

File name: Alison HALL - POLTD-1011-0095 Alison Hall Tape 1 of 2 Tape No. 065759.mp3

Audio quality: Great

Moderator questions in Bold, Respondents in Regular text.

KEY: **Unable to decipher** = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** = (ph + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

(TC: 00:00:11)

Chris Knight: Yep, okay. This interview is being tape recorded. My name is Chris Knight, my colleague is-,

(TC: 00:00:15)

Paul Whittaker: Paul Whittaker.

(TC: 00:00:18)

Chris Knight: We are officers of Post Office Ltd, investigation department, employed to investigate possible criminal offences. Also present is, can you state your full name, please?

(TC: 00:00:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Alison Lorraine Hall.

(TC: 00:00:27)

Chris Knight: And your date of birth.

(TC: 00:00:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall:

GRO

(TC: 00:00:30)

Chris Knight: Thank you, and also present.

(TC: 00:00:32)

Paul Normandale: Paul Normandale of Inesons Solicitors, Cleckheaton.

(TC: 00:00:36)

Chris Knight: Lovely. The date is 28th September 2010, the time by my watch is 11:37 hours. This interview is being conducted in an office within Inesons Solicitors in Cleckheaton. Err, so, I want to ask some questions regarding the audit shortage at your post office, Hightown branch. At the end of the interview I'll give you notice explaining what will happen to the tapes. Have you any objection to the interview being tape recorded?

(TC: 00:01:00)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No.

(TC: 00:01:00)

Chris Knight: Okay, then. Right. Prior to the tape, err, starting, we did complete our, err, the Post Office legal rights form, and the Post Office friends form, okay. So, we'll just err, just recap. Because you're suspected of having committed a criminal offence, which may result in a criminal prosecution, I must inform you that you don't have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. Do you understand that?

(TC: 00:01:25)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes, I do.

(TC: 00:01:27)

Chris Knight: Okay. Like I say, we, we've completed, err, the legal rights form, and the Post Office friend's form, okay, and your legal representative, Mr Normandale, is here, okay. So, you're happy that that, you you've got what you need?

(TC: 00:01:39)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes, thank you.

(TC: 00:01:41)

Chris Knight: Right, okay. Right. I've got some questions now, just, these are, sort of, background questions to yourself and the office, alright? You're the postmistress of Hightown Post Office.

(TC: 00:01:56)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I am, yes.

(TC: 00:01:55)

Chris Knight: Right. Can you just, sort of, I haven't been to your branch, can you just tell me what

it is? How big a Post Office, how many positions there are?

(TC: 00:02:03)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, it's just a till position Post Office, and, um, we have three staff altogether working for us.

(TC: 00:02:12)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:02:11)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, it was a small Post Office when we started, but we've recently extended the Post Office twice, in the last six years since we've been there, to make it a bigger shop.

(TC: 00:02:21)

Chris Knight: Is, is there a shop attached to it, or vice versa?

(TC: 00:02:23)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It's, it's all attached. It's an off licence, um, newsagents and general grocery store.

(TC: 00:02:35)

Chris Knight: Right, okay. And is it, um, a, rural branch, or is it in a town?

(TC: 00:02:38)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I think they class it as a rural branch, yes.

(TC: 00:02:43)

Chris Knight: Right, is it in a small village, or-,

(TC: 00:02:44)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, I don't class it as a village, but the Post Office actually do. But I wouldn't class it as a, the village, but it's, err-,

(TC: 00:02:50)

Chris Knight: Right, that's fine. Right. How long have you been at the branch?

(TC: 00:02:58)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, since 16th February 2005.

(TC: 00:03:03)

Chris Knight: Right, okay. And did you work at any other branches prior to that?

(TC: 00:03:06)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I didn't. No.

(TC: 00:03:05)

Chris Knight: So, you, you came straight into being the postmaster of, of this branch?

(TC: 00:03:08)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes. Yes.

(TC: 00:03:13)

Chris Knight: Fine. You said that, you mentioned that you've got three other staff. Are, are they staff for your, your retail, or do they work in the Post Office?

(TC: 00:03:18)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I've got, well, I've got, so, there's just me, me, Kimberley and Marjorie, who works in the Post Office.

(TC: 00:03:26)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:03:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And then I've-

(TC: 00:03:27)

Chris Knight: Sorry, you say Marjorie, Marjorie, what's her surname?

(TC: 00:03:30)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Marjorie Higgins.

(TC: 00:03:32)

Chris Knight: And she works in the Post Office?

(TC: 00:03:33)

Alison Lorraine Hall: She works in the Post Office.

(TC: 00:03:34)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:03:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Kimberley Langley.

(TC: 00:03:41)

Chris Knight: Mmhmm.

(TC: 00:03:41)

Alison Lorraine Hall: She works in the Post Office.

(TC: 00:03:43)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:03:43)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And, plus, I have um, four other staff that work on the retail side.

(TC: 00:03:48)

Chris Knight: Right, but they don't work in the Post Office.

(TC: 00:03:50)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No.

(TC: 00:03:50)

Chris Knight: Right, that's fine, we'll, we'll leave those off, err, for the moment. What's the opening times of, of the Post Office?

(TC: 00:03:59)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Nine while five thirty, Monday to Friday, and um, nine while twelve thirty on a Saturday.

(TC: 00:04:11)

Chris Knight: Right, okey-doke. Now, again, yourself and the two staff. Do you all have individual user IDs?

(TC: 00:04:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: We do, yes.

(TC: 00:04:21)

Chris Knight: Right, and, obviously, passwords that, that go with those?

(TC: 00:04:23)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes.

(TC: 00:04:26)

Chris Knight: Do you all use your own IDs?

(TC: 00:04:29)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Only time I use another, err, password and ID is on a Wednesday and a Friday, when I'm on my own in the Post Office. I've no staff, so that when parcels come in, um, and maybe customers, that's when I use them. So, I'm on one machine serving people, and on the other machine trying to get the postage done.

(TC: 00:04:51)

Chris Knight: Right. So, just to split that up, when you do normal transactions, is that your user logon?

(TC: 00:04:59)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I use mine for the, the normal serving of people.

(TC: 00:05:02)

Chris Knight: Yep.

(TC: 00:05:02)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And I use probably Kim's for, just to, um, do the postage because, you know, instead of stopping and starting every two minutes, sort of thing, when you're doing parcels.

(TC: 00:05:12)

Chris Knight: So, presumably, you know her, um-,

(TC: 00:05:14)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes.

(TC: 00:05:14)

Chris Knight: Password?

(TC: 00:05:16)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes I do, yes.

