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Witness Statement

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



Statement of Wendy LYELL

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

This statement (consisting of three 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 17 day of July 2006

Signature

I started my employment as a counter clerk at North Bransholme Post Office in November 2005. This was my first experience of working in a Post Office. Prior to this I worked on the retail side of the outlet, which was owned by Mark Ombler.

I was given initial training by the Subpostmistress Janet Skinner. I was given a user code, WLY001 and a password. Janet asked what my password was and I gave it to her. She gave me her password in cases of emergency.

I used stock unit AA to serve out of. On one occasion I used stock unit OOH to do the lottery transactions. I did not know of any other stock units in the branch.

My duties were Monday, Tuesday and Friday all day and Saturday morning. Monday I worked with Katherine or Theresa depending who was scheduled to be in. Janet was also working on a Monday till 2pm although she did stay all day on occasions of staff being of ill. Tuesdays was all day with Janet, Saturday all morning with Theresa or Katherine again dependant on who was scheduled in. Friday was with Theresa.

I used to take the keys on a Monday and Tuesday and kept them till Friday.

I only did one cash declaration which was incorrect. Janet always did a cash declaration and

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Continuation of statement of Wendy LYELL

finish all the work whilst I was on my lunch so when I came back it was all done. I was not happy with the cash declarations as Janet used to guess the amounts on hand. I was used to counting every penny when I worked in the shop.

On several occasions the office ran out of cash. I used to go to Kwik Save with £500 of £1 coins to exchange for notes. A customer came in to withdraw £600 and Janet told me to tell him to come back. I also used to phone local business's to bank early as we had no money.

The office used to receive it's cash remittance on a Tuesday afternoon so we were always short until that arrived.

I regularly took phone calls from the cash centre asking why the planned order had been altered on a Monday morning. The calls were always on a Monday afternoon. On one occasion in May, I took a call and was told I should have approx £74,000 in the office. I counted what we had and it was around £2,000. Janet had altered the rem in the morning before going home. Janet told me that we would be getting calls from the cash centre and to fob them off. On one occasion she told me to tell them we were expecting a large withdrawal.

Just before the office shut in May, I turned up for work on a Monday morning to find the Post Office section locked up. The landlord had done this as he was owed rent. Janet came and broke the lock and we opened up the Post Office.

Both Janet and the landlords secretary, Naomi, told me that £10,000 was owed in rent. I took the calls from Naomi and Janet told me to say she wasn't in. I found myself covering for her with the landlord.

I was also told that the shop was owed money for National Lottery commission. In May 2006, Janet gave the shop £2,200 for rent and £1,100 for lottery, this was in cash. The shop assistant then brought the cash to deposit into there account and I undertook the transaction as an automated payment. I did wonder where the cash came from as I knew she was struggling for money.

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Janet told me the bailiffs had recently removed furniture from her house as she owed money for council tax.

On one conversation with Naomi, I was told that the cheques sent by Janet were bouncing.

In May 2006, Janet called me at the office from home and asked me to remove £200 out of the till and purchase an £18.00 postal order with the rest of the money left on her desk. Janet said she would be there in 10 minutes. I told Janet that I was not happy doing this but eventually did as I was asked. Janet did not turn up until after the Post Office had closed. I saw her car parked outside 25 minutes later.

When I first started at the office I asked if we had balanced and she would say amounts of not very much. On one occasion I remember it being £16.00. I was never asked to pay towards this loss. I made a mistake for £5 and gave Janet the money. The customer returned and I got there £5 back.

On the 1st week I started in November 2005, Janet asked me to remove over £400 out of the till to pay the staff wages. I gave this to Janet and she paid the individuals. This happened on another 2 occasions where I was asked to remove cash from the till.

Janet was always taking scratchcards out of the dispenser and scratching them. On Tuesday afternoons it would be non stop. I saw her put the cash in on some occasions but there were so many I couldn't keep up. I told Janet she was addicted to scratchcards which she denied. The small winners were cashed in the shop. Janet said the larger winners she would take to Asda.

I have been shown a schedule of transfers from January 9th 2006 which I believe is known as DM > This shows my user code has been used with 2 transfers undertaken out of AA stock to BB for £8,000 and CC for £15,000. I have not performed these transfers and did not know that the office had a BB or CC stock unit.

I have not stolen any money from North Bransholme Post Office and I have no knowledge as to where the cash has gone.

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