and a half, two thousand car taxes a month -

H Q. I am going to try to bring my note up to date. One of the difficulties I have is that if I ask

WS

A questions it is not so easy for me to record the answers and we need to get on.

A. Yes.

MR JOHN: Would your honour allow me to speak to Mr Cooper for a moment, please?

B JUDGE WOOD: Yes, of course. (After a pause) I will read out what I have put and then I would
be grateful if you would tell me if I should add to it. "When customers accidentally received less
than they should have done, the surplus was put on one side and returned to them, which might
happen in the following week. That would explain a surplus in that week. It often happened
C because we had a very high turnover." That is as far as I have got. Would you like me to add to
that?

A. No, sir.

D Q. I will leave it there.

A. Maybe when the office members were showing a surplus for reasons beyond them, we used to
have to show that, sir.

Q. Yes.

E MR JOHN: I just want to ask you about some of these cheques before I move on, Mr Page. Would
you turn in the jury bundle to page 249. I just want to come back briefly to this £278,000 cheque.
When you were first asked about this, Mr Page, and we see that it bears the date of 2 January, your
F account was that Mr **GRO** had given you this cheque to cater for the possibility that three of
his cheques would bounce over the Christmas period. Yes?

A. That is correct.

Q. That was the explanation that you gave.

G A. That's the explanation Mr **GRO** gave me.

Q. Yes, and that is the explanation you gave to Mr Patel when you were interviewed. So, it was
sitting there in the till against the likelihood or the possibility that those cheques were going to
H bounce?

db

A A. I don't know, sir.

Q. Well, what did Mr **GRO** tell you?

A. He said they might bounce.

B Q. They might bounce. And that didn't bother you?

A. No, as I said earlier, I'd been dealing with Mr **GRO** for quite a period of time and no, it didn't.

C Q. Why did you not say to him, "If there's any risk of these cheques bouncing, you can't take the euros away"?

A. Well, he gave me an explanation that the money would be coming into his account and because of the Christmas period, Corus or whatever it was had shut down.

D Q. Is this a post-dated cheque we see at 249?

A. In what way, sir? I think he came in on the 3rd, didn't he?

E Q. That is your evidence. We will see that I suggest that you said something quite different to Mr Patel, but we will come to that in due course. You are clear now, are you, in your evidence that this was given to you on 3 January?

A. Either the 2nd or the 3rd, I don't know.

Q. Let us not quibble about whether it was the 2nd or the 3rd; it is January, after Christmas?

F A. Yes.

Q. That is the time when he came in and gave you this cheque?

A. That is correct.

G Q. Let me be clear about this. Are you telling us that it was on that occasion when he handed over this cheque that he said, "The three cheques I gave you previously may bounce?"

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

H Q. We will look at your account in interview this afternoon but let us be clear about this. Your evidence now is not that when he gave you those three large cheques he said, "These may bounce"

A but that he told you that later?

A. No, sir.

Q. Let us see if we can get the chronology right.

B JUDGE WOOD: I am sorry, I need to understand what that answer means. It was put to you that you were saying that when he gave you those cheques for the first time, writing them out and giving them to you --

A. For euros before Christmas.

C Q. That is right. On that occasion was he then saying that there might be a problem with them or was he not then saying that?

A. No, he wasn't saying that, sir. He came in after Christmas and told me that.

D Q. "It was later, after Christmas, that he told me that"?

A. That is correct.

MR JOHN: So that we can trace this through, I am going to invite the jury, if they think it is helpful, to note on page 249, "See page 982" because I am now going to invite Mr Page and the jury to look at page 982. So as to keep things neat, if the jury think it will be helpful, to write on page 982 "see 249", or we could just take out 249, if that is easier. Whichever way suits you, Mr Page, can we look at the three cheques on page 982, please?

F A. Yes.

Q. These are the three cheques that we are talking about, are they not?

A. Yes.

G Q. Because as a matter of arithmetic, add those three sums up and they come to the 278,181 on page 249. All right?

A. Yes.

Q. When do you say that these cheques were given to you by Mr GRO

H A. These three cheques?

20/12/2012
20/12/2012
20/12/2012
See page 50

UK

A Q. Yes.

A. Before Christmas.

Q. They are dated, two of them, the 20th and one of them the 23rd. Given to you together?

B A. What do you mean by together, just two together?

Q. I mean by that together, at the same time.

A. Two on the 20th, probably, yes, and the one on the 23rd on the 23rd.

Q. Forgive me one moment. Let us just look at 989, then, please, which shows us the

C transactions. On 989, do you see a transaction on 20 December?

A. Yes.

Q. That line is the £87,000 odd cheque, correct?

D A. Yes.

Q. Below that is a transaction for 90,909?

A. Yes.

Q. Where is the 87? I am sorry, where is the 100,000 on the 20th? What was that used for?

E A. I don't know, sir.

Q. All right. Turn over from 982 to 983 which shows us the back of those cheques which were given to you, you say, before Christmas.

F A. Yes.

Q. They were put through the system, were they not?

A. Yes.

Q. Because we can see that they went through the office on the 27th.

G A. That is correct.

Q. So, in the office records they would have been shown on Horizon as being the receipts, would they not?

H A. They would have done, sir, yes.

3 cheques
2 dated 20th Dec
1 23rd Dec.

put through on 27th Dec

A Q. Receipts against the sales of euros which they were being used for payment. Yes?

A. Hmm.

Q. And it would be right then, would it not, that if we go back to the 278 cheque, that would not appear anywhere on the office records at all? *W*

W B A. That is correct. *L*

Q. Because that was just being held there in suspense. Yes. *de*

A. That is correct, yes.

C Q. And it certainly did not represent the sale of any euros to Mr GRO?

A. No, no.

Q. Because of course otherwise that also would have been entered on Horizon as a receipt, would it not?

D A. That is correct.

Q. All right. Have you seen your expert accountant, Mr Liddell's report?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. Have you studied it with care?

A. I have looked at it, sir, but I haven't studied it, no.

Q. Really? It is a very important document, is it not, in your life?

F A. It is, sir, yes.

Q. Have you found anything in it in relation to what you have been saying to this jury that does not tie up?

A. In what way, sir?

G MR COOPER: Your honour, some of the prefaces to questions put to Mr Patel of, "Mr Patel, this is not a memory game" was quite right and I wonder whether the same courtesy could be afforded to Mr Page? If there is a point, quite properly, that my learned friend has, perhaps he could direct

H him to it?

5

JUDGE WOOD: I do not think that there is anything improper about the question. It is really very normal for counsel to make a general enquiry before focusing on the specific. Obviously the jury will know that the report is not short and the witness does not profess to be an accountant, but I do not think that there is anything wrong in the question.

MR JOHN: Can we have the answer then?

A. (No audible reply)

Q. Can we have the answer?

A. Can I have the question again, please, sir?

Q. Yes, it is a question that Mr Cooper did not want you to answer.

MR COOPER: No, your honour. That is just the sort of thing that was said and your honour told me to apologise.

JUDGE WOOD: We will not have that.

MR COOPER: So, perhaps my learned friend might apologise to me

MR JOHN: Yes, I do. (To the witness) I will ask you again. Have you seen anything in that report which relates to instructions that you have given that strikes you as being wrong?

A. Off the top of my head, no.

Q. Have you noticed, for instance, that there is no reference anywhere in Mr Liddell's report to the explanation that you have given to the jury for the schedule that we spent so much time on for the rounding up of those thousands of figures? Have you spotted the fact that Mr Liddell makes no reference to that explanation at all?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. He does not, does he?

A. I don't think so, no.

Q. Because you have invented it since he wrote his report, have you not?

A. No.

Ref Liddell report
check report in COR. but agree from memory.

- A Q. You know, do you not, that he has examined whether there could have been a build
office of £282,000 worth of foreign currency.
- A. That is correct, yes.
- B Q. And you know his conclusion, do you not?
- A. That there wasn't, no.
- Q. There was not and you know that that was Mr Patel's conclusion as well, do you not?
- A. That is correct.
- C Q. That it simply was not possible that there could have been £282,000 worth of euros in the
office.
- A. That is correct.
- D Q. But the inflation figure that appears on the foot of the schedule, which you have been
explaining to us, implies that there were.
- A. Yes, sir.
- E Q. And that inflation schedule, you have explained how that comes to pass because it is figures
that you put in.
- A. That is correct.
- Q. So, on your evidence there should in fact have been, when the auditors went in, £282,000
worth of foreign currency.
- F A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Well, where is it then?
- A. I don't know, sir.
- G Q. So, you accept, do you, that there is missing money?
- A. Whether the money is missing, sir, or there was an accounting problem I don't know.
- Q. No, it is not an accounting problem at all. You know that.
- H A. No, I don't know that, sir, at all. I'm not an accountant.

! comes to £282K
missing

A Q. The documents that you yourself have created and produced show that there is physical money missing from that office. That is true, is it not?

A. No.

B Q. Would you look, please, at page 280 in the jury bundle? That is the snapshot that was taken by one of the auditors, Mr Orgill, on 14 January.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. We remind ourselves that this is not a whole office snapshot, is it?

C A. No, it is the AM stock, sir.

Q. It is the stock for which you were individually responsible.

A. Not individually responsible, sir, no.

D Q. You are not going to tell us, are you, that somebody else has been putting false entries into the AM stock?

A. No, sir, the question you asked me was if I was solely responsible for that stock.

Q. What does this snapshot mean to you?

E A. That there is sterling cash of 72,000 plus foreign currency of 282, 1404 99(?) instant scratch cards.

F Q. Let us forget the Lottery. We are not troubled with the Lottery. The £282,000 figure: what did this snapshot mean to you?

