

29-11-06 15:24 FROM:MARINE+DRIVE+PO

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(1) D Day
(2) Defendant
(3) First

Claim No. HQ 05 X 02706

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

BETWEEN:

POST OFFICE LIMITED

Claimant/
Part 20 Defendant

and

LEE CASTLETON

Defendant/
Part 20 Claimant

WITNESS STATEMENT OF
DOROTHY DAY

I, DOROTHY DAY, of [address] WILL SAY as follows:

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1. I am currently the temporary sub-postmaster of Marine Drive Post Office in Bridlington.

Prior to that, I had been sub-postmaster of my own post office at [address] for 14 years

LANE END P.O.

before selling the office.

GRO STAITHES LANE STAITHES
STAITHES TEL: 546 546

Mrs Cath Oglesby

2. I was asked on 29 May 2004 by [who?] on behalf of the Post Office to go to Marine

Drive Post Office to take over as temporary sub-postmaster following the suspension of
the previous sub-postmaster, Lee Castleton.

3. It soon became apparent to me that there were intermittent problems with the Horizon computer system in use at Marine Drive Post Office. The most worrying and inconvenient of these was that debit and credit cards would intermittently fail to register when swiped through the gateway keyboard to pay for customer transactions. The terminal would go off-line frequently and swipe cards would only work on the gateway intermittently but be ok on the node 2 terminal.

4. The only way round this problem was to finish the transaction to cash and then create a "false" sale of the same amount to stamps on the secondary terminal to enable me to clear the outstanding amount. I would then have to adjust the stamp stock to reinstate the fictitious sale of stamps.

5. The keyboard on the gateway was changed three times before the problem was solved. At one point, the engineer who attended the site resorted to switching keyboards between the two terminals-the "faulty" keyboard from the gateway then worked perfectly on the other terminal and exhibited none of the problems that it had shown previously when attached to the gateway. This made me think that there was something more than the keyboard at fault in causing the problems that I had experienced.

6. After a few weeks in post at Marine Drive Post Office, and whilst the problems ongoing, I received a visit from a training instructor from the Post Office in respect of the fact that I had no experience of on line lottery. By this point it was a useless visit as I had already had to ask Mrs Train the procedure for accounting for the lottery.

I asked Ann whether she would find it acceptable for me to have to work with this problem if I were a new sub-postmaster with no experience. She replied quite categorically that it was not acceptable.

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7. Although when I started at Marine Drive Post Office I was sceptical that the Post Office would resort to suspending a sub-postmaster without irrefutable proof of wrong-doing, I began to doubt whether this was in fact the case and whether Mr Castleton had in fact been made a scapegoat for a problem with the Horizon computer system

8. I reviewed the cash account for the first week after Mr Castleton's suspension, when the office had been run by Ruth Simpson, and discovered a number of what I considered to be alarming things. Firstly, the amount that Mrs Simpson had handwritten on the lottery transaction as having been taken from Mr Castleton had not had the prizes deducted even though they were clearly shown on the account. When then was Mrs Simpson ^{NOT} over by this amount at the final balance?

9. Secondly, it appeared that the cash account had been rolled over twice, with two final balance tally rolls produced at different times of day. This is something that is supposed to be impossible do as this would then roll over two weeks
Secondly, it appeared that the cash account had been rolled over twice, with two final balance tally rolls produced at different times of day.

10. In July 2004, I was then visited by Mrs Oglesby, the Post Office's Regional Line Manager responsible for the Marine Drive office. She asked me whether I would be prepared to reinstate Christine Train, Mr Castleton's assistant who had been suspended at the same time as Mr Castleton had. Ms Oglesby seemed desperate to have Miss Train back in the office. I gladly took her back as, having got to know her over the 2 months that I had been at Marine Drive, I knew that she was dedicated to the only job she had ever known since leaving school and it had hit her hard that her honesty was being questioned. For my own part, I have never had any problems with her honesty and integrity.

This is something that is supposed to be impossible to do as this would then roll over two weeks instead of one. This could only be done with outside intervention.

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11. At this point, I thought that it might be sensible for me to join the National Federation of Sub-postmasters as a result of the apparent problems with the Horizon system. I was very aware that what had happened to Mr Castleton could just as easily happen to me and in those circumstances it would pay me to have the Federation's backing. However, I was refused membership of the Federation on the basis that I was only a temporary sub-postmaster. I queried this and was told that the Post Office does not allow temporary sub-postmasters to join the Federation. I found this rather surprising given that the Federation is supposed to be an independent body.
12. I have now been at Marine Drive Post Office for around 2½ years and I am convinced that the problem is with the Horizon system. I look back at my own office, which was a small village post office, and recall that I had two anomalies which I could not explain. The first occurred within 2 months of Horizon being installed when I was several hundred pounds in surplus which never turned up. The second occurred some 5 months before I left my office when on a Tuesday I was again several hundred pounds over. Tuesday was my half-day of trading and I more or less knew everyone who had been in and out and could not explain where this amount could have appeared from. The source of the discrepancy never turned up and I was at a loss to understand how this could be. Surely if I had missed inputting a Giro payment or a National Savings & Investment payment someone would have missed it sooner or later? I have worked in accounts offices all my working life and have regularly done double-entry book-keeping. These anomalies must be turning up somewhere.

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13. I truly believe that Mr Castleton has done nothing wrong otherwise I would have left Marine Drive Post Office a long time ago.

14. I believe that the contents of this statement are true.

DATED:

27/11/06

SIGNED:

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