(TC: 00:05:16)

Chris Knight: Does anybody else know your-,

(TC: 00:05:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No. Yeah, oh, yes, they do. They both know. They both know my password.

(TC: 00:05:23)

Chris Knight: Right, do they use your-,

(TC: 00:05:24)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, no.

(TC: 00:05:25)

Chris Knight: Your, your details?

(TC: 00:05:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No.

(TC: 00:05:26)

Chris Knight: Right. Um, going to the, err, the things in the branch. Obviously, call it the daily

work, you, you understand what that will mean, at the end of the day?

(TC: 00:05:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes. Yes, I do, yes. Yes.

(TC: 00:05:37)

Chris Knight: Who would, who would do all of that?

(TC: 00:05:40)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, we shared it. When it's Tuesday or my day off, err, when I'm not about, around, um, Kimberly or Marjorie would do the end of day reports for me.

(TC: 00:05:49)

Chris Knight: Right, okay. And what about, um, err, the branch trading statements every, every month, or every four weeks?

(TC: 00:05:54)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I do that, they don't do that.

(TC: 00:05:57)

Chris Knight: You, you would do it.

(TC: 00:05:57)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I do it all my, so, myself, yeah.

(TC: 00:06:03)

Chris Knight: And, um, what about, sort of, you know locking up and, and-,

(TC: 00:06:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Locking up, I do that and all, yeah.

(TC: 00:06:09)

Chris Knight: That, you, you handle all of that.

(TC: 00:06:11)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I handle, I do, yeah.

(TC: 00:06:10)

Chris Knight: These two, these two girls just do the other procedures.

(TC: 00:06:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, they just do the, clerks.

(TC: 00:06:14)

Chris Knight: As directed, or whatever.

(TC: 00:06:15)

Alison Lorraine Hall: That's it, yeah.

(TC: 00:06:17)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:06:18)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Only time when Kimberley's opened up is when, um, I've been on holiday.

(TC: 00:06:23)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:06:23)

Alison Lorraine Hall: 'Cause she's looked after it for me.

(TC: 00:06:25)

Chris Knight: Right, err, and when was that?

(TC: 00:06:27)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, the last one being the first two weeks in August.

(TC: 00:06:31)

Chris Knight: This year?

(TC: 00:06:31)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah. That's the only time I've had off.

(TC: 00:06:35)

Chris Knight: Right. Okay. Um, part of the, the end of day, I say the daily work, end of day work, the cash declarations. Is that something that you would do?

(TC: 00:06:52)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I do that, yeah.

(TC: 00:06:53)

Chris Knight: You do that.

(TC: 00:06:53)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And they, they know how to do it, as well.

(TC: 00:06:55)

Chris Knight: Yeah. Right, um, obviously, the, the reason we're here is, on, on 3rd September, err, there, there was an audit at your branch.

(TC: 00:07:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:07:08)

Chris Knight: That, err, highlighted a shortage, um, and the shortage being, err, £14,842.37.

(TC: 00:07:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:07:20)

Chris Knight: Okay, I'll just refer to it as £14,000, I won't keep saying all the full amount, so, so as long as you're aware of the amount.

(TC: 00:07:27)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:07:29)

Chris Knight: Okay, um, can you tell me why there was a cash shortage of £14,000, in, in the account?

(TC: 00:07:37)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, I think it's all to do with the scratchers, um, I've been having problems with them for a while now, and I should have asked for help earlier on, and I didn't. Um, I can't see it being anything else. I know sometimes we get, err, discrepancies for missing giros and cheques and stuff, but I don't think it's going to add up to that amount, um.

(TC: 00:08:04)

Chris Knight: Right. Right, I'll ask you another question more. You, you said a while.

(TC: 00:08:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm.

(TC: 00:08:14)

Chris Knight: Can you, you know, put some time frame on that?

(TC: 00:08:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I don't know, really. It's just, it's probably six months.

(TC: 00:08:26)

Chris Knight: Right, probably six months.

(TC: 00:08:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:08:28)

Chris Knight: So, are we in, let's say, beginning of September.

(TC: 00:08:31)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I think it maybe started at the beginning of the year, when it all started, um, building up.

(TC: 00:08:37)

Chris Knight: Right, okay.

(TC: 00:08:38)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And I have been trying to rectify it, and been calling the helpline, the lottery line. Just trying to get everything sorted, and it's just got on top of me. And I actually asked for an audit myself.

(TC: 00:08:52)

Chris Knight: When was that?

(TC: 00:08:53)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, I just can't remember all the dates. The-, I spoke to Denise at Chesterfield, and she put me in touch with another lady. I wish I'd have wrote all the reference number down, and I, I didn't, 'cause I were just in such a state, but she-,

(TC: 00:09:10)

Chris Knight: That's fine. When, when, when did you phone up?

(TC: 00:09:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: This is before, when I came back off, um, holiday. It all started because the branch was rolling over. Not the branch, the, the online, the, the, we were going online.

(TC: 00:09:23)

Chris Knight: Oh, you, you were going onto the next yeah, changing the new, next generation, yes.

(TC: 00:09:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, onto the new, new change and that. So, I asked, um, I spoke to Denise at Chesterfield, and then she gave me another lady's number to ring, and I requested an audit, because I wanted all this sorting out. So, I've nothing to hide, I just want it all sorting out, so I can get back to my post.

(TC: 00:09:50)

Chris Knight: Right. Right, you're saying, again, just going back. You said that it looks like it's been happening from the beginning of the year, you've had a problem.

(TC: 00:09:58)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:10:00)

Chris Knight: (TC 00:10:00) When did it first come to light? When did you know that you had a problem?

(TC: 00:10:03)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It's just the figures. The, the money being down, every time I had a transaction correction with the lottery it always put the figures completely-, obviously, when you get your transaction corrections, it changes your figures into your stock and stuff. So, every time I actually counted what I'd rem'd in, the, the figures never showed, never were right, and every time I had to put the figures down to what they said I had on hand, that's when I was losing all the time, and they've got it all here.

(TC: 00:10:34)

Chris Knight: And that, and that, and that's, you say, it would affect your cash, would that?

(TC: 00:10:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes, it affects my cash because, um, can I give you an example of one thing?

(TC: 00:10:40)

Chris Knight: Yeah, I was gonna say, if you've got something that-,

(TC: 00:10:42)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, this was the, um, just, probably the, a couple of days before the audit, I'm not sure on the dates. Um, I actually counted my stock, err, what I got from what, um, what's in the dispensers.

(TC: 00:11:01)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:11:02)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And the stock says that I had 56 of the £5 ones, and the system said I had 59.