A. That there is £282,000 worth of foreign currency in the AM stock.

Q. In order for this snapshot to have been printed off Horizon, someone would have had to input the figures, would they not?

G A. That is correct, sir, and these figures come from the previous cash account and the figures I would have put in.

H Q. Yes, and if a snapshot had been taken the previous week also of the AM stock, then on your evidence, Mr Page, it would have shown us a figure of £280,000 exactly, foreign currency

A

equivalent

A. If you say so. I don't know what page.

Q. Turn back -- do not take my word for it -- to 1130.

B

A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, if the auditors had come in on the 7th rather than 14 January, and punched just the same button to get a snapshot of your AM stock, it would have shown in terms of foreign currency, sterling equivalent of foreign currency, 280?

C

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And similarly, if they had come in a week earlier, 272,000 and so on?

A. Yes, sir.

D

Q. Because all those figures would have had to have been manually input, would they not?

A. Yes, and checked by myself and Margaret.

Q. Yes, and they would all have been false, would they not?

A. No, sir, I don't believe so.

E

Q. Well, they have to be, do they not? They have to be because otherwise on your evidence when the auditors came in on the 14th, they would have found £282,000 worth of foreign currency and they did not.

F

A. I can't explain that, sir.

Q. We have come full circle with your explanation, you see, Mr Page. There is a great big hole of cash that according to the records which have been input through your AM stock simply was not there and it is you who is inputting the figures.

G

A. Me and Margaret Pearce, yes.

Q. The AM stock is yours. You were the one who was doing the rounding up?

A. Yes, that is correct, sir but we would have checked it, sir.

H

Q. So, the figures, if we look at page 1130, for the foreign currency on hand declared figure,

52

A these are your figures, are they not?

A. And checked by Margaret, yes.

Q. I am sorry, are you trying to drag Margaret Pearce into this?

B A. No, I am not trying to drag Margaret into it. I said before, sir, that Margaret used to check the bulk figure with me.

Q. The inflation column that we have looked at so many times now, every entry in it, I think you have agreed yourself, from July onwards, is an entry which is not accurate.

C A. It is slightly inaccurate, sir.

Q. How can it just be slightly inaccurate? We come right back to the start here. The auditors did not find £282,000 worth of foreign currency or anything like it in the office. There was a hole -

D A. And I can't explain that, sir.

Q. And the figures have been input into your AM stock. You are a thief, Mr Page.

A. No, I deny that.

Q. I want to deal with just one other matter. Who had keys to the office, Mr Page?

E A. Myself, Jane and Margaret.

Q. And you, as the sub-postmaster, of course, was the boss?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

F Q. You could let yourself into that office at any time you liked.

A. Yes, sir and I did.

Q. And had you done it - I know that you will not accept that you did - you could have gone in at any stage, day or night, and taken 2,000 here, 5,000 there and no one would have seen you.

G A. That is very doubtful, sir.

Q. Really?

JUDGE WOOD: I am writing, "I don't agree" --

H A. The reason being, sir, that the safe should be on a time lock.

5

A Q. I will get you to explain that in a minute.

A. I will do, sir, yes.

B Q. The suggestion was that it would have been easy for you to make away with thousands of pounds in small numbers of thousands, regularly without anyone noticing and your answer was, "I don't agree that that would be" --

C A. Because the majority of the time, sir, the safe should be on a time lock. There's four safes and what you do, you turn a manual key to how many hours you want the safe to be locked. I'm not saying it was done all the time, sir, but the majority of the time it was.

Q. Right, you say that. And who would do that?

A. The last person leaving. It would be myself or Margaret or -

D Q. 'Last person out would do that'.

A. Hmm.

Q. So, one way forward would be that if you close at six o'clock, leave the building at that stage -- I do not know if that is -

E A. The safe should not open again until maybe seven or eight o'clock the following morning.

Q. Yes, so you would be able to set the time clock so that no one could get into the safe for eleven hours, say?

F A. Yes, and if we used to come in, because we were connected to the Redcare System, Romec, so if you came in out of office hours, you would have a phone call round the back asking what you are doing there, and whatever, and that would be logged.

Q. Yes. "Romec would telephone me if I went in out of hours and that would be logged"?

G A. Yes, sir.

MR JOHN: Romec are a pretty unreliable organisation, are they not?

A. Some parts of it, sir, especially the electricians.

H Q. We know that, do we not, because you waited for months and months for them to come and

A repair your rate board?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. So, we cannot really rely upon them picking up any defaults, can we?

B A. They should do, sir, because I was paying x amount per year.

Q. I know that we should do but we would be wrong, would we not?

A. That is something you would have to take up with Redcare then, sir, isn't it?

Q. We know that from all the evidence. You are not disputing, are you, that your rate board was
C inoperative for months?

A. No, I am not, sir.

Q. And it was down to Romec to replace it?

D A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, we cannot place too much reliance upon them, can we?

A. No, I don't know, sir. I used to rely on them regarding the alarm, sir, yes.

Q. Now, I want to deal with your suggestion that euro sales, sales of large quantities of euros to

E Mr **GRO** would regularly be entered by you into the Ford money changer and Mr

GRO then not pick them up until a day or two later.

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

F Q. And you stand firm on that, do you, Mr Page?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. And you say that the rate boards will show that, do you?

A. Yes, I do, sir, yes.

G Q. If you are telling the truth, they should do.

A. They should do, they will do, sir.

Q. Yes, if you are telling the truth they will do will they?

H A. Yes.

- A Q. Let us see what you said about it in interview. Is this right that you said --
- A. Can I have the interview, sir?
- B Q. Well, we will take you to it in a moment. I will ask you the general question first and then we will look at the detail. In interview, what you were saying, broadly speaking, was this, that almost invariably Mr **GRO** would be there to conduct the transaction with you.
- A. That is correct.
- C Q. On occasions you might be out of the office and you would then give instructions for your staff because you had already arranged the rate with him.
- A. That is correct.
- Q. And in effect you would say, "Mr **GRO**", however you referred to him --
- D A. Mr **GRO**
- Q. "Mr **GRO**", very respectful, "will be in later and there are some euros for him".
- A. That is correct.
- E Q. Words to that effect, and they would know the amount, would they, because it would be in the diary?
- A. They had already been sold some of the time, sir.
- Q. How would they know the amount?
- F A. Because it would be in the box with a receipt on.
- Q. You would have torn off the receipt?
- A. Yes, and put it on top of the box.
- G Q. So, the receipt on the FM money changer -- let us take a simple example -- if you had had a conversation with Mr **GRO** he would ask you, "How many euros have you got?"
- A. Yes. We'd show him how much we had received over a period of a couple of days, yes.
- H Q. Let me see that I have not misunderstood this. Is it not the case that Mr **GRO** would order a certain amount of euros, place an order with you and you would then ask for them from

Hemel?

A. No, it got to the stage where I was just getting them in as he wanted as many as he could get.

Q. Because he would buy whatever you could lay your hands on?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

Q. But initially did he say, "Can you get me 100,000 or 200,000 euros?"

A. No, that's as it built up, sir, yes.

Q. Yes, and as time went on you just got in as much as you could?

C A. That is correct. As I said, it started from 1999 onwards.

Q. Yes. So, assume on a Monday he calls you and asks, "How many euros have you got available today?" and you said half a million?

D A. Well, whatever I'd got in stock, sir, yes.

Q. All right. Let us assume that it was half a million and you would tell him that. Is that right? I just want to see if I have got the system right. Would he say, "What's the rate?"

A. He probably would do, sir, or just ask how many euros I'd got in stock.

E Q. Would he ask the rate is the question.

A. I am not saying all the time. He may do, sir, but not all the while, no.

JUDGE WOOD: He might ask the rate but not all the time?

F A. No, sir - I can't answer yes or no with that sir.

MR JOHN: To be clear about this, here is a man who is transacting business with you at a significant sum of money?

A. Yes.

G Q. And he would ask you how much you had in stock?

A. Yes.

Q. And he might not even ask you what rate you would give him?

H A. He may do, sir. I can't really remember. I have just said that.

A Q. Whether or not you had agreed a rate with him?

A. He knew I would probably give him the best rate I could possibly do.

Q. He never tried to negotiate a rate with you?

B A. No, sir.

Q. Never?

A. No, sir.

C Q. This was a man who had so much trust in you, Mr Page, that he never had to ask you the rate because he knew, because you knew, that the rate that you were giving him was better than he could get anywhere in the country.

A. Well, I didn't know that, no, sir.

D Q. That is the reality, is it not?

A. I didn't know that, sir, no. I'm not in the money market.

Q. Does it make business sense to you for someone to say, "I will buy half a million euros from you but I don't need to ask you what the rate is?"

E A. I don't know, sir. You will have to ask Mr GRO that, not me.

Q. Well, you are a businessman, not perhaps on the same scale, Mr Page – no disrespect to you – but you are in business.

F A. Hmm.

Q. You were in business to make a profit?

A. Yes.

Q. Make a turn on your money.

G A. (No reply)

Q. Does it make business sense for you – let us take a smaller transaction. If you wanted to buy 5,000 euros from Thomas Cook's or the Co-op or anywhere else, you would want to know the rate, would you not?

