

Wednesday, 14 August 2013

### Post Office 2nd Sight report into Horizon

This blog post has been prompted by the July release of an **interim report** by the forensic accountancy firm **2nd Sight** into the Post Office's Horizon computer system.



A Post Office, earlier today

I have been working on this story for a long time, and I'm finally beginning to see what it is.

It is not just about computer failure. It's about incompetence, intransigence and indifference. It is a story about an organisation's misplaced faith in the infallibility of a computer system and its total disregard for any consequent misery caused. It is a story about ordinary people having their lives ruined through a series of punitive technical, contractual and legal constraints which stacked the odds against them, and then ran them through, good and proper.

My involvement started back in November 2010 when I received a call from a man whose pregnant wife had been sent to prison on the basis of computer evidence generated by Horizon. It led to an investigation **broadcast on 7 Feb 2011** on my BBC Surrey show and on BBC1 South's Inside Out programme.

Following the broadcast of the investigation and a **subsequent article published in Private Eye** magazine, the Post Office announced it would be appointing 2nd Sight, a forensic accountancy firm, to look at Horizon and how well it's working.

The MP for North East Hampshire, James Arbuthnot, who featured in our initial broadcast, was one of the prime movers in all this. He effectively leaned on the Post Office, possibly pointing out the increasing level of media interest in the story, until they agreed to do something.

2nd Sight's appointment was announced in June last year. **Matt Prodger**, the BBC's home affairs correspondent, had been gathering material on Horizon, and was able to react to this by **broadcasting some of the interviews** he had already recorded with Subpostmasters who had found their lives turned upside down by their experience.

In the meantime I stayed in touch with the **Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance**, and continued to receive correspondence from Subpostmasters who stumbled across my initial blog post on the subject.



Ha! Well! Ha! Yes! Ha!

The 2nd Sight interim report into the Horizon accounting system is a short and thankfully jargon-free document. And it is damning.

On the fundamental issue of whether software glitches have caused disruption within Horizon, the report is unequivocal.

"We are aware of 2 incidents where defects or 'bugs' in the Horizon software gave rise to 76 branches being affected by incorrect balances or transactions which took some time to identify and correct."

Paragraph 8.2.b, 2nd Sight interim report

So, in a relatively short investigation 2nd Sight has uncovered two instances of software glitches affecting computer systems in multiple Post Office branches.

This contradicts the statement the Post Office gave to Inside Out South two years ago, which claimed:

"The Horizon computer system is absolutely accurate and reliable"

When we first broadcast the complaints against the Post Office we were in a tricky place, legally. We had no proof there was anything wrong with Horizon, or that there ever had been. All we had was the word of a series of individuals, some of whom were now convicted criminals, none of whom were computer experts.

There was a public interest in broadcasting the information we had, but it had to be balanced against the fact that we didn't have a single shred of hard evidence - no whistleblower, no smoking gun, no paper trail, nothing. The Post Office, for its part, could point to a 100% success rate when it came to making prosecutions, noting that every time they took a case to court, the jury had concluded beyond reasonable doubt that the Subpostmasters in the dock were criminals. The Post Office refused all interview requests for our Inside Out programme.



# GRO

Stephen Mason QC

Whilst trying to raise wider enthusiasm for this story in the months following its initial broadcast I had a chat with **Stephen Mason**, a barrister specialising in the presentation of electronic evidence in court. In fact, **he wrote the book on it.**

Mr Mason believes the legal system is failing when it comes to computer evidence.

Firstly because prosecution and defence lawyers don't understand what they're being presented with, and therefore don't know how to examine it properly, and are therefore unable to ask the right questions of the relevant experts in court.

Secondly, there is an underlying legal presumption that computer evidence is infallible, based on the assertion that "machines do not lie". The wording is odd, because it appears self-evident. Of course machines do not deliberately misrepresent, **unless built to do so.**

But legally this has come to mean that "machines do not make mistakes" ie if a mechanical device has done the same thing hundreds or thousands of times in exactly the same way, it is not a defence to say it must have started doing something differently. This idea was conceived well before anyone started programming computer software, and was meant to represent basic mechanical devices (say, a cash register), rather than the interlinked electronic eco-systems we depend on nowadays.

Thirdly, there is a widespread *public* perception that electronic evidence is infallible, hence the readiness of juries to convict on computer records alone.

I asked Mr Mason directly if it was conceivable that the Horizon system was throwing up random glitches, the central allegation of our Inside Out piece. "Yes of course." he replied.

Turns out, from chatting to people who work in IT, these sort of "legacy" (ie old) systems can be extremely problematic. Over a period of time, they degrade. The older they are the more problems can be expected, especially when you start bolting new features and interfaces onto it. But finding someone who works in this area (or more pertinently worked on Horizon itself) who would be prepared to break cover seemed impossible.

I asked **the journalist I worked with at Private Eye** about all the IT cock-up stories they'd run over the years - where did they get *their* whistleblowers from? He told me none of the information they received had ever come from anyone inside an IT company. It mainly leaked out through unions and politicians.