(TC: 00:11:08)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:11:09)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It said that I'd counted 52 on the £2 ones, and the system said I had 133. On the £1 scratchcards, I counted 387, and the system told me I had 753. So, when I go then to alter the figures of what the system's saying I had, that gives me a £528 loss, and this is what it keeps telling me to do, put the figures right, every time you get a transaction correction.

(TC: 00:11:38)

Chris Knight: Right, so-,

(TC: 00:11:38)

Alison Lorraine Hall: So, to put these.

(TC: 00:11:39)

Chris Knight: How, how often do you get these, then?

(TC: 00:11:42)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, to be honest, I seem to be getting them every, after every balance. Um, these are the figures what we've, um, we've gone through every single, um, remming in slip, and activation slip, um, from 29th May '09 up to 21.08;.10.

(TC: 00:12:04)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:12:04)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And that's with, um-,

(TC: 00:12:10)

Chris Knight: Right, that's fine.

(TC: 00:12:10)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, two there. And then this is the-, this is every time I've got a transaction correction, which is, um, from 5th June last year, I've got eighteen transaction corrections.

(TC: 00:12:31)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:12:31)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And this is why the figures don't tally up.

(TC: 00:12:37)

Chris Knight: Right, so, do all, obviously I-,

(TC: 00:12:38)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Because every time I get one of these, these transaction corrections, I've got to alter my stock to what it says.

(TC: 00:12:46)

Chris Knight: So, presumably, all, all of these, the sheet that you've given me, just for the benefit of the tape, you've given me a sheet that's, um-,

(TC: 00:12:51)

Paul Normandale: Showing market sheet number one, whatever you call it, your exhibit, yeah.

(TC: 00:12:53)

Chris Knight: Yep, if we call it, well, if we call it Alison Hall.

(TC: 00:12:57)

Paul Normandale: Yeah, number one.

(TC: 00:12:58)

Chris Knight: AH01, alright. Err, basically, it's an A4 sheet, and it's got various, err date periods on. And the first one is 29.05.09 to 23.06.09. It says, 'Activated, £4,000, paid in 400, sorry, 4,330.'

(TC: 00:13:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm.

(TC: 00:13:13)

Chris Knight: So, just so that I can understand this, obviously, what I get away from this. Obviously, the period, I understand what the period is.

(TC: 00:13:20)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It's like a balance period, yeah.

(TC: 00:13:21)

Chris Knight: That, that's your balance period. When this was activated, is that, that's what you've-,

(TC: 00:13:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I've activated, I've got every single slip what I've activated on the system, and I've got every remming in slip.

(TC: 00:13:32)

Chris Knight: Right, so, and then the paid in, what, what does that mean?

(TC: 00:13:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: That means, um-,

(TC: 00:13:36)

Paul Normandale: Just show the officer, like you showed me, and then he-, because he-,

(TC: 00:13:41)

Alison Lorraine Hall: That this were bills, that I've actually put them back into the Post Office for, these are the, these, they've got every single day, every single day you've got to do this.

(TC: 00:13:51)

Paul Normandale: Right.

(TC: 00:13:51)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, so, that shows that I'm putting them back into the system.

(TC: 00:13:56)

Paul Normandale: Right.

(TC: 00:13:56)

Alison Lorraine Hall: That's a slip to say that I've activated all the, all the, um, scratchcards, and that's the proof that I'm remming them into the system.

(TC: 00:14:07)

Paul Normandale: Right.

(TC: 00:14:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Now, I've only learnt in the last, it was, I don't even know what date I'm on. After we came back off holidays, I spoke to somebody called Rebecca, I think it's Post Office Ltd, um, but she works on the lottery side.

(TC: 00:14:23)

Paul Normandale: Mmhmm.

(TC: 00:14:23)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And I spoke to Rebecca, and she said that I've been doing it wrong.

(TC: 00:14:28)

Paul Normandale: Right.

(TC: 00:14:30)

Alison Lorraine Hall: All this time, 'cause I've never had any proper training on the lottery, um, on the Post Office side, apart from one guy who came when we started the lottery.

(TC: 00:14:39)

Paul Normandale: Mmhmm.

(TC: 00:14:39)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Now, what I've been doing, I've been getting ten packs out of the safe and putting them in my drawer, and remming them in to, into the system. So, that means I've got so many scratchcards on. So, I might have 500 at £1, 400 at £2, you know, and that. So, all them have been rem'd in, and then when we need a pack, we take it to the shop side, and we activate it, which are all these.

(TC: 00:15:09)

Paul Normandale: Explain how you activate it.

(TC: 00:15:11)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, well, you've got to activate a pack and then that makes sure you can sell the pack, then, you know.

(TC: 00:15:16)

Chris Knight: Yeah. Mmhmm.

(TC: 00:15:17)

Paul Normandale: That's activated with the lottery.

(TC: 00:15:18)

Alison Lorraine Hall: That's activated with the lottery. So, them's my remming in slips, which I've got for every, every one. Them's my activation slips, to prove that I've activated the pack into the lottery, and that's to prove that I've paid the money back into the Post Office. So, I've been doing that for, I don't, well, up until this year, 'til August this year, when I got told by Rebecca that I shouldn't be doing it that way. I should have just kepted the packs in the drawer, not into the system, and when I want to activate one, I take a pack, I activate it, and then we'd rem it into the system. So, it's, um.

(TC: 00:15:58)

Chris Knight: Right, yeah.

(TC: 00:15:58)

Alison Lorraine Hall: So, it's, um, so this is what.

(TC: 00:16:04)

Chris Knight: So, right. So, you've been in, at that branch since 2005.

(TC: 00:16:04)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah. We didn't start the lottery though, straight away.

(TC: 00:16:10)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:16:11)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Our lottery has only been going just over three years, now.

(TC: 00:16:16)

Chris Knight: So, that's when you got the lottery terminal?

(TC: 00:16:18)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, it were August.

(TC: 00:16:21)

Paul Normandale: August 2007.

(TC: 00:16:23)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm.

(TC: 00:16:23)

Chris Knight: Right. So, obviously, the sheet you've given us is, we'll call it AH01 sheet, that's May '09.

(TC: 00:16:34)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, but we can go back.

(TC: 00:16:35)

Chris Knight: So, did you have-, have you had, have you had problems before?

(TC: 00:16:37)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No. No, I don't think so, but we can get every-,

(TC: 00:16:40)

Chris Knight: Well.

(TC: 00:16:41)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I don't think I'd had-, I don't seem to think I was having problems until, you know, I was doing it correct and then, because of the training, when I-, when the trainer came and I showed them how I were putting them in, he said 'Yeah, that's fine.'

(TC: 00:16:55)

Chris Knight: Mmm, right. But I mean, a, a simple thing is, obviously, we, we know, things that we do know is that on 3rd September, your account was £14,000, um, less than, than, the cash was less than it should be.