H

- A A. That's not my -- I don't know. I'm not Mr **GRO** I wouldn't ask --
- Q. No, I am asking about you. If you were doing it, you would want to know the rate, would you not?
- B A. Possibly I would, yes, but I am not Mr **GRO** so whether he asked me or not that's another thing, isn't it?
- Q. Particularly if you were into it for hundreds of thousands of pounds.
- A. What do you mean, into it for hundreds of thousands of pounds?
- C Q. Well, he was, wasn't he?
- A. Well, I didn't know that.
- Q. He was giving you cheques for hundreds of thousands of pounds.
- D A. Yes.
- Q. Yes. All the more important, if you are using money at that kind of level, to be certain what rate you are going to get.
- A. As I said, I cannot speak for Mr **GRO**
- E Q. So, that is your evidence, is it, that he never asked what the rate -
- A. No, I didn't say that. I said I can't remember. He may have done; he may not have done.
- Q. You cannot remember one way or the other but the one thing that you are sure about is that he
- F never at any time attempted to negotiate the rate with you?
- A. He may have done when he first started, I very much doubt it, but there's one rate and that's the rate I gave him.
- Q. Would you look at the interviews, please, tab 5, page 16?
- G A. What page, 16?
- Q. Yes, please. You are being asked about one particular transaction which was reversed. Do you remember this?
- H A. (No audible reply)

A Q. Perhaps we should start at the bottom of 15. You were asked about a transaction at 10.17 for 36,000 euros. Do you see?

A. Hmm.

B Q. And then another done for 80,000 euros?

A. Yes.

Q. And then you say that that is reversed, over on page 16. "The 80,000 is reversed, which leaves us with only one transaction".

C A. Yes.

Q. And then one minute later you do another transaction of 72,000. Your answer, "I'm probably just trying to balance the books."

D A. And the Ford money changer, sir, yes.

Q. Question: "So, was Mr GRO physically present when all this was going on?" "I would very much doubt it, yes."

A. That is correct.

E Q. Apart from that one occasion that is dealt with here in the context of a reverse transaction, is there anywhere within your interviews that you can recall where you suggest that Mr GRO would order currency in advance, that you would enter it in the money changer as a sale in advance and that he would come in a day or two days later? Does that appear anywhere in these interviews?

F A. I don't know, sir. I don't think so.

Q. You see, it is one thing, is it not, for currency to be ordered from Hemel Hempstead in advance and entered into the money changer on receipt so that it is booked into the office?

G A. Hmm.

Q. That is the standard procedure, is it not?

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. Into, of course, euro stock, yes?

A A. Yes, sir.

Q. It is quite another, is it not, to have a conversation with Mr GRO on the phone when you have the euros already in stock but he is not coming in for another couple of days but for you to put them through the money changer as a sale as soon as you put the phone down? The two things are quite different, are they not?

A. No, sir, not really because as soon as the money used to come in we used to sell it straightaway or Jane would sell it straightaway. It just makes it easier for us to give to Mr

C GRO when he did come in.

Q. So that on the till roll, the Ford money changer till roll, which of course, has a date and a time on it, if Mr GRO then came in two days later to collect it, the receipt would reflect a transaction which was not taking place that day but one that had taken place two days earlier?

A. That is correct, yes.

Q. That is just totally wrong, is it not?

E A. No, if he came in - if we sold something on the Ford money changer, say, on the Monday and he came in on the Wednesday, he would give me - there's a receipt for that Monday and he would give me a cheque on the Wednesday.

F JUDGE WOOD: I quite follow that. So, what you are saying is that you would tell him the amount of foreign currency you had available?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You would do a deal with him that he was going to buy it?

A. That is correct, sir.

G Q. And you would then put that through the Ford money changer so that you were allocating to him, putting on one side for him, the figure that you just agreed he should have?

A. That is correct, sir.

H Q. At a rate which he -

A A. May or may not have --

Q. -- may or may not have set with you?

A. That is correct, sir.

B Q. And that would be efficient because when he came in, the staff would be able to hand it over and he would simply write the cheque as required by the valuation, the price shown, on the Ford transaction?

A. That is correct, sir. That's why there's a difference regarding the cheques and the transactions.

C Q. So, that would explain why he would be producing a cheque which would bear a different date from the Ford money changer transaction? Key

D A. That is correct, sir. As you can understand, we were a busy office and we used to try and get things done as quickly as we could to make it easier for ourselves later on.

Q. Right.

E A. And I think Jane, in her evidence, said that she used to do that. She used to count the money and sell it off and put it in the safe.

Q. I am afraid that we may need to recall her on that but the point you are making, anyway, is that this was done so that the foreign currency was -- I am saying allocated to Mr GRO and would be delivered to him -- no, handed over is better -- to him when he came?

A. That is correct, sir.

MR JOHN: Now, this afternoon I am going to take you to some examples in an attempt to show to you that this account you have given is inaccurate. All right? May I just deal with a general point before I invite his Honour to adjourn perhaps a minute or two early so that I can move on to that later. If we just take a simple example, shall we say half a million euros which you have in stock on a Monday, and Mr GRO rings you and you sell them by putting them through the money changer as a sale as soon as you put the phone down on him?

A A. The majority of times, yes.

Q. That means, of course, that the rate at which they are sold is already fixed in stone?

A. If I'd done it, sir, yes. If I've sold, yes.

B Q. Well, that is what you are telling us that you normally did.

A. I did normally do that, sir.

Q. Right. So, the phone call on Monday, half a million euros. "That's fine, Mr Page. I'll be in on Wednesday". You put the phone down. He has not asked for the rate but so as to make it easy when he comes in on Wednesday, you straightaway put it through the money changer applying a rate which comes out of your head and nowhere else?

C A. The rate that I would have took off the buyback rate, slightly lower.

D Q. A figure which you would have set for yourself. Yes?

A. Yes.

Q. Without reference to anyone else?

A. That is correct.

E Q. And a rate which you had not even given to Mr GRO over the phone?

A. I may have done, I may not, sir. I can't remember. I said that earlier.

Q. It is another shift in your story, Mr Page, is it not?

F A. I don't think so. I did say that I couldn't remember the conversation, every conversation I had with him.

Q. You see, one of the consequences might be this, might it not, that if you conducted a transaction with him in this way, say first thing on Monday morning, and put it through the money changer at, shall we say, 500,000 euros at 1.60 and he comes in on Wednesday, if the markets had been doing something alarming in the last two days, he might have ended up getting a rather raw deal, mightn't he?

H A. I don't know, sir. If that's the case, that's the case, yes.

A Q. Yes. A bit risky for him, would you not think?

A. Looking back at it, sir, yes.

Q. Particularly if you have not even told him what rate you were going to give him?

B A. That's if I hadn't told him.

Q. That's not the way it worked, Mr Page, was it?

A. I don't know what you are on about.

Q. Let me make it clear so that you can think about it, perhaps, over the short adjournment. The way it worked was that almost invariably – not always but almost invariably – Mr GRO

C would come in, he would produce the euros and they would be sold and punched into the money changer in front of him and he would take them away from the office. That was the normal way, was it not?

D A. No, we used to do it both ways.

Q. We will look at the schedules this afternoon and we will see whether you are right or I am right.

E A. Can I finish answering the question please?

JUDGE WOOD: Yes.

A. Sometimes we used to do that, sometimes we didn't. As we got busier, we used to put the money to one side for him.

F MR JOHN: Which do you say was the normal way?

A. The normal way later on would be putting the money to one side for him.

G MR JOHN: We will look at that this afternoon. If that is a convenient moment?

JUDGE WOOD: Yes, of course. Thank you very much. I propose to break off until five past two if that is all right for you, members of the jury, remembering, of course, that we will be stopping at four o'clock today.

H (Luncheon adjournment)

A Q. I am afraid that I am going to have to take you back to the discrepancy schedule once again. I am sorry, I should have done it earlier and by all means take your time before we deal with the next aspect. It is my fault that I did not deal with this at the appropriate stage.

B A. Can I have the page, please?

Q. Of course, 1128, in fact 1129, which contains a reference to the week when the £160,000 was remmed out by Mr Cartwright.

A. Yes, sir.

C Q. I just want to look at some arithmetic with you, and I am going to do it in round figures, if I may, because it is unfair for you and anybody else to expect to do it in any other way. Can we look, please, at the result shown on the office balance at the end of the week 31 July 2002, so in other words where it is highlighted, and to put this back in context this is of course after Mr Cartwright has taken the £160,000 away and this is the office balance at the end of that week. Are you with me?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. I just want you to look at these figures with me and accept, if you would, my maths in round figures because it will be checked if I am wrong. The far right-hand column, £160,000 is taken out during the week ending 31 July. Correct?

F A. Yes, according to this, sir.

Q. The inflation figure is achieved by Mr Patel by deducting the sum shown on the Ford money changer from the foreign currency on hand declared figure, 177,500. All right?

A. Yes, sir.

G Q. And add to that the sterling figure, 87,000?

A. Hmm.

H Q. So, those three figures, 160, 177 and a half, and 87 in round figures. Would you please take it from me for these purposes that that is about 424,000 together?

Yes this he took off once before correct

A A. (No audible reply)

Before 16th Feb out?

Q. Can we look, please, at the same exercise for the previous week? We have no money remmed out, of course. We have a Ford money changer figure which is exactly the same as foreign currency sterling equivalent declared, 6,600 odd?

B A. Hmm.

Q. And a very large figure, I think you would agree, 421,000 sterling declared. Would you take it from me, again in round figures, that is about 428,000, so in other words about the same?

C A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, a large sum within a few thousand, about the same, about £425,000 but the distinction, would you agree with this, Mr Page, is that in the later week, that is to say, week 18, there is a very substantial rise in the amount shown as foreign currency on hand?

D A. According to these figures, sir, yes.

Q. Well, you appreciate, Mr Page, do you not, that these figures are taken, and it has not been disputed, from source documentation?

E A. By Mr Patel.

Q. From the office.

A. Yes, sir.

F Q. They have not come out of the ether. They come from documentation. Now, can we just keep that in mind? It may be helpful, perhaps, just to take that sheet out for one moment because we may need to come back to it, and see how much currency came in from Hemel Hempstead that week? For that purpose could we look, please, at page 198?

G A. Yes.

