		Thursday, 24 February 2022	1	Α.	On the back, yes.
	(10.	00 am)	2	Q.	Do you see your signature in the middle of that page?
	MS	HODGE: Good morning, sir. Can you hear and see us?	3	Α.	Yes, that's my signature.
1	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: I can indeed.	4	Q.	Have you had an opportunity to read that statement
5	MS	HODGE: Thank you. Our first witness this morning is	5		since it was first made?
6		Mr Thomas English.	6	Α.	Yes.
7	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.	7	Q.	Is its content true to the best of your knowledge and
3		THOMAS ENGLISH (sworn)	8		belief?
9	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Good morning, Mr English.	9	Α.	Yes.
0	Α.	Good morning, sir.	10	Q.	I'd like to begin by asking you a few questions about
1	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming.	11		your background, if I may?
2		Questioned by MS HODGE	12	A.	Yes.
3	MS	HODGE: As you know, Mr English, my name is	13	Q.	How old are you now, Mr English?
4		Catriona Hodge and I ask questions on behalf of the	14	A.	69 now, 70 this year.
5		Inquiry.	15		Are you married?
6	Α.	Yes.	16		Yes.
7	Q.	Please can you state your full name?	17	Q.	For how long have you been married?
8	A.		18		Since 1979, September '79.
9		Thank you. You made a statement, Mr English, on	19		Do you have any children?
0		9 February of this year; is that correct?	20		I've got two daughters.
1	Α.		21		How old are they?
2	Q.	Do you have a copy of that statement before you?	22		37 at the weekend, and 35.
3	A.		23		Can you please tell me about your career before you
24	Q.		24		went to work for the Post Office.
25		your statement. It should be page 16.	25	A.	Yes. I was schooled in Middlesbrough and then I left
1		Middlesbrough in 1969 and joined the Royal Marines as	1		leave, and I made the biggest train journey of my life
2		a 16 and a half year old boy, stayed there until	2		from Middlesbrough, all the way down to Deal in Kent,
3		1 April '77 and then on 4 April '77, I joined the	3		on my own, and I mean I had to get my Mum to sign
4		Metropolitan Police and served at Stoke Newington	4		me into the military because I was underage,
5		police station here in London.	5		technically and off I went, and spent eight years
6		I then transferred up to Leicester because	6		there.
7		a girl I'd met, still my wife, didn't want to live in	7	Q.	Did you enjoy it?
8		London and so we went to Leicester where she came	8	Α.	Oh, yes. I just got into sport again, didn't I, and
9		from, and I spent 20 or so years in Leicester and then	9		I enjoyed soldiering. It was me, really.
0		I left the police force through a medical problem, and	10	Q.	What attracted you to working for the Post Office?
1		then we decided on settling for a Post Office to make	11	Α.	Well, I tried after I left the police force,
2		a living because my daughters at that time were only	12		I tried to get jobs with them and I don't know what
3		12 and 13, and we needed more money than my police	13		happened at the time but it seemed that they'd put
4		pension was paying me to survive.	14		a little line at the bottom "If you don't hear from us
5		So I'd got problems getting a job because of	15		within a month, then you're not successful". And
6		a blood disorder I've got, which is genetic, and	16		I thought I've just given you 20 years of my life and
7		I settled for the Post Office as a way of survival.	17		you can't even write to me and say, "Sorry, Tom,
8	Q.	What had attracted you, firstly, to your role in the	18		you've been unsuccessful"?
9		Royal Marines and the police force?	19		So, as time went on, I thought, well, I've got
0	Α.	Well, I suppose I'm I was a natural competitor.	20		to make a move because the girls are getting bigger
1		I've always been sport mad, sport-minded, as a kid,	21		and they're getting older and I need some stability.
2		always out playing football, played rugby for 15 years	22		I can't go round, you know, hunting for jobs because
3		and it just seemed a natural progression that I leave	23		of my illness, which nearly killed me. I thought I've
4		Middlesbrough. I didn't want to go in the steelworks	24		got to survive.
25		and I felt, well, I'm going to go and I'm going to	25		So the next best thing is I'll go down this

(1) Pages 1 - 4

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1		avenue of being self-employed and work at that.	1		we settled for that because I just thought, "Position,
2	Q.	What did the process of applying to be a subpostmaster	2		position, position". It's a Grade II listed building,
3		involve?	3		which was part of the Lord Lichfield's estate,
4	Α.	I wrote to the Post Office, I went for an initial	4		Patrick Anson, it was part of his estate many years
5		interview at Bishop Street in Leicester, which was	5		ago, and it's such a nice building, built about
6		their Crown Office. I then sat some exams there and	6		1790-ish, nobody seems to know exactly, and I thought
7		I was successful. I then had to go away and write	7		I'll never lose money on this place, and we decided to
8		I've still got it to this day a study of the	8		take the office.
9		business, of what I would do if I was given an office	9		And I didn't want too big a business because
10		and how I would make it better.	10		I didn't want to neglect my daughters because, as
11		So I wrote this business document and submitted	11		I say, they were 12 and 13. We'd uprooted them from
12		it to them and they said, "Yeah, that's fine" and then	12		Leicester, from all their friends and we went there
13		I went for an interview at Derby with Nigel Trumpton,	13		and we did get a bit of flak like that initially from
14		who turned out to be my line manager. There was	14		them, you know, "You've taken us away from our
15		another lady with him I can't remember her name,	15		friends", which is to be expected, and but they
16		but she was a subpostmistress and they interviewed	16		soon settled down at the local school and it you
17		my wife and I for four hours in Derby.	17		know, it was a good move that way.
18		Then, at the end of it, he said, "You've got the	18	Q.	-
19		job". [redacted]	19		About £66,000, bearing in mind removal costs from
20	Q.	I was about to ask you which Post Office you ran but	20		Leicester over to Stafford. Then I had to buy the
21		it's the Great Haywood	21		business as well and normally you paid two to two and
22	A.	Yes, Great Haywood Post Office, yes.	22		a half times the salary for the business. So the
23	Q.		23		salary when I took it on was about £22,000 a year and
24	<u>.</u>		24		that was 3 February '99. As I say so that would
25		country I mean, Norfolk, Devon, the north-east and	25		have been somewhere in the regions of £44,000 I'd paid
		5			6
1		for the business and then there was some modernisation	1		"No, it will pan out, just keep going".
1 2		for the business and then there was some modernisation to go on, and removal and purchase fees, those kind of	1 2	Q.	
				Q.	
2	Q.	to go on, and removal and purchase fees, those kind of	2		Not long after your appointment, there was an
2 3	Q.	to go on, and removal and purchase fees, those kind of things, which added up.	2 3		Not long after your appointment, there was an attempted robbery
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			I		
1		room, through the living room, opened the door into	1		send her a bunch of flowers. They didn't even do
2		the Post Office from my living room, and then ran out	2		anything. And I thought "Oh, hang on a minute, that's
3		into the street, and they had a stolen car outside	3		not very good", and I'd only been in position eight
4		with a getaway driver. So they jumped in and just got	4		months. Well, if they're going to treat me like that,
5		away and then I got the number, we rang the police and	5		what are they going to do to the others who've sat
6		the police were in the area and eventually they went	6		here in this chair? Their attitude is not very good.
7		over to Abbots Bromley and they were caught trying to	7	Q.	When was the Horizon system first installed in your
8		do something over there.	8		branch?
9		But, prior to that, they went to Fillybrook	9	Α.	About 2004. I was a latecomer to that because of my
10		Service Station up near Trenthem Gardens. They were	10		appointment was in '99 and they'd already had
11		a pair of thugs, really, because they hit the young	11		a roll-out but we were all paper-based. Everything
2		girl at Fillybrook Service Station, which is a garage	12		was worked out on a proper chart, which we submitted
3		it isn't now, but it was and they hit her for 20	13		to the Post Office and, obviously, everything had to
14		cigarettes and I thought, well, they were particularly	14		balance, and you could cross it along and check it up,
5		nasty fellas these and one of them, apparently, in the	15		down, left-hand, right-hand side, the lot and
6		paper had previous for hitting his Mum. I thought,	16		everything was paper-based.
17		well, you're not a very good advert for a manhood if	17	Q.	What training did you receive from the Post Office
8		you're going around belting your Mum. So they got	18		when Horizon was installed?
9		their desserts and they went to prison.	19	Α.	When gosh. The Post Office isn't like a lot of
20		The Post Office, we rang them up and said,	20		people think it's glamorous, you open at 9 and you
21		"We've had a robbery" and all they said was, "Well,	21		close at 5. It wasn't like that at all. It was
22		how much did they get?" and I said, "Nothing". "Oh,	22		seven days a week, non-stop. Because you've got your
23		okay, just close the office", and, well, my wife fell	23		ancillary business and we chose this business because
24		apart a bit after that, through the shock. It was	24		it wasn't too big and we could still spend time with
25		just latent shock, I suppose, and they didn't even	25		our daughters, and our ancillary business probably
		9			10
1		only gave us about £7,000 or £8,000 a year, which we	1		had this Canadian fella I'm sure he was Canadian
2		kept you know, we fine-tuned it to that, because we	2		and he said, "Look, about this system, the Post Office
3		used to go out every Thursday and every Saturday and	3		have told me not to tell you this, but there are
4		Sunday around warehouses ourselves looking for things	4		problems with this system; they have experienced
5		we could work out to sell in the shop. And then you'd	5		problems". And one of the lads because I wasn't
6		take them home, unbox them, work out a price for them,	6		really computer literate, and one of the lads, about
7		put the price on the item, store it or put it in the	7		my age, he said, "Yeah, but this is a second-hand
8		shop.	8		system, this is not a good system" and I thought,
9		So, basically, the whole job was 24/7, really,	9		"Oh".
10		because you were open Saturdays for the Post Office	10		Then, with what the instructor said, "This is
11		anyhow, and you closed about 1.00, by the time you'd	11		not a good and they have had problems with it", so
2		cashed up and declared all your cash and things. So	12		that's within five years of roll-out, I thought, oh,
13		it was busy.	13		be careful because this thing can bite you, and that
4	Q.	How did you fit training in around that?	14		was always in my mind.
15	Α.	Well, what we did was they sent us these CD disks or	15	Q.	Were you given an opportunity to use the Horizon
6		DVDs. So we had a DVD and we put it in and you had to	16		system during your group training?
17		self-teach, and we sat for hours in the evening after	17	A.	I'm going to say no but I don't remember sitting there
18		we'd had our dinner and we'd sit until like	18		with a computer in front of me. I just can't remember
9		10.00/11.00 at night looking at these videos trying to	19		that, and that's the best answer I can give.
20		learn a computer from a video. And we did that for	20	Q.	What training did you receive from the Post Office
21		many, many hours.	21		after it had been installed in your branch?
22		Then we went for some training, and I can't	22	A.	We had a very nice lady come to stay with us not
23		remember where I went in Stafford for it but we did it	23		live with us, obviously but train us for about four
24		separate, because Bren had to run the office and I had	24		days or so, and then she left us on our own and we
25		to go to training, and it was a week's training and we	25		thought, "Oh, this is it now". And you just get on
		11			12

1	with it, and you just try and remember what you've	1		ve'd sit there and the average age of
2	been taught and what you've been told and, as I say,	2		subpostmaster was quite old, you know. The average
3	just hope it pans out okay from you from there.	3		ge of somebody going into the Post Office was quite
4	I would say about a year, before I really knew	4		ld. It was certainly mid-40s. And, after these
5	what I was doing.	5		neetings with the Post Office, because we'd browbeat
6 Q .	Forgive me, I was going to ask how suitable do you	6	t	nem, we'd sit there and have a pint and something to
7	think the training was in preparing you to run the	7	e	at, a cob, and we'd talk about, "What do you know",
8	branch?	8	"	What do you know", and we'd all question each other
9 A .	I don't think it was adequate. No, I don't.	9	а	nd say, "Well, I know this, I know that".
0 Q .	Did you experience problems when using the Horizon	10		And a story would emerge. And because we
1	system?	11	v	veren't, sort of, all together all the time, we were
2 A .	Oh, yes. Yes. You had problems with communication,	12	S	pread out, you learnt that things were not
3	ie from the internet, from and I think part of the	13	h	unky-dory.
4	problem was I went and spoke to the Post Office	14	Q . 1	ou've just described attending group meetings with
5	engineer who was at the green box outside one day.	15	t	ne Post Office.
6	I says, "What's going down?" He goes, "Well, the	16	A . \	es, with the Post Office.
7	problem is we're using copper wires", he says, "and	17	Q . V	Vhere would those be held?
8	they snap and they break and they break the	18	A . V	Vell, the Garth Hotel doesn't exist anymore. That's
9	connections". And I thought, "Oh, I wonder if this is	19	r	ow houses but we had we went up to a hotel in
20	causing some of the problems that people are alleging	20		h, I can't remember the name of it, 10 miles,
1	they're having".	21		2 miles away from us, and there was other premises
2	And eventually they changed things to the fibre	22		here we went to and had meetings.
23	optic. But you still had problems. I mean, these	23		low frequently would these meetings be held?
24	problems that people have reported and we knew it	24		Vell, you had one about every six months, or so, and
25	because we used to go to subpostmasters' meetings and	25		nen they started to drop off and I don't know why.
	13		-	14
1	But it was a way you could quiz them and air your	1	SIR M	YN WILLIAMS: meeting.
2	problems Stone is the place we used to go to the	2	A. 1	5
3	hotel in Stone.	3		YN WILLIAMS: at which area managers/managers
4	But there were other premises. We could air our	4		ne Post Office would be there, subpostmasters would
5	problems and, hopefully, they'd be listened to and	5		e there
5	then they'd tell us where the Post Office was going			
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,		A \	53.
	and what was hannening and what was in the nineline	6	A. Y	
	and what was happening and what was in the pipeline.	7	SIR W	YN WILLIAMS: and in those discussions, am I right
B Q .	Who was in attendance at these meetings on behalf of	7 8	SIR W	YYN WILLIAMS: and in those discussions, am I right n taking from your evidence that problems with
8 Q . 9	Who was in attendance at these meetings on behalf of the Post Office?	7 8 9	SIR W ii H	YN WILLIAMS: and in those discussions, am I right n taking from your evidence that problems with forizon were discussed?
8 Q . 9 0 A .	Who was in attendance at these meetings on behalf of the Post Office? People up the food chain. That's all I can say.	7 8 9 10	SIR W ii H A . א	YN WILLIAMS: and in those discussions, am I right in taking from your evidence that problems with forizon were discussed? Yes.
8 Q . 9 0 A . 1	 Who was in attendance at these meetings on behalf of the Post Office? People up the food chain. That's all I can say. People in the know not terribly, terribly high but, 	7 8 9 10 11	SIR W ii H A. Y SIR W	IYN WILLIAMS: and in those discussions, am I right in taking from your evidence that problems with lorizon were discussed? Yes. IYN WILLIAMS: Fine, thanks.
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(4) Pages 13 - 16

1	A.	On a day-to-day basis, it's the helpline and you could	1		December 2005.
2		get good people at the helpline. I suppose it	2	Α.	Yes.
3		depended on their experience and how long they'd been	3	Q.	Can you please describe what occurred on that
4		doing the job for. If you get a newcomer, you know,	4		occasion?
5		they're not going to have the experience of somebody	5	Α.	Right. Where are we on the statement?
6		who's been there a while. And they could only do so	6	Q.	Forgive me, this is on page 5, paragraph 26. It
7		much, and if it's a problem that they couldn't solve,	7		relates to a problem with the personal banking
8		they would pass it on up the line to Chesterfield to	8		programme. Would you be able to explain what
9		the accounts department, and they would register it	9		happened?
10		there. And then, invariably they'd be in touch with	10	Α.	
11		you or they might be in touch with you sorry, you	11		copper in the telephone lines problem, I think. The
12		might be in touch with them.	12		Horizon would crash and you couldn't carry out
13		So that's how it worked.	13		transactions. So you'd ring them say "My system's
14	Q.	How often would you say you contacted the helpline?	14		gone down". They'd go "Oh, we know, yes. Well, keep
15	A.	Oh, quite regularly, yes. I suppose it's this thing,	15		the office open and do what you can". "But the
16		going back to training, this can bite you on the bum	16		system's gone down". "Ah, but you can still carry out
17		time, and you're thinking, "I've got to be cautious	17		certain transactions". "Yes, but what happens if they
18		here because" I'm one of those people that, if I've	18		want to pay by cheque and credit card and cash",
19		got a problem I'll come and tell you about it, and	19		because you could pay transactions using all those
20		that is my safeguard because, you know, you can't say	20		methods and you could interchange among those three to
21		to me, "Oh, well, you have hid this away, you haven't	21		pay one bill.
22		said anything to anybody else". I'll say, "This has	22		And you say, "Well, if somebody wants to come in
23		happened, that's happened. What we going to do about	23		and pay a bill and say 'Tom, I want 500 quid', I can't
24		it?"	24		give them 500 quid so they can't pay their bill". "Oh
25	Q.	In your statement, you've referred to an incident in	25		well I says look, best thing is to do, close the
		17			18
1		office, we don't get any mistakes then. We know where	1		What's going on here?"
2		the crash has happened, we know when it's happened and	2		"I don't know, it's down to the Post Office, I'm
3		hopefully everything's backed up and you have saved	3		very sorry". You've got a note on your door:
4		everything", and that's what we'd say to them.	4		"Sorry, not open".
5		What I said there, yeah, accept payment in part	5	0	Did you report the issues you had experienced to the
5		what i salu there, yeah, accept payment in part			
6		each and eard and cheque. I mean neeple would hav		ч.	
6 7		cash and card and cheque I mean, people would pay	6		helpline?
7		their bills out of their pensions. Well, if I can't	6 7	Q. A.	helpline? Oh, you ring them. You just ring them and say "Look,
7 8		their bills out of their pensions. Well, if I can't give you your pension, you can't pay your bill, so	6 7 8		helpline? Oh, you ring them. You just ring them and say "Look, the line's gone down". Well, they know your
7 8 9		their bills out of their pensions. Well, if I can't give you your pension, you can't pay your bill, so what's the point of keeping the office open? Because	6 7 8 9		helpline? Oh, you ring them. You just ring them and say "Look, the line's gone down". Well, they know your computer's gone down. They know it's crashed.
7 8 9 10		their bills out of their pensions. Well, if I can't give you your pension, you can't pay your bill, so what's the point of keeping the office open? Because you can't transact. So you close the office and	6 7 8 9 10		helpline? Oh, you ring them. You just ring them and say "Look, the line's gone down". Well, they know your computer's gone down. They know it's crashed. Sometimes it would be a local thing, sometimes it
7 8 9 10 11		their bills out of their pensions. Well, if I can't give you your pension, you can't pay your bill, so what's the point of keeping the office open? Because you can't transact. So you close the office and that's what used to happen.	6 7 8 9 10 11	Α.	helpline? Oh, you ring them. You just ring them and say "Look, the line's gone down". Well, they know your computer's gone down. They know it's crashed. Sometimes it would be a local thing, sometimes it would be an area thing.
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1	scan the book and then insert the amount that's on the	1		I can understand to a degree why, because that stamp
2	docket into the Horizon system, and then it would come	2		is official, it's a governmental thing, you know, the
3	up, and you'd pay them accordingly.	3		Government own the Post Office and it's their baby,
4	And you would take that docket, which is not	4		and we did it because it was cheaper than inking up
5	a lot bigger than that (indicated) and you'd have	5		pads and doing that all the time, the old fashioned
6	a box with sections in it and the dockets were	6		way.
7	different kinds of pensions, like 1, 2, 3, 4 to 12, or	7		So we had them and we'd tot all the dockets up
8	whatever it was, and you'd put them in value order.	8		at the end of the day and then Brenda would I'd
9	So smallest value first, highest value to the end, in	9		just sing out how much they would and she'd go item 1,
10	each of them sections.	10		item 2, and then you'd have a full total at the end.
11	Then what you'd do at the end of the day, you	11		Well, we did about 35,000 quids' worth of pensions
12	would get all them dockets out and you would make sure	12		every week to the old folk in the village, and that
13	they're in the right order, with the right sequencing,	13		was that.
14	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and then you would add them all up. So	14		At the end of the week, we'd put all these
15	I would go my wife had a calculator with a printer	15		together so the dockets and the till roll that we'd
16	on it. We went out and purchased it ourselves because	16		printed off and the Horizon roll because it's on
17	you had to do that.	17		the Horizon as well as long as them two figures
18	Our stamps because they had the old fashioned	18		matched and all the dockets were on there, that's
19	stamps with the ink, but we went and bought these	19		done, and we'd parcel them up in a bag and then they'd
20	Ludwig things, which cost I mean, two of them cost	20		go off to Lisahally in Northern Ireland.
21	me 250 quid and, even though I paid for mine, they	21		Then one day, a few months later, I got this
22	weren't my property, they were the property of the	22		message that I was £127 or £147 down. I thought, no,
23	Post Office. But because I purchased them I was	23		I'm not. "Oh, you didn't put a docket in the system".
24	responsible to Ludwig's for their repair and	24		I says, "Yes, I did". And they said "No, you didn't".
25	replacement should anything go wrong. And, basically,	25		I said, "Well, prove I didn't". They says, "Well,
1	I can't". I said, "Well" So, you know, there's	1		she said, "and they should be able to do it". I said,
2	an impasse. "I said I've done it, you said I haven't.	2		"But, they won't". She says, "Well, I can't do it
3	Why at Lisahally have they lost it at Lisahally,	3		because I don't know" she say, "but they've got the
4	Why at Lisahally have they lost it at Lisahally, because", I said, "when my wife and I did it, it was	3 4		information".
	because", I said, "when my wife and I did it, it was there". I said, "Not only is it there, it's on the			
4	because", I said, "when my wife and I did it, it was there". I said, "Not only is it there, it's on the till rolls and it's in the Horizon".	4		information".
4 5	because", I said, "when my wife and I did it, it was there". I said, "Not only is it there, it's on the	4 5		information". So, basically, I ended up having to pay that
4 5 6	because", I said, "when my wife and I did it, it was there". I said, "Not only is it there, it's on the till rolls and it's in the Horizon".	4 5 6		information". So, basically, I ended up having to pay that money, much against my will, and I said they
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(6) Pages 21 - 24