(TC: 00:17:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:17:10)

Chris Knight: You're saying that lottery-, you're saying it's the lottery has created this.

(TC: 00:17:11)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I think it's the lottery what's created most of the money.

(TC: 00:17:13)

Chris Knight: Right. So, that's it, so, you've had the lottery terminal three years.

(TC: 00:17:16)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:17:16)

Chris Knight: So, for the first two years, did you have, did you have any loss in your account?

(TC: 00:17:22)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I don't think so. No.

(TC: 00:17:23)

Chris Knight: Right, so you're saying, from what you've told me, if I understand it right, that from the beginning of this year, you started seeing that the account was-,

(TC: 00:17:30)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Just it seemed, when I get, started getting all these transaction correction, when this problem started.

(TC: 00:17:36)

Chris Knight: So, when-, right. So, when you were doing-, going back to '09. When, when you're doing these branch trading statements, when you come to balance up your, your cash. Was the cash short?

(TC: 00:17:47)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes, because, err, obviously, you have to put some of the money in yourself, and I have. I did actually put some money in myself, from the, well, from savings.

(TC: 00:17:56)

Chris Knight: Right, okay. So, again-,

(TC: 00:17:58)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And then it were correct. It was just after.

(TC: 00:18:01)

Chris Knight: So, when did you put some money in?

(TC: 00:18:04)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Oh, I don't know. It were-,

(TC: 00:18:09)

Chris Knight: Alright, we'll ask a different question.

(TC: 00:18:10)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I'm not sure, I just don't know dates, it's-,

(TC: 00:18:11)

Chris Knight: How much? How much did you put in?

(TC: 00:18:15)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I think it were just after one transaction correction. I think I might have put £640 in at one time, and it were my savings that I put in to make it, to make it right.

(TC: 00:18:27)

Chris Knight: Right, and is that the only time that you've put money in?

(TC: 00:18:30)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I've put bits, you know, like, when, if the, when you have to balance, you're over with the money.

(TC: 00:18:36)

Chris Knight: Mmm.

(TC: 00:18:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, you keep it to one side, and then if you're short on the next one you put in. So, I have been, there's been times when the money's been up a bit. Not by thousands, just by, you know, a couple of hundred pounds. So, if I'm wrong on the next balance I put that in, it'd be, like, that's what you've got to do.

(TC: 00:18:54)

Chris Knight: Right. Obviously, the, this sheet you've given me, that's going back to '09. Was, are you saying that the £14,000 discrepancy has started back then?

(TC: 00:19:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It, it could. I don't think so, no. It's only this year where it's got really out of control, if you would want to say.

(TC: 00:19:13)

Chris Knight: Right, so, when, when was the first? When you, when you came to do your balance trading, and you've got to add up all, all your, all your, everything is added up and you come to a balance figure, like the audit figure.

(TC: 00:19:22)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, yeah.

(TC: 00:19:23)

Chris Knight: You come to a balance figure, you've cashed up. When, in January, we're going back to January this year, was your branch trading statement, when you did end of January, was it, was the cash correct?

(TC: 00:19:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, this the only thing I've done wrong, because I haven't asked for help. I've, I've just said that the money's there, and it wasn't, because I've been trying to find the money myself. I've been going-, this is why we've gone through every single thing for these, to try, because I don't think-,

(TC: 00:19:51)

Chris Knight: Right, I, I need to just tidy it up. So, in, in January, when you did your branch trading statement, was, was it correct?

(TC: 00:20:00)

Alison Lorraine Hall: (TC 00:20:00) I thought that the money was there, which I know I shouldn't have done. That's the only thing I'm saying I've done wrong.

(TC: 00:20:06)

Chris Knight: Right, okay.

(TC: 00:20:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: But the money wasn't there, but I've said it was there, and that's-

(TC: 00:20:10)

Chris Knight: Right. So, on, on that, on that, and is that the first time you've, you've, basically, falsified an account? Is that the first time you did it, in January, or have you done it prior to that?

(TC: 00:20:22)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I think I've-, I must have done it after, as well, because it started getting, the money started getting higher and higher.

(TC: 00:20:28)

Chris Knight: Right.

(TC: 00:20:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall: But I do really think that it's these lotteries, because every time-,

(TC: 00:20:34)

Chris Knight: Right. So, on-, so, up-, you've been in since 2005. You've been doing your balance trading statements, your balances, whatever you want to call them.

(TC: 00:20:40)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:20:42)

Chris Knight: Okay, and then in January, you come to do your balance trading statement, and it's, it, the account is adrift. The account doesn't balance up, is that correct?

(TC: 00:20:51)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes.

(TC: 00:20:52)

Chris Knight: So, can you rememberer how much?

(TC: 00:20:55)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, not in January I can't, no. It just-, it just might have been a, a couple of thousand, I don't know. I just, I just, I don't know.

(TC: 00:21:04)

Chris Knight: Right. So, then from January, every month, every, every four weeks.

(TC: 00:21:10)

Paul Normandale: You're doing well, just keep going.

(TC: 00:21:11)

Chris Knight: Every four weeks, or every month, you give a further branch trading statement.

(TC: 00:21:14)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm, and it just seems to be getting higher and higher, because of all these transactions what I'm receiving, and I'm not-, I should have asked for help and I've let it go on too long, but I was scared. I were panicking, I were scared, and I shouldn't have let it go on like it did. I needed help, but I was scared of asking for help because this is what it's resulted in, now. But I did ask for the audit, because I wanted to sort this out, because every time I change my stock, I cannot be this much out. When I physically counted them, them scratchcards, and they-, I know exactly how many, and they, the system, because these transaction corrections keep coming in, saying no, I've got this many, I've got that many. And, you know, £528 difference, that's just in one, you know, transaction correction.

(TC: 00:22:08)

Chris Knight: Yeah, I, I understand that. What I'm trying to, what I'm trying to get to the bottom of, um, I'll be quite blunt, which, obviously, the account, we know, the audit's come back and it's £14,000 short.

(TC: 00:22:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, but I want to know, I want to-,

(TC: 00:22:21)

Paul Whittaker: Listen to the question.

(TC: 00:22:21)

Chris Knight: So, we-, So, we're, we're trying to find out what's happened to that £14,000.

(TC: 00:22:25)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:22:26)

Chris Knight: Obviously, the reason we're doing one of these formal interviews, as it said at the beginning, you're suspected of committing a criminal offence.

(TC: 00:22:32)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm.

(TC: 00:22:32)

Chris Knight: Potentially, that criminal offence is theft of £14,000.