Q. This is the week, we remind ourselves, ending 31 July and at 198 - you will remember this, Mr Page, I hope - this is the printout that Hutchins produces showing day by day throughout the

H period we are concerned with, in fact January 2002 through to January 2003 the amount of currency

A despatched from Hemel to your office. Are you with me?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. In the middle of page 198, if we look for the date Friday 26 July, do you have that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. We will trace that down, if we may: two entries, Friday the 26th, and a second, Monday the 29th, two for Tuesday the 30th and one for Wednesday the 31st. Would you agree that those dates taken together comprise that accounting week?

A. According to these figures, sir, yes.

Q. It looks like it, does it not?

A. On these figures, sir, yes.

Q. If we go over to the right-hand column, what I am doing, and it may help the jury, if they wish, I am simply highlighting them so that one can look at the totals. As we see, there are the figures of euros which have been sent in from Hemel to your office, and we see 42 and a half, the same again, the same again, the same again, the same again, 42 and then 42 and a half. Would you take it from me – again, I may be wrong but as a matter of arithmetic, 297,000 euros brought in that week

A. (No audible reply)

Q. So, you would expect, would you not, for your figures, as shown on page 1129, to show an increase of about that amount because that was currency received into your office that accounting week?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. In fact, what you show, if we look at 1129, the shaded line for that accounting week, £191,000 in round figures, foreign currency on hand, sterling equivalent, 191, minus a smaller sum of 6,000 odd the previous week, thus showing an increase of about 185,000.

A. According to those figures, yes, sir.

20

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KEY

PATEL +
LUDLOW REAG
AGREE AS
THESE FIGURES
HAVE BEEN CHECKED
BY NEW BANK

A Q. So, there is a big difference, is there not?
A. According to these figures, sir, yes.
Q. You see, the figures, as you appreciate, Mr Page, have been checked not just by Mr Patel but by your expert.

B A. Yes, sir.
Q. And are agreed as being accurate, but they do not match on paper, do they?

A. Do you mean on week 18, the inflation figure?

C Q. Yes.

A. Well, the inflation figure we put in is what I had in stock, sir, at that time.

Q. So that we are clear about it, you are looking here, I think, at the shaded line, week 18?

D A. That is correct.

Q. We are leaving aside the week of the June audit and leaving aside all those previous weeks where there is nil inflation shown on this Patel schedule. What you are referring to is the inflation figure of exactly £177,500, which is shown five days after Mr Cartwright takes out all that sterling?

E A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And that figure is something that you have input?

A. Yes, after myself or myself and Margaret checked it sir, yes.

F Q. Can I just go back to an earlier issue and please, if the question is confusing in any way, tell me so because I do not want it to be. When foreign currency is received in your office from Hemel Hempstead, unless the office is particularly busy at the time when that comes in, generally in the morning I think -

G A. That is correct, sir.

Q. That bulk currency is entered into the Ford money changer and remains there showing that as a receipt?

H A. That is correct, sir.

A Q. Into what we refer to often as FM for that week?

A. That is correct, sir.

B Q. And to take a simple example, assume it is a Thursday so that we are in the new accounting week, in comes 500,000 euros that morning in a number of pouches. They are checked and they are keyed into the money changer as receipts?

A. If we are not busy, sir, yes that is correct.

C Q. The money changer, as we know, at that time not being directly connected to the Horizon computer, so it is a stand alone machine?

A. Yes, sir.

D Q. And bureau transactions done on that day and throughout that accounting week would all be done on the FM machine?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And at the end of the accounting week when the individual clerks are balancing their stocks, similarly the bureau stock needs to be balanced as well?

E A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And the way that that is done is by a command 10 print being obtained from the FM machine?

F A. That is correct, sir.

Q. So, that standalone machine is, as it were, thinking to itself during the course of the accounting week, recording the money that has come in from Hemel because that has been keyed in either by you or by your staff. Correct?

G A. That is correct, sir, yes.

Q. And every time that currency is sold to a customer, whether it be Mr GRO or me, that is being keyed in as well?

H A. It is being sold, sir, yes.

- A Q. And all that is being held, as it were, in the memory of the Ford money changer?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And the way that that gets dealt with at the end of the accounting week, because the Ford machine is a stand alone device, is that the command 10 print comes out, somebody presses the
- B button and that shows in summary form by currencies and by amount what has gone through the bureau in that week?
- A. If it's been inputted, sir, yes, that is correct.
- C Q. Yes, and it would have been, would it not?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And it is then that figure, the figure that comes out on the command 10 print from the Ford money changer, that is the one that whoever is balancing the bureau stock -
- D A. (inaudible) sir, yes.
- Q. Puts into Horizon?
- A. That is correct.
- E Q. And that is why, if we look at 1129, and I take a random week, week 15, we see there in the fourth column, foreign currency on hand figure declared, 4772.44. Ford money changer figure, the same and the process is this, is it not? Whoever dealt with the bureau account at the end of that
- F week would have printed out command 10?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Got the figure 4772.44?
- A. Yes.
- G Q. And then keyed that into Horizon because the Ford money changer figure is generated and that then goes to form part of the cash account for the week?
- A. Yes, sir and then the sum is then sent off to Chesterfield.
- H Q. Yes. So, to summarise, to deal with the many weeks leading up to July 2002, Mr Cartwright's

A visit, we can see, can we not, from this schedule that whoever deals with the accounting at the end of the week has printed out the command 12 figure, got to take week 17, 668,395 and that is the figure that has then been transferred on to Horizon to form part of the whole office balance?

B A. That is correct, sir.

Q. Now, without going over ground which we dealt with this morning, Mr Page, that goes certainly from week 22 right the way to the end of our schedule, completely out of kilter because never again from week 22, 28 August 2002, right up until the time of your arrest, does the Ford money changer command 10 figure agree with the amount that has been input into Horizon.

A. That is correct.

Q. That is right, is it not?

D A. Yes.

Q. Let us take week 22 so that we are quite clear about the mechanics of it. Again, we remind ourselves that these schedules are being looked at by any number of people.

E Q. The Ford money changer figure for week 22, the command 10 summary would have printed out £95,000 odd. Correct?

A. Yes, sir, week 22, yes.

Q. The amount that has been input to Horizon is in the column immediately to its left.

F A. 283.

Q. A massive difference between those two figures.

A. Yes, sir.

G Q. And whether it was you who was doing it or Margaret Pearce or our friend Joe Public, no one could have failed to miss the fact that those two figures bear no relation whatever to each other.

A. According to this, sir, no.

H Q. So, can we just place ourselves, if we can, back in the Rugeley office on the day when this office is being balanced on or about 28 August, and someone has a command 10 print in front of

A them that shows £95,000 odd as the Ford money changer figure and somebody has put into Horizon not that figure but £283,000?

A. That is correct, sir.

B Q. How can that possibly be a mistake?

A. It is not a mistake, sir. It's what – the bulk, 188,000, what was in the AM stock.

Q. How does it get into the AM stock?

A. Because it might be currency already sold to Mr **GRO** or left in there.

C Q. The money that comes in from Hemel Hempstead is booked into the Ford money changer.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. On receipt. That is where it stays throughout the accounting week.

D A. But I've sold it on the Ford money changer, sir, and put it in the till.

Q. It does not work, Mr Page, does it, because the command 10 summary is the figure that needs to be put into Horizon so that the office will balance at the end of the week. There is no answer to it, Mr Page, is there?

E A. Yes, there is. Can I finish?

Q. Yes.

A. The £188,000, whilst bulk currency, was in the AM stock.

F Q. How does it get into the AM stock, Mr Page, because it has been booked in? The currency that you have got from Hemel that week has been booked into the Ford money changer.

A. But it is currency that has already been sold or put into stock for Mr **GRO** if he hasn't collected it by the Wednesday I put in the AM stock as bulk.

G Q. If it has been sold, Mr Page, that is reflected on the Ford money changer.

A. It should be, yes.

Q. Not should be. It would be, even on your case.

H A. Yes, sir.

15

- A JUDGE WOOD: I think that that may be why we are keen to understand exactly what you were telling us this morning happened. When Mr **GRO** phoned, you agreed how much you had, told him how much you had, he agreed to buy it and you say that the transaction was done.
- B A. Yes, sir, that is correct.
- Q. If the transaction was done then it would go through the Ford money changer then, would it not?
- A. Yes, sir.
- C Q. Would it not?
- A. It would do, sir.
- Q. If it is, then it would be shown on the Ford money changer figure:
- D A. It would be deducted from the Ford money changer.
- Q. Exactly so, and that is the point that you are being asked about by -
- A. Yes, the Ford money changer would have what the currency of the Ford money changer thinks left in the --
- E Q. We have the Ford money changer figure here at 95616.12.
- A. Yes, but if Mr **GRO** has not picked up currency, I'd have put it in the AM stock and used it then in the balance. *So all you saying that is equivalent but not in the balance*
- F MR JOHN: It does not work. It does not work on your own case, on your own evidence, Mr Page, because if you have keyed it in as a sale, leave to one side whether it is the next day or the day after that Mr **GRO** comes in, it is shown on the Ford money changer as already having been sold.
- A. Yes, but I -
- G Q. And therefore -
- MR COOPER: I am sorry, your honour, but I think he was in the middle of giving his answer. If he might be allowed to finish?
- H JUDGE WOOD: I think, in fact, the witness interrupted the questioner.

A MR COOPER: I understand. I did the same myself. I am sorry, it is difficult.

MR JOHN: We are certainly not going to fall out about that. I want to give Mr Page every opportunity to explain this. (to the witness) If, as you have told us, you had agreed a transaction on the telephone with Mr GRO

B A. That is correct, yes.

Q. Leaving aside the fact that he did not know what rate he was transacting at but you had keyed it in as a sale, then that is in the Ford money changer's memory.

C A. Yes, sir.

