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Memo



11 October 2011

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POST OFFICE LTD -v- KHAYYAM ISHAQ CASE POLTD/1011/0186

Thank you for your minute of 5 October 2011 submitting the papers in this case. My understanding of the evidence is that an audit discovered a shortage on 8 February 2011 of £21,168.64. Following the audit, the Defendant consented to being interviewed. The first set of interviews took place on 7 April 2011. During the course of the interviews the Defendant denied any dishonesty including theft, false accounting or fraud. Following which the assistant who worked at the sub post office was spoken to and has provided a witness statement which refutes a number of suggestions put by the sub postmaster in the course of the interview. In essence Mr Liaquat confirms that he worked between 9.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. He maintains that when he changed his password on the computer he notified the sub postmaster of the change but was unaware of the sub postmaster's log-on code.

The witness was also shown a number of branch trading statements and stated that he was unaware of discrepancies that were raised in the statements. He also confirmed that the sub postmaster counted both the cash deliveries and stock in the office.

Mr Liaquat stated that he had never been informed of any discrepancies and never been told that he had forgotten to count any cash.

The sub postmaster was further interviewed on 27 September 2011. During the course of the interview the sub postmaster maintained that Mr Liaquat's recollection and version of events was inaccurate and that he was mistaken and that in fact he had been forgetful whilst working at the office. He continued to deny that he knew Mr Liaquat's password. Whilst he now accepts that he checked the cash every week he denies checking any stock levels.

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I note in the audit report there is reference to a conversation which took place during the course of the audit between an auditor, Kath Smith and an employee at the P&BA Chesterfield. In essence, I understand that there were a number of sales reversals of stamps. I understand the reversals involved large numbers of sheets of stamps and they took place under the suspect sub postmaster's user name. During the course of the audit he was asked about the reversals but stated that he was not responsible for their inputs as they took place when the "relief" was working. I understand when he is referring to "relief" that he may be referring to annual leave that he has taken where he has paid a substitute to work at the office. Alternatively, he could mean the sub office assistant. I will be grateful if Horizon data could be obtained in relation to the reversals as it appears that this may well be the piece of evidence which can prove that the sub postmaster is the person who was acting dishonestly in this case. If we are talking about a "relief" in relation to annual leave, can records be checked that the period can be and cross-referenced with any reversals that took place? If the evidence shows that the sub postmaster is the person who was reversing the sales for stamps then clearly this points towards the guilty knowledge that there was a deficiency in this stock which should lead to a prosecution in relation to fraud and/or theft or false accounting.

If there are any difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact this Office.

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