(TC: 00:22:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, yeah. But I have not took one penny.

(TC: 00:22:39)

Chris Knight: Right, that, that was going to be my, err, my next question.

(TC: 00:22:40)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I have not took one penny. I have never, ever took a penny out of that Post Office. I won't.

(TC: 00:22:46)

Chris Knight: Right, that, that's fine. Um, the other side of it, is obviously, that every month you have to create a branch trading statement.

(TC: 00:22:52)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, yeah.

(TC: 00:22:53)

Chris Knight: Which is, as you, as it completes, a, a true record of what is, what transactions you've done, and obviously, what cash stock is on hand.

(TC: 00:23:03)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:23:04)

Chris Knight: Now, you're saying that in January, it was, it didn't balance, you falsified the account, and then-,

(TC: 00:23:10)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, but I've just checked.

(TC: 00:23:11)

Chris Knight: Since January, it, it's kept going on.

(TC: 00:23:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It's just kept going up and up and up, and this is when I've just got to the point where, right, I need help with this, because this is just going.

(TC: 00:23:19)

Chris Knight: Right. What I'm trying to get to the bottom of, is, um, you were telling me about the lottery, err, and that's fine, that's what you were telling me.

(TC: 00:23:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm.

(TC: 00:23:29)

Chris Knight: I need to make sure that when I go away, that if I start, you know, we start looking into this and I make more checks, this is going to be a problem, that this is not just some, almost, like, smokescreen, and we come back and have to interview you again because there's, this doesn't hold water, there's something else. What, sort of, concerns me, is you're saying that you put £640 in of your savings, but you can't remember when that was.

(TC: 00:23:59)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I don't know, I'd have to have a look for my old bank book. I feel like if I could talk to them.

(TC: 00:24:04)

Chris Knight: Again, I'll be, I'll be upfront with you. If I had to put £640 into somewhere, I would certainly-, it would be a date that stuck in my head.

(TC: 00:24:12)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm, I'd just, I'd have to look at my bank book, 'cause I took some money out of my savings book, and I think I actually took the, the rest out of the business, if I can think, rightly.

(TC: 00:24:23)

Paul Normandale: Roughly, this year?

(TC: 00:24:25)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, I think so, yeah. Which I took, I think, it's just about dates, and stuff.

(TC: 00:24:31)

Paul Normandale: Take your time, you're alright.

(TC: 00:24:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I just can't remember. I've got, I'm sure I've still got the bank book at home, um, with what I took out, and I think I took some from the business, saying, you know, like, my wages, 'cause obviously, I get some money out of the business. So, I put, I think I put some out, in out of that, as well.

(TC: 00:24:55)

Chris Knight: And that's fine, um, like I say, I, I've got to try and understand what, what has occurred, and get to the bottom of what's happened. Um, potentially, the money has been taken by somebody.

(TC: 00:25:06)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:25:06)

Chris Knight: Okay, you're here as our first port of call. Um, you don't think the money has been taken by-,

(TC: 00:25:15)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I don't think the money has been physically taken out, not by myself, anyway.

(TC: 00:25:18)

Chris Knight: But what about anybody else?

(TC: 00:25:20)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, only thing you could do is interview the staff, but I don't think for a minute they would, but if they have, then-

(TC: 00:25:28)

Chris Knight: And that, and that's fine. Like I say, I need to come up-, sorry, Paul, go on.

(TC: 00:25:31)

Paul Whittaker: I was just going to say, are they aware? Were they aware of all this?

(TC: 00:25:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes, they were.

(TC: 00:25:36)

Paul Whittaker: Right. So, obviously, you're going back to January when it-, so, the staff were aware that-,

(TC: 00:25:42)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:25:42)

Paul Whittaker: That you were having problems with the lottery. And have you ever confronted them?

(TC: 00:25:46)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, which I probably should do, really, because, you know, I haven't. They're on their own, sometimes, which, you know, they are.

(TC: 00:25:56)

Paul Whittaker: Yeah.

(TC: 00:25:56)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And you can't be in with them 24/7, but Marjorie's 60. I think she's 62 or 63, and

Kimberley's 22 or 23. Um, but everything's, you know, locked away and everything, and, but I just, I mean, no, I don't, I don't want to say.

(TC: 00:26:17)

Paul Whittaker: What, what about the other members of staff? Because obviously, the, the lottery sales and the activated lottery cards go onto the, onto the private side, which, which your other members of staff are selling.

(TC: 00:26:23)

Alison Lorraine Hall: They don't, well we keep our-, well, we keep ours separate, um, every-, all the money what comes in for the lottery, we keep it in a separate tub, and, er.

(TC: 00:26:35)

Paul Whittaker: And is it, is it always paid across at the same? Have you got, like, robust procedures for it to-,

(TC: 00:26:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Just, well, I have to do it. I, I, um, at the end of the night they run the report off the lottery, and, um, then I check the money. I, I could the scratchcards, how many we've sold that day, um, I either do it last thing at night or first thing in the morning before I've sold any more.

(TC: 00:26:59)

Paul Whittaker: Yeah.

(TC: 00:26:59)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, so, I've checked the scratchcards, um, and then, obviously, I check the money, what's meant to be going into the Post Office.

(TC: 00:27:09)

Paul Whittaker: Mmm, so you would do a reconciliation. Is that on a nightly basis, then?

(TC: 00:27:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I do, I do it on, either, last thing on a night or first thing on a morning.

(TC: 00:27:17)

Paul Whittaker: Right.

(TC: 00:27:17)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Which, the last couple of weeks I've been doing on a morning to make sure that it's right for the people whose took over the Post Office at the moment.

(TC: 00:27:25)

Paul Whittaker: Right, so you, you do this reconciliation. Is there any, um, and, and you know that the cards, like you say, 'cause you've rung them in, err, and then you activate them, don't you, as a pack, pack as you sell them, sort of thing.

(TC: 00:27:34)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, we do. Yeah.

(TC: 00:27:36)

Paul Whittaker: So, the, the cards that have been rem'd in that have not been activated, are they kept secure, and things like that?

(TC: 00:27:42)

Alison Lorraine Hall: They're in, um, they're usually kept in the Post Office. Um, I have got three at the moment, which is in my cigarette kiosk, which is locked.

(TC: 00:27:50)

Paul Whittaker: Right.

(TC: 00:27:51)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Which is in the bottom, which nobody knows they're there, apart from me and the lady who was working today. They're just ready to activate onto the-, because we're running low on a few and I didn't want to come out without, you know, 'cause you don't like-, they don't like you to have empty containers, sort of thing.

(TC: 00:28:07)

Paul Whittaker: No, I know the lottery put pressure on you, don't they, to keep your containers full.