Q. And it remains as one of the transactions, large or small, done during the accounting week until the Ford money changer command 10 print is done at the end of the week.

D A. That is correct, yes.

Q. And that is the figure that we see in that column.

A. On the Ford money changer.

Q. Yes. And that figure on the command 10 print, it is a physical document, is it not, that comes out of the machine?

E A. That is correct, yes.

Q. And the figure that is on that command 10 print is the one that should be input into Horizon?

F A. Yes, but I also would have the remaining bulk of currency left in the office still waiting to be collected, so I would have put that in the AM.

Q. That does not matter. That does not matter, Mr Page, for this reason, that where the currency is – let me make it clear that I am not accepting, as you understand, I am sure, that that is what occurred – does not matter where currency is. The point is this, that the transaction so far as the office accounts and machine is concerned have already been done. It is in the Ford money changer's memory.

G
H A. Yes.

77

A Q. And the command 10 print is what tells the member of staff who is doing the balancing at the end of the week what amount to keying as the foreign currency on hand figure.

A. Yes, from the bureau stock, yes.

B Q. Well, it is the bureau stock because it can't be both in the bureau stock and in the AM stock - we have gone through this once before - otherwise you have the same large sum duplicated.

A. The money, the sum that I put into the AM stock, would be the bulk of cash and foreign currency in the AM safe.

C Q. I am only going to take another moment or two on this and then I am going to pass on but we have this position clear in mind, have we, Mr Page, that whoever finalised the cash account for week 22, and I will leave it with this one example, would have had in front of him, if it was you, or her if it was anybody else in your office, a command 10 print showing 95,000 odd?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And whoever that person, if it was a he, you, if it was a she, any of your staff, would have keyed in £283,616.12? *Not sure 9 follows? again: check CPBL plus again to mark*

A. That is correct, sir.

E Q. I am going to leave it there. Was there a stage, Mr Page, on your evidence, when instead of Mr GRO coming into the office and doing a transaction which was completed then and there on the spot, in other words keyed in as a sale to the Ford money changer, cheque handed over, he leaves with the euros, when that procedure ceased and a new procedure began, he would order over the phone or agree with you over the phone but only come in a day or two days' later?

A. That I can't remember, sir, no.

G Q. Would you please try and think about it because this is your case and your memory is important. Was there a stage when the practice changed, that instead of coming in, writing out a cheque in front of you for the amount that the Ford money changer would show was the required sterling amount, that that ceased and the normal practice would be that he would ring you up in

H

A advance, ask what was available; you would key it in and he would come in a day or two later and have it all done and dusted?

A. I think that that may have been going on for quite a while, sir, but I can't remember specific dates, it's so long ago.

B Q. Because certainly for a period, would you agree, Mr Page, the regular practice was this, that you would meet Mr GRO in the office sometimes early in the morning, and he would write out a cheque in front of you?

C A. He did that all the while, sir.

Q. All the while?

A. Because he couldn't give me a cheque for transactions and come into the office (inaudible) could he?

D Q. No, and the normal practice throughout the period with which this jury are concerned, unless you happened to be off elsewhere, the general run would be that he would come in and write out a cheque in your presence and hand it over then and there?

E A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And that that transaction would be keyed into the Ford money changer as a sale at that same time.

F A. Sometimes before, sir, yes, as I said earlier.

Q. What I am seeking your help to establish is this, Mr Page. Okay, if the question is confusing, tell me so and I will try and rephrase it. Is this the position on your evidence, that initially the transactions were all done at one go: in other words, he would come in, you would have the euros available for him, you would key in the transaction to the money changer, that would give you a sterling cost and he would write out a cheque for that amount?

G A. Yes, sir, we did that, yes.

H Q. Was that how it started off?

79

A A. It was, sir, yes.

Q. And was that the way it ran for a period?

A. Yes, sir, I believe so.

B Q. This is what I am trying to get at, you see. Did a stage come when, on your evidence, the normal pattern changed?

A. I think it did do, sir, yes.

C Q. I really am going to become unpopular if I refer to 1129 again, but would that happen to be at the time of July 2002?

A. I couldn't tell you, sir.

D Q. I am going to come to one or two examples so that you can deal with this in a moment, Mr Page, but would we understand this, without pinning you down to dates, that in the latter part of 2002 on your evidence the normal practice would be that Mr Page would ring you first?

A. Mr GRO

E Q. I am so sorry, thank you very much — Mr GRO would ring you first, you would tell him what was available, you would key in the transaction as if he were in front of you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And he would, in fact, come in a day or two later?

F A. That is correct, sir. That had been going on for quite a while.

Q. But starting when?

A. I don't know specific dates, sir.

G Q. Let us just look at one or two examples to see if this is right. Can we start, please, by looking at schedule MP82, which shows currency — I am just turning it up, if you forgive me. It shows the euros being booked in the Ford money changer. I am so sorry that I did not have the page number instantly to hand. It is 1470. We are going to need, for comparison purposes, 1129 still. What I am
H going to do — it may help others — is to take out 1129 while we look at 1470. Would your honour

A forgive me for a moment? I have trouble with my own writing. (After a pause) I am sorry, this is entirely my fault. I have asked the jury and Mr Page to turn up the wrong page. Do forgive me for it. It is 988 I would like you to look at. This is the master schedule, as we sometimes call it, MP3, the transactions extracted from the Ford money changer till rolls. Can we look, please, at 988 and take 22 August and 23 August. So, on 988 do we see this, Mr page, for 22 August: a sale(?) note euro transaction, as all these are, of 147,000 euros?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

C Q. And we have the help on this schedule of the time.

A. Yes.

Q. So, this as you appreciate, comes off the FM print out. 22 August 0818 in the morning, which, would I be right in saying, would be 0718?

A. Yes, sir because I didn't change the --

Q. Not changing the summer time. Well, I am not criticising you for that. So, 7.18 in the morning on 22 August. This would be bound to be you, would it not? Nobody else would have been in the office at that time.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What we see from this is Mr GRO because we know that this is his transaction, buying 147,000 euros at a rate of 1.67.

A. Yes.

Q. And the following day, the next two lines, two transactions done, I suggest, plainly at the same time, 0959 and 10 o'clock, which are in fact 0859 and 9 o'clock -- would that be right?

G A. Yes, sir.

Q. Each of them for 85,000, so it is in effect the same transaction?

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. So, we have him on those two days buying 147 in the early morning of the 22nd and 170,000 a

A little later in the morning on the 23rd.

A. Did he buy these on these days, sir?

Q. What I am pointing you to is what the records show.

B A. Yes, okay, I just wanted to know. You see, I could have had euros delivered into the stock, sir, and I could have sold them in the morning.

Q. I know that.

A. Without Mr GRO being there, sir, but unless you're telling me that there's a cheque to go, to correspond, with that, sir?

Q. That is what we are going to look at.

JUDGE WOOD: What this proves, I suppose, at the least, is that you were inputting the Ford money changer at those times with these figures?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. Yes.

E MR JOHN: So, let us concentrate, can we, please, on 147,000 and then on 170,000 the following day. All right? Can we focus on those two figures, please, Mr Page?

A. 147,000?

Q. 147,000 bought early morning, according to the record.

F A. 22nd of the eighth?

Q. 22nd of the eighth.

A. And 85,000?

JUDGE WOOD: Well, it is 170 because it is two lots of 85.

G A. Yes, sorry, your honour.

MR JOHN: A bit later in the day on the 23rd; all right?

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. I am not going to ask you to speculate whether it would have been you doing the 23 August

A transactions?

A. At that time, sir, I think it would have been me.

Q. It probably would be, would it not?

B A. Yes, sir.

Q. And this, of course, is weeks after Mr Cartwright has taken the 160,000 out of your office?

A. August, July, yes.

Q. It is a month later, roughly.

C A. Okay.

Q. So, can we see, please, what happens, as I suggest to you, to those euros which on the till rolls are shown as being sold to Mr GRO on those days and at those times? If we look, please at

D 1423 in the jury bundle, this is the schedule, as you will understand, Mr Page, of the euros which were sold by Mr GRO to various bureaux de changes.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And at 1423 can you find, please, the date, 22 August 2002?

E A. Yes, sir.

Q. At Lichfield?

A. Yes, sir.

F Q. 146,900 euros.

A. Yes.

Q. Sold by Mr GRO to Thomas Cook's.

A. Yes.

G Q. And when I say sold by him, to be strictly accurate, sold on his behalf, as we see from the comments, by a GRO Now, barring 100 euros, that is exactly the same sum as you sold to him at 7.18 that morning.

H A. Yes, sir.

Handwritten notes:
160,000 sold
146,900
500 BLC.
dwp 100

Handwritten mark: 83

A Q. Did he leave the 100 euros with you?

A. No, sir. He didn't.

B Q. But the way it looks, Mr Page, is this, is it not, that this was a transaction that was done face to face with you in the early morning of the 22nd?

A. Yes, it does, sir.

Q. And later the same day, barring 100 euros, that same sum is deposited on Mr GRO behalf at Lichfield.

C A. According to this schedule, yes, sir.

Q. Are you questioning this schedule?

A. No, I am just saying, according to this schedule I'm looking at now.

D JUDGE WOOD: Yes, you have said that more than once and please do not think I am criticising, Mr Page. It is just that the schedules have been provided to the defence who have engaged expert accountants to study them and were there to be errors in that schedule no doubt those would have been pointed out. We are working on the basis that they are right.

E A. Okay, sir.

Q. So when you say, "according to the schedule", fine, but we are working on the basis in this court that the schedule is right. We will carry on.