1	week the account week, the dates from and to, the	1		on a minute, it's 250 quid, twice in two months? The
2	week it covers, and I'd put all my cash, 1 pence,	2		same amount? What's going wrong?" And I know my wife
3	2 pence, 5 pence, every bit of cash I had, down to the	3		wouldn't do it, I know I wouldn't give out the
4	noughts, and then in the middle I'd put all the stamps	4		250 quid. I mean, that's a lot of money to give away.
5	1, 2, all the stamps in the middle, all your milk	5		And, even if you give it out in fivers, imagine how
6	tokens, all your foreign currency, and everything, all	6		many people you would have to pay, 40 or 50 people in
7	your other stamps, like presentation packs and things	7		fivers to make that money. I'm thinking no.
8	like this, and your presentation envelopes, and you'd			
0 9		8		So you tell the helpline again, "Look, I'm another 250 quid down. Why is that?" "No". So
9 10	count them all up again and you think, right, so if that all tallies	9 10		
			•	you've got to put the money in. So that was that one.
11 12	And then you look at the previous weeks because	11	Q.	I'd like to ask you about I think it was the largest
12	you can balance that against stock in and stock out	12		shortfall you experienced of £3,873?
13	and what you've sold, you're thinking, hang on	13	Α.	Well, it wasn't really, was it? It was like £4,000
14	a minute, that 250 quid, I must have given it to	14		because what happened is, initially and I'm not
15	somebody over the counter. That's the only thing you	15		referring to my statement off the top of my head
16	can say in the end, and go, "But you don't give 250	16		again, I was and the lady came in and it was that
17	quid over the counter". So we thought, "Oh". So	17		one where I stamped her Severn Trent Water bill, it
18	letter in the envelope, where you send all your	18		was, and I thought, right, stamp the water bill, scan
19	accounts away in the big brown envelope, letter in	19		it through, get the receipt from the Horizon, staple
20	there, "We've got a £250 discrepancy", you'd back that	20		it to it, and give her it back. So, "Here you are,
21	up by making a telephone call to the helpline and go,	21		thank you very much".
22	"We're 250 quid down but we don't understand why; is	22		And then when I did my giros on the night,
23	there anything you can help us with?" "No".	23		I thought, "Oh, no, Tom, you've made a mistake, you
24	So we're looking at each other. And then,	24		didn't take the stub from the bottom of the form she
25	a month later, 250 quid again, and I'm thinking, "Hang 25	25		brought in", because you've got the rip-off stubs, 26
1	haven't vou. at the bottom. I thought. "I've made	1		and they've got to detach it from that slip so I'll
1	haven't you, at the bottom. I thought, "I've made a cock up". So I thought "Right, I'll just go and	1		and they've got to detach it from that slip so I'll
2	a cock up". So I thought, "Right, I'll just go and	2		know I've got their attention". And I thought, well,
2 3	a cock up". So I thought, "Right, I'll just go and see the lady because I know what where she lives". So	2 3		know I've got their attention". And I thought, well, they're not going to rip it off, because they're not
2 3 4	a cock up". So I thought, "Right, I'll just go and see the lady because I know what where she lives". So what I did is, when I sent my giros off daily, you	2 3 4		know I've got their attention". And I thought, well, they're not going to rip it off, because they're not going to rip an official piece of paper like that, so
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2 3 4 5 6	a cock up". So I thought, "Right, I'll just go and see the lady because I know what where she lives". So what I did is, when I sent my giros off daily, you have got like an A5, half an A4, and it was a black I'm sure it was a black, because you had a black one	2 3 4 5 6		know I've got their attention". And I thought, well, they're not going to rip it off, because they're not going to rip an official piece of paper like that, so they've obviously took it off with one of them staple removers. Because when I asked for the evidence, they
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	a cock up". So I thought, "Right, I'll just go and see the lady because I know what where she lives". So what I did is, when I sent my giros off daily, you have got like an A5, half an A4, and it was a black I'm sure it was a black, because you had a black one and a red one, and I'm sure it was a black one that I did daily, and then you'd put them in a blue envelope for giro bank, and then I looked at it and	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		know I've got their attention". And I thought, well, they're not going to rip it off, because they're not going to rip an official piece of paper like that, so they've obviously took it off with one of them staple removers. Because when I asked for the evidence, they sent it back to me and there it came and they'd enlarged it and there was the two holes in the top left-hand corner. I thought, well, they've had the
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(7) Pages 25 - 28

1	I says, "Well, I can't. I couldn't do it that way	1	Because, I mean, when you consider that I run
2	because I made a mistake. I didn't take any monies.	2	the village Post Office, everybody knows me and
3	The money's there".	3	everybody knows my wife, and when things like this
4	So, anyway, it got sorted by Christmas. So it	4	come out and people go, "Oh, he's been thieving
5	took about three months. So I thought, okay.	5	money", and people have said that in this chair before
6	Christmas came and went, New Year came and went, and	6	me, I'm quite well aware of that. And you think,
7	then I logged on one February morning about 8.30, on	7	"Well, hang on a minute, I'm an ex-policeman". People
8	a Saturday morning it was, because I was preparing the	8	know me. People all round the United Kingdom know me
9	office then ready for 9.00. I looked at it and	9	because I was in the Marines with them, because
10	I thought, "What the hell is this on the computer?"	10	I served in the Metropolitan Police with them, because
11	It was like a message with no punctuation marks, no	11	I served in Leicester with them and the villagers know
12	full stops, no nothing, no capital letters, and it was	12	me because I run their Post Office. And they're
13	just like ticker tape. I thought, "What? Somebody	13	going, "Oh, well, he's bent, he is. Wonder what he
14	having a joke?"	14	did in the police force? Was he bent then?" And
15	So then, like an email, you start to decipher	15	you're thinking this is a real stain on my character,
16	it, you're going, "What's all this?" And I'm going,	16	this is.
17	"You've been accused of fraud and theft from the	17	So, anyway, I says. "Look, I haven't taken any
18	computer?" I thought, don't talk so stupid. And that	18	monies. I want to speak to Nicky Moore". "Well, you
19	I had taken 100 and which was the sum of this	19	can't". I said, "I'm telling you now, if she's going
20	Severn Trent Water bill that belonged to the lady,	20	to accuse me, I want to speak to Nicky Moore". I said
21	I thought, "Well, they know I haven't taken it.	21	"Get her on the line". And they said, "Well, you
22	They've had it. It said in the accounts". We spent	22	can't speak to her".
23	three months hammering this problem out and it was	23	I says, "Well, don't accuse me of theft".
24	somebody called Nicky Moore, I think her name was	24	I says, "If you want to do it, come and see me or get
25	and I thought, "Oh", and I went ballistic.	25	Nicky Moore to ring me", I says, "and I want to know
	29		30
1	the day, the date, the time, the place, which computer	1	Because what I did every week is I get an A4
2	it was from, is it my wife's terminal, is it my	2	envelope and put everything that I'd done that week in
3	terminal, what time of day it happened, how many	3	that envelope, all the till rolls, all the balances,
4	attempts were made to take this money out of the	4	the cash, and you could do a stock-on-hand check and
5	computer". I says, "Because it's all electronic, you	5	I'd press a stock-on-hand check, and so you could work
6	can tell me what I've done and when I did it". They	6	out just in case things went wrong, you can say,
7	said, "No, we're not going to do that". I says,	7	"Well, hang on a minute, this is where it happened".
8	"Well, forget it, because I ain't going to pay you".	8	So I said, "I'm on terra firma. Everything's
9	So they said, "Well, we'll just take it out your	9	legal". I says, "You can't accuse me of theft".
10	wages". I says, "Don't threaten me". I said, "I am	10	"Well, we'll just have to do something to you. We'll
11	not going to cave in and pay you", I says "not this	11	prosecute you or take it out of your money". I said,
12	time, because you are really running me down now".	12	"No, you won't". So I said, "and I want to still
13	So, anyway, I made several calls to Chesterfield	13	speak to Nicky Moore".
14	and I was getting nowhere and then they came back to	14	Eventually, I got a lady. I rang up one day and
15	me and said, "Ah, we've done a further investigation.	15	she says, "Nicky Moore doesn't work here anymore,
16	We've found that you've stolen more money". I said,	16	Mr English". I says, "You what?" "She doesn't
17	"Pardon?" "You've stolen" whatever it says in	17	work" I said, "What do you mean she doesn't work
18	there £4,300 or thereabouts. So I said, "No,	18	here". I said, "I clear up this giro thing in October
19	I haven't" "Ah, but we've done" "Well, produce	19	to December and there she is in February accusing me".
20	your investigation, day, date, time, place, the usual	20	"Oh, well, she left the business in October, the
21	things I've asked you". They said, "No, you will pay	21	previous" so I said, "She left the business when
22	us". I said, "I'm not going to pay you while I'm in	22	I had the first accusation from you of £147, or
23	dispute with you". I said, "This is an official	23	whatever it was, and 12" but what would you want to
24	record on my Horizon system. I've kept my accounts to	24	pinch 12 pence for, for god's sake? You don't nick
25	cover this period. I've got the whole account".	25	£142.12 or £3,700.10, do you? You don't do that. You
			, , , , , ,

(8) Pages 29 - 32

1	round it up, for god's sake.	1	I am aware that there's some fantastic sums of money
2	So, anyway, she goes "Nicky Moore left the	2	come through in this room and we were always treated
3	business in October". I said, "So what's she doing in	3	in isolation. It's as though: you're the only one,
4	the February of the following year accusing me of	4	there ain't nobody else, pal. And I'm going, "No,
5	theft and false accounting or whatever?" No comment.	5	that's not true". But when you think of how long did
6	So I said, "I still want to speak to Nicky. I want to	6	it take that Asian gentlemen, who I saw on the telly,
7	speak to somebody about this because I'm not having it	7	£208,000. I'm going, "He's not pinched that.
8	and I am not paying you".	8	Something's wrong in the system".
9	So they I mean, when you look back at the	9	If they did a full and complete audit of your
10	initial treatment from when I had the armed robbery,	10	office now, in 15 years of being a subpostmaster
11	you know, and they say, "How much did they get?"	11	I had three audits in my office and on one of them
12	You're thinking, "I'm being treated in the same way".	12	they said ,"This Post Office is run on very tight
13	There's no empathy, there's no sympathy, there's no,	13	lines". Now, my wife used to work doing accounts.
14	"Well, yes, we can see where you're coming from, and	14	She was the NAAFI manager for the commando training
15	we can see it's here". They just said, "We've	15	centre at Royal Marines, that's where I met her at
16	conducted investigations". No, you haven't. You're	16	Lympstone in Devon and she did the NAAFI accounts.
17	just accusing me but you don't want to prove it,	17	Now, there's 3,000 men on that camp. That's a lot of
18	hoping I'll roll over.	18	vittles going through the premises to feed 3,000
19	So, basically, it went on and you're thinking,	19	Marines, when they went to the NAAFI. And I mean
20	well, if this comes out I'm going to people are	20	beer, sandwiches, you know, you think about it. Milk,
21	going to go "We know Tom", and they're going to look	21	because all the recruits, even me, when I was
22	at me and think, "What a prat. What's he playing at?	22	a recruit, you just drank milk and Mars Bars.
23	Why did he do that?" And I didn't do it and I'm	23	And that was about the size of it, and I'm
24	convinced a lot of these other subpostmasters didn't	24	thinking, "She's not daft. She worked in hotels and
25	do it because, once you report something I mean,	25	did accounts as well". And you're thinking, "No,
	33		34
1	they're right, we did run it on tight lines and we	1	second class mail, parcel mail, you had your Special
2	were really scrupulous about what we did". And it's	2	Deliveries and you'd sort the mail for them. And then
3	your honour, at the end of the day. You don't want to	3	what you'd do is you'd tie it up with a nylon tie at
4	be labelled and people look at you out of the corner	4	night and you'd put a label on it saying whether it
5	of their eye, "He's a lad, he is", and they besmirch	5	was first or second class, so I'm thinking, "Hang on
6	you and they don't treat you very nicely, the	6	a minute, I'm doing their job for them here and I'm
7	Post Office, whereas they should have gone in and	7	not being paid for it".
8	conducted a thorough check.	8	So I got in touch with them and I said, "Oh, I'm
9	As I say, I had three in 15 years and never had	9	not doing this" and they said, "Well, you're in breach
10	a problem with when the auditors because they just	10	of your contract". So I said, "What contract?" They
11	knock on your door, you know. They didn't say "I'm	11	said, "Your Post Office contract". I said, "Never had
12	coming round to see you in the morning". They'll go	12	a contract".
13	[knocked on table] "Come to do your accounts". "Oh,	13	"Yes, you did". I said, "No, I didn't".
14	okay", let them into your house and you stand there	14	"You signed" I said, "I did sign a piece of
15	while they tot up all the monies and the stamps and	15	paper saying I would get a contract", I says, "but
16	everything else "Yeah, that's fine" and off they'd go.	16	that's a bit disjointed, isn't it? You've given me
17	You would be closed for a good hour, hour and a half,	17	the job and put me in position, then you want to
18	you wouldn't be able to open on time. I'd have to put	18	impose a contract upon me that I know nothing about
19	"Closed" on the front door, so I was losing trade,	19	and nobody's discussed with me and I've not been able
20	anyhow.	20	to see a solicitor to have it vetted to see if it's
21	So it wasn't very nice that way and it wasn't	21	a good or bad contract?"
22	very nice in other ways, where they decided they	22	But that was their favourite get-out. "Like
23	wanted us to sort the mail for them. So they said	23	Horizon, you're in breach of" I says, "Hang on
24	"What you'll do is you'll put batons around your walls	24	a minute, I took office in '99 before the Horizon
25	and you'll hang mail bags on", first class mail,	25	system I got in 2004. You can't impose that upon me".

(9) Pages 33 - 36

1		I said, "I'm not going to sort your mail" and so I get	1		for survival, really. I can imagine some people it's
2		an audit one day, and the lad comes in, I think	2		going to eat them up bad but I suppose I just get
3		I called him Kevin, and he goes I says, "What you	3		angry and I just think all the time, "I'm not paying,
4		doing taking photographs in my house?" He goes, "Oh,	4		I haven't done nothing wrong. I'm going to write to
5		well, we've got to be able to prove that" I said,	5		Paula Vennells".
6		"Look, if I tell you my daughters are both nursing and	6		So I wrote to Paula Vennells and said, "Lots of
7		out of the back of my Post Office, you go straight	7		evidence, you've got a problem. Who in the
8		into my kitchen, and I haven't got the facility to	8		Post Office is stealing money from me and other
9		hand mail bags on the walls and separate them, then	9		subpostmasters?"
10		I suggest you take me up". I said, "After all, this	10		So I waited, waited a few weeks, didn't get
11		is a house". It's a 12 by 12 room I traded out of	11		a reply. I thought that's strange. So I ring them up
12		with my Post Office and, I mean, I was handling about	12		I says, "I've written to Paula Vennells".
13		£5 million, £6 million, £7 million a year in cash for	13		"Oh, she didn't get your envelope". I mean,
14		them.	14		this was quite a thick tome, really, of what I put
15	Q.	Mr English, could we return to the error notice in	15		together. I said, "Well, I sent it Recorded Delivery.
16		February 2012. How was that particular discrepancy	16		I'll do it again". So I photocopied the whole file
17		resolved?	17		and sent it Special Delivery. And then they wrote
18	A.	····· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	18		back and says, "Oh, yes, we've received your envelope
19		you up. It's like a roundabout and it's whirring	19		and we found the one before it as well". I thought,
20		around in your head and you're going, "What's my next	20		"Well, that's really convenient.
21		move? Why aren't they giving me the information?	21		And then eventually I got a letter from the
22		What do I do next? Who do I see?" And then and	22		Post Office and they said they were apologising and
23		all the time you're driving or you're shopping, and	23		I thought, "No, you're not".
24		you're thinking all the evidence is going round in	24		"If the subpostmaster would keep his accounts
25		your head and it consumes you because you're desperate	25		and records straight" I thought, "There was nothing
		37			38
1		wrong with the accounts and records. Just say who's	1		HODGE: Who was the author of that letter
2		stealing from me and who's stealing from the other	2		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system
		stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going	2 3		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided
2 3 4		stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere".	2 3 4		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of
2 3 4 5	Q.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to	2 3 4 5		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously
2 3 4 5 6	Q.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive?	2 3 4 5 6		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't
2 3 4 5 6 7	Q. A.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive? It was well into it. Probably a couple of years down	2 3 4 5 6 7		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't I can't because evidence is now in the system
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	A.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive? It was well into it. Probably a couple of years down the line, even.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't I can't because evidence is now in the system somewhere, either with Second Sight or Alan Bates or
2 3 5 6 7 8 9	A.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive? It was well into it. Probably a couple of years down the line, even. R WYN WILLIAMS: In your statement, you actually give	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't I can't because evidence is now in the system somewhere, either with Second Sight or Alan Bates or Freeths. I would think they have copied it and set it
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive? It was well into it. Probably a couple of years down the line, even. R WYN WILLIAMS: In your statement, you actually give a precise date for the recorded delivery sorry,	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't I can't because evidence is now in the system somewhere, either with Second Sight or Alan Bates or Freeths. I would think they have copied it and set it to Howe & Co, I hope they have, but I haven't seen any
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	A.	stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive? It was well into it. Probably a couple of years down the line, even. R WYN WILLIAMS: In your statement, you actually give a precise date for the recorded delivery sorry, the well, let me get it right. I think at	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Α.	To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't I can't because evidence is now in the system somewhere, either with Second Sight or Alan Bates or Freeths. I would think they have copied it and set it to Howe & Co, I hope they have, but I haven't seen any of the original evidence at all for years.
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	a. Sir A. Sir A.	 stealing from me and who's stealing from the other subpostmasters because the money must be going somewhere". Do you recall roughly when that was that you wrote to the chief executive? It was well into it. Probably a couple of years down the line, even. R WYN WILLIAMS: In your statement, you actually give a precise date for the recorded delivery sorry, the well, let me get it right. I think at paragraph 60 you say we sent the Recorded Delivery documents on 21 April 2012. Yes, you have rescued me, sir. R WYN WILLIAMS: That's all right. Because I was just I haven't gone through my statement everything's from the top of my head. I knew what I did. R WYN WILLIAMS: I understand that but I just wanted to establish because it's quite important, because this is quite late on in the Horizon saga, that you were providing this information. Yes, I did, sir, yes. And, as I say, I did that and 	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	A. Q.	To be honest, I can't remember. It's in the system some way. I've not seen all the evidence I provided way back to Alan Bates from because I was one of the original 150 complainants, and then obviously Freeths escalated that to about 550. So I can't I can't because evidence is now in the system somewhere, either with Second Sight or Alan Bates or Freeths. I would think they have copied it and set it to Howe & Co, I hope they have, but I haven't seen any of the original evidence at all for years. How did your appointment as a subpostmaster come to an end? It came to an end they wanted to close me three times and then they kept me open, and then a second time, and at the third time, I thought "We want to close you and it's definite". I thought, "Well, I'm 62 years old, I'll call it a day. I can sort of retire". My daughters are working and my wife was drawing her old age pension then, because she's 18 months older than me. <i>[Redacted]</i> And I just said "Right, that's it", and then we closed on 14 January 2014, and that was the end of it