I suppose if you work in IT and you see a problem with a system you go to management or charge clients a fortune to fix it. It would be career suicide to go public.

Interestingly, 2nd Sight's report was picked up by the [programmer forum slashdot](#). It's well worth [reading the discussion](#) there.

I also spotted this, from Angus Marshall, a "digital forensic examiner/expert witness" (who I have since contacted) on a [motoring discussion forum](#):

"A few years back, I assisted with one case where a sub-postmaster was accused of defrauding the benefits systems by cashing vouchers and keeping the money for himself. The whole case revolved around a discrepancy between the Post Office system and the DWP system. Given that DWP's "error handling" consisted of throwing away any records that it didn't like the look of, without recording anything about them, we managed to get that "evidence" ruled unreliable and inadmissible pretty quickly.

It took about 4 hours of meetings with two of the system programmers - one DWP and one Post Office to discover that no-one had ever bothered to check that the data interchange specs. Actually matched on both sides - and they'd never been told to consider the evidential requirements of their systems.

Both systems were (are) run by the same company, btw."

It has become apparent to me that the Horizon story is laying bare the logical inconsistency which governs the way non-IT people (including journalists, juries, lawyers, prosecutors and Post Office directors) think about technology.

We believe the commercial IT systems which affect our daily lives are durable to the point of being incapable of material error. We have to, or we'd never get in a car.

This belief is borne out by experience. Every time I go to the cashpoint, it works. Every time I buy something at the supermarket, it works. Every time I take a flight, it lands. What we're perhaps not aware of is the army of people making sure the software involved in these interactions is solid, by testing and re-testing, ironing out bugs and maintaining the systems at an optimum level.

So Horizon can go wrong or be misused. But so can any other computer system. With Horizon, are we looking at a computer system that is much worse (or more badly-maintained) than equivalent systems being used elsewhere, or are we focusing our attention on the wrong issue?

Let's assume that Horizon is no more unstable than any other bank's accounting system. Let's assume "random" software glitches occur once in every billion banking transactions (or whatever the industry-standard acceptable level of risk is) everywhere.

So what happens in every other banking system?

Nobody knows.

It all happens internally.

Losses are recorded, managers are alerted, customers are compensated (where appropriate) and codes are re-written/employees are re-trained to mitigate against future re-occurrence.

Reports are produced, decisions about IT contracts and/or the investment in IT maintenance/support/training are made and the losses are written off. The risk of random IT

glitches affecting the balance sheet is effectively spread amongst the bank's shareholders.

Indeed, we know **Horizon "lost" more than two million quid** in Crown Post Offices (the big city POs) in the 2007/8 financial year, and the figure was simply chalked against turnover.



A non-Crown Post Office, today

With non-Crown Post Offices (ie all Sub Post Offices) it's different. Thanks to the extraordinary nature of the Subpostmaster contract, all the risk for any computer-generated accounting discrepancy falls on the individual Subpostmaster.

Culturally, the PO would far rather pursue individual postmasters for money its accounting system says it's owed than examine the possibility of errors within its own system. Whatever the personal cost to the individual postmaster concerned.

The 2nd Sight report picks up on the PO's culture of bureaucratic intransigence, and its effect on Subpostmasters who have had to try and deal with it:

eg: "2nd Sight has asked POL [Post Office Ltd] to deliver... responses that would prove as easy to understand [as our own case review reports] that addressed the spirit, as well as the letter, of the Subpostmasters' complaints; and that were backed by evidence. Whilst the responses received from POL can be seen to be thorough, they are long and highly technical documents. In some cases, they present counter-assertions, based on Standard Operating Procedures and Controls, rather than tangible evidence of what actually happened."

From paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3, 2nd Sight interim report

"Many of the Subpostmasters we have dealt with remain aggrieved and dissatisfied with what they see as POL's defensive and unsympathetic response. Whereas we had expected that some form of closure would be reached between POL and the Subpostmasters [whose cases we are looking at], this has so far not been achieved."

Paragraph 5.7, 2nd Sight interim report

There is also some satisfaction at giving the Post Office a taste of its own medicine:

"It is of course hard for POL to prove the negative (i.e. that [Horizon's] controls have not been circumvented) but it is only fair to say that POL now finds itself in the same situation that has faced all of the Subpostmasters who have submitted cases. They too, were unable to prove that the shortages or transactions that they reported to POL... were not the result of their own (or their employees') errors or criminal activity."

Paragraph 5.5, 2nd Sight interim report

Translation: suck it up and give us the information we want.

There's more:

"We can't help concluding that had POL investigated more of the "mysterious shortages" and problems reported to it [by its own Subpostmasters] with the thoroughness that it has investigated those reported to it by 2nd Sight, POL would have been in a much better position to resolve the matters raised, and would also have benefited from process improvements."

Paragraph 7.3, 2nd Sight interim report

Translation: if you'd have given a \*\*\*\* when your Subpostmasters raised these issues rather than