

## Witness Statement

(CJ Act 1967, s9; MC Act 1980, ss 5A(3)(b)  
and 5B, MC Rules 1981, r 70)



Statement of Gary THOMAS

Age if under 18 Over 18 (If over 18 insert 'over 18')

This statement (consisting of 3 pages each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe true.

Dated the 12<sup>th</sup> day of March 2009

Signature G. Thomas

I am employed as an Investigation Manager within Post Office Ltd assigned to the Royal Mail Group. I have been employed for the past 24 years by the Post Office and it is my duty to investigate possible criminal offences on behalf of the business. On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008, together with Mr Graham Brander, Post Office Ltd Investigator I attended **GRO**

**GRO** the home address of a Mr Julian Wilson the Postmaster of Astwood Bank Post Office to conduct a voluntary search. At 11.05 hours I handed Mr Wilson a Notice Of Powers & Rights with regards to the search. Between 11.11 hours and 12.08 hours I participated in a search of Mr Wilson's premises along with Mr Brander and in the presence of Mr Wilson. I now produce the Consent To Search (GS005), Record Of Search (GS005c), and Record Of Property Seized (GS005d) forms as exhibit **GRT/1**. As can be seen from the "Record Of Property Seized" a total of three items all of a financial nature were seized and they have all since been returned to Mr Wilson.

I had contacted Mr Wilson following confirmation from the Post Office Auditors that there had been a £27,811.98 shortage discovered on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008 within the Post Office Accounts at Astwood Bank Post Office. The Postmaster Mr Wilson had allowed the Post Office auditors access to the secure area and at the commencement of the audit he advised Mr David Patrick the lead auditor that there would be a shortfall in the cash on hand at the branch of about £27,000. He had explained that this was due to shortages that had accumulated at the Astwood Bank Post Office branch over the last 5 years or so and admitted that he had been

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Continuation of statement of Gary THOMAS

deliberately inflating the cash figures in order that the office showed a balance on the weekly cash account and then more recently each month when the Post Office accounting process moved to monthly Branch Trading Statements in late 2005. I can confirm that the auditors completed the audit and this resulted in a final shortage of £27,811.98 and Mr Wilson confirmed the shortages were correct but that he was not in a position to make good the losses that day. Upon completion of the audit Mr Wilson was precautionary suspended and the shortage was posted to the late account duty in Chesterfield. I spoke to Mr Patrick on the day and asked him to obtain some various paperwork / documentation from the Post Office and a signed statement from Mr Wilson in relation to his admission upon the auditor's arrival and prior to commencement of the audit. I now produce this signed admission statement as exhibit **GRT/2**. Following the audit result I made contact with Mr Wilson to arrange an interview and explained to him his Legal Rights and it was at this time that Mr Wilson agreed to allow us to conduct a voluntary search of his premises that was subsequently arranged for the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008 the same day as the interview.

Following the search of his premises along with Mr Brander I attended the offices of Astwood Law Solicitors where we had arranged to meet at 14.30 hours to conduct our interview. At 15.07 hours on 15 September 2008, together with Mr Brander, I conducted a tape-recorded interview with the Postmaster Mr Wilson in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Codes of Practice. Also present was Mr Graham Evans (Solicitor) and Mrs Donna Evans from the Federation Of Sub-Postmasters. On commencement of the interview I cautioned Mr Wilson and once again explained to him his Legal Rights and completed form GS001 that I now produce as exhibit **GRT/3**. The interview concluded at 16.33 hours and comprised of two master tapes, which have the serial numbers, 50313 and 50314 and I now produce these items as exhibits **GRT/4 & GRT/5** respectively. From the working copy of the master tapes I prepared summaries, which I now produce as exhibits **GRT/6** and **GRT/7**.

During the interview I showed Mr Wilson a selection of Branch Trading Statements for the Astwood Bank Post Office that Mr Wilson confirmed were all false accounts. He confirmed that

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all accounts produced by him over the past 5 years would also have been false accounts as he had deliberately inflated the cash on hand figure. I now produce all the trading statements referred to during the interview on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008 as exhibit GRT/8.

Signature G. Thomas

Signature witnessed by

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