(10) Pages 37 - 40

1	make good shortfalls shown by Horizon?	1	I said, "Okay, we'll go to Manchester". He says,
2 A .	Well, actually, only over £1,000, or so. See, what	2	"I'll meet you there". So I says, "Well, I'll tell
3	happened is the Post Office engaged Second Sight, Ron	3	you now I'm going to bring a tape recorder". He goes,
4	Warmington's firm, and others, and they established	4	"You what?" I says, "I'm going to bring a tape
5	that it wasn't the subpostmasters that were at fault,	5	recorder. I'm going to put it on the table" and said,
6	it was the Post Office. And then the Post Office cut	6	"If this is good enough for me as a police officer,
7	them out of the equation, terminated their contract,	7	it's good enough for all you Post Office
8	and wanted all the information back, and I understand	8	investigators, so we can have everything out and then
9	that he wouldn't give it to them. I mean, I suspect	9	we can publish it, if we have to". He says, "Don't do
10	what would have happened to all that evidence, it	10	that". I said, "Why?" He says "Because somebody
11	would have been shredded probably.	11	tried it before and it didn't go down very well".
2	But, having said that, he said "No, I'm not	12	So they want to arrest people, take them to
3	giving it to you", and it was referred on. Then the	13	police stations, interview them under caution on
4	Post Office came up with a set of forensic accountants	14	a tape recorder and get them to cough to something
15	that we could go to, and I chose, I think, it was	15	they probably haven't done because there's a plea
16	PAVER (sic), Bill Cleghorn up in Edinburgh and I went	16	bargain going on, "Well, if you plead to this charge,
7	up to see him, personally, and we had a chat and we	17	you won't get done with this, this is the more serious
8	were then going to go to arbitration with the Post	18	charge. You plead to this one, you get less time or,
19	Office and they sent us a letter. "Why do some	19	you know, you get less of a penalty". I says, "Well,
20	postmasters think that arbitration is a case to talk	20	if it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me,
21	for more money?" I thought, "Well, that's what unions	21	and I will bring a tape recorder". So he said, "No,
22	do, isn't it?" And they said, "Well, it isn't. You	22	no". I said, "Well, call it off, I don't want to go".
23	know, there will be no more money on the table".	23	So I didn't go.
24	So I said to Bill, I said he says, "They want	24	But they offered me he says, "Oh, they're
25	a meeting with us in Manchester" I think it was. So	25	offering you 1,500 quid". I says, "Okay". I said,
1	"1,500 quid, you're joking?" He goes, "No". He said,	1	in Middlesbrough, but we closed in the January and she
2	"The distance between us", what they said in the	2	died in the May. I mean, she was 88 but sadly
2 3	letter was "is £1,000 and then we'll give him £500	3	I thought I'd spend more time with her, because I did
4	compensation". I says, "You're joking, not after what	4	leave home in '69 when I was 16/17 years old but
5	they've done to some of these other people". I says,	5	I always went back to Middlesbrough to see my Mum.
6	"No, I'm not having that".	6	And you're thinking: well, Mum's gone. And then
7	So he says "But there'll be a non-disclosure on	7	ten months later my wife's Mum was gone. My Mum was
8	it". I says "What, for 1,500 quid non-disclosure?"	8	in the north-east, Brenda's Mum was in Leicester, and
9	I said "No". I said "because I'm not taking the money	9	you've got this going on and you're commuting around
9 10	and I'm not signing a non-disclosure", and that's me	10	trying to clear up the estates and the houses.
11	and the Post Office finished.	11	I mean, they were quite simple because we're
	I'd like to ask you finally a bit about how the	12	council house kids, my wife and I not that that's
12 u. 13	problems you had with Horizon affected you and your	12	bad, that's good.
13	wife. What was the impact upon your health?	13	But having said that and then my wife's
14 15 A .	The impact constantly tired. You constantly think	14	brother died in Brighton, he just died, and you've
16 A .	you're being worn down. You're constantly thinking	16	got my wife's aunt died, my wife's cousin died, and
17	about your next move. You're constantly thinking	17	you've got all this going on, and you're trying to
18	about: how am I going to get information to prove what	18	clear all these things up, because they had, you know,
19	I want to prove? Why aren't they helping me? Like I	19	nobody to do it for them and it's all added pressure
<u>20</u>	said earlier, it's like this merry-go-round. You can	20	and it does your head in, really. You're thinking:
21	get on but you can't get off, and you're thinking:	20	I've got to do this but I've got to do this as well,
22	well how can I stop it to get off, so I can go back to	21	and I've got to prepare all these statements, and I've
23	leading a normal life?	22	got to get all this stuff out and write something
<u>2</u> 4	Because, after I closed, this was still going on	23	that's coherent. And you've got a timeline to it.
24 25	and, I mean, I thought I'd spend more time with my Mum	24	Very tiring, very confusing, quite distressing.
		L 20	

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1		It plays on your kids as well because you think: if	1		it.
2		this comes out my kids are going to get hell because	2		As I say, that's what I received.
3		that's the way kids operate.	3	Q.	How do you feel about the way the Post Office treated
4	Q.	How did the time you spent resolving these issues	4		you and other subpostmasters who experienced problem
5		affect your relationship with your wife and children?	5		with Horizon?
6	Α.	We didn't let it get to us, let's put it like that.	6	Α.	I don't think they treated any of us very well. They
7		We just kept plodding on and just keep fighting and	7		went at us like they were judge, jury and
8		that's what happened. We just kept fighting and	8		executioner. They had the power, they were this big
9		I wasn't going to let go of the bone, so to speak.	9		organisation up there, they had all the answers and
10	Q.	You have referred to Mr Alan Bates and the Group	10		I just felt that they felt they could do with you as
11		Litigation.	11		they wished, what they will. And that's basically how
12	Α.	Yes.	12		I felt about them. No empathy.
13	Q.	Were you a participant in that?	13		And the robbery at my office bears it out. Not
14	Α.	I said, I was participant from the outset.	14		a bunch of flowers for my wife, or anything. "How
15	Q.	How much did you receive by way of compensation?	15		much money, did they get?" "Well, they got nothing".
16	Α.	About £4,000. I can't remember the exact amount of	16		"Oh, that's all right".
17		money but it was about £4,000/£4,500 I received	17		Then, as I say, that sort of continued
18		from because, I mean, most of that money and we	18		throughout. "Oh, we've lost a docket". "Well, you've
19		couldn't have got where we were without the backers,	19		had the money but the docket's missing". "Well, I'm
20		if you like, which they took about 46 million, didn't	20		sorry, I put the docket there". "Oh, I didn't take
21		they, I think, the people who backed it. And I'm not	21		a bill. Yeah, but I've sorted that out".
22		decrying that because, without their help, we wouldn't	22		And it's sort of they want to bite you all the
23		have got this far, and then the money was split up.	23		time and, even when they know they're wrong, they
<u>2</u> 4		I don't know what they split it up on but they	24		won't admit they're wrong. When you look at it,
25		obviously had an algorithm if you like and that was	25		l mean, l'm an ex-Royal Marine, l'm an ex-police
		45			46
1		officer, you are what you are, you are the subject of	1		When I reflect back, I had to pay the first
2		your environment and your upbringing, and I was	2		25 per cent of my first year's salary went to the
3		a council house kid, born in west Hartlepool, and	3		Post Office, free, gratis. So out of about 22 grand
4		raised in Middlesbrough, schooled in Middlesbrough,	4		a year, I gave them 25 per cent of my salary for
5		played rugby for 15 years, very competitive at sport	5		taking a Post Office on. That money was
6		and I've always been a forthright person.	6		non-returnable. And you're thinking: when you've made
7		I mean, I was told I don't suffer fools lightly,	7		an investment like that, when you have got 25,000
8		and I suppose I don't, and I wouldn't suffer the	8		subpostmasters now about 11,000, we were paying and
9		Post Office in the end, when they were trying to do me	9		our investments I mean, our investments in the
10		for that money. And I just feel as though if they had	10		Post Office as subpostmasters must have been
11		carried out correct and proper audits, with stock in,	11		£100 million or more, quite easily.
12		stock out, they could find a lot of this money and	12		And you are thinking: well, I'm paying part of
13		think: well, he's not taken it, where's it gone?	13		their wages. I'm paying part of their pensions
14		When you think of, as I say, my background, I've	14		because they've got a job because I've invested in the
15		always been a bit tenacious and I can be very fiery,	15		Post Office; the biggest investors in the Post Office
16		which is why I exploded at the robbery at my office,	16		were the subpostmasters. And, on one occasion, they
17		it's just action and reaction. And I feel threatened	17		refused me access to my line manager. I thought I was
18		by the Post Office and, if I feel threatened, then	18		doing about 5,000 or 6,000 car taxes a year, and then
19		some of the people who have sat here before certainly	19		the Post Office up the road, because I'd paid for that
20		felt threatened, because they suffered a lot more than	20		as part of my business. I bought that as part of my
20		I did. They went to prison, they had babies in	21		business. They give it to another chap up the road,
21		prison, they tried to save their reputations and they	22		and I took umbrage. I says "Why didn't you discuss it
21		were trashed, basically, by the Post Office. They	23		with me?" "Well, because we don't have to". "Well,
21 22		were trashed, basically, by the Post Office. They didn't care about trashing your reputation. They just	23 24		with me?" "Well, because we don't have to". "Well, hang on a minute, that's not nice". And push came to

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8 9 M 10 11 12 13 N 14 15	 A. Thomas George Brown. A. Thank you. Mr Brown you made a witness statement on 11 January of this year; is that right? A. Yes. Do you have a copy of that statement 	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	 A. It is, yes. Q. I would like to begin by asking you a few short questions about your background. Forgive me, or hear me clearly? A. Yes. Q. Where in the country are you from? A. I was born in a town called Houghton-le-Spring, it in County Durham. We're a little village, outside Houghton-le-Spring called Philadelphia, not in An I might add. Q. How old are you now, Mr Brown? A. Pardon? Q. How old are you now? A. 76. Q. You were married for many years; is that right?
8 9 M 10 11 12 13 M 14 15 16 A 17 G 18 A 19 G 20 21 A	 THOMAS GEORGE BROWN (affirmed) Questioned by MS HODGE MS HODGE: Mr Brown, as you know, my name is Catriona Hodge and I ask questions on behalf of the Inquiry. Yes. Please can you state your full name? Thomas George Brown. Thank you. Mr Brown you made a witness statement on 11 January of this year; is that right? Yes. 	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	 Q. I would like to begin by asking you a few short questions about your background. Forgive me, or hear me clearly? A. Yes. Q. Where in the country are you from? A. I was born in a town called Houghton-le-Spring, if in County Durham. We're a little village, outside Houghton-le-Spring called Philadelphia, not in An I might add. Q. How old are you now, Mr Brown? A. Pardon? Q. How old are you now?
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8 9 N 10			Q. I would like to begin by asking you a few short
8 9 №		311	-
8	-		Δ It is ves
	IS HODGE: Mr Brown, the usher, Jane, will take you	9	JOIIOT :
	had an introductory chat, so it's over to you.	8	belief?
	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Ms Hodge, Mr Brown and I have already	7	Q. Is the content true to the best of your knowledge
	. Yes, I can see and hear you.	6	A. Yes, I've been reading it, yes.
4 N 5	hear us?	4 5	since you first made it?
-	IS HODGE: Hello Chair. Hello, Mr Brown, can you see and	4	Q. Have you had an opportunity to read your statem
	(A short break) 11.28 am)	2	 A. Yes, yes.
2	(A short break)	2	Q. Do you see your signature at the top of that page
1 (1	11.16 am)	1	A. Yes.
-	49		50
25	There's little wonder that we are where we are	25	MS HODGE: Thank you.
24	lawless because they did not act diligently.	24	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Certainly that's fine, yes.
23	get lawlessness and I think the Post Office were quite	23	shall we resume in ten minutes time, at 25 past?
22	to it and go: that's fine. Once that stops, then you	22	To allow for the necessary arrangements to be m
21	due diligence. Law can only work if we all acquiesce	21	witness, Mr Thomas Brown, will be appearing rer
20	you". But they haven't they haven't carried out	20	MS HODGE: Thank you, Chair. It's now 11.15. Out
19	guilty to this. We're going to have the money off	19	A. Thank you, sir.
18	telephone, and then say "Well, you've got to plead	18	much detail as possible. So thank you very much
17	just threatened you through the back door and over the	17	I appreciate the way in which you sought to give
16	done it another way. They didn't use a gun. They	16	used about yourself, being so forthright about it a
15	wanted money off me. Now, the Post Office have just	15	give evidence before me and, to use a word I thir
14	Now, when these robbers came into my office they	14	Thank you very much, Mr English, for con
13	their stance: "How much money did they get?"	13	questions.
12	their stance and, from the word go, I felt that was	12	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, I don't have any additiona
11	I did have my armed robbery and the Post Office made	11	Sir, do you have any questions for Mr Eng
10	as I say, I've been a subpostmaster for 15 years,	10	MS HODGE: Thank you.
9	I will be argumentative and questioning. I've been,	9	A. No, I think I've said everything now.
8	I'm a man of substance and, because of my background,	8	there you would like to add?
7	cave in but I certainly wouldn't. As I say, I think	7	Q. Mr English, I've got no further questions for you.
6	threaten you, I can understand why some others might	6	I think the Post Office failed, sadly.
	As I say, if they'll do that to you and they'll	5	got in a big organisation fails when they fail and
5	was smaller, would you be there?"	4	I just feel as though the trust you think you
4 5	"If I wasn't here, would you be there? If the network	3	been stopped.
	I says "Pardon? I pay part of your wages". I says	2	is it, 33 deaths? Not good. Some of it could hav
4	says "I think you should consider your position".	1	and a lot of people have fallen by the wayside. V

1	Q.	You currently live with your son and grandchildren; is	1		decided to buy a Post Office, a little tiny village
2		that right?	2		Post Office, in Chester Morton, by Chester-le-Street
3	Α.	Yes, we do, yes.	3		in County Durham. So we bought that and we sold
4	Q.	Please can you tell us about your career before you	4		the money she got off the redundancy, and the house we
5		joined the Post Office?	5		sold, we paid for the little Post Office, which had
6	Α.	When I left school, I started I went to college for	6		a three-bedroomed house with it as well, and we the
7		a year and I got a job as I got an apprenticeship	7		wife worked in that. But I also when she got
8		with the National Coal Board as an apprentice	8		I've jumped the gun a little bit.
9		electrician. I mean, the first year I was at college	9		When she went for the interview, I had to go for
10		for a full year, and you had to be qualified, you	10		the interview as well, so we both were interviewed for
11		know, you had to pass certain exams, and I served	11		the Post Office. But, at that particular time, I was
12		a five-year apprenticeship. It wasn't the mines, it	12		still working. But we worked for she had that
13		was an area workshop, which did all the repairs for	13		about two year, and we decided actually, we got
14		the mines and I served my time as an electrician.	14		offered a big Post Office, a bigger Post Office in
15	Q.	What did your wife do before you purchased	15		a little town called Fence Houses, which is in County
16		a Post Office branch?	16		Durham, which had it was a bigger Post Office and
17	Α.	She worked in a company called the Caterpillar Tractor	17		it had a big general dealers. So we bought that.
18		Company and she worked in accounts. Yes, she worked	18		And then I decided to take my redundancy, while
19		in accounts.	19		I was there, so I could work full time in the
20	Q.	Thank you.	20		Post Office with her, because it was a lot bigger
21	A.	She did the wages, I think, for the employees of the	21		Post Office. So that's what I did. I took my
22		Caterpillar company.	22		redundancy and we worked in the Post Office together.
23	Q.		23		But then we were offered again to put in for
24	A.	Well, it started in about 1979/1980. The wife was	24		a Post Office in Gateshead in Birtley in Gateshead,
25		made redundant because the company was closing, so we	25		which was smaller in premises but it was a much, much
		53			54
1		bigger salary. So we bought that one and we were	1		I used to go to different Post Offices, looking after
2		there until 1999, when the wife was diagnosed with	2		them if people had gone on holiday or even when some
3		breast cancer. So we sold it and we bought	3		of the postmasters had been finished. So I used to
4		a Post Office sorry, we sold the Post Office and we	4		I looked after quite a number of Post Offices in
5		bought a house.	5		Durham at the time.
6		Then I applied for a job for Finlay's	6	Q.	You've explained that the branch came up for sale.
7		north-east, which was a big (unclear) and it had a few	7		Was that in and around February 2008?
8		Post Offices and I was manager of a couple of	8	Α.	Yes, it was February 2008 I purchased it, yes,
9		Post Offices for them. And I was working there until,	9		I bought it, and
10		what, 2008. And one of the Post Offices which I was	10	0	I think you have
11		looking after came up for sale and they offered us it	10		it had four counters. It was a really big
12		for 150,000, so I decided to buy that. But I had to	12	д.	Post Office. It was one of the biggest in Newcastle.
12		get a mortgage for it and I got a mortgage for it and	13		It had four outlets and it was a massive shop side as
13 14		that's when the problems started. But the problems	13		well. It was a newsagents and general dealers.
14 15				0	• • • • • • • • •
		would start, really, when I was looking after it. We	15 16	Q.	
16 17	~	were having shortfalls in the Horizon system.	16 17		the Post Office business?
17 10	Q.	Mr Brown, forgive me, you may have said but, to	17	A.	
18		clarify, which branch was it that you purchased in	18	Q.	
19		2008?	19		£150,000
	A.	North Kenton in Newcastle.	20	Α.	
20	Q.	Thank you. So before purchasing that branch you had,	21	Q.	which you financed by placing a mortgage on your
21		for quite a number of years, worked for the	22		home; is that correct?
21 22					Vee an my home and my flat I had a flat as wall
21 22 23		Post Office?	23	Α.	
21 22	A.	Post Office? Oh, yes, yes, and I used to look after Post Offices, because we had plenty staff in the Birtley one.	23 24 25	A. Q.	You've described it as a large branch? Did you employ staff to assist you in running the branch?