(TC: 00:28:09)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, they do. Yeah.

(TC: 00:28:11)

Paul Whittaker: Whereas the Post Office put pressure on you to keep them empty.

(TC: 00:28:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, they're not activated. Yeah, they're not activated, anyway, so, yeah.

(TC: 00:28:17)

Paul Whittaker: Right. So, they, they, um, so, you're saying you're quite confident that, 'cause obviously, we're looking at potential, err, accountancy issues in relation to the, um, the scratchcards, and you're quite confident that you're reconciling them correctly within the shop, you're, you're confident that the, that the, um-,

(TC: 00:28:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I am now, I wasn't.

(TC: 00:28:38)

Paul Whittaker: Right.

(TC: 00:28:37)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Um, I've learnt quite a few things these last couple of weeks, um, even, like, another thing what I didn't know, last Wednesday when the people who've took over, they was obviously doing the monthly balance, and, um, everything on that Wednesday, what's been done on the Wednesday, obviously, I balance at half past five on a Wednesday afternoon, but-,

(TC: 00:29:02)

Chris Knight: That's just with the lottery?

(TC: 00:29:03)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Just with the, but the, obviously, the shop's still open while half past nine.

(TC: 00:29:07)

Paul Whittaker: Right, yeah.

(TC: 00:29:08)

Alison Lorraine Hall: So, everything what I sell on that Wednesday has been going through on the Thursday morning.

(TC: 00:29:12)

Paul Whittaker: Right.

(TC: 00:29:13)

Alison Lorraine Hall: But I've been told this week, last week they said last week that everything what's done on that Wednesday must go in on that balance.

(TC: 00:29:20)

Paul Whittaker: On the Wednesday.

(TC: 00:29:21)

Alison Lorraine Hall: On the, well, they've been doing it on the Thursday morning.

(TC: 00:29:24)

Paul Whittaker: Right. Alright, I see.

(TC: 00:29:25)

Alison Lorraine Hall: So, which I didn't know. So, to me, that makes it out, like, well, that's gonna be another-, are they gonna say that I've got another transaction correction because I'm not putting it in on the right day, you now, and it's-,

(TC: 00:29:38)

Paul Whittaker: I mean, I'm, I'm not, as I say, we're, we're here, initially, sort of, trying to fact find, as it were. Err, one thing that concerns me, and I don't know about, I don't know whether Chris is the same is that you seemed to-, it seemed to be running right for a good couple of years.

(TC: 00:29:51)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I know, I know, it does.

(TC: 00:29:52)

Paul Whittaker: And then, then something's happened in January.

(TC: 00:29:53)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I just don't know why, because I've been doing-, I've been doing it all the same since, and it's all this.

(TC: 00:29:59)

Paul Whittaker: Did (TC 00:30:00) you have any new members of staff, or anything, around about January? Did you start doing anything differently around about January?

(TC: 00:30:05)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No. Well, no, I don't think so. I just, um, this is when all these seemed to be coming through, like, it-,

(TC: 00:30:12)

Paul Whittaker: Well, I, I was wondering about those, actually, 'cause, I mean, I've not gone through, through the sheet personally, but you, you say it started in January with the transaction corrections. Did the transaction corrections refer to the month prior to it, or do they go back a number of years, or what?

(TC: 00:30:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, well, these only go back from, um, this is from 5th June last year, up until the present day.

(TC: 00:30:34)

Paul Whittaker: Right.

(TC: 00:30:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: This is how these-,

(TC: 00:30:36)

Paul Whittaker: But were you getting them before 5th June?

(TC: 00:30:38)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, they only go back a year, but I don't- I think I had, I definitely had some, but not as many as this.

(TC: 00:30:44)

Paul Whittaker: But, do the corrections refer to-, do you now, because obviously-,

(TC: 00:30:48)

Alison Lorraine Hall: With all the corrections, yeah. The corrections, most of the corrections, um, you, you get them for your giros, your cheques.

(TC: 00:30:55)

Paul Whittaker: Yeah, they can be four, five months old, can't they, really?

(TC: 00:30:56)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, some of them. I mean, sometimes, it's just ridiculous what comes through, because I had one before I got suspended. Something to do with a giro back in February, and I just think, well, why didn't they send me it in February, you know. And, like, it's like another, when the auditors came, um, they say I hadn't done any reming in, and it's, err, and I've got, I've got every single one to prove that I have.

(TC: 00:31:23)

Paul Whittaker: You've got the rem slips there, yeah. Right.

(TC: 00:31:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: But I want a breakdown of what, um, that last letter, the letter what-, because, I'm just showing a letter to them, what I've had to-,

(TC: 00:31:40)

Paul Normandale: Put the date of the letter, so that we know.

(TC: 00:31:41)

Alison Lorraine Hall: The date of the letter was, um, 3rd September.

(TC: 00:31:45)

Paul Normandale: Let's mark it OH22. Is there a reference number on there, just so we might be able to transcribe that.

(TC: 00:31:53)

Chris Knight: It's just from Carol, Carol's your, um, contracts manager, line manager, isn't it?

(TC: 00:31:58)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, but it said that, um, the, the stock, actually, was £13,000, That's what I was out, and then all of a sudden it's moved up to 14, nearly £15,000. Now, I want to know what the pending transaction correction was on the £819, because I don't know what that's about.

(TC: 00:32:18)

Chris Knight: Okay.

(TC: 00:32:18)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And I'd actually like to know what £446.03 was on the stock figures, because I balanced the week before.

(TC: 00:32:27)

Chris Knight: Yeah, basically, well, I mean, the breakdown is, obviously, from your return. There's £13,577.34 identified as a difference in the cash figures.

(TC: 00:32:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:32:36)

Chris Knight: Speaks for itself.

(TC: 00:32:37)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:32:37)

Chris Knight: £446.03, identified as a difference in the stock figures, stock, postage and such like. So, that makes the total audit on the day, £14,023.37.

(TC: 00:32:48)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I want to know, because I, I-

(TC: 00:32:51)

Chris Knight: And then, and then there's, there's, it says an accounting on the day of the audit, £819. Now, um, presumably that's a transaction that you had to be put through that month.

(TC: 00:33:04)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I think it was a transaction correction, but I don't know what's it for, because obviously, I haven't been in since then. But I want to know what the £446 were in stock, because I balanced the week before. I did the, you know, the balance, and I just want to know how come in one week that the stock was out £446.

(TC: 00:33:24)

Chris Knight: I don't know. I mean, again, the auditors, when they finish, um, the, the audit, they should have given you the details. Obviously, to verify.

(TC: 00:33:33)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Can I get them details, now?