F MR JOHN: It is not a criticism of you, Mr Page, in that respect, at all. Your comment is perfectly proper. Just before I move on to the 23rd, can we engage in this exercise, please? Do you still have 988 open, the sale that you agree must have been you because of the time in the morning and therefore you are physically keying it into the money changer at 0718? If we go to the last column
G but one on that same line, the amount paid over to you, doubtless by cheque from Mr GRO is £97,048.02. → X £88,023.95 - see next page -

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. And that figure, of course, does not come from the back of an envelope. It is generated by you

✓
(84)

- ✓
- A because you key in 147,000 euros at the 1.67 rate and that is what the FM machine tells you to charge.
- A. That is correct, sir.
- B Q. Just pausing there while we are at it before we lose the place — I am so sorry; I am told I may have made a mistake. It is because we have not got column headings. That is my excuse, anyhow. You are quite right. Thank you, Mr Tatford — ahead of me as always. 88,000.
- JUDGE WOOD: That is the cheque to be paid?
- C MR JOHN: Yes, it is not 97. 97 is what the Crown say is the amount that should have been paid. It is because we do not have the headings at the top of each page. It is my fault, and I am sorry. So, to recap, 147,000. you key in that to the machine. You allow GRO the rate of 1.67 —
- D correct?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And therefore he gives you a cheque for 88,023.95.
- A. Yes, sir.
- E Q. And while we are dealing with it, the schedule tells us that the ordinary rate, which would have been on the fax sheet that day for an under 5,000 transaction would have been 1.4974 and in bold in the next column if the special rate had been applied, 1.5147. Yes?
- F A. Yes, sir.
- Q. So, you were allowing him a preference of the difference between 1.5147 up to 1.67?
- A. That is correct, sir.
- Q. Sixteen points better. If we then go back, please, to 1423 to see what happened on Mr
- G GRO behalf at Lichfield that day, that same sum of euros are 100 and he sells that for £92,742 odd. That seems to be right, does it not?
- A. Yes, sir.
- H Q. So, he is £4,700 to the good before the end of that day?
- 85

A A. According to that, sir, yes.

Q. And the point is this: he has come into the office and has transacted with you before half past seven in the morning. You have keyed those figures in and by the end of the day he has paid the equivalent of 100 euros in elsewhere.

B A. That is correct.

Q. So, on your evidence this is against the normal pattern by August; this is a transaction where he has come in in the morning, done the transaction with you, you have keyed it in and someone has gone straight to Lichfield and made nearly £5,000 profit in the same day. Right?

C A. According to this, sir, yes.

Q. So, the next day. Back to 988, if you please. 23 August. This is in reality nine o'clock in the morning, two transactions done simultaneously because we can forget the minute, can we not?

D A. (No audible reply)

Q. Are you with me?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. Nine o'clock in the morning. You dealing with Mr **GRO** personally, yes?

A. I would have thought so, sir, yes.

Q. Selling him 170,000 euros and the figures given: 51,515.15 times two, so £103,000, give or take. Correct?

F A. Yes, sir.

Q. Back to page 1423, if you please. The next day, 24 August, 170,500, in other words 500 euros more, deposited at Lichfield. And this has gone through another third party, a **GRO** Yes?

G A. I don't know who **GRO** is, sir.

Q. No reason why you should but that seems to be the fruits of the same transaction, does it not? This time on the next day, so not two days later?

H A. Yes.

A Q. And again, to look at the profit element involved, in round figures £103,000 paid to you?

A. One thousand?

Q. Yes, £103,000 paid to your office.

A. Yes.

B Q. Two times 51 and a half odd, and a profit of over £4,000 made by the end of the next day.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And yet you knew nothing of these profits?

C A. Not at all, sir.

Q. And there would not have been any spare euros lying around at the end of the week, would there?

D A. No, sir.

Q. Nothing to reflect that very large inflation figure which we see at the end of that week?

A. No, sir.

E Q. Just a moment, I promise I am moving on to another area but can I just ask you to deal with one other aspect, please, Mr Page. Up until the time when Mr Cartwright removed £160,000 in sterling from your office, it appears from the paperwork – I use the term neutrally – that your office was balancing perfectly apart from the exceptional week when Mr Davis came in and found the office in a mess.

A. When the auditors came in, sir.

Q. Yes. Apart from that it seems from the discrepancy schedule that we have been looking at that your office, week after week, was balancing perfectly.

G A. The best I could, sir, yes --

Q. It's because --

A. Can I -- I'm sorry, sir.

H Q. No, forgive me; I interrupted you. You carry on. I would say when you say "perfectly" that

A means a nil balance?

Q. Yes, well, nil inflation, nothing to adjust.

A. That is correct, sir.

B Q. And after Mr Cartwright's visit, every week there has to be an adjustment.

A. No, sir, because if you look, just after there's nil and nil.

Q. I am rightly corrected. I have already put my case to you about weeks 20 and 21. I suggest that you were testing the water to see whether shifting the false entries from sterling on hand to foreign exchange on hand was going to be picked up -- we will not go over that ground again.

C From week 22 onwards every week you were making adjustments because the office was not balancing, you tell us.

D A. Yes.

Q. And every week by rounding up or rounding down there are figures which are ever on the increase.

A. Yes, the inflation figures, sir, yes.

E Q. Always in round thousands of pounds.

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. So that when the auditors come in on 14 January, and your paperwork shows that there ought to be £282,000 worth of foreign currency in the AM stock, which is yours, it is not there.

A. It wasn't there when they came in, sir.

Q. And you have no explanation for it?

A. No.

G Q. A new topic, Mr Page. While you were running the office at Rugeley did you give preferential rates in your office for anything except foreign currency?

A. Preferential rates apart from foreign currency?

H Q. Yes.

- A A. There's only foreign currency, sir.
- Q. Did you give anybody who came in, our friend Joe Public, anything at less than the value which the Post Office said it should be sold at?
- B A. No, sir.
- Q. A crude, obvious example being that you do not sell a 27 pence stamp for 26?
- A. That is correct, sir.
- Q. But perhaps more relevantly, bearing in mind what you said about Mr Geraty, you do not sell
- C £170 tax disc for 165.
- A. That is correct, sir.
- Q. Why not?
- D A. Because that is the price.
- Q. Because that is what the rules say.
- A. That's the price.
- Q. That's what the rules say.
- E A. If you say so, sir, yes.
- Q. Well, it's right, is it not?
- A. Yes.
- F Q. Yes. You did not give preferential rates for buybacks on foreign exchange?
- A. That is correct, sir.
- Q. You did not give preferential rates for any other kind of item which was sold over the counter?
- G A. No, only foreign currency, sir.
- Q. What kind of things might be product of the month that we haven't heard about?
- A. Stamps, utility bills, pay all your utility bills at the Post Office; foreign currency, purchasing
- H foreign currency; pushing E111s, travel insurance.

A Q. So, if I had come into you and said, "I want some travel insurance" there would be a price that would be set down?

A. That is correct, sir.

B Q. Say, £50, depends on where you are going and for how long, I suppose?

A. Where you are going, how long, how old you are, sir, yes.

Q. But it would be laid down somewhere what the price would be for the country?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

C Q. For the length of the trip, for the number of family members?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

Q. And then you would look it up or your staff would?

D A. That is correct.

Q. And if the book said £50, how much would you charge?

A. If it said £50, sir, it would be £50.

Q. What if I said to you, "Oh, I don't like that, Mr Page. I fancy paying you £48"?

E A. I couldn't give them at 48, sir.

Q. Why not?

A. Because it says £50 in the book.

F Q. The fax sheets you receive from First Rate every day tell you the price too, do they not?

A. They don't tell me a price, sir; they tell me what the rate should be.

Q. Yes, they also tell you that if anybody wants more than £5,000 worth, you were to ring First Rate, do they not?

G A. Yes, sir.

Q. You had plenty of time to look through the operations manuals that the jury have copies of in this case?

H A. Yes, sir.

- A Q. Did they say anything in there about exercising your own discretion?
- A. No, sir.
- B Q. Do they say anything in there about you can fix your own rates as long as you think you are making a profit for the Post Office?
- A. Well, I thought I had authority, sir.
- Q. Would you answer the question?
- A. I think I just have.
- C Q. No, you have not. Does the operations manual say anything about fixing your own rates being allowable?
- A. No, sir.
- D Q. Do you agree that within the Post Office there are a very large number of different outlets?
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. The figure we have been given, I think, and we will not quibble about the exact number, I hope, is about 17,500 in the country?
- E A. I think there's a lot less than now, sir, yes.
- Q. It's come down; that is certainly true, but a lot, and there is a rule for almost everything in the Post Office is there not?
- F A. That is correct, sir, and that's why I asked Mr Steve Geraty if I could do that.
- Q. We will come to Mr Geraty. It is one of the banes of the life of a sub-postmaster, is it not, that there are so many rules?
- A. It can be bind, sir, yes.
- G Q. Well, you get data through every week, do you not? You get your weekly newsletter and there is always something changing, is there not?
- A. That is correct, sir.
- H Q. Did any of those say, "We've introduced a new rule now. As long as you are selling

- A somewhere between the buy rates and the sell rate on the fax, that is all right by us?"
- A. No, sir.
- Q. The whole point about the operations manual is that if you are in any doubt as to what is proper, as to what you should do, you can look it up, can you not?
- B A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And if you look it up in the manual it tells you exactly what to do if a customer wants more than £5,000 of currency, does it not?
- C A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And it gives you the number and tells you when it is in operation?
- A. That is correct, sir.
- D Q. And if it happens to be a Saturday it actually comes through in printed form on the fax.
- A. On a Friday evening, sir, yes.
- Q. So, are you pinning your case in relation to the profit that we know that Mr GRO made over a year – are you pinning your case now to Mr Geraty having said to you, "This is fine, Mr Page. As long as your sell rate's between the buy rate and the sell rate on the fax, you've got my authority?"
- E A. Yes, sir.
- F Q. So either he is lying or you are, is that it?
- A. Well, I'm not lying, sir. I know that.
- Q. Can we just have a look at the extent to which the ordinary customer, anybody except Mr GRO would benefit if he was buying more than £5,000 worth of currency? Could we look, please, at 258?
- G A. Yes.
- MR JOHN: Your honour, can I make it clear, in case I am accused of being selective, which I hope
- H I will not be, that this happens to be the only sheet in our bundle which is a Saturday rate one. I

A know that there are others, and I know that they have all been produced. This happens to be the only one before the jury at the moment.