3 realy bay, 4 0. What was your – 5. 3 65,000°, and they just shut the Pead Office at that particular time, even when there was acustomers staticular time, even when there was acustomers the busy days there was – on the real busy days, we had four counters going. 3 65,000°, and they just shut the Pead Office at that particular time, even when there was acustomers staticular time, even when there was acustomers the busy days. The real busy days, we had four counters going. 3 65,000°, and they just shut the Pead Office at that particular time, even when there was acustomers staticular time, even when the static four days until they got their own staff in and put it four days until they got the shop ade going and 1 worked in theshop ade going and 1 worked and	1	A.	I had three girls working for us in the Post Office	1		because there's money in the suspense", they just
4 Q. What was your	2		and two girls working in the shop side, because it was	2		ignored and they did the audit and said "You have
5 A. Imaen, we didn't work every day of the week but on the busy days there was - on the real busy days, we had bour counters going. 5 standing, waiting to be served. 8 C. What salary did you receive from the Post Office for an uning the North Kanton branch? 1 in but then I decided III'ry ant keep the shop side going and I works and the shop side, and they kept on of the girls on that I employed because they didn't have enough. I think there was two close what the yeing is not if go to the stage where they were just saying and it works and they kept on of the girls that there was two close what the going and I works and the kept and they had it came up the addit. 10 A. 40.00. 10 of the girls on that I employed because they didn't have enough. I think there was two close what the yeing and i toy to the stage where they were just saying and i go to the stage where they were just saying '' that in the suspanse account, it will come back', '' but it new sus on 25 November 2000; is that right? 10 Not. So th was going on, I assume, every week, ever where the sace in the sup and the sup of the audit on 25 November 2000; is that right? 11 was bacsobe what happened that day, please? A. Yes. Yes. A. 12 A. yes. A. No. Carning tach was bappaning to them. 2 13 suprise to you that a discrepancies, were - 57 Yes. A. 14 twas bacla and they were institue on tha conput ri	3		really busy.	3		85,000", and they just shut the Post Office at that
6 5 So what hey did was they closed it for about four days until they got their own staff in and put four days until they got their own staff in and put four days until they got their own staff in and put four days until they got their own staff in and put four days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put four days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put four days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff in and put for days until they got their own staff a duit, and it careu pet 500 short. If uwas keep for the suspense account, it will come back', for uses and 25 November 2008, is that fight? 10 For they dot and i got suspended on that day. For was and 25 November 2008, is that fight? Coming back to the day of the audit for days until and put staff day, please? 20 A. Yes. For Yes. Can you describe what happened that day, please? 31 Can you describe what happened that day, please? No. 32 A. Well, when the best differ, were 53,000 short that for up differ and put if says "Mind, you do realise i'n going to be short for days until would when they first day. 33 Can you describe what happened that day, please for were staff and put if says "Mind, you do realise i'n going to be short for the	4	Q.	What was your	4		particular time, even when there was customers
7 had four counters going. 7 four days until they got their own staff in and put it in but then I decided IT ity and keep the shop side. 8 0. What sating did you meakly from the Post Office for unning the North Kenton branch? 10 1 10 A. 40,00. 10 of the grids on that I employed focus they kept on of the grids on that I employed focus they what the Post Office put I and they kept one of the grids on that I employed for the buy days and the furny thing about 1 11 A. Unni - I would be December 2008, when I had the audit, and it came up ES5,000 short. But I was keep and ig to the stage where they were just saying and ig to the stage where they were just saying in got to the stage where they were just saying in got to the stage where they were just saying in got to the stage where they were just saying in got to the stage where they were just saying in the source it down back. And when I got the audit, in the uses on 25 November 2008; is that right? 10 A. Yes. 10 - Fom what you have said, it didn' come as a supprise to you that a discrepancies in your accounts? 11 says "Mind, you breaks came quark and when they first came and is says "Tim. early 52.000 short. 12 12 A. Yes. 2 4. Weil, they did the audit and when they first came and is says and it didn' come as a supprise to you that a discrepancies? 2 13 and uid of your branch was carried out. 21 a. Noc. 14 weak ithey did the audit	5	Α.	I mean, we didn't work every day of the week but on	5		standing, waiting to be served.
8 Q. What salary di you receive from the Post Office for running the Noth Kenton tranch? 8 in but then I decided II try and keep the shop side going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on the going and I worked in the shops side, and they kept on they kept one of the girls what in addit, and they kept one of the girls that I and the inner they were just saving 10 A full came up ES5,000 short. But I was she "Put it in the suspense account, it will come back", I was Sho 0 short and I got suspended on that day, I was sho 25 November 2008; is that right? 10 11 L was 25 November 2008; is that right? 10 A 12 A ves. 20 - from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 12 A. Well, they did the audit and when they first came and I says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be shot 57 11 Non. 13 Lough it was t- when the change over came, when 1 Well, they did the base with a discrepancing discrepancies 1 14 though it was t- when the origine you came. Mean 1 1 Well, well, the was a fault on the - what they call you took over the branch? 14	6		the busy days there was on the real busy days, we	6		So what they did was they closed it for about
9 running the North Kenton branch? 9 going and I worked in the shop side, and they kept on 10 A 43000. 10 of the gifts on that I employed because they didn't 11 have enough. I think there was two chapes what the 12 12 A. Until - It would be December 2008, when I had the 12 13 audit, and it came up 285,000 short. But I was keep 13 14 tives the first week she came up to me and she says 15 and it got to the stage where they were just saying 15 16 "Put it in the suspense account, it will come back", 16 17 but it newer did com back. And when I got the audit, 18 18 I was £5,000 short and I got suspended on that day. 18 19 Q. This was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 20 20 A. Yes. 22 A. No. 21 Q. A saudit of your branch was carried out. 21 A. No. 23 Q. Can goud escribe what happened that day, please? 24 No. 24 A. Yes. 22 A. No. 25 I sugs "Mind, you dor realise I'm going to be short 27 A. 26 </td <td>7</td> <td></td> <td>had four counters going.</td> <td>7</td> <td></td> <td>four days until they got their own staff in and put it</td>	7		had four counters going.	7		four days until they got their own staff in and put it
00 A 48,000. of the girls on that I employed because they didn't 11 0. For how long did you run that branch? 11 have enough. I think there was two chaps what the 13 a. Until It would be December 2008, when I had the 12 Post Office put in and they kept one of the girls that 13 and it got to be stage where they were just saying 13 I employed for the busy days and the furny thing about it was the first week she came up to me and she says 14 I have setody. I think there was two chaps what the employed for the busy days and the furny thing about it was the first week she came up to me and she says 15 Thin kays a core of the suppresent that day. 16 Thin kays a core of the audit on 25 November 16 Put it in the suspense account, it will come back'. 16 Coming back to the day of the audit on 25 November 16 This was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 10 A Yes. 20 - from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancies in your accounts? 20 A. Well, we there was a fault on the day, please? 24 No. 25 A Well, within - there was always shortages, even - 57 21 says 'Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 57 A Well, westhere was a	8	Q.	What salary did you receive from the Post Office for	8		in but then I decided I'll try and keep the shop side
11 Q. For how long did you run that branch? 11 have enough. I think there was two chaps what the audit and the was the December 2008, when I had the audit and trane up ESO boy short. But I was keep the lang device they were just saying 12 have enough. I think there was two chaps what the phost Office put in and they keep one of the gifts that and the was the first week she came up to me and she says transme, every week, ever when the subs days count, it will come back'. 12 Put it in the suspens account, it will come back'. 11 have enough. I think there was two chaps what the says that fight? 13 and it got to the slage where they were just saying 15 Thin meet 2200 short'. 14 ti was the first week she came up to me and she says trime back'. 16 So it was going on, 1 assume, every week, ever when these took over. 12 A trees. 20 A reside 21 a surptise to you that a discrepancy was found? 24 A week, when they dust dust and then when they first came and to you docorbe what happened that day, please? 22 A. No. 25 I song it was block, our when it going to be short 57 26 Weel, when there was a fault on the - what they call they dust due audit and by low or set as subportsmatch, and the engineers came out and they was fault on the - what they call the day look orer is subportsmatch, and they changed the base units. 25 1 sand it or weep field foru	9		running the North Kenton branch?	9		going and I worked in the shop side, and they kept one
 A. Until it would be December 2008, when I had the audit, and it came up E85.000 short. But I was keep and sing be lead easks of the surget was had the audit, and it came up E85.000 short. But I was keep and sing be lead easks of the surget was and the gains that i and the week kee and super jimes have and sing be says. The nearly £2,000 short. Fut it in the suspense account, it will come back?, the week that day I took over as subpostmaster, and the 25 super hard og it was the frage were face model. A. Yes. B. Small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even 57 A. Well, they did he audit and when they first came and the sugerse account? A. Well, when the change over came, when 57 A. Yes. B. Dought the Post Office, we were 53.000 short that inght - B. Dought the Post Office, we were 53.000 short hat they first came and the sugerse account? A. Yes. B. Dought the Post Office, we were 53.000 short hat inght - C. Had you experienced any problems using Horizon bef you took over the branch? A. Yes. C about the discrepancies you were experiencing? A. Yes. A. Yes. C. What rid - C. A Yes. C. What rid - S. A. The model of the day, in ease the light yous in the sugerse account?. C. What rid - S. A. The model was the light would come the sugerse account?. C. What rid - C. What rid -<td>10</td><td>Α.</td><td>48,000.</td><td>10</td><td></td><td>of the girls on that I employed because they didn't</td>	10	Α.	48,000.	10		of the girls on that I employed because they didn't
13 audit, and it came up £85,000 short. But I was keep 13 I employed for the busy days and the funny thing about it was the first week shore and save save. 14 phoning the help desks here and saving "I was short", 14 it was the first week shore ame up to me and she save. 15 and it got to he stage where they were just saving 15 "I'm nearly £2,000 short". 16 "Put it in the suspense account, it will come back", 16 So it was going on, I assume, every week, ever when those took over. 17 but it never did come back. And when I got the sudit, 17 when those took over. 18 I was £65,000 short and I got suspended on that day. 18 Q. Coming back to the day of the audit on 25 November 19 Q. This was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 19 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 20 C from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancies in your accounts? 24 A. Well, they did the audit and when they first came and the saves "Nind, you dor reliable I'm going to be short 57 A. Well, wes, there was a fault on the - what they call the sub saves shortges, even - 57 1 small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even 1 was because the same thing was happening to them. 2 though it went - when the change over came, when 3 <t< td=""><td>11</td><td>Q.</td><td>For how long did you run that branch?</td><td>11</td><td></td><td>have enough. I think there was two chaps what the</td></t<>	11	Q.	For how long did you run that branch?	11		have enough. I think there was two chaps what the
14 phoning the help desks here and saying 'l was short', and it got to the stage where they were just saying 'l'm nearly £2,000 short'. 14 it was the first week she came up to me and she says 'l'm nearly £2,000 short'. 15 "Put it in the suspaces account, it will come back', 'l'm is was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 16 So it was going on, I assume, every week, eve when those took over. 16 A Yes. 20 -from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 27 A Yes. 20 - from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 28 A. Yes. 20 - from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 29 A. Yes. 20 Q. They was but and when they first came and 1 says 'Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 25 26 though it went - when the change over came, when 3 Loogith the Post Office, we were £3,000 short that 4 week that day I took over as subpostmaster, and the 5 company had to - Finaly's was puting the money in. 1 Weas because the same thing was happening to them. 9 you took over the branch? 20 A. Yes. 1 Weas datu on the computer system. It said there was a fault on the ongineers came out and they 6 changed the base units. 1 Weas datu on the - what they call the base units. 1 Weas dature to was the dual on the c	12	Α.	Until it would be December 2008, when I had the	12		Post Office put in and they kept one of the girls that
15 and it got to the stage where they were just saying 15 "I'm nearly £2,000 short". 16 "Put it in the suspense account, it will come back,", 16 So it was going on, I assume, every week, every when toose took over. 18 L was £85,000 short and I got suspended on that day. 17 We then toose took over. 19 Q. This was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 20 Q from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 20 A. Yes. 20 Q from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 21 A. Ves. 22 A. No. 23 Q. Can you describe what happened that day, please? 23 Q. Can you describe what happened that day, please? A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 25 A. Well, they dith a duit and when they first came and 1 was because the same thing was happening to them. 26 a suprise duit they call they duit they call they duit they call they duit they coll that day 1 took over as subpostmaster, and the company had to P inlay's company had to pay the 5 Well, within there was a fault on it and the engineers came out and they remark? 30 Q. Yov've described. I think, contacting the helpline, is 9 9 Well, with weet was a fault on it and the engineers came out and they they sus sutt	13		audit, and it came up £85,000 short. But I was keep	13		I employed for the busy days and the funny thing about
16 "Put it in the suspense account, it will come back", not with the suspense account, it will come back. 16 So it was going on, I assume, every week, ever when those took over. 17 but it never did come back. And when I got the audit, and the set ook over. 18 Q. Coming back to the day of the audit on 25 November 18 I was £85,000 short and I got suspended on that day. 17 No. Q. Coming back to the day of the audit on 25 November 20 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 20 Q from what you have said, it didn't come as a suprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 21 A. Yes. 21 A. Yes. 22 A. No. 23 Q. Can you describe what happened that day, please? A. Well, they did the audit and when they first came and 1 says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 24 A. Well, they did the audit and when they first came and 1 bough the Post Office, we were £3000 short that 3 you cover the branch? Q. Had you experienced any problems using Horizon bef you cok over the branch? 25 though it went - Finlay's company had to pay the 5 the base units. So, I mean, I don't know what they changed the base units. So, I mean, I don't know what the you have said full on it and the engineers came out and they? 26 A. Yes. Q. What id uo us was faulton it and the engineers cam	14		phoning the help desks here and saying "I was short",	14		it was the first week she came up to me and she says
16 "Put it in the suspense account, it will come back", it was come to but it never did come back. And when I got the audit, it was come to but it never did come back. And when I got the audit, it was come to but it never did come back. And when I got the audit, it was come to but it may be addition to but it was come to but it was the was it was the the come to but it was it was it was it was it was it was the base units. So, I mean, I don't know what it was but it was solut it was it was it was it was solut it was inked to the Post Office for the scale come." 16 So it was going on a base but to but it was solut to but it was come to but the down it was the mane? 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	15			15		
17 but it never did come back. And when I got the audit, I was 265,000 short and I got supended on that day. 17 when those took over. 18 I was 265,000 short and I got supended on that day. 18 Q. Coming back to the day of the audit on 25 November and I got supended on that day. 20 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 20 Q from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 21 Q. An audit of your branch was carried out. 21 a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 22 A. Yes. 20 Q from what you have said, it didn't come as a surprise to you that a discrepancy was found? 24 A. Yes. 20 Q. When had you first started experiencing discrepancies in your accounts? 25 I says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 58 26 company had to - Finlay's company had to pay the 5 week that day 1 tok over as subportamater, and the 4 27 Finlay's was putting the money in. 7 28 You've described, I think, contacting the helpline, is 7 8 29 You've described, I think, contacting the helpline, is 7 8 21 A. Yes. 0 When you first started experiencing problems with 14 21 A	16		"Put it in the suspense account, it will come back",	16		So it was going on, I assume, every week, even
 9 Q. This was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 9 A. Yes. 9 A. Yes. 9 A. Yes. 1 Q. An audit of your branch was carried out. 2 A. Yes. 20 Can you describe what happened that day, please? 21 A. Weil, they did the audit and when they first came and I says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 25 A. Well, they did the audit and when they first came and I says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even through it went - when the change over came, when 57 25 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 26 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 27 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 58 28 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 29 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 58 20 A. Yes. 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even through it went when the change over came, when 1 20 A. Weel, within - there was always shortages, even 57 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even 1 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even 1 22 A. Weel, with a day I toko, were as submaster, and the computer system. It said there same thing was happening to them. 23 A. Yes. 24 Week escribed, I think, contacting the helpline, is that day I toko ever as subportance? 24 Yes, and they just said "It will come back, put it in that right 25 A. Yes. 26 A. Yes. 27 A. Yes. 28 A. Yes. 29 A. Yes. 29 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 21 A. Yes. and they just said "It will come back, put it in the suspense account". 31 a they changed the base units. So, I mean, even the same the post office. 31 back but it never did, and it went on for, what, the s	17			17		when those took over.
 9 Q. This was on 25 November 2008; is that right? 9 A. Yes. 9 A. Yes. 9 A. Yes. 1 Q. An audit of your branch was carried out. 2 A. Yes. 20 Can you describe what happened that day, please? 21 A. Weil, they did the audit and when they first came and I says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 25 A. Well, they did the audit and when they first came and I says "Mind, you do realise I'm going to be short 57 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even through it went - when the change over came, when 57 25 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 26 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 27 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 58 28 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 57 29 A. Well, within - there was always shortages, even 58 20 A. Yes. 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even through it went when the change over came, when 1 20 A. Weel, within - there was always shortages, even 57 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even 1 21 as small shortages but, on the busy days. I mean, even 1 22 A. Weel, with a day I toko, were as submaster, and the computer system. It said there same thing was happening to them. 23 A. Yes. 24 Week escribed, I think, contacting the helpline, is that day I toko ever as subportance? 24 Yes, and they just said "It will come back, put it in that right 25 A. Yes. 26 A. Yes. 27 A. Yes. 28 A. Yes. 29 A. Yes. 29 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 20 A. Yes. 21 A. Yes. and they just said "It will come back, put it in the suspense account". 31 a they changed the base units. So, I mean, even the same the post office. 31 back but it never did, and it went on for, what, the s	18		I was £85,000 short and I got suspended on that day.	18	Q.	Coming back to the day of the audit on 25 November
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25 I think the reason why they didn't press any charges 25 It couldn't take when I got my first	24					
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1		solicitor, he said he got a computer expert.	1	Q.	What effect did that have on your monthly balancing?
2		I mean, obviously he couldn't look at the computer but	2	Α.	It just went haywire, you know. It was way out of
3		he said the way he explained it to us, he thinks	3		control. I had to I had to do false accounting
4		the memory of the computer cannot compete with the	4		saying the money was there but I had no other choice.
5		footfall that's coming into your office and,	5		What could I do? I mean, I got no help whatsoever
6		obviously, what's happening is when you're doing some	6		from the Post Office. They didn't help us at all.
7		transactions and you're paying them out, it isn't	7		The only
8		going through the computer. Therefore, it might be	8		It was just horrendous, really. I was short
9		giving the customer a receipt but, at the end of the	9		every week.
10		day, you're that money short. If you paid somebody	10		I mean, one of the area managers came but he wa
11		£100, but it wasn't going through the computer, you're	11		no help at all. I was explaining the situation to him
12		£100 short.	12		but all you got off the Post Office, "It will come
13	Q.	What was the footfall sorry, what that it is	13		back", but nothing ever came back.
14		footfall like that the North Kenton branch?	14	Q.	You've explained the audit on 25 November 2008
15	A.	The two main days it was horrendous. The chaos was up	15		identified an apparent discrepancy of more than
16		the street. Because it was a little shopping centre	16		£85,000.
17		and I was next door to a huge comprehensive school.	17	A.	Yes, yes.
18		So it was really, really busy, you know. You're	18	Q.	What were you told had been the cause of that
19		talking about maybe nearly £1,000 1,000 people in	19		discrepancy?
20		one day well, in a couple of days, in the two main	20	Α.	I've taken the money, and they shut the door and
21		days. It was really, really busy.	21		they just shut the Post Office and then when the
22	Q.	You've explained that when you contacted the helpline	22		Post Office charged us with theft and I had to go to
23		you were advised to roll the sums over; is that	23		a police station, they put us in a prison cell for
24		correct?	24		an hour because the Post Office enquiry people weren't
25	A.	Yes, into the suspense account.	25		there and they shoved us in a cell for an hour.
		61			62
1		And what becaused because the Dest Office	4		the Mediatestal Court they give up the date for
1 2		And what happened because the Post Office the police weren't were not questioning us, it was	1		the Magistrates' Court, they give us the date for
2			2		the charges was theft and it had to go to Crown Court
3		two people from the Post Office that were questioning	3		and they give us the dates for the Crown Court, but that's when I it was the date was, for the Crown
4 5		us and had to wait for them coming in, when they did	4		-
5		come in, you know, they just simply accused us of	5		Court, was 17 June 2013, that was the official date of
6 7		stealing the money and I said, "I've never touched	6		the case but my solicitor got a phonecall saying that
7		a penny". So what they said was, after the questions	7		they were fetching it forward a fortnight. We had to
8		they said, "We want to come through to your house and	8		go into court, the Crown Court a fortnight earlier.
9		search it", and at the time I didn't think they were	9		And the solicitors said, "There's a rabbit up
10		allowed to do that. Anyway, they came to the house,	10		here. I think they're going to drop the case" and,
11		followed us through to my house and they searched	11		sure enough, when we got there their the
12		went right through the house but, obviously, they	12		Post Office barrister said that "We are dropping the
13		didn't find anything. I said, "You going to look for	13		case, we've got no evidence to bring", and that was
14		£85,000 lying in the house?" It was unbelievable,	14		it.
15	-	really.	15	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Brown, I'm sorry to interrupt you
16	Q.	How did you feel about your house being searched?	16		but I want to get the chronology right, if I may.
17	Α.	Absolutely horrendous, that. It was your privacy	17		Ms Hodge has established with you that the audit which
18		invaded, you know. I mean, absolutely and they	18		led to you being charged took place in November 2008,
19		just walked about there, looking in cupboards and	19		yes?
20		opening drawers. And you had no pride; they just took	20	A.	
21		over, basically. Anyway	21	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: But you just told me that the Crown
22		But they didn't find nothing, which I knew they	22		Court date is June 2013, which is getting close to
		wouldn't, like, but	23		five years afterwards and that surprised me. So I'd
23					Disa success for a success for
23 24 25	Q. A.	You have explained sorry, Mr Brown. Then when the first case when the case came up to	24 25	A.	like you to explain what was happening What happened was, because I got another little job,