(TC: 00:33:34)

Chris Knight: I, I will speak to the auditor, yeah. You'll get those, they, they should have, you should have verified-,

(TC: 00:33:37)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Because it's hard to know if it's-,

(TC: 00:33:40)

Chris Knight: When they did the audit, what their figures were. If there was a discrepancy that you didn't agree with.

(TC: 00:33:43)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Right, well they've never said.

(TC: 00:33:43)

Chris Knight: I mean, I can't, unfortunately, I can't do anything about that now for obvious reasons.

(TC: 00:33:47)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, I suppose.

(TC: 00:33:48)

Paul Whittaker: When you did the balance, you say, the week before, and you checked it and everything was right. I mean, you know and I know, Alison, there's balancing and there's balancing.

(TC: 00:33:56)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:33:57)

Paul Whittaker: Did you have everything out? Did you count everything?

(TC: 00:33:59)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, I always do.

(TC: 00:34:01)

Paul Whittaker: All your books, stamps.

(TC: 00:34:01)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I always do, yeah.

(TC: 00:34:02)

Paul Whittaker: All your books, stocks, you know. Did you get the, the coin out of the safe and check it through?

(TC: 00:34:06)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I did do, I check it all the time.

(TC: 00:34:09)

Paul Whittaker: So, you always, it's a good, proper balance.

(TC: 00:34:10)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I would do, always, yeah. I don't just say, right, we've got ten of those twelve of those.

(TC: 00:34:13)

Paul Whittaker: Well, I mean, I've been sat across from people who say they do a good balance. They say, well, I know there's fifteen bags in the safe, you know, and they never get them out.

(TC: 00:34:21)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, you've got to check, got to make sure.

(TC: 00:34:22)

Paul Whittaker: Right, that's fine. That's fine.

(TC: 00:34:24)

Chris Knight: Right, okay. Um, so, again, what we have said, on the flip side of that, that for the last eight, nine months, that the cash hasn't been correct, has it?

(TC: 00:34:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, it hasn't, and it's been my fault because I never-, it just, everything were just getting on top of me, and I tried to-, if I've looked through these bloody bags of stuff once, I must have looked through them 50 times, trying to find the money, and it all pins down to me, to be honest, to these transaction corrections what keeps coming through.

(TC: 00:34:56)

Chris Knight: Right, I'll tell you what, we'll just go through it.

(TC: 00:34:58)

Paul Whittaker: Can I just pop in, a second?

(TC: 00:34:59)

Chris Knight: Course you can, yeah.

(TC: 00:34:58)

Paul Whittaker: In relation to that, you said that you were under a lot of pressure, which is understandable, from what you've said. Are you a member of the federation, or anything like that?

(TC: 00:35:06)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, no. No.

(TC: 00:35:07)

Paul Whittaker: Do you speak to any other sub-postmaster's group?

(TC: 00:35:09)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Only for, no, no. Only, I just tried to do it. I should have asked Richard for help, Richard's my partner, and I didn't. I just let it go on and on and I shouldn't have done.

(TC: 00:35:21)

Chris Knight: Right, okay.

(TC: 00:35:21)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I just, um-,

(TC: 00:35:23)

Paul Normandale: Because it's Richard, your partner, who helped you prepare all this.

(TC: 00:35:26)

Paul Whittaker: Right.

(TC: 00:35:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I mean, we've gone through, now that, um, when we found help, and, I mean, I did ask for the audit, um, you know, and I did ask for the help then.

(TC: 00:35:36)

Chris Knight: When, when did you ask for the audit?

(TC: 00:35:38)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It was before, before these came. I can't remember, there's all these dates are going on in my head.

(TC: 00:35:47)

Chris Knight: Because you were contacted to say that a cash audit would be-, when, when the girl from the migration team came, was coming. So-,

(TC: 00:35:53)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, that was the-, yeah that's, where's that letter that Tracey-, what you showed me before, that one.

(TC: 00:35:59)

Chris Knight: I don't know, you've got the letters. So, you were contacted the end of August to say that the migration team would be coming along.

(TC: 00:36:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, but I did that before, I did it about a week before.

(TC: 00:36:11)

Chris Knight: Before you got the phone call from her?

(TC: 00:36:14)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, I did it a week before, that I wanted help, and I wanted to try and-, I know I wasn't going to sort it out in a week, you know, before, but I wanted, um.

(TC: 00:36:25)

Chris Knight: Right, okay, well, we'll just go over that.

(TC: 00:36:28)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Tracey Beckford, she was called.

(TC: 00:36:28)

Chris Knight: By that time, if we're talking, literally, maybe two weeks before the actual audit came in, then.

(TC: 00:36:32)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:36:32)

Chris Knight: Um, the account, presumably, was close to £14,000, um, adrift.

(TC: 00:36:41)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I think it was about £13,300.

(TC: 00:36:44)

Chris Knight: Yeah, alright. Well, I mean, again, on the audit, um, the actual cash amount is £13,577, then we've got the odd, there's £819, which pushes it up.

(TC: 00:36:50)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah. Yeah, I think the eighteen-, yeah.

(TC: 00:36:53)

Chris Knight: So, the cash amount is about £13,500. So, if we say that, that a couple of weeks before the audit, that, you know, the cash was about £13,000, what concerns me is that you've let it get to £13,000.

(TC: 00:37:08)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I know. I know I have, without asking for help.

(TC: 00:37:09)

Chris Knight: You say you put £640 of your own money in, which, you're not awash with money. It doesn't sound like you're awash, yet you can't remember when, exactly, that was put in.

(TC: 00:37:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I can find out, I can get a date for you.

(TC: 00:37:21)

Chris Knight: Yeah, but, um, regardless of whether you can get a date, I'm saying to you, you can't remember, um, you know, offhand. I just want to show you, this is a balance trading statement, it's dated 24.03. It's not a very good print, obviously.

(TC: 00:37:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, they're not that good.

(TC: 00:37:37)

Chris Knight: It's got your Hightown Post Office, you understand these so I'm not showing you anything that you don't understand. It's got the date, 24.03.2010, which is, obviously, March, and down here, it says cash on hand, and it shows a cash on hand figure of £26,615.38. So, presumably, that figure was not the cash on hand.

(TC: 00:37:56)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, it wasn't.

(TC: 00:37:57)

Chris Knight: Right, it would be some, something less than that.

(TC: 00:37:59)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes.

(TC: 00:38:00)

Chris Knight: Right. If I-, I've got these up to 25th August, which, obviously, is just a week before

the audit.

(TC: 00:38:09)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:38:09)

Chris Knight: So, it would be fair to say, rather than going through each one of these and showing you them, that each one of these that shows a cash in hand figure.