JUDGE WOOD: Yes, well let us clear that point up. The Saturday sheets would have reached your Post Office every Saturday, would they not?

B A. No, Friday afternoon, sir, because First Rate don't work on a Saturday.

Q. But every week is what I mean.

A. That is correct.

C Q. So, this would be a weekly event, the Saturday one?

A. Yes, sir, it would be.

Q. It would come on Fridays?

D A. Yes, sir.

MR JOHN: I am going to get the highlighter out here and others may wish to do so as well because this may help. What you have just said, Mr Page, is shown by the fax header, is it not? Here we can see that this particular rate sheet was faxed out on 3 January, top left?

E A. Just before three o'clock, yes.

Q. Just before three o'clock from FRCS, their fax number given, and you accept, I think, that this was one of the sheets that was seized from your office by the police?

F A. It may be, sir. I don't know if this individual one was, no.

Q. I know that you were not there, but this was one of them. So, we will take this example because it is in front of us and without troubling with the details we can see that for Saturday, the weekend commencing Saturday January 4th 2003, a limit up to 5,000 and we see the normal range

G of popular currencies?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the ones for which First Rate choose to publish the 5,000 plus rate are dollars, French

H francs, German marks and euros?

23

A A. Yes, the French franc and German mark only for buying in, sir, I think, because they no longer existed.

B Q. Exactly, in fact if we look to the left, as you have rightly pointed this out, it says, "Not applicable" does it not, because nobody was selling them at that time but what we need to home in on is the euros, is it not, Mr Page?

A. Yes.

C Q. And what we see there, if we look at the far left-hand column, we have euros and euro 5K plus and the sell rate for euros at the standard rate, 1.4753. Correct?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

D Q. And if I had come into your office and had been dealt with, let me suggest by Mrs Batey or Mrs Rogerson or any of your clerks, and said, "I would like £7,000 worth of euros on Saturday 4 January" she would have looked at that sheet, would she not?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. And she would have said, "I can do a better rate than 1.4753; I can do it slightly less than two points better, 1.4924". Yes?

A. Yes, sir.

F Q. And we can look at others in due courser if we have to but would you accept, Mr Page, that a difference, the preferential rate, the difference between the standard and the special if you happen to have more than five grand, is pretty limited?

A. Yes, sir.

G Q. And certainly much, much more limited than the preferential rate that you were giving to Mr GRO week in week out for years?

A. That is correct, but he's buying more than 5,000 at a time, sir.

H Q. This rate is for 5,000 plus. There is no rate shown for 10,000 plus or 20,000 plus and the evidence is that it is the same rate whatever it is over 5,000 and you were routinely giving rates

A which were massively more preferential than this, were you not?

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

B Q. When you first took over the franchise at Rugeley, Mr Page, was there a degree of negotiation that had to be gone through?

A. Negotiation, sir?

Q. Well, you had to talk it through with somebody on the business side of the Post Office?

A. I had a business plan, sir, yes.

C Q. Yes, and you gave us a name, did you not, yesterday, Cath Hotton.

A. Hatton.

D Q. Hatton. Obviously you had ideas in mind as to what you wanted to achieve by embarking upon this new venture?

A. Me and my ex-wife sir, yes.

E Q. You and the first Mrs Page, yes. In your discussions with her, did you make it clear that one of the things that you regarded as most important was that you should be able to open a bureau de change counter? Think carefully before you answer that.

A. I think we hoped to do, sir, yes, because there was not one in the office.

F Q. Did you make it clear to her that it was important to you that you should be allowed as part of your franchise to open a bureau, not immediately because that would take time, but you wanted a bureau?

A. Yes, I would say – yes, that is correct, sir.

G Q. Did you tell her that you had a customer already lined up?

A. No, sir.

Q. Can you put a year on when it was you first met Mr GRO

A. I thought it was about 1999, 2000, because he used to come in and buy punts and -

H Q. When did you sign your lease for the Rugeley office?

A A. In 1997.

Q. In 1997? Do you have that lease available?

A. No, sir, not with me, no.

B Q. Do you not have a copy of it?

A. I may have, sir, but not on me, no.

Q. Do your solicitors have a copy?

A. They may have, sir, yes.

C Q. Because you will remember that a number of the line managers, each succeeding the other in turn, were asked about whether certain activities that you carried out were within the scope of your lease.

D A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, we can take it, can we, that somebody in your legal team has a copy of this lease?

E MR COOPER: Your honour, my learned friend is playing a few games here. He knows that he should not ask that question. If it is appropriate, your honour will let it continue but it is not a matter for this witness to be asked questions such as this.

F JUDGE WOOD: It may be appropriate for the jury to go out but I hope not. Obviously, there would be no question of the witness being required to answer about instructions given to solicitors, but about the existence of a document, I do not regard that as privilege unless you want to take the point further.

G MR COOPER: No, your honour. I am just anxious that my learned friend does not ask questions which do breach a legal professional privilege and perhaps I am just simply putting a marker down there.

JUDGE WOOD: I will be very attentive to it, Mr Cooper. We will ask the jury to retire if we need to.

H MR JOHN: I always note Mr Cooper's markers, and I do know about legal professional privilege.

A JUDGE WOOD: There are often arguments about it and that is why I shall be very careful and I am sure that you will be.

MR JOHN: And I shall too. If I am out of line I know that it would not be the first time this week.

B JUDGE WOOD: Well, let us get on with it.

MR JOHN: I am not playing games, Mr Page. Now, when did you last see a copy of your lease upon which a number of the Crown witnesses have been cross-examined?

C A. I had a new lease — I had an original lease in 1997 and then I had a new one — I think it was the middle of 2002, which took a while to be negotiated.

D Q. Let me cut this short and if my friend says that this is a breach of privilege, he will be on his feet and we will argue it. Do you have any objection to a copy of that lease being produced to the jury?

E MR COOPER: That is a matter, your honour, for the defence as conducted by Mr Page if they think that it is relevant and of assistance to consider. It is not a matter — Let me put it this way, your honour. When I have asked Mr Patel questions about how the prosecution put their case, my learned friend was on his feet like a whippet, as it were, telling me that it is not for Mr Patel to say how he puts his case; it is for the prosecution. Your honour, I take the same point.

JUDGE WOOD: Yes.

F MR JOHN: I am not asking the witness how he puts his case. I am asking whether he has any objection to his lease with his signature on it being produced to the jury. If he does, let him say so.

JUDGE WOOD: I think that it probably is right for the jury to go out at this stage. I am sorry to break off the afternoon when we only have three quarters of an hour to go, but I think we should.

G (The jury leave court)

(Discussion in the absence of the jury)

(The jury returned into court)

H JUDGE WOOD: Members of the jury, we have taken a bit longer because we have dealt with two

A things. The first is to do with that lease, if you remember, the first lease of the Post Office when Mr
John was interested to find out, first of all, what its date was and whether it made a specific
B provision or not for the bureau. We have checked, and I have learnt, that as it happens, the defence
do not have a copy of that lease. Mr Cooper has been working on the basis of instructions as to
what the restrictions were in it but has not actually got copy so that question cannot be answered in
C detail at all. Mr Cooper quite rightly asks me to make the point that when there are leases prepared
the landlord has a copy as well as the tenant, and the landlord, of course, is the Post Office, so he
says, if the prosecution want to make a point about this they can produce the lease and should do.
You may have heard some witnesses being asked about this lease and the details of it, and they
referred to the business unit. All that I am going to say is that one can perhaps accept that if there
D are over 1,000 Post Offices, to get the 1997 version of the lease of a former tenant of a sub-post
office and get it to the Waterfront Courts might not be quite as easy as one might hope. It could be
not that easy. I do not think we are going to see the lease and I do not think that, frankly, it is going
to affect your decision in the case very much so I do not propose to do more than just explain the
E problem that exists and why it has come up and why you have been out.

One last point is this. You may remember that Mr John was asking some questions of the
witness about when Mr **GRO** came, produced a cheque, took away some currency and then
F looking at the schedule, I think another person went to Thomas Cook's and got the sterling,
changed it back into sterling. Miss Nicholls, counsel for Mr **GRO**, has made the point that it
appears that Mr **GRO** was in fact not in the country on that particular day and Mr John wants
to correct the position by using an example when Mr **GRO** definitely was there and it was
G not somebody else who was meeting up with Mr Page on the day in question. I hope that that is a
fair summary of what we have been discussing so that you know what we are going to refer back to.
MR JOHN: Yes, certainly. May I venture to correct one thing in relation to the lease. There are
H not 1,000 Post Office; there are 17,500.

A JUDGE WOOD: I am sorry, 17,500 Post Offices.

MR JOHN: If we can get hold of it we will, but I do not hold out any more hope than your honour does.

B JUDGE WOOD: No, and please do not think that this judge would mind if a fairly cursory attempt is made to produce it. It is not central to the case.

MR JOHN: Thank you very much. (to the witness) Through you, Mr Page, can I attempt to correct one matter. You agreed with me when we were looking at the 22nd and 23 August, that it must have been you dealing with Mr GRO particularly on 22 August because it was at 7.18 in the morning. Now, I am asking you this in fairness to Mr GRO because there may be evidence that he was out of the country. Did you ever in fact deal in terms of sales with other members of his family?