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1	I lost my house and I got a little bungalow through	1		Magistrates' Court first, then the charges in the
2	the Housing Association, and I got a little job	2		Magistrates' Court sent us to Crown Court and that was
3	driving a van, but the Post Office didn't press the	3		it.
4	charges until 2012.	4		But there was a gap of a few year. It wasn't
5 SIF	R WYN WILLIAMS: So let me get this straight: the audit	5		immediately after I'd been finished. I couldn't
6	is 2008?	6		understand that, right, because I thought it was over
7 A .	And they didn't press the charges until 2012. I got	7		and done with.
3	a letter through the post saying that we are charging	8	MS	HODGE: Mr Brown, you've described attending
)	you with theft.	9		an interview and your home being searched.
0 SIF	R WYN WILLIAMS: Right, okay. In the meanwhile, did	10	Α.	Yes.
1	they try to get the 85,000 alleged shortfall from you?	11	Q.	In terms of the chronology, can you recall when those
2 A .	No.	12		events took place?
3 S IF	R WYN WILLIAMS: Right, okay.	13	Α.	When the, what? Can you repeat?
4	Sorry, Ms Hodge. I just wanted to get that	14	Q.	Yes, your interview at the police station and the
5	clear while it was in my mind.	15		search of your home.
6 A.		16	Α.	Yes.
7	sorry, after they closed the Post Office, I tried to	17		Do you recall when they took place? Was it closer in
8	run the shop but it wasn't viable. I couldn't afford	18	,	time to the audit or to the point at which you were
9	to keep the premises going. So I closed the shop as	19		charged?
0	well, and I sold the stock, and I got a little driving	20	Α.	Oh, it was it was about oh, it was long after
1	job just to try and tide us over.	21		the audit. Yeah, it was long after I can't
2	But then I got a letter, a letter came in the	22		remember the dates, it was that long ago, really
3	post from the Post Office, round about nearly 2012,	23		I can't. But it was long after the audit.
4	I think it was, that they were charging us with theft.	24	0	You have explained that, as a result of the audit, you
5	Then that's why the court case I went to the	25	ч.	were suspended; is that right?
.0	65			66
1 A .	Yes.	1	0	Following your suspension, how did your appointment a
			ω.	
2 Q.	Who was responsible for running your branch during the		ω.	
	Who was responsible for running your branch during the period of your suspension?	2		a subpostmaster come to an end?
	period of your suspension?	2 3		a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said
A.	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but	2 3 4		a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said
A.	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the	2 3 4 5		a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us
A.	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the Post Office but, I mean, obviously I didn't know who	2 3 4 5 6	Α.	a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us to go anywhere near the Post Office.
A.	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the Post Office but, I mean, obviously I didn't know who they were. And they kept one of the girls I had	2 3 4 5 6 7	Α.	a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us to go anywhere near the Post Office. What effect did the closure of the Post Office
3 A. 5	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the Post Office but, I mean, obviously I didn't know who they were. And they kept one of the girls I had working for us, they kept her on as well. But,	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Α.	a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us to go anywhere near the Post Office. What effect did the closure of the Post Office you've described a little the circumstances in which
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3 4 A . 5 7 8 9 0	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the Post Office but, I mean, obviously I didn't know who they were. And they kept one of the girls I had working for us, they kept her on as well. But, I mean, I only worked for another couple of month then I couldn't keep the office going the shop side	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Α.	a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us to go anywhere near the Post Office. What effect did the closure of the Post Office you've described a little the circumstances in which your retail business closed but can you explain what effect the closure of the Post Office had upon your
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A. 5 7 8 9 0 1 2 3	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the Post Office but, I mean, obviously I didn't know who they were. And they kept one of the girls I had working for us, they kept her on as well. But, I mean, I only worked for another couple of month then I couldn't keep the office going the shop side going, sorry. So I closed the shop side and sold the stock and I gave the keys to the Post Office for the shop premises, and everything.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	A. Q.	a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us to go anywhere near the Post Office. What effect did the closure of the Post Office you've described a little the circumstances in which your retail business closed but can you explain what effect the closure of the Post Office had upon your retail business? It meant that I lost I lost all my income. I tried to get a little job but it was a little driving job
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A. A. 1 2 3 4 5 5	period of your suspension? The Post Office put I don't know who they were but they put it was two people they put in to run the Post Office but, I mean, obviously I didn't know who they were. And they kept one of the girls I had working for us, they kept her on as well. But, I mean, I only worked for another couple of month then I couldn't keep the office going the shop side going, sorry. So I closed the shop side and sold the stock and I gave the keys to the Post Office for the shop premises, and everything. Then I don't know what happened. I think they just closed the Post Office altogether, and I think it went into one of the shops above in the shopping	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	A. Q.	a subpostmaster come to an end? I couldn't work. They just suspended us and they said I had to resign. So I had to resign. Why they said that I mean, and I just they wouldn't allow us to go anywhere near the Post Office. What effect did the closure of the Post Office you've described a little the circumstances in which your retail business closed but can you explain what effect the closure of the Post Office had upon your retail business? It meant that I lost I lost all my income. I tried to get a little job but it was a little driving job but it was actually, it was working for Amazon, delivering parcels, but it was too much I was too old for that. Then I went and I couldn't afford to pay
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	properties took the properties, gave us a week in the	1	Α.	Yes, but they took the bankruptcy people took
2	house to find another place to live but, luckily,	2		51 per cent of it off us. But, I mean, that
3	a Housing Association gave us a little two-bedroomed	3		bankruptcy's finished now, though, apparently.
Ļ	bungalow. But it was horrendous, it just crippled	4		Because I didn't realise that, after the seven years,
5	me our world for all our lives, lost	5		it still goes on five years after the bankruptcy,
6	Sorry, sorry.	6		apparently. I didn't know that. Anyway they took
, Q.		7		51 per cent off us.
}	take a short break?	8	Q.	So that left you with about £15,000?
) A.	No, I'm fine, fine.	9		Yes, yes, exactly. So, a lot of it out for the money
0 Q .	. Can you describe the current state of your finances,	10		l owed certain people.
1	please?	11	Q.	You explain that you had invested £150,000 in
2 A .	Well, I've got a mine workers' pension and a little	12		purchasing the branch, in the first instance?
3	state pension. My son works full time, so we're	13	Α.	Yes.
4	managing, you know, we're not rich. And when I got	14	Q.	You lost your home and your flat?
5	the money from the what Freeths got for the	15	A.	Lost my home, my flat.
6	there was only 11 million to be shared between 550 but	16	Q.	To what extent does that £15,000 compensate you for
7	the problem was I got, I think, £30,000-odd but	17		the financial losses which you suffered?
8	51 per cent of that money I received had to go to the	18	A.	It was like by the time I paid bills to the people
9	bankruptcy people. So the money I had left and the	19		I owed money, you know, companies that I owed money
0	bills I had to pay, outstanding bills I had to pay,	20		you know, to pay bills off, we were left with about
1	I had hardly anything left, you know, really.	21		£5,000. So all that for £5,000 by the time I paid all
	. So just to break that down, you participated as	22		my debts. The good thing about it is it paid my debts
3	a Claimant in the Group Litigation; is that right?	23		off, what I had left, so at least I'm in no debt now.
4 A .	Yes, yes.	24		That's the only good thing about it.
5 Q.	. You received a share of the settlement?	25		But, I mean, I must have lost, if you take the
	value of my properties, my bungalow was worth about	1		speaking it was false accounting right until the end
2	230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy	2		but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were
2	230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open	2 3	•	but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine.
2 } }	230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got	2 3 4	Q.	but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right,
2 3 1 5	230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got 150,000 for the house and 50,000 for the flat. Well,	2 3 4 5		but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right, isn't it?
2 3 1 5 6	230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got 150,000 for the house and 50,000 for the flat. Well, I couldn't understand why they wouldn't put it on the	2 3 4 5 6	A.	but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right, isn't it? Yes.
2 3 1 5 7	230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got 150,000 for the house and 50,000 for the flat. Well, I couldn't understand why they wouldn't put it on the open market, but still	2 3 4 5 6 7		but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right, isn't it? Yes. As a result of which, your case was transferred to the
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2 3 5 3 3 Q .	 230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got 150,000 for the house and 50,000 for the flat. Well, I couldn't understand why they wouldn't put it on the open market, but still I'd like to return briefly to your prosecution, if I may, just to clarify a few points. You've explained 	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A.	but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right, isn't it? Yes. As a result of which, your case was transferred to the Crown Court? Crown Office, yes, yes. And they recalled us
2 3 5 5 7 8 Q .	 230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got 150,000 for the house and 50,000 for the flat. Well, I couldn't understand why they wouldn't put it on the open market, but still I'd like to return briefly to your prosecution, if I may, just to clarify a few points. You've explained to the Chair you were charged in 2012 	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	A. Q.	but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right, isn't it? Yes. As a result of which, your case was transferred to the Crown Court? Crown Office, yes, yes. And they recalled us a fortnight earlier before the proper trial had to
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2 3 4 5 5 7 0 1 2 2 3 4 5 4 5 4 5 7 8	 230,000, my flat about 105. But when the bankruptcy people took it over, they didn't sell it on the open market. They just put it on for auction, and only got 150,000 for the house and 50,000 for the flat. Well, I couldn't understand why they wouldn't put it on the open market, but still I'd like to return briefly to your prosecution, if I may, just to clarify a few points. You've explained to the Chair you were charged in 2012 Yes. with an offence of theft; is that correct? Yes. Were you also charged with false accounting? False accounting as well, yes. Yes, I forgot to mention that. It was theft and false accounting. But the false accounting was why I it's because I was putting did into a suspense account. 	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	А. Q. A. Q. Q.	but, I mean, what could I do? The Post Office were doing nothing. They said the computer was fine. You pleaded not guilty to those charges; that's right, isn't it? Yes. As a result of which, your case was transferred to the Crown Court? Crown Office, yes, yes. And they recalled us a fortnight earlier before the proper trial had to begin and that's Sorry, you were told that the Post Office weren't proceeding with the prosecution? They said they were pressing no evidence. That's the very words: the Post Office is not pressing any evidence against us.
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(18) Pages 69 - 72

1	started the subpostmasters, I think he's done	1	Q.	Was your prosecution reported in the local press,
2	a tremendous job. And, I mean, I'm still in that but,	2		Mr Brown?
3	I mean, obviously I'm with Howe & Co. But, I mean,	3	Α.	Oh, it was horrendous, yes. Yes, it was the funny
4	Alan Bates is the person to thank for really for as	4		thing about it is it was all over the Northern Echo
5	far as we've got now because if it wasn't for him, we	5		and the Newcastle Chronicle, but when I was found not
6	would be nowhere near.	6		guilty and that there was a little paragraph in the
7 Q	. How did you feel when you were told originally that	7		Evening Chronicle. So it'd never I mean, people
8	the Post Office would be bringing criminal charges	8		still think you took it. I mean, you know, there'll
9	against you?	9		never be peace about it really. People still think
10 A	. Well, I says, "No matter what, even if I go to prison,	10		you took the money. I mean, I'll never, ever get over
11	I'm not pleading guilty. I'm not pleading guilty to	11		it.
12	something I didn't do" and that was it. I mean, it	12	Q.	What effect did these events have on your health,
13	was a horrendous time.	13		Mr Brown?
14 Q	. Mr Brown	14	Α.	Well, I had basically, really, a nervous breakdown.
15 A	I mean, what gets me is it's taken the Government and	15		I couldn't I mean, that's why I packed this
16	the Post Office to wait nearly 20 years after inquiry	16		I couldn't cope with the it was because we had
17	and inquiry after this, and they know exactly what the	17		we couldn't live, we couldn't we couldn't we had
18	problem is. Why don't they just pay the people?	18		no money. We were destitute. We weren't getting
19	I mean, some people haven't even lived to see the end	19		all I had was a small mineworkers' pension to live
20	of it. They've died. I mean, it's true that most of	20		off. And my son worked but he had kids. You know, it
21	the subpostmasters are not very young people. They're	21		was just horrendous.
22	either middle-aged or getting older and, what, they	22		And it's all due to the Post Office having
23	going to wait another 20 year when, say, half of them	23		a system that was faulty and they knew that.
24	are all dead? The Government's got to pay it out now	24	Q.	You have described I'm sorry, I didn't mean to
25	really or they've got to sort it out.	25		interrupt.
	73			74
1 A	 They knew the system was faulty. They really did. 	1		done now is that proper compensation is paid; is that
2	And something should be done about the	2		right?
3	Post Office people at the top. And they must have	3	A.	That's right. I think I mean, the compensation we
4	known about it, you know. Anyway, I make no rate of	4	7.1	were offered in the first place 57 million for
5	it now. It should be compensated really compensated.	5		I mean, that was just ridic what we need is
6 Q		6		everybody should be sat down and put down what exactly
σ α 7 Α		7		what we've lost and they should get compensated for
8 Q		8		that, whatever they've lost plus their salaries.
9 A		9		I mean, they've lost their livelihoods through
10 1 0	saviour, and the grandkids.	10		no fault of their own through a system that wasn't
10 11 Q		11		good enough to cope with the system they had. The
12 A	2	12		Post Office bought the cheapest equipment, so I've
12 A 13	I mean, he's I mean, he had he's got two/three	12		been told, you could buy and it wasn't good enough to
13 14	grandkids to look after, so he had to look after them.	13		do the job it was supposed to be doing. Anyway, I'm
15	I mean, Andy works mainly nights so I mean he works	14		not a computer expert, so that's what I've been
16	hard and I mean, it's hit him hard. He lost all	16		told. The computer wasn't up to standard for the
17	his money, all his savings everything just to help me.	10		system that they needed it to do. And I heard that
17 18 Q		18		the very first week it happened that a chap who was
10 Q		10		a computer expert never looked at it but he just
19 A. 20	he's got the grandkids, the two lads, and the girl's	20		
		20		quoted what they found out, what he said in the
21 22	away at university now but, I mean, he's got the two			beginning has turned out to be completely true, that
	boys living with us.	22		the computer couldn't cope with the footfall of your
	I'll never get over it never, ever get over	23		office, and that's as simple as that. It wasn't
23	14	0.4		(unalgor) and all ather revents as a second the second
23 24 25 Q	it. You've said, Mr Brown, that you think what needs to be	24 25		<i>(unclear)</i> and all other payouts, so consequently when you came to do a balance you were short. Simple as

1	that.	1	MS HODGE: Thank you.
2	Q. Sorry, can I just ask you to clarify. Who came up	2	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Well, it's been very good
3	with that explanation that it was to do with the	3	to hear from you and you can rest assured that I'll be
1	computer?	4	taking close attention paying close attention to
5	A. It was a computer expert that my first Michael	5	what you have told me, as I will of course with all
3	Henderson solicitors had, he was my first solicitor,	6	the other subpostmasters who have been good enough to
7	and he just asked a computer expert what he thought,	7	make statements or give evidence before me.
8	and then he said that the way they've explained it to	8	So thank you again, Mr Brown, for taking the
9	us the footfall he's getting and the computer couldn't	9	time and trouble to explain all this to me.
0	compete with the footfall and by the time he was	10	A. Thank you.
1	paying it out and the people are coming in, it wasn't	11	MS HODGE: Sir, it is almost 12.15. That concludes our
2	going through the memory of the computer or something	12	witnesses for this morning's session. I wonder if we
3	like that and consequently he would be short. The	13	were to take an early lunch and see if we could resume
4	person would get the money but it wouldn't go through	14	a little earlier this afternoon.
5	the system saying he's paid it out. Therefore, he	15	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Well, let's say we won't
6	would be short of that money. He would be short.	16	start before 1.30 but if we can start at 1.30, you can
7	Q. Did this expert produce a report?	17	send me an email to alert me to that and I'll make
8	A. Oh no, no, it was just an opinion no, no, nothing	18	sure I'm on the screen, all right?
9	like that. It was just his opinion when we explained	19	MS HODGE: Thank you, sir.
20	the doing. It's just his opinion.	20	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much.
21	Q. Thank you, Mr Brown. I have no further questions for	21	(12.14 pm)
22	you. Is there anything that you would like to say to	22	(Luncheon Adjournment)
23	the Chair that we've not already covered?	23	(1.29 pm)
24	A. No, I think that's I think I've said enough really.	24	MS KENNEDY: Good afternoon, Chair.
25	I mean, I'm a little bit too upset now.	25	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.
	77		78
1	MS KENNEDY: Our first witness this afternoon is	1	Q. I'm just going to start by asking a couple of
2	Mr Malcolm Simpson.	2	introductory questions about you. How old are you
3	MALCOLM SIMPSON (affirmed)	2	now?
4	Questioned by MS KENNEDY	4	A. I'm 60.
5	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr Simpson.	5	Q. You talk in your statement about your wife. How long
6	A. Hello, Sir Wyn.	6	have the two of you been married?
7	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you for being prepared to give	7	A. We've been together 25 years and married, yeah, nearly
, B	your evidence a little early so that we can keep	8	20 years.
9	running smoothly.	9	Q. How many children do you have?
0	A. No trouble.	10	A. I have two sons from my first marriage and Lesley has
1	MS KENNEDY: As I think you know, my name's Ruth Kennedy	10	two children from her marriage, so we have four
2	and I ask questions on behalf of the Chair. Have you	12	considered as one family, four, and five
2 3	got a copy of your witness statement there?	12	grandchildren, one on the way. So family's
3 4	A. I have, yes.	13 14	ever-growing.
4 5	Q. Then it should be dated 15 January 2022?	14	Q. What types of jobs did you have before you bought
5 6	A. Yes, it is.	15	a shop, could you describe for the Chair?
0 7	Q. If you turn to the last page, which I think should be	10	A. When I left university, I was working in the forestry
	page 14?	18	industry for a few years and then I had a small back
8 0		10 19	injury and decided it was time to not be hanging on to
9 0		19 20	
	Q. Is that your signature there?A. It is.	20 21	a chainsaw the whole time. So I joined B&Q. I was
1 ว			with them for 12 years, as an assistant manager and
2 3	Q. Have you read through this statement recently?	22	a manager in a number of stores. Then I was a project
1	A. I have.	23 24	manager for the last two years with B&Q. Then we took a year out to look for a shop and
		2/1	
24 25	Q. Is it true to the best of your knowledge and belief?A. It is indeed, yes.	25	that's when we found Boxgrove.

(20) Pages 77 - 80

1 Q .	So I think you bought the Boxgrove village store in	1		an asset to the village, and it seemed the obvious
2	2003; is that correct?	2		thing for me to do it. But, yeah, I wasn't
3 A .	That's right, yes.	3		100 per cent happy about it.
4 Q .	There was a Post Office in your store already?	4	Q.	I think you took it over in around 2007?
5 A .	There was. There was an existing Post Office with	5	Α.	Yes, that's right, yes.
6	a subpostmaster in situ, and he stayed there. We took	6	Q.	I think you say in your statement you lived on the
7	the business over. We were quite happy with that	7		premises as well. Is that right?
8	arrangement and it allowed us to focus on the retail	8	Α.	Yes, the shop we bought had a house and the shop was
9	side. The shop was quite run down, so we that was	9		all one the shop was next door, if you like, of the
0	our skill-set, if you like, at the time, was to boost	10		house. We bought it freehold, so the whole thing was
1	the shop. We introduced loads of different things.	11		ours. We split the title, soon after we got there so
2 Q .	You ended up taking over the Post Office. Could you	12		the shop and the house were separate titles. Just you
3	just describe how that happened?	13		never know, when you work for yourself, you have to
4 A .	Of course, yes. The subpostmaster who was there, he	14		protect yourself a little bit. So we wanted to
5	had to leave for personal reasons and it seemed	15		protect our house, in case anything went wrong.
6	we'd been there four or five years then by then. It	16		Ironic really.
7	just seemed an obvious transition, really, for me to	17	Q.	When you took over as subpostmaster, what training did
8	take over being the subpostmaster. It was a busy	18		you receive?
9	Post Office. The salary was attractive. So that was	19	Α.	So there was it was a two-week training course, for
20	the decision that was made.	20		want of a better word, over two lots of Monday to
21 Q .	How did you feel about the prospect of taking over	21		Friday in a Crown office in Bournemouth, and there was
22	a Post Office?	22		about 10 or 12 of us there, and there was all sorts of
23 A .	I can't say I was 100 per cent. It's not something	23		different people. There was a chap who was buying
24	I it wouldn't have bothered me if we'd bought	24		a big Post Office, there was people who were just
25	a shop without a Post Office but it was there, it was 81	25		going to go and work in Crown offices as counter 82
4				
		4		
1 ว	clerks, and there was a couple of people like me who	1		closed it for the whole of December because she was
2	were sort of one-man band.	2		suffering from stress.
2 3 Q .	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well?	2 3		suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have
2 3 Q. 4 A.	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much	2 3 4		suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we
2 3 Q . 4 A . 5	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling,	2 3 4 5		suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every
2 3 Q. 4 A. 5 6	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling, and it was a time when Post Office was very keen for	2 3 4 5 6		suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every night. So the trainer didn't really train. She
2 3 Q. 4 A. 5 6 7	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling, and it was a time when Post Office was very keen for you to speak to every customer every week about	2 3 4 5 6 7		suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every night. So the trainer didn't really train. She wasn't next to me, she was on the other terminal
2 3 Q. 4 A. 5 6 7 8	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling, and it was a time when Post Office was very keen for you to speak to every customer every week about insurance, mortgages, and things that when most of	2 3 4 5 6 7 8		suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every night. So the trainer didn't really train. She wasn't next to me, she was on the other terminal serving customers because the demand was so high. So
2 3 Q . 4 A . 5 6 7 8 9	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling, and it was a time when Post Office was very keen for you to speak to every customer every week about insurance, mortgages, and things that when most of my customers were coming through, they were pension	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0	suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every night. So the trainer didn't really train. She wasn't next to me, she was on the other terminal serving customers because the demand was so high. So it wasn't adequate training.
2 3 Q . 4 A . 5 6 7 8 9 0	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling, and it was a time when Post Office was very keen for you to speak to every customer every week about insurance, mortgages, and things that when most of my customers were coming through, they were pension customers. They weren't interested in insurance and	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Q.	suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every night. So the trainer didn't really train. She wasn't next to me, she was on the other terminal serving customers because the demand was so high. So it wasn't adequate training. How did you find using the Horizon system at that
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 6 7 8 9 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 6 7 8 9 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9 2 2 3 4 5 6 7 7 8 9 9 2 2 7 8 9 2 2 2 2 2 1 8 9 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	were sort of one-man band. I think you then had some in-branch training as well? Well, the two-week training was it was very much slanted towards, sort of, front office, so selling, and it was a time when Post Office was very keen for you to speak to every customer every week about insurance, mortgages, and things that when most of my customers were coming through, they were pension customers. They weren't interested in insurance and telephone systems and mortgages. But that's what they pushed very much in that two-week course. We did do a couple of balances and, sort of, back office work but nobody was that confident with it, nobody was that happy with it, and nobody balanced in the training. The trainer implied that that was normal and that, yes, sometimes it will be up, sometimes it will be under, but don't worry, just keep a pot of money in the safe and that will allow you to put it straight each month.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Α.	suffering from stress. So we picked up all the business that would have gone to them that everybody was coming to us, and we were queued out the door from 9.00 until 6.00 every night. So the trainer didn't really train. She wasn't next to me, she was on the other terminal serving customers because the demand was so high. S it wasn't adequate training. How did you find using the Horizon system at that time? At that time, I wasn't the most computer literate person and I find it quite a confusing system. It wasn't it wasn't logical to me and it was some of the procedures were painful and I didn't do some of the things I didn't know how to do. Fortunately, most of my business was postage, pensions, and we did a lot of car tax. Most of the car dealers from Chichester came out to us, and we did I did a lot of car tax. But I didn't find the system that friendly.