(TC: 00:38:16)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It wasn't right, no.

(TC: 00:38:17)

Chris Knight: It wasn't what was there.

(TC: 00:38:18)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, because I just said it were there because I was struggling with all this what was going on, trying to find it, and-

(TC: 00:38:27)

Chris Knight: But again, presumably, from what you've been saying, we know at the end point it was £14,000. At the start point, it must have been zero. So, it either crept up in amounts over the eight, nine months, or it suddenly became £14,000 after the first month.

(TC: 00:38:45)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, it wasn't. No.

(TC: 00:38:46)

Chris Knight: It crept up along the way.

(TC: 00:38:47)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It's, it's crept up over, yeah.

(TC: 00:38:48)

Chris Knight: It's crept up and it's crept up.

(TC: 00:38:49)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah, and it's just crept up to the point where I just thought, right, I need to, err, sort this out.

(TC: 00:38:56)

Chris Knight: At no point did it get to a point along the way, that you thought this was a concern, it's something that you don't know, you know nothing about it.

(TC: 00:39:02)

Alison Lorraine Hall: It was, because I was going through all these figures, trying to-

(TC: 00:39:06)

Chris Knight: You didn't raise it with anybody, that's what I'm getting at.

(TC: 00:39:07)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, and I should have done. I should have done.

(TC: 00:39:08)

Chris Knight: Right. So, for the first month, when it was X amount of pounds adrift, you falsified the account, but you didn't raise.

(TC: 00:39:16)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I didn't. Not until the last problem.

(TC: 00:39:20)

Chris Knight: Right, and you said you were scared of, you know.

(TC: 00:39:20)

Alison Lorraine Hall: I'd just say I was just frightened. I were just, um-,

(TC: 00:39:23)

Chris Knight: What were, what were you frightened of?

(TC: 00:39:26)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Because I just thought, right, they're not gonna believe me.

(TC: 00:39:31)

Chris Knight: Right. So, lets say, for argument's sake, the first month, let's say it was £1,000.

(TC: 00:39:35)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:39:35)

Chris Knight: It's a rough amount, we're talking eight months, so, £1,000 a month. If you'd have raised that with Carol, who's your line manager, your contracts manager, what do you think would have happened?

(TC: 00:39:47)

Alison Lorraine Hall: She'd have probably done exactly the same, denied it.

(TC: 00:39:50)

Chris Knight: What she's done now, you've been suspended.

(TC: 00:39:51)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yeah.

(TC: 00:39:52)

Chris Knight: So, it would be, again, following on, fair to say-,

(TC: 00:39:54)

Alison Lorraine Hall: And I should have done that at the beginning, when the figure was lower, because I probably wouldn't have been (TC 00:40:00) in this situation now.

(TC: 00:40:01)

Chris Knight: Well, hindsight's wonderful, but along the way, every month that you've been falsifying the figure, okay, and not informing anybody that, that it's not a true record. Basically, you've gained employment along the way, haven't you? You've gained from-, by covering it up, you've gained by staying employed for a month, or two months, or nine months. Would that be a fair assessment.

(TC: 00:40:25)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Yes, it would be a fair assessment. Yes, but it's only because I was scared. I was scared to ask for help, because I'd been reading, I've just heard of other stories. I was, I was scared, and I

should have asked for help earlier and I didn't. And I shouldn't have falsified the accounts, which I did.

(TC: 00:40:44)

Chris Knight: Yeah.

(TC: 00:40:45)

Alison Lorraine Hall: But I have been trying to sort it, and this is why we've done all this work.

(TC: 00:40:49)

Chris Knight: Yeah, well, I mean, it's, sort of, trying to sort it after, after the-,

(TC: 00:40:52)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, no, I shouldn't have done it after. I should have done it before.

(TC: 00:40:54)

Chris Knight: Um, just so I can cover something off, as well. Um, obviously, prior to coming here, um, understood there were problems with the audit, I contacted the chap in Chesterfield, Neil Thornicroft, who looks after the audit, um, err, stuff in Chesterfield. And what he's saying, what he said to me, um, which I've had a look over. He said, um, the last two years we've issued, he says, national lottery game, 03.04.08, to date, they've issued £1,052.00 credit. Prize payments, 24.04.08 to date, £190.20 debit. Scratchcards, 23.06.08 to date, they've issued a £2,200 debit, as a stock credit. What he's saying is, from 01/01/08 to date, you've had 115 stock adjustments, at £1,760 credit. Okay. Now, the figures he's, sort of, saying there, don't come anywhere near £14,000.

(TC: 00:41:55)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, I know they don't. I know.

(TC: 00:41:57)

Chris Knight: Obviously, you've brought paperwork, which I'm not in a position to, to verify or dispute, or whatever. I'm reading out what he's told me, so that I'm, I'm being open with you, you know. I've made some enquiries, I can go back and say, well, this is what Miss Hall has got, does that tie in with anything? And that's not, it could be-,

(TC: 00:42:19)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Well, will they go through these, then? Will they go through these figures?

(TC: 00:42:23)

Chris Knight: Well, they can-, obviously, they go through them, but they can have a look at, you know, trying to explain what you're saying. If you're saying you've adjusted stock, they can have a look and see.

(TC: 00:42:27)

Alison Lorraine Hall: Mmm, I have. I've adjusted stock on quite a number of occasions.

(TC: 00:42:33)

Chris Knight: And why, why have you adjusted it. Is it for your own-,

(TC: 00:42:36)

Alison Lorraine Hall: No, because they've got a transaction correction. Every time I've got a transaction correction I've had to adjust the stock to what they say I should have.

(TC: 00:42:43)

Chris Knight: Right, so, again, we can have a look at, and tie that up, and see if the amounts are what we're talking about.

(TC: 00:42:49)

Paul Whittaker: 43:00.

(TC: 00:42:50)

Chris Knight: Right. What we'll do is, the tape's just going to finish. We'll just stop that, bung another-, put another tape in, just to finish off, okay? Can you, um, read that serial number, on?

(TC: 00:42:58)

Paul Whittaker: Yeah, if you just want to read that serial number out, please, Alison, that one there.

(TC: 00:43:01)

Alison Lorraine Hall: 065759.

(TC: 00:43:03)

Paul Whittaker: And if you could just sign as the person interviewed, please. That's great, thank you very much.

(TC: 00:43:12)

Chris Knight: Right, err, the time by my watch is 12:22, and we'll stop the tape.

(TC: 00:43:18)

Paul Normandale: Do you want me to sign?

(TC: 00:43:18)

Paul Whittaker: Yes, sorry. Yes.

(TC: 00:43:20)

Paul Normandale: No, I don't mind, as long as it's not signed wrong.