Wasn't this delayed - according to the travel documents it was this as the holiday?
A. No, no. I presume that Jane Batey and Margaret Pearce have but I haven't. Not that I can remember, sir, no.

Q. So, although the records show a sale at that time in the morning, you are not able to say that you dealt with anybody else?

A. No, sir, but usually at that time it would have been myself who would have been in, sir.

Q. But the issue, really, is this. It may be that it is a straw in the wind, if I can be forgiven to that very limited extent. You are not able to help us by saying that that was not Mr GRO?

A. No, sir.

Q. All right. Let me take two other examples which may not give rise to that problem. We are all back to the same point, Mr Page, transacting with Mr GRO on the morning of one day and far from him coming in two days later, the currency being sold on the same day.

A. Yes.

Q. Are you comfortable there, Mr Page?

H A. Yes, I'm just looking at the --

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A Q. Can you look, please, at 988 in the jury bundle and take another date within the period when you have told us that the normal practice was that he would ring up, you would tell him how many euros you had; you would put it through the money changer and he would come in a day or two later. All right, just so that we have the context?

B A. Yes.

Q. The jury bundle 988, 14 October, and you can see there week 29, 7.36, so that again would be 6.36 in the morning, would it not?

C A. Yes, sir.

Q. Because the clock is back all the time, is it not, throughout this --

A. Yes, unless it's back in the summer and it would be the normal time then, sir.

D Q. Nothing may turn on it but there we are. It is "earlyish" in the morning depending on what time you are used to getting up. All right? 7.36 on 14 October, 150,000 euros sold at a 1.67 rate. Correct?

JUDGE WOOD: A cheque for 89,820.

E MR JOHN: Exactly, your honour, thank you very much. While we are at it, in fact, we can look at the very next line because there is an identical transaction at almost exactly the same time of day on the 17th for exactly the same amount, exactly the same rate and exactly the same amount of sterling, 89,000 odd. Correct?

F A. Yes, sir.

G Q. Now, if keeping that open we could go to the schedule of euros sold by Mr GRO, again, that is at page 1423 and look for 14 October, we see there a sale, it would appear, by the absence from the comments column of anything to the contrary, by Mr GRO himself at New Street of exactly that same quantity of euros, the same as he bought from you?

A. Yes, sir.

H Q. And it would have been you at that time in the morning, would it not?

A A. Yes, sir.

Q. So, keyed into the money changer 14 October at 7.36, 150,000 euros sold at New Street the same day, credited to his bank account and the amount credited, £93,808 odd, making that a shade under £4,000 profit within the day. Would that appear to be right?

B A. Yes, sir.

Q. Let us look at one more example, please, and then we will put that issue to bed. It is 7 October, week 33 on the same page, 988, at 8.32 in the morning, a larger sum, 230,000 euros --

C A. Excuse me, sir, 7 October?

Q. I am sorry, did I say October? November I meant to say: My fault. 7 November, week 33, 0832 in the morning, 230,000 euros, rate 1.672, sterling amount paid to you £137,559 odd.

D Correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Again, from the timing is that in all probability a transaction that you yourself conducted?

A. Yes, sir.

E Q. Very unlikely to have been anybody else, is it not?

A. No, sir.

Q. Are you agreeing or disagreeing with me?

F A. I am agreeing with you.

Q. If we turn over in the other schedule to page 1424, on 8 November, so the following day, 227,000 euros exchanged again at New Street and credited to Mr GRO account in the sum of £142,715 odd, so a profit in excess of £5,000. Is that right?

G A. Yes, sir.

Q. The next day?

A. That is correct. You said the 7th.

H Q. Yes.

A A. Which is --

Q. You are quite right; this is the next day. What is paid in is 227,000 rather than 230,000. Did you keep 3,000?

B A. No, sir, I did not keep 3,000.

Q. Are you sure?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And again, Mr Page, by the end of that week there would not have been any large sums of euros still hanging around the office, would there?

A. I don't know, sir. I'd have to look at the schedule.

Q. Well, he would have taken everything that you had, would he not? That was the way he was operating.

A. If he comes in, sir, yes.

Q. He left you a bit for the customers who were going on holiday but any bulk amount he would have been only too anxious to take everything that you had, would he not?

E A. That is correct.

Q. You can put that to one side now and I hope for today. Is it your evidence that you never knew until you were arrested and interviewed in relation to this case what Mr **GRO** was

F doing with the euros he bought from you?

A. That is correct.

Q. No idea whatsoever apart from a little bit of chit chat about plastics?

A. That is correct, sir.

G Q. At some stage you told the jury yesterday that he was talking to you about getting busier and busier.

A. Yes.

H Q. Did you understand that -- do you mean the jury to understand by that that he was getting

A busier and busier with his plastics business?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Which you understood, of course, revolved around euros?

B A. Yes, sir.

Q. Because although in the early days we have heard you were dealing with Irish punts and Dutch guilders --

A. That is correct, sir, yes.

C Q. The only other currencies you dealt with were very occasionally limited sums of American dollars?

A. Yes.

D Q. And the rest of the time, of course, very large sums of euros?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. So, when you told the jury yesterday that you understood that he had got a contract in South America, did he ever ask you for escudos?

E A. South America?

Q. Yes.

A. Escudos in South America? I wouldn't know, sir.

F Q. Or any other South American currency?

A. Not that I recall, sir, no.

Q. You see, you said nothing in your interviews about him transacting any form of business in America or South America, did you?

G A. I think I mentioned that he was saying something about South America, I am sure.

Q. Did you?

MR COOPER: I think that is the case, your honour. I think I recall South America being

H mentioned in the interviews. I am not quite sure in what context.

A MR JOHN: If I am wrong, I am sure it will be corrected in re-examination but when you say, Mr Page, and this is where I propose to leave it in a moment or two if I am permitted to, that you never had any idea what he was doing with the euros bar the fact that he had a plastics business, you are quite clear in your mind about that, are you?

B A. That is correct, sir, yes.

Q. When did it first come to your knowledge, or when did you first come to believe that for much of the time with which we are concerned a man was driving him to your office in the BMW in the morning -

C A. The man was driving - I never saw a man with him, sir.

Q. You never saw Mr Houghton? All right. When did it first come to your knowledge that the holdall filled with euros from your office was simply being driven to the nearest convenient branch of Thomas Cook's at Tamworth or Kennett or Lichfield and changed straight back into sterling directly credited to Mr **GRO** bank account so that he could make £5,000 before he had had his lunch? When did that first come to your attention?

E A. I was thinking maybe in the interview with the police or Mr Patel. I can't remember when but it was one of the interviews.

Q. So, you were told by them, by Mr Patel and by the police?

F A. Patrick Fountain, who was my then solicitor, had informed me.

Q. At your first interview you did not have a solicitor present at all.

A. That is correct.

Q. So, can we take it that Mr Fountain could not have told you anything at that stage?

G A. No, sir.

Q. So you would not have learned it by the time of your first interview?

A. I can't remember sir, I don't think so.

H Q. Because if you are right, when you finally realised what Mr **GRO** was doing with these

A euros, it must have been a bombshell to you.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Just one question on this issue and then with his Honour's leave I will pause because I am moving on to something completely different. Would you just take up the interview file once more for today, please? So that you understand, before I take you to the passage, precisely what I am driving at, Mr Page, you hold hard on this, do you, that you had no idea that Mr **GRO** was at any rate to a substantial extent trading in foreign exchange to make money?

C A. No, I didn't know that.

Q. I don't think we even had a tab one but right at the front of the interview file - the jury may have one but no one has given me a tab one; never mind. 13 January, your interview starting at half past nine in the evening, roughly, with the two police officers. Do you have that?

D A. Yes.

Q. Would you turn to page 4, please? At the bottom of the page, the last question you are asked: "What time do you normally open up in the morning?" Your answer, "It ranges from seven o'clock to sometimes I'm in at five thirty, six o'clock. The latest I'm here is between about seven o'clock, from seven until seven forty five." True?

E A. Yes, sir.

F Q. "Usually I open up early because we have a gentleman who comes and does foreign currency". True?

A. Yes.

Q. "And I open up for him because he has, like, a foreign currency office."

G A. Foreign currency?

Q. Your words, not mine. Where do they come from?

A. No, the only thing I was saying here, sir, is that he used to come in and do foreign currency.

H I'd open up the foreign currency office so that he could, you know, purchase foreign currency.

A Q. No doubt the tape can be checked over the weekend but I suggest to you that what you are
saying there right at the first time you are interviewed about these matters is that Mr GRO
had what you described as, in your words, "like a foreign currency office" and the suggestion I
B make to you is that you knew perfectly well that he was trading in foreign currency, making a big
turn on it because of the rates that you were giving him.

A. That's incorrect, sir.

Q. Thank you.

C MR JOHN: Would that be a convenient moment, your honour? *9 don't remember him saying this? — See next file*

JUDGE WOOD: Yes, it would. Thank you, Mr Page. I have to give you the same caution as I
have done, I think when we have broken before. Members of the jury, we will resume on Monday—
D I nearly said "tomorrow" — at the usual time at half past 10. I am not sure if anyone has managed to
type out for us the dates when we are not sitting, but I would be grateful if we could get that done
for you. It looks as if you are going to get that on Monday. I do not suggest you wait for it now.
Thank you very much, members of the jury.

E MR JOHN: Your honour, may I say on behalf of all of us that there is not a problem with half past
ten on Monday. We understood at one stage that there might be.

JUDGE WOOD: No, the problem is, I think, the following Monday, the 11th. I believe that is right.

F Thank you. I will rise now.

(The court adjourned until 10.30 am on Monday 4 July 2005)

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