1		evening to do my first balance with me and I think we	1		that time; would that be right?
2		were £150 short, and he said "Oh that's the way it is,	2	Α.	Yes.
3		go and get the money out of the shop till to balance",	3	Q.	How many auditors attended?
4		as if it was normal.	4	Α.	That first one, I think there was two, and that's when
5	Q.	Were they all sums like that initially?	5		they found a shortfall of about £2,500 and I made
6	Α.	Initially, they were in the low hundreds or a bit	6		arrangements for that to come out of my salary because
7		lower. Very occasionally, it was a little bit over	7		I didn't have that sort of money. It was all right
8		but I can hardly remember a time when it was over. It	8		taking a few hundred pound out the till, now and
9		was always under and they were in the low hundreds to	9		again, of the shop but I didn't have that sort of
10		start with.	10		money.
11	Q.	What help did you make of the helpline what use,	11	Q.	I think you call that in your statement a payment
12		sorry, did you make of the helpline?	12		plan, is that
13	Α.	At first, I was quite facetious about it, because	13	A.	Yes, that is right. Yes, they dressed it up as
14		and I called it the "unhelpful line" because they	14		a payment plan, yes.
15		weren't of any help at all. It was always "Oh, you	15	Q.	I think then you are audited, again, in
16		will get a correction through, just put the money in"	16		September 2012; is that about right?
17		or "used the manuals". There was a whole shelf of	17	Α.	Yes.
18		manuals which weren't up to date and, again, weren't	18	Q.	How many auditors attended that audit?
19		user-friendly, to my mind.	19	A.	In total, there was at any one time, there was four
20	Q.	How much do you think that you paid into the	20		there, but they changed. They were there for
21		Post Office to balance?	21		four days and they changed a couple of times. There
22	A.	In total?	22		was two that were there all the time and then there
23	Q.	Yes.	23		was a couple of people came and went. A couple of
24		£2,500, £3,000.	24		them spoke to us and two of them didn't speak to us at
25	Q.	I think you were first audited in October 2008 around	25		all. They were it was quite a hostile vibe coming
		85			86
1		off them.	1		good". He didn't say why it wasn't good, just said it
2		We're always very welcoming of everybody who	2		wasn't good, "I've now got to ring Nigel Allen, the
3		came into our shop and the kettle always went on, you	3		area manager, and he'll need to speak to you". That
4		know, straightaway and it was the same with these	4		was after an hour and a half.
5		guys, you know. I almost felt like I was pleased they	5		I felt like they already knew the way it was
6		were there because I thought we could get to the	6		going to go in that short time.
7		bottom of the balance and, naively, I thought, to	7	Q.	
8		start with, for the first hour, we'll get the office	8		shortfall?
9		straight, we'll draw a line in the sand, move forward.	9	A.	They didn't oh no, they didn't put a figure on
		You know, the payment plan was in for that money and	10		it, they just said it wasn't good. It was that vague.
10		we would go forward.	11	Q.	Then later, I think, you received a phone call; is
		But no it didn't.			that right?
11			12		
11 12	Q.		12 13	A.	•
10 11 12 13 14	Q. A.	Did the atmosphere change over the course of those	13	A.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this
11 12		Did the atmosphere change over the course of those After about an hour, yes. Yes, they well, I'm sure	13 14	Α.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this Nigel Allen person came on the phone, and his first
11 12 13 14		Did the atmosphere change over the course of those After about an hour, yes. Yes, they well, I'm sure you'll get on to the area manager's call in a minute	13 14 15	Α.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this Nigel Allen person came on the phone, and his first comment was, "It's not good, you may as well resign".
11 12 13 14 15		Did the atmosphere change over the course of those After about an hour, yes. Yes, they well, I'm sure you'll get on to the area manager's call in a minute but, yes, they changed after about an hour/hour and	13 14 15 16	A.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this Nigel Allen person came on the phone, and his first comment was, "It's not good, you may as well resign". That was the first thing he said. By that time,
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Α.	Did the atmosphere change over the course of those After about an hour, yes. Yes, they well, I'm sure you'll get on to the area manager's call in a minute but, yes, they changed after about an hour/hour and a half.	13 14 15 16 17	Α.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this Nigel Allen person came on the phone, and his first comment was, "It's not good, you may as well resign". That was the first thing he said. By that time, I felt I was a bit on the ropes, to be honest, and my
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	A. Q.	Did the atmosphere change over the course of those After about an hour, yes. Yes, they well, I'm sure you'll get on to the area manager's call in a minute but, yes, they changed after about an hour/hour and a half. How did you feel after they left?	13 14 15 16 17 18	Α.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this Nigel Allen person came on the phone, and his first comment was, "It's not good, you may as well resign". That was the first thing he said. By that time, I felt I was a bit on the ropes, to be honest, and my first thought was, going back to my B&Q days, "Hang
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	A. Q. A.	Did the atmosphere change over the course of those After about an hour, yes. Yes, they well, I'm sure you'll get on to the area manager's call in a minute but, yes, they changed after about an hour/hour and a half. How did you feel after they left? Shell-shocked, absolutely floored, to be honest.	13 14 15 16 17 18 19	A.	No, that was after an hour and a half, this Nigel Allen person came on the phone, and his first comment was, "It's not good, you may as well resign". That was the first thing he said. By that time, I felt I was a bit on the ropes, to be honest, and my first thought was, going back to my B&Q days, "Hang on, this feels like constructive dismissal" and I said
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1		to speak to them. Lesley was still making them cups	1		and we wanted the community to have a Post Office
2		of tea and it progressed for the rest well, three	2		through Christmas. So they came really to arrange for
3		more days.	3		her son to come and be a stand-in postmaster in the
4	Q.	When were you suspended?	4		office.
5	Α.	I think on the second day. It's vague but I think	5		Once that was all agreed, in this meeting in the
6		Nigel Allen rang back just to say "You are suspended	6		evening, she then said, "I can't come with you to any
7		because of what the auditors found".	7		meetings. I can't represent you because my son's
8	Q.	I think you gave the Post Office a cheque for what	8		working here. You're on your own". That was the
9		they said was the existing shortfall of around £7,000,	9		words she used. So, to answer your question, there
10		later; is that right?	10		wasn't any representation.
11	Α.	Yes. That was we then started having	11	Q.	I think, instead of attending hearings, you made
12		correspondence from Elaine Ridge, who I understood to	12		written submissions.
13		be Nigel Allen's boss, and, verbally, she spoke to	13	Α.	I did. I was in no state to go and defend myself, by
14		Lesley by this time I wasn't in a fit state,	14		this time, and I also felt that it was completely
15		really, to talk to these people and was struggling to	15		stacked against me and I didn't see any point in going
16		do that without bursting into tears, to be honest. So	16		to I think they wanted me to go to Southampton,
17		she spoke to Lesley, and she said "That's the money	17		just to I knew inevitably, I knew I was going to
18		that's missing, you need to replace it now", yeah.	18		lose my job, so I just didn't want to put myself
19	Q.	I think during that investigation, what representation	19		through that.
20		did you have at the time?	20	Q.	What points did you make in your written submissions
21	Α.	So the NFSP area rep came that first week, in the	21		to that investigation?
22		evening, with her son, primarily not to help me or to	22	Α.	I that I felt the whole thing was a sham, really,
23		represent me. September was starting, believe it or	23		that there were things that had happened in the office
24		not, to build up for the Christmas rush and we were	24		that I hadn't had any help from. The help desk hadn't
25		very conscious it was a very busy time for this office	25		been any help.
		89			90
1		One of the things we didn't do in this office	1		was just lip service.
2		was foreign currency, very often. We did the	2	Q.	
3		occasional one for somebody going on a skiing holiday	3		you to terminate your contract on, I think,
4		or whatever and their currency would come, I'd order	4		17 October 2012?
5		it, it would come in an envelope, and then it was	5	Α.	Yes.
6		basically just scan a bar-code and then it would work	6	Q.	Who did they ask to run the Post Office for them in
7		on the system.	7		the interim?
8		A few weeks before the audit, I think it was	8	Α.	Can I go back slightly?
9		£12,000 worth of Euros were delivered to the office,	9	Q.	Of course.
10		and I didn't know how to put that onto the system.	10	Α.	Earlier that year, I think it was in the summer, we'd
11		I couldn't get an answer from help desk. I tried them	11		all all the local subpostmasters had been invited
12		three or four times. So I tried to put it on the	12		to Portsmouth football ground to a presentation on
13		system but I wasn't convinced it had gone on properly,	13		a Sunday morning, and it was about the network change
14		so I put all this into the letter about these Euros,	14		process, and there was a lot of anger in the room.
15		which was a significant amount of money, and I think	15		A lot of the little one-man band guys, like me, didn't
16		I mentioned we used to have quite a lot of power	16		like what they were hearing. There was a talk of
17		cuts, and things like that.	17		salaries going and everything being commission only,
18		So, even then, I felt it was a system error.	18		and we came away with three options. We were given
19		I knew I hadn't done anything malicious, so yeah,	19		three options.
20		that's where I was at, really, with that submission.	20		The first one was to go with the change, take
21	Q.	What response did you get to those submissions?	21		out the fortress Post Office and have an open-plan
22	A.	Just lip service, really. I complained about	22		Post Office in our shop on our counter; the second one
23		Nigel Allen's manner on the phone. That was ignored	23		was to stay as we were; and the third option was to
24		in the first response I got back from Elaine Ridge.	24		leave the Post Office, and have the Post Office taken
			1		
25		The second one, she said "I'll speak to him", and that	25		out.

1	I opted, after discussion with Lesley, to stay	1		However, there was two guys there, three days before
2	as we were, and you had to just fill in a box on the	2		the deadline, and they took all the equipment out.
3	computer. It was pre-email not pre-email. Anyway.	3	Q.	How did you feel about that behaviour by the
4	So I opted out and, within weeks, the auditors	4	·	Post Office?
5	had come. So I felt it almost felt like a closure	5	Δ	l just thought it was just arrogance beyond words,
6	programme. The next village to us Tangmere, the pub	6	7	really, and just not understanding the situation and
7	had just been bought by the Co-op and we were	7		the damage they were doing. And then to come back and
8	convinced that they wanted to put the Post Office in	8		ask my wife to take over the Post Office, after what
9	there. Co-op refused, and so I don't know the	9		they'd put us through? No, it was just unbelievable.
10	timescales but it wasn't very long. Elaine Ridge rang	10		But not surprising, in the same way, because we'd got
11	Lesley one day, out of the blue, and said "Would you	11		used to them by then.
12	be prepared to take on the Post Office and be the	12	0	You mentioned previously the temporary subpostmaster.
12	subpostmistress?"	12	Q. A.	Yes.
13			-	
	The response wasn't great to be honest because	14	Q.	I think you mention in your statement that he found
15	there was a lot of anger at the Post Office and she	15		something in the Post Office.
16	was told in no uncertain terms, "No, we'll have the	16	Α.	This was the first full week he did. Somebody must
17	Post Office here until after Christmas with the	17		have met him from the Post Office to give him the keys
18	temporary subpostmaster but, after that, we take it	18		because, obviously, we weren't allowed the keys, and
19	out. It's a freehold property, we don't want the	19		the code to the alarms and things, on the Monday and
20	Post Office in here anymore".	20		they did an audit they did a balance on that
21	She then said, "You can't do that we'll decide	21		Monday. And the Wednesday was balance day so he did
22	when it comes out", and Lesley said, "No, you have got	22		a second balance on the Wednesday, and then, on the
23	until the last Friday in February, if it's not out by	23		Saturday morning, Les and I were in the shop, we were
24	then, your equipment will be on the pavement". "You	24		serving customers, and his mother had come to work
25	can't do that, we're Post Office was the response". 93	25		with him in the Post Office and we heard a lot of 94
1	banging and crashing and whispering, and then at	1		It must have been the same envelope, the same stamps.
2	12.30/1.00 when they closed, he came out with a big	2		He said, "There's £4,500 worth of stamps here. You
3	envelope stuffed full of stamps. He says, "I'm really	3		may as well sell those on Ebay", which was just
4	sorry but we found these stamps. They're going to	4		gob-smacking, really.
5	have to go on to the deficit you owe the Post Office,	5	Q.	Did you think those stamps might have been what may
6	there's about £4,500 worth of stamps here".	6		have caused
7	Fortunately, one of us, and it wasn't me, was really	7	Α.	It was a similar balance to the stamps they said we
8	on the ball and Lesley says "No, hang on, you've had	8		were short, yes, yes.
9	two balances since you took over. They are not our	9	Q.	I'm going to ask you some questions now about the
10	responsibility, those stamps". And she was not	10		impact that all of this has had on you. Firstly, I'm
11	happy I forget her name.	11		going to ask you about the financial impact. You have
12	Anyway, she was not happy with this. She says	12		already mentioned the money that you paid into the
13	"Well, we'll be speaking to Nigel Allen over the	13		Post Office but could you tell the Chair about what
14	weekend". That struck me as strange, that they had	14		other financial losses you have suffered as a result.
15	access to Post Office executives over a weekend but,	15	Α.	So once the Post Office salary had gone, we had two
16	anyway, the son came in on the Monday and didn't	16		ladies who worked part-time in the shop and we had
17	mention the stamps and, in the end, I thought: I'm	17		a lad who came and helped with the paper rounds on
18	going to have to find out what's going on here because	18		a Saturday and they had to go the same week that
19	there's 4.5 grand hanging over our heads. I went back	19		I came out of the Post Office. And it's important to
20	to him and he said, "Oh, Nigel says don't worry,	20		put names to these people and, especially, Jan and
21	we'll just don't worry about it".	21		Debbie who worked in the shop, because they were
22	So it was just hushed over, just swept under the	22		Jan, especially, she had been there a long time. She
23	carpet. But the stamps did appear again in the	23		worked with three yeah, three owners, including us,
20				
	February when that last week he came out with this	24		so 30 years. I think, she'd been in the shon. So that
23 24 25	February when that last week, he came out with this bundle of stamps and I assumed it was the same stamps.	24 25		so 30 years, I think, she'd been in the shop. So that was tough for her and for Debs and, you know, the

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1		little lad, on Saturday, he was a nice lad but he	1	Q.	I understand that you were part of the Group
2		understood we just couldn't pay anybody anything. It	2	ч.	Litigation group. How much money have you received by
3		was just us and family when they could help out. So	3		way of compensation?
4		there was that impact. So it just wasn't the impact	4	A.	We had two payments from Freeths, and I I think
5		on us it was them as well.	5	Π.	about 18,000. I don't consider that compensation
6		We would have stayed a lot longer if the	6		really.
7		Post Office had stayed and was manageable, we would	7	Q.	How are you doing now, financially?
8		have got to a stage where we perhaps could have had	8	Q. A.	The driving helps. I'm probably not fit enough to
9		somebody to work in the Post Office and we would have	9	А.	work five/six days a week. When we were in the shop
10		stayed until I was, what, 50 yeah, around	10		we were both doing 80 hours a week but it's your
1		50 then, and we loved Boxgrove, they loved us, it was	11		lifestyle, it's your social life, it's everything but
2		something we would have done until I retired. So	12		I had two strokes, so
3		there's all that was lost, financially.	13		Yeah, I'm not a bit broken.
4	0	What about your salary? What job do you do now?	14	Q.	I was going to ask you about the impact this has had
5	Q. A.	Now? I work part-time for a company called Cook who	15	ω.	on your health. You have mentioned your two strokes.
6	А.	sell frozen food meals and I deliver for them	16		What other impact has this had on your mental and
7		three days a week.	17		physical health?
7 8	0	Did you have to borrow money from anyone?	18	۸	(Pause) Sorry.
o 9		So the initial payment to Elaine Ridge, in that first	10		Please don't apologise and do let me know if you need
9	А.	week, I went to my parents because we didn't have that	20	હ.	a break.
.0 !1		sort of money to pay them, and we paid them	20	Α.	No, I'm okay, thank you.
2		straightaway. Dad gave me the money and we paid.	21	А.	Just cautious and scared. I've always been
3	0	How did it feel to have to borrow	22		somebody who respects authority and expects people to
.3 !4	Q. A.	It's humiliating. 50 years old, going to your Mum and	23		treat you as you treat them and in everything I've
25	А.	Dad, it's just not right.	24		done work-wise it's always been that's always
		97	20		98
1		worked until you come up against the Post Office and	1		everybody who came in the shop I mean, those first
2		they just the same rules don't work.	2		few days I wasn't really to be seen. I'd get up
3		They don't care about anybody and that makes you	3		early, we used to start about 4.00 in the morning,
1		anxious and scared all the time when you're working	4		you'd get up early and do the papers but I wasn't
5		for them, and there's no support, there's no excuse	5		really in the shop the first few days but, even going
6		me, there's no they don't care. They just don't	6		forward, when the temporary subpostmaster was there,
7		you know, you're just a number, and that I couldn't	7		we told everybody and we weren't ashamed. We
3		cope with that. I've always worked in teams and with	8		weren't because we didn't see that we'd done
9		people who there's mutual respect, and there just	9		anything wrong.
0		wasn't any of that and it just grinds you down. You	10		We went to the Parish Council meeting, we told
1		just feel so alone.	11		them what had happened, what our plans were going
2		And now since, yeah, I'm not as confident as	12		forward, because we desperately wanted to keep the
3		I was. It's little things, like I don't like talking	13		shop going, you know.
4		to people on the telephone. I'd rather be	14		It was just one other thing, just with this
5		face-to-face. Yeah, you just it just breaks you.	15		temporary subpostmaster there, it felt as if we had
6	Q.	You said a moment ago that you loved Boxgrove and they	16		an enemy in the camp, really, and they were listening
7	- - -	loved you. What was the impact on your reputation in	17		to everything. So we weren't shy in coming forward
8		the community?	18		about saying how poorly and shabbily we felt we'd been
9	Α.	Okay, so there's two ways you can go about this when	19		dealt with by the Post Office.
20		this happens, and our attitude, from when the auditors	20	Q.	What was the response of the people that you were
21		were already there, was to tell everybody what was	21	-	speaking to? Was anyone
2		happening and how I hadn't done anything wrong, it	22	A.	They were appalled, most of them. The only negative,
3		was the system, it was the way the Post Office worked.	23	<i>,</i>	we had a friend of ours, one of the builders used to
24		And we told everybody, and Lesley says the same.	24		come in every morning, he'd heard a lady in the
25		She must have bored people senseless because	25		garage, which was literally at the end of the road,
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1		running me down and saying that I'd obviously stolen	1		the shop when they could, you know, when other when
2		the money, and I wasn't allowed to go and speak to	2		their jobs weren't coming first and, yeah, they have
3		her.	3		been tremendous. We now live in an annex of our
4		But Lesley went down two or three days later	4		daughter's house and, you know, they're tremendous
5		once she'd cooled down a bit and, as she walked into	5		everyday. But you know we get to see one or two of
6		the garage, the woman stepped back, she knew she'd	6		our grandchildren every day as well, so that's
7		stepped out of line and Lesley just told her what had	7		a bonus.
8		happened, in quite a forthright manner. That was the	8	Q.	What would you like from the Post Office now?
9		only negative that we knew of.	9	A.	I'd like significant compensation paid to all the
10		Consequently, when we came out, when we sold the	10		victims, including the 555, and paid now, plus the
11		shop, we were still living in the house next door and,	11		costs that are owed to the 555. It will never bring
12		yeah, we've still got lots we don't live in the	12		back loved ones lost or replace all the lost years but
13		village anymore, we moved last June, but we've still	13		it will allow every victim to move forward with some
14		got a lot of friends and I've had emails and texts the	14		sense of security and with less stress, anxiety and
15		last few days wishing me luck today, so	15		hurt.
16	0	What about the impact on your marriage?	16		I'd like the Post Office to start behaving with
17	A.		17		honesty and integrity, providing full and open
18	л .	she just just gets on with it. It's probably even	18		disclosure going forward. They will never extinguish
19		stronger, our marriage, through all this. I can't	10		the deeply embedded toxic culture that still exists,
		look at her now because I will be crying.	20		
20	~	, .			until there is root and branch change.
21	-	Was there any other impact on your family?	21		This change will only come through closing this
22	Α.	Yeah, of course. You know, they all know me, they	22		devastating chapter fully, by coming clean and
23		know I'm not a villain, I'm not a bad person. It's	23		admitting all the lies and exposing all the guilty at
24		distressing to see your Dad, your brother, in this	24		all levels of the organisation.
25		position, but they all stepped up, they all worked in 101	25		On a wider note, I'd like to see national 102
1		recognition for Alan Bates, Nick Wallis, Karl	1		"Horizon is robust and works very well. You are
					the only person in the whole network who's having
2		Flinders, Ian Hislop and Private Eye journalists, Lord	2		
3 ⊿		Arbuthnot and others because, without all of them, we	3		problems."
4 5		would not be sat here today and this scandal would	4		Nigel Allen told me that. Auditors arrive, turn
5		have been buried by the Post Office and other in	5		your business into a crime scene, provide no written
6		Government forever. We all owe them a huge debt of	6		evidence, get the contracts manager on the phone after
7		gratitude.	7		just one and a half hours and his first statement is,
8		That's it on the Post Office. I've got a couple	8		"Well, you need to resign". When I reacted to this,
9		of other bits I'd like to say. Is that all right?	9		he just hung up. He knew he didn't have to argue with
10		Please.	10		me. Everything is stacked in his favour. He knows
11	Α.	So these people, they take away your sense of worth,	11		I'm going to crash and burn. After all,
12		your sense of self. There's no need to invest in the	12		subpostmasters are totally expendable.
13		individual, to nurture, to develop, no desire or	13		You are belittled by the whole process. You
14		culture to help people grow, to make them feel valued.	14		can't prove your side of the argument, you can't
15		Instead there are just lies, indifference, aggression,	15		defend yourself, there is no support, no honest fair
16		all take, demands for total loyalty to the brand and	16		process. You're alone.
17		blind acceptance that Post Office is always right.	17		As we've already heard this last couple of
18		The reality is the complete opposite. The only	18		weeks, it's too much for many. You feel abandoned,
19		people within the whole Post Office structure who are	19		tainted, and that is what they want, a quick cull grab
20		held accountable for every action, every stamp, every	20		some money, move on the next victim, leaving
21		penny are subpostmasters and that accountability is	21		heartache, anguish and devastation in their wake.
		managed by a totally corrupt computer system, which is	22		If you're lucky, and I was, someone steps up,
		not fit for purpose, and a system that's policed by	23		trusts you and guides you through the calmer times.
22					
22 23		a corrupt hierarchy who spout the party line over and	24		I hey carry the whole burden until you recover.
22 23 24 25		a corrupt hierarchy who spout the party line over and over:	24 25		They carry the whole burden until you recover. Eventually you dig in, start afresh, reinvent and move

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1	on. But the hurt and pain is always buried deep,	1		complicit as Vennells, van den Bogerd, Elaine Ridge
2	suppressed, but always eating away.	2		Nigel Allen, and all the others who bullied and
3	After a stroke you're known as a stroke	3		terrorised so many. Sort it out now. Do the decent
4	survivor. I'm lucky enough myself to consider myself	4		thing for once and put the victims first.
5	a Post Office survivor as well. But they damaged me	5	Q.	Is there anything else you had like to say to the
6	and tried to damage my self, my worth, my family, my	6		Chair?
7	business and my community.	7	A.	No. Thank you.
8	Last bit. I fear for this Inquiry in the long	8	Q.	I'm just going to turn to the Chair now to ask if he
9	run because the actions of the Post Office previously	9		has any questions for you.
10	all show that they will do anything at any cost to	10		Chair, do you have any questions?
11	protect themselves. The civil case was fought in the	11	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: No, thank you.
12	most aggressive manner by Post Office and when they	12	-	But I would like to thank Mr Simpson, first for
13	attempted to recuse Judge Fraser and tarnish his	13		his witness statement, next for his oral evidence, and
14	reputation, it showed everyone just how low they were	14		then, thirdly, for taking the time and trouble to
15	prepared to go.	15		write what is really quite a formidable speech that
16	Be careful, Sir Wyn, and your colleagues here at	16		you gave me right at the end, Mr Simpson. So thank
17	the Inquiry. Post Office will try every underhand,	17		you very much.
18	dishonest and evil tactic to destroy any threat and	18		Thank you for introducing me to Mrs Simpson, who
19	they have powerful friends who will back them all the	19		has obviously been a great source of support to you.
20	way. They don't want the truth to come out and if	20		So thanks very much.
20	they carry on as they are, I fear for all your		•	Thank you, Sir Wyn.
21	reputations and well-being.	21 22		KENNEDY: Chair, our next witness is Mr Gordon Martin,
22		22	NI S	
	Messrs Scully, Kwarteng and Read, through your			whose is appearing remotely. I propose we take
24 25	delaying and blocking of proper compensation for all	24		a short ten-minute break and perhaps come back at
20	the victims of this scandal, you're as guilty and 105	25		25 past. 106
1	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Certainly, fine.	1	•	Okay.
2			А.	
2	(2.14 pm)	2	Q.	-
2	(2.14 pm) (A short break)		-	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	(A short break)	2	Q.	I'm going to start by asking a couple of introductory
3		2 3	Q. A.	I'm going to start by asking a couple of introductory questions about you. How old are you now? I shall be 78 next week.
3 4 5	(A short break) (2.27 pm) MS KENNEDY: Our next witness is Mr Gordon Martin.	2 3 4 5	Q. A. Q.	I'm going to start by asking a couple of introductory questions about you. How old are you now? I shall be 78 next week. Can you tell us a little bit about your family?
3 4	(A short break) (2.27 pm) MS KENNEDY: Our next witness is Mr Gordon Martin. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: We've already had a chat. I don't	2 3 4	Q. A. Q.	I'm going to start by asking a couple of introductory questions about you. How old are you now? I shall be 78 next week. Can you tell us a little bit about your family? I'm on my second marriage. I have a son who lives in
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		1	
1	find a small business and there was a pause in their	1	training, I was a sales director and we had a very,
2	seeking of an option, but we made the move first and	2	very successful two years, at which point Fujitsu
3	my wife moved to Cornwall with my son, whilst I tried	3	bought out the Japanese company that we were dealing
4	to sell the house. At that time, the housing market	4	with and immediately closed our options on equipment.
5	collapsed and it took me 12 months to sort that out.	5	This left us with no option but to move out of
6	I eventually moved to Cornwall and my wife had	6	the business. For a few weeks, I hesitated as to what
7	a small boutique, and it didn't really pay enough	7	I was going to do with life and I did quite a bit of
8	money so I took a job in security. Having been in the	8	computer consultancy work and also ordinary business
9	Air Force and security cleared at very high level, it	9	consultancy work, helping new formed companies.
10	was very easy for the security company to get me	10	Then I got involved in retail with a Tandy
11	through their books.	11	franchise. At first, I managed a franchise and we
12	Difficult times over nine years. I had to learn	12	were so successful that the owner of the business and
13	on the job, I had no experience whatsoever. I dealt	13	his wife had too much work to do because I was
14	with security for major companies, so I knew	14	performing too well. So they decided that they were
15	everybody's cash movements, I knew their security	15	going to sell the business, and I purchased it. I did
16	measures, and it was a trusted job. I was promoted	16	a deal with them. The lease was up so we moved to
17	and moved to Bristol but my wife didn't really fancy	17	premises, we got involved with Tandy, we had a thing
18	moving to Bristol and the only other option, really,	18	called Photo Stop which was a one-hour photo
19	was to move on.	19	processing business. We ran a cyber café, we ran
20	I took up an option which was to prove quite	20	a games room, we got involved with selling games
21	difficult and that was selling microcomputers. At	21	machines. We set up a web design company, and
22	that time, there was next to no dealerships in	22	everything was going very, very well.
23	microcomputers. Everybody was into mainframes and,	23	And then Tandy pulled out of the UK, sold off to
24	really, there were only toys on the market. So I got	24	Carphone Warehouse. Carphone Warehouse didn't want
25	involved in selling, I got involved in programming,	25	the Tandy set up, what they wanted, really, was the
	109		110
1	shops that Tandy owned to set up phone shops.	1	up then running a Post Office?
1 2	So I was left with a building with a lease, for	1 2	A. It was a matter of attrition really. The
	So I was left with a building with a lease, for which I was going to be responsible, and no business.		 It was a matter of attrition really. The Post Office I didn't know it, because we were in
2	So I was left with a building with a lease, for which I was going to be responsible, and no business. I spoke to friends who actually pointed me in the	2	A. It was a matter of attrition really. The
2 3	So I was left with a building with a lease, for which I was going to be responsible, and no business. I spoke to friends who actually pointed me in the direction of running a pound shop (this was before	2 3 4 5	A. It was a matter of attrition really. The Post Office I didn't know it, because we were in there too early in the morning and working too late at night, we didn't realise that the Crown Office in
2 3 4	So I was left with a building with a lease, for which I was going to be responsible, and no business. I spoke to friends who actually pointed me in the direction of running a pound shop (this was before most of the big pound shops came on the market) and we	2 3 4	A. It was a matter of attrition really. The Post Office I didn't know it, because we were in there too early in the morning and working too late at night, we didn't realise that the Crown Office in Falmouth was going to be sold off to a private
2 3 4 5	So I was left with a building with a lease, for which I was going to be responsible, and no business. I spoke to friends who actually pointed me in the direction of running a pound shop (this was before most of the big pound shops came on the market) and we were a fairly new innovation and it was very	2 3 4 5	A. It was a matter of attrition really. The Post Office I didn't know it, because we were in there too early in the morning and working too late at night, we didn't realise that the Crown Office in Falmouth was going to be sold off to a private supermarket and the Commercial Workers Union and the
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1	a year. It was a large office. We're talking about	1		position. My wife always dreamt of a café. We opened
2	a dedicated currency exchange, a seven-position	2		the front of the building up as a café, we put our
3	Post Office with fortress, and in a very, very	3		retail in the middle of it and the Post Office came up
4	desirable trading position.	4		with all sorts of requirements. I didn't have the
5	In the end, I had to make a decision. My	5		time. I was working too many hours a day.
6	business was going to close anyway because the	6		So the business manager who was speaking to u
7	landlord was going to redevelop the property. So we	7		actually produced all the cash flows, without
8	decided that we would go for broke. We'll go for it.	8		referring to me. He also produced a business plan,
9	At that time I was 62. We were only three years off	9		without referring to me, and he announced that we'd
10	retirement, and a friend of mine said "You do realise	10		won the franchise and that we could go ahead. There
1	that if you have got 125,000 salary on a Post Office,	11		were various promises of supplying safes and all sorts
2	plus a retail business that's got a footfall of over	12		of other bits of equipment, and it would be
3	1,000 a day, it's going to be a fair old business to	13		a walk-in/walk-out, so as their staff walked out, we
4	sell on and you can retire comfortable on that".	14		would walk in and take over with whatever equipment
5	So we decided that that's what we would do.	15		and office furniture that was available.
6	We'd go for broke. Our daughter in Australia was	16	Q.	How was this financed?
7	struggling, so we promised her that, at 65, I would	17	Α.	Right. Well, we decided that, seeing we were going to
8	retire, I would sell the business and we would move	18		disappear off to Australia, what we didn't want to do
9	out to try to support her.	19		was end up, three years down the line, I'd have to try
20	That wasn't to be.	20		to find a buyer for the house. So we put the house on
21 Q	. What were the terms of the deal with the Post Office	21		the market. 60,000 of that went into the business,
22	in the end?	22		20,000 went into the bank to try to support ourselves
23 A	. 125,000 a year. They insisted that it had to be	23		for the next few years. 80,000 was paid to us by the
24	an open plan office, this was the new idea, an open	24		landlord, because we were going to have to give up our
25	plan office with a small what we call a fortress	25		leases, and he paid us compensation of 80,000.
	113			114
1	The Post Office introduced us to the bank, who	1		two days off to sort themselves out with uniform,
2	promised us a good working overdraft, which when the	2		this, that and the other, and then we took over on the
3	business when the shop had been redeveloped and we	3		Wednesday.
4	were back in that building, they would convert that to	4	Q.	The Post Office that you took over, you were guarantor
5	a business loan and still leave us with a small	5		of the Moor Falmouth?
6	overdraft facility.	6	A.	That's correct.
7	After we moved in, it was chaos, absolute chaos.	7	Q.	That was from 20 March 2006; is that right?
3 Q	. How many members of staff did you have working for you	8	A.	That's correct.
9	in your various businesses?	9	Q.	How soon after starting to run the Post Office did you
0 A		10		start to notice shortfalls and discrepancies?
1 Q	. When you took over the Post Office, what training did	11	A.	
2	you receive?	12		trainers with us, also the assistant manager from the
- 3 A		13		original Post Office was due to retire in four weeks
4	turned out to be talk of how we would transfer the	14		time, so they kept her on in the Post Office as part
5	business, all the things that needed to be done on	15		of the training team. At the end of the first period,
6	day 1, all the things that we need to put into place.	16		the roll over had to happen, my staff had been given
5 7	I had ten staff who were ready to move in to the	17		no training on the roll over of the branch. She knew
8	Post Office. I had interviewed them. We were still	18		that. Without talking to anybody, she automatically
9	waiting for the Post Office to verify that they had	19		went out and did the roll over and announced that
20	checked them out, right up to the last minute. So	20		everything was fine.
	there was a bit of a panic going on.	20		I was quite surprised that it had even been
		22		done, bearing the size of the branch, I can't believe
!1		~~		-
!1 !2	The week before we took over the Post Office, the Post Office took a room in a local hotel, where	22		that she did it in the time. Rear in mind that even
21 22 23	the Post Office took a room in a local hotel, where	23 24		that she did it in the time. Bear in mind that, even
20 21 22 23 24 25		23 24 25		that she did it in the time. Bear in mind that, even the vault was a room 10 by 10, lined with shelving full of foreign currency, and money and coin. I can't

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1	believe she even checked it.	1		The manageress that I had employed was pulling
2	But, anyway, she announced that was all done and	2		her hair out. We had a problem in that, because it
3	we rolled over.	3		was in the old Crown Office, we were still under the
4	The next trading period, all the training staff	4		control of the Post Office security setup, which meant
5	had gone, had left. In fact, most of them left after	5		they controlled the time locks on the safes, they
6	a couple of days. They couldn't take the strain of	6		controlled the alarm system and the monitoring system,
7	the takeover of the branch. So that period, our staff	7		and at 8.00 we had a deadline: we had to close. At
8	were left in the dark as to how to do the roll over.	8		that point, we hadn't found it.
9	When you take this down to the machine and try to	9		The help team huh! The help team. They
10	check your transactions, it's a piece of paper just	10		decided that we should roll over; irrespective, we had
11	over three inches wide, bearing in mind that we have	10		to close. We didn't have any choice. If we didn't
12	six positions open most of the time, for 14 days,	12		roll over at that time, we couldn't open the next
12	there's thousands and thousands of transactions. It	12		morning.
		13		5
4	was like ticker tape, paper absolutely everywhere. The first thing you do is you check all your			So, on their advice, we rolled over.
15 16	various stock. Each member of staff has their own	15 16		The next morning, I got in touch with the help desk and they said "Well, if you're £2,000 short, I'm
7	private stock that they are responsible for. They	17		afraid you're going to have to put it in". Easier
8	each balance their own stock. That stock then goes	18		said than done.
9	into the safe and then you are left to do the foreign	19		So I contacted the business development manage
20	currency and the vault, and you have to then do your	20		he promised me he'd come back and tell me what was
21	balance.	21		going to happen. He never did come back.
22	All those stocks individually balanced. The	22		I, contacted Chesterfield, they said to me "Put
23	vault was correct. The foreign currency was correct.	23		the money in, simple as that". When I said, "Well,
24	When they tried to roll over, it came back with	24		I can't find out where the money is. There's no
25	a 2,000 deficit. Nobody could explain it. 117	25		deficit on any of the stocks, there's no deficit in 118
1	the cofe but we've and ad up with this shortfall of	1		and sizeration and things
1	the safe but we've ended up with this shortfall of	1		and cigarettes and things.
2	£2,000". So they agreed that they'd put it into	2		At the end of the day, we shut desk down and
3	a suspense account and I was going to argue black with	3		I ran a balance on the desk, and we were £800 down.
4 -	blue that this wasn't going to happen, that they	4		I said, "What do we do now?" So he said, "You have to
5	weren't going to take £2,000 off me, not for all the	5		put the money in, simple as that". I said, "There's
5	tea in China.	6		got to be a reason for it. You have sat here, you
7	This set up a rather bad relationship between me	7		have watched me, you've done transactions with me,
3	and the Post Office. They didn't like people	8		nothing strange has happened. Why should there be
9	answering back. They were in charge, they were	9		a deficit of £800?" He said, "Well, it'll come back,
-				don't worry about it, it will come back". I didn't
	running the show and, basically, you do as you're	10		
1	told.	11		understand why but he said it would come back.
1 2 Q .	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls?	11 12		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the
1 2 Q. 3 A.	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had	11 12 13		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy
1 2 Q . 3 A . 4	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans,	11 12 13 14		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back.
1 2 Q. 3 A. 4 5	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of	11 12 13 14 15	Q.	So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the
1 2 Q. 3 A. 4 5	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans,	11 12 13 14 15 16	Q.	So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back.
1 2 Q. 3 A. 4 5 6	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of	11 12 13 14 15		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the
1 2 Q. 3 A. 4 5 6 7	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to Euros, pounds to Euros, dollars to pounds. And the	11 12 13 14 15 16		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming, I've done training and, to me, there seemed something
1 Q. Q. 3 A. 4 5 6 7 8	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to	11 12 13 14 15 16 17		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming,
1 Q. 3 A. 4 5 6 7 8 9	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to Euros, pounds to Euros, dollars to pounds. And the	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming, I've done training and, to me, there seemed something
1 Q. 3 A. 4 5 6 7 18 9 20	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to Euros, pounds to Euros, dollars to pounds. And the Post Office was absolutely rammed that day. It was	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming, I've done training and, to me, there seemed something very amiss with if there was something wrong with
11 12 Q. 13 A. 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to Euros, pounds to Euros, dollars to pounds. And the Post Office was absolutely rammed that day. It was busy. I decided to help out by going onto the foreign	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming, I've done training and, to me, there seemed something very amiss with if there was something wrong with balancing, then there should have been an error
1 Q. 12 Q. 13 A. 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to Euros, pounds to Euros, dollars to pounds. And the Post Office was absolutely rammed that day. It was busy. I decided to help out by going onto the foreign currency desk, which was a dedicated desk, and we	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming, I've done training and, to me, there seemed something very amiss with if there was something wrong with balancing, then there should have been an error message or something that would come up on the system
	told. Did you continue to notice further shortfalls? We had another shortfall on the currency desk. We had a cruise ship come into Falmouth, full of Americans, thousands of them, or it appeared to be thousands of them, and their next port of call was somewhere in Europe, so they were all coming in changing dollars to Euros, pounds to Euros, dollars to pounds. And the Post Office was absolutely rammed that day. It was busy. I decided to help out by going onto the foreign currency desk, which was a dedicated desk, and we still had one trainer with us at that time who sat	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22		So I went next door and robbed £800 out of the daily takings. I'd bought, effectively, dummy currency, £800 for nothing. It never did come back. How did you feel about not being able to solve the problem or find what went wrong? Well, I'm used to computers, I've done programming, I've done training and, to me, there seemed something very amiss with if there was something wrong with balancing, then there should have been an error message or something that would come up on the system but nothing ever did. There had to be something else

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1	Communication cut down. No matter who I tried to	1	have as they developed the building, we were
2	speak to, they were in meetings. Everybody's in	2	supposed to move units around within the building and
3	a meeting. We always said that if the Post Office cut	3	stay in the same building and, in the end, the
4	their meetings down they'd probably cut their staff in	4	Post Office agreed that, under health and safety
5	half.	5	rules, they didn't want their customers in a building
6 Q	Q. You mention in your statement that you had four audits	6	site. So, along with my landlord, we found up the
7	during your time with the Post Office. I think	7	road there was a charity shop, which was going to be
8 A	A. Yes, I think it was four. The first one was my	8	moving, so we gave them a donation, and we did
9	request, when we couldn't find the £2,000. I can't	9	a refit. The total refit costs were only estimated by
0	remember how long after it was, but we had three	10	the Post Office to be 80,000. We spent more than that
1	people turn up early one morning. We weren't allowed	11	putting the charity shop to rights to open up as
2	to open and they went through and they came back and	12	a temporary office, and we hadn't been in there long
3	said "There's £2,000 missing". I said, "I know that,	13	when the audit team turned up.
4	I've told everybody that, everybody knows we're £2,000	14	Again, there was three of them. Two of them
5	down, it's in the suspense account, I was rather	15	were bean counters and the third guy didn't really say
6	hoping you could tell me where it was".	16	very much. At the end of the bean count, the guy came
7	They said, "Well, no, we can't, we don't have	17	and he said "That £2,000 is still missing", and I said
3	the power to find that. All we can do is come and	18	"I know, it's in the suspense account. I have
9	count your money". Rather a waste of time, really.	19	an agreement and I won't pay it, and not until you can
	Q. Then the second time they come back, I think in your	20	tell me where the £2,000 has gone. We haven't got it.
1	statement you say it's around February 2007, and you	21	I trust my staff. There must be a good reason for
2	mention that they threatened you with legal action.	22	it".
3	Could you tell about that?	23	Then the third guy got involved and said, "Well,
4 A	A. Yes. That was after when after we'd been in the	24	it's quite simple really. If you don't really pay the
5	main Post Office for a while, we were supposed to 121	25	£2,000, then we'll have to look at your contract. 122
1	We'll have to look at whether we can put you back in	1	and we now had got two years before retirement. So we
2	the new building that's being developed", which was	2	were hanging on by the skin of our teeth.
	a bit self a bit of a problem for them because	3	The business manager turned up and said to me
	they wouldn't have had a Post Office left at that	4	about she thought things were getting a bit tight,
	time, so I didn't understand that line. And then they	5	were they, and I said "Yes", and I confided in her
	said "Well, the only other action is we're going to	6	that we'd spent a lot more money than we'd anticipated
	have to take legal action against you to pull back the	7	and, really, we could do with some help and maybe
	money".	8	a little bit less of the Post Office demanding so much
)	So, at that time, I had that much money invested	9	from us. And I didn't get any answers and, no matter
)	I couldn't really afford to let it go, so I took the	10	who we spoke to, we couldn't get the answers out of
, 	cheque book and gave them a cheque for £2,000.	11	anybody. The £2,000 got in my craw.
_	Q. I think just after that second audit, in around	12	It was under the scheme of things £2,000,
3	May 2007, you say you emailed the CEO of the	13	when you have invested 250,000, is not a lot of money,
, 1	Post Office Adam Crozier at that time; is that right?	14	but it was the principle that they didn't want to
	A. Yes, I did. We had all sorts of problems going	15	investigate what the problem was.
5	forward. Whenever the Post Office staff turned up,	16	So one day, I got so fed up, I took hold of my
7	which was quite regularly, there was always something	17	laptop and I managed to find the email address of
}	else we were going to have to buy, and the money was	18	Adam Crozier, who was the CEO, and I fired off
)	disappearing out the door like nobody's business.	19	an email and I put down the branch number and all the
)	We'd moved into the new building by this time, and	20	details and underneath it I put "Lots of questions,
1	we'd refitted that, we put our pound shop back in	20	people are listening, but we're not getting any
2	place, we put a café back in place, and we're now	21	answers". Next day, I had a visit from an area
2 3	running a cost of getting on for 250,000. I had to	22	manager who said to me "You can't do that. Nobody
4	sell my first shop. I had to sell it really for	23	talks to Adam Crozier". I don't suppose he even saw
.4 :5	a pretty low figure but we maxed out some credit cards	24	it. I'd probably find one of his minions took the
0	123	20	124

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1	email anyway. "We don't talk to Adam Crozier, he's in	1	and said "Look, you offered us at the time that you
2	charge of the business. He doesn't have time to talk	2	would convert our overdraft to a business loan" and
	-		
3 4	to people like you. What you are doing is you're	3	they said "Well, we hear your contract is a little in
4 r	setting up a problem for yourself and somebody's going	4	jeopardy. Maybe we ought to rethink this and we'll
5	to look at your contract". This was a theme that	5	just leave you with an overdraft". We were a little
6	seemed to go on: "We'll look at your contract".	6	bit shell-shocked, to say the least.
7 Q	,	7	A fortnight later, we moved into the new
8	passed without issue; is that right?	8	building and the Post Office were all over us. We had
9 A	5 7 5 1 5	9	their staff telling shopfitters what to do, spending
0	satisfied, it was the same two guys. They were happy	10	my money left, right and centre. I had the area
1	with everything, carried on.	11	manager actually ordered, on my behalf, digital
2 Q	. Then the final audit happened in February 2008. Can	12	scales, another bill to cover. Then we found out, or
3	you tell us about what happened then?	13	I found out afterwards, that they had changed the
4 A	. Right. Well, after I paid the £2,000, within a few	14	uniforms and part of my agreement was that my staff
5	days of the £2,000 we were getting ready to go back to	15	had to be in uniform. We'd only just recently spent
6	the old building and the Post Office had put	16	God knows how much money buying all the uniforms and
7	a deadline on us to actually have the Post Office	17	now she, without contacting me, ordered all new
8	open, and that was going to be four weeks to	18	uniforms for my staff. I wasn't given the option.
9	completely rebuild a Post Office, and people lined up	19	So now we're beginning to really run out of
0	ready to do that.	20	money and things are getting really tight. So I put
1	And then we had a problem the builder, or the	21	the business on the market. We went to Daltons, and
2	developer, went bankrupt and we were left with	22	another organisation which I can't remember. They
3	a building with no electric, no water, no ceilings,	23	valued it 650,000 plus stock, was the valuation. We
24	a multi-level of floors, pillars left in places that	24	had one initial enquiry which didn't want the
25	weren't supposed to be there, and I contacted the bank	25	Post Office. All they wanted was the shop because of
	125		126
1	its good trading position and it's size, a bit longer	1	We had just been paid by the Post Office, and I paid
2	than 3,000 square feet, and I felt that was wrong. We	2	their salaries and backtrack a bit here. Back when
3	hard at a ff the second descent second second the second states of		
	had staff to we'd nurtured and trained and they	3	we first moved in and I was falling out with staff, we
4	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them	3 4	we first moved in and I was falling out with staff, we had two people arrive with the area manager, who was
	-		-
5	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them	4	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was
5 6	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down.	4 5	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who
4 5 6 7 8	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down. Then we had another enquiry from the Midlands.	4 5 6	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who they were. I'd just come back from the warehouse and
5 6 7 8	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down. Then we had another enquiry from the Midlands. A chap had been down, he'd actually put a deposit on	4 5 6 7	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who they were. I'd just come back from the warehouse and they were introducing the two people to my staff and
5 6 7 8 9	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down. Then we had another enquiry from the Midlands. A chap had been down, he'd actually put a deposit on a house, and was looking for a business and he really	4 5 6 7 8	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who they were. I'd just come back from the warehouse and they were introducing the two people to my staff and I said "Who are they?" They said, "Well they run
5 6 7 8 9	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down. Then we had another enquiry from the Midlands. A chap had been down, he'd actually put a deposit on a house, and was looking for a business and he really pushed for the Post Office. He was going to run that, his wife was going to run the shop, and his daughter	4 5 6 7 8 9	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who they were. I'd just come back from the warehouse and they were introducing the two people to my staff and I said "Who are they?" They said, "Well they run an organisation that actually runs failed Post Offices". Very strange. "They're currently
5 7 3 9 0 1	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down. Then we had another enquiry from the Midlands. A chap had been down, he'd actually put a deposit on a house, and was looking for a business and he really pushed for the Post Office. He was going to run that, his wife was going to run the shop, and his daughter was going to run the café. Looked the ideal marriage	4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who they were. I'd just come back from the warehouse and they were introducing the two people to my staff and I said "Who are they?" They said, "Well they run an organisation that actually runs failed Post Offices". Very strange. "They're currently running over 70 Post Offices". I thought: this is
5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2	didn't deserve to be out of a job. So I turned them down. Then we had another enquiry from the Midlands. A chap had been down, he'd actually put a deposit on a house, and was looking for a business and he really pushed for the Post Office. He was going to run that, his wife was going to run the shop, and his daughter was going to run the café. Looked the ideal marriage to me. Everything was good, he was happy with the	4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	had two people arrive with the area manager, who was being shown around the shop, but I didn't know who they were. I'd just come back from the warehouse and they were introducing the two people to my staff and I said "Who are they?" They said, "Well they run an organisation that actually runs failed Post Offices". Very strange. "They're currently running over 70 Post Offices". I thought: this is stupid, how can you run 70 Post Offices for
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	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24		He picked up his mobile phone and phoned his head office, explained the situation, and he said the message came back "Could you estimate how much you owe us?" I said, "My estimation is nothing at the moment". I gave him a cup of tea and he sat there for a while, thinking about it, made a few more phone calls. He phoned the VAT office and told them what had happened. He had a word with the PAYE office, told them what had happened. We never heard another dicky bird from them. We never heard anything more from the bank. We heard nothing more from the Post Office until August when we received a termination of our contract. I think you also mention in your statement that the Post Office tried to reclaim sums from your insurance; is that right? When I don't know if it's the same with postmasters in little sub-offices or whether it only applies to the crown offices but what they try to do is to claim back a percentage of your salary to insure all their property and money in the shop. Now, I already had a very good insurance from a broker, who I'd worked with for years, he knew the situation, he knew exactly	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	Α.	When we closed the Post Office, the Post Office decided that they were going to come back now and give me a bill for two years' insurance, even though I was insured. They never, ever accepted that I was fully insured. Turning then to the financial consequences that this has had on you, I believe you were declared bankrupt; is that right? We were declared bankrupt in the August. My wife had several credit cards, and I had several credit cards and a personal loan at the bank, unsecured. We had no choice. We were being hounded left, right and centre, life was becoming a misery. My wife at one stage, at the height of all the problems, had a stroke. She was in no real fit state to fight anybody. She lived dreading a knock on the door. She didn't want to answer the phone. She had become a recluse. I brazened it out. I've always been a bit shouty, prepared to defend myself. But she couldn't do that and her health was suffering. So I decided the only answer, really, was to go bankrupt, which we did, and then we had to go through the whole shenanigans again with the receiver.

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1					
		another job?	1		Bates said to me, he said, "I've had a call from the
2	Α.	I went to the Job Centre and they said, "How old are	2		Sunday Times. They want your story. They don't know
3		you?" and I was I think, I was about three days off	3		who you are". I thought about it for a while and
4		being 64, and the young lady just smiled and looked at	4		I thought: do I really want to go through it all
5		me and said, "I don't think so, not at 64. I think	5		again? So I contacted David Enright and David said to
6		you'd better consider that it's early retirement.	6		me "If you can do it, we would appreciate the fact
7		I don't think anybody would query benefits. I suggest	7		that your story is out there".
8		you go home, sit on your bum".	8		So later that night, I took a phonecall from the
9	Q.	What happened to your retirement plan?	9		Sunday Times, nice young lady, who probably spent the
10	Α.	Well, that went out the window, which really broke my	10		best part of an hour and a half with me, and she
11		wife up. I didn't find out until six months ago that	11		gleaned enough information to write a story. And
12		she came her doctors were quite concerned about her	12		I pictured it would probably be on page 20 or buried
13		and sent her to the mental health team and I found out	13		somewhere in a corner. They sent a photographer dow
14		for the first time that when life was tough she had	14		to photograph me in the local area, managed to catch
15		threatened to take her life.	15		me standing beside a postman, who just happened to b
16	Q.	How did that make you feel?	16		there. I don't know she knows she's in the Times at
17	A.	Very inadequate.	17		the moment.
18	Q.	What about the impact that all of this has had on your	18		The article came out on the Sunday and I had
19		health?	19		various phonecalls from people saying, "What's all
20	A.	Until recently, I didn't think it had really affected	20		this about? I didn't know you were involved in this".
21		me. I buried it. Two weeks ago, when my name	21		But the headline that hurt me: "The Post Office
22		appeared on the schedule for this Inquiry, somebody	22		had taken away my chance to be a grandfather".
23		queried who I was. My name hadn't really come up in	23		Sorry.
24		anything. I kept my head down. And I had a call from	24	Q.	Please don't apologise, and please let me know if
25		the JFSA, as I was part of the litigation, and Alan	25	-	you'd like a short break.
		133			134
4			1		
1	A.		1		They didn't lose anything.
2	Q.	Turning to your family in Australia, what impact has	2		A few weeks after we left, they reneged on that
3 1		this had on them?	3		deal and said to our staff, "You're owed money".
4 5	Α.	They have had tough times. My son-in-law puts in	4		They'd brought in a person from the Citizens' Advice
5		fibre optics into houses as a subcontractor. The main	5		and they sat them down and asked them how much the
6		contract changes hand from time to time and each time	6		owed. They all inflated their figures. I know the
7		she seems to be on the wrong end of somebody going	7		figures were nothing like the figures that they were
8		bust, and not getting money. So my daughter is a very	8		quoting. And they took it to small claims court.
9		strong character and she goes out and digs holes with	9		They were people we'd helped, employed, nurtured,
10		him. To dig holes was in the middle of the day in	10	_	looked after. And they were taking us to court.
11		Queensland in temperatures 30 degrees takes some guts.	11	Q.	
12		The family has had great difficulties, obviously, with	12	Α.	It broke my wife. She's never got over it.
13		her working with two growing children. They were in	13	Q.	You mention in your statement that you lost some
14		need of us and we weren't there.	14		friends over this; is that right?
15	Q.	Turning to the community, what impact did this have on	15	Α.	Well, the staff were our friends. We'd helped them.
16		your standing in the community?	16		One young lady had had a window smashed by her
17	Α.	I don't know. We've never been back to Falmouth.	17		daughter's boyfriend in a fit of temper. She hadn't
18	Q.	Because of this?	18		got the money. We paid for a replacement.
19	Α.	Yes.	19		Another one had got problems paying rates and
	Q.	I think you mention in your statement that there was	20		they were going to end up in court. We paid them.
20		an issue with your staff's pay; is that right?	21		Another one was on the breadline with young
20 21		There was. When these two guys took over the running	22		children and we gave her money to help her out as
	Α.	There had. Then alloce the gays took over the raining			
21	Α.	of the Post Office, the terms were that they would	23		a loan, which we never saw back, and there she was
21 22	Α.		23 24		a loan, which we never saw back, and there she was taking us to court.

1		threats made. Could you tell us about those?	1		financial redress towards the bill for compensation
2	Α.	I don't want to be specific about that. That's	2		I don't believe the taxpayer should really take the
3		I can't face that.	3		full hit and they should have to do that for
4	Q.	How did it feel to be threatened?	4		sitting on their hands for so long knowing exactly
5	Α.	I've never been threatened in my life apart from on	5		what that situation was.
6		the East German border.	6		The Post Office: apart from individual
7		I've always got on with people. Being	7		accountability, maybe like-for-like action; maybe they
8		a salesman at heart, you learn to accept people as	8		should sacrifice their pensions; maybe they should do
9		they are, see their better side. I've never been	9		community service. I can't believe any of them are
10		involved in anything like it in my life and, after	10		going to end up in prison.
11		65 years of being on this planet, I certainly didn't	11		Also, there needs to be a clean slate and
12		expect it then.	12		a clear out at the top of the Post Office to put it
13	Q.	What would you like from the Post Office now?	13		back on track to regain its rightful status.
14	Α.	Well, there's the obvious things. I've made copious	14	Q.	Is there anything else you'd like to say to the Chair?
15		notes over the last fortnight. I've heard so many	15	Α.	Yes.
16		people on this Inquiry come forward with their	16		Thousands of people have invested their life
17		requirements and their needs but they all say the same	17		savings believing the Post Office to be a true and
18		basically, so I'll just read what I've put here.	18		trusted brand. When Horizon went wrong the
19		Apart from the obvious (that is compensation),	19		Post Office hid the truth and banked the proceeds of
20		all subpostmasters I can't see a thing now	20		their crime. And when the unexplained windfall
21		subpostmasters need their compensation in full without	21		appears in suspense accounts, instead of finding out
22		prolonged negotiations and individual interaction, so	22		why, they transfer the proceeds to the bottom line
23		eliminating more grief and trauma for all concerned.	23		and, as a result of it, top executives are showered
24		Fujitsu: apart from the police investigation,	24		with bonuses and honours.
25		the company should be held partly responsible for	25		The words of Nick Wallis still ring in my ears
		137			138
4		when he looked around the High Court during the Group	1		the dates from?
1			1		
2		Litigation and noted that all those present were	2	A.	
				Α.	
2		Litigation and noted that all those present were	2	Α.	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make
2 3		Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims. Now I see the Inquiry. Nothing's changed:	2 3	Α.	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in
2 3 4	MS	Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims.	2 3 4		I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in which the questions were put were not relevant to the
2 3 4 5	MS	Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims. Now I see the Inquiry. Nothing's changed: everybody being paid, apart from the victims. KENNEDY: I'm just going to turn now to see if the	2 3 4 5	SIR	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in which the questions were put were not relevant to the timeline. WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, okay.
2 3 4 5 6	MS	Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims. Now I see the Inquiry. Nothing's changed: everybody being paid, apart from the victims. KENNEDY: I'm just going to turn now to see if the Chair has any questions for you. Do you have any	2 3 4 5 6 7	SIR	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in which the questions were put were not relevant to the timeline. WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, okay. I got a few things round the wrong way, so I had to
2 3 4 5 6 7		Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims. Now I see the Inquiry. Nothing's changed: everybody being paid, apart from the victims. KENNEDY: I'm just going to turn now to see if the Chair has any questions for you. Do you have any questions, Chair?	2 3 4 5 6	SIR	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in which the questions were put were not relevant to the timeline. WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, okay. I got a few things round the wrong way, so I had to get in my own mind the actual timeline. So some of
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims. Now I see the Inquiry. Nothing's changed: everybody being paid, apart from the victims. KENNEDY: I'm just going to turn now to see if the Chair has any questions for you. Do you have any questions, Chair? KWYN WILLIAMS: No, no thank you, Ms Kennedy.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	SIR	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in which the questions were put were not relevant to the timeline. WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, okay. I got a few things round the wrong way, so I had to get in my own mind the actual timeline. So some of those timeline entries appear to be a little bit
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		Litigation and noted that all those present were earning a wage, apart from the victims. Now I see the Inquiry. Nothing's changed: everybody being paid, apart from the victims. KENNEDY: I'm just going to turn now to see if the Chair has any questions for you. Do you have any questions, Chair? WYN WILLIAMS: No, no thank you, Ms Kennedy. You won't be surprised to learn, Mr Martin, that	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	SIR A.	I prepared it because when I was interviewed to make my statement or my witness statement, the order in which the questions were put were not relevant to the timeline. WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, okay. I got a few things round the wrong way, so I had to get in my own mind the actual timeline. So some of those timeline entries appear to be a little bit disjointed with witness statement.
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4	alarm exercise.	4	THOMAS GEORGE BROWN (affirmed)	51
5	MS KENNEDY: Exactly, exactly.	5	Questioned by MS HODGE	51
6	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine, all right. So I'll see everyone	6	MALCOLM SIMPSON (affirmed)	79
7	at 10.15 in the morning. Goodbye everyone.	7	Questioned by MS KENNEDY	79
8	MS KENNEDY: Thank you.	8	GORDON MARTIN (affirmed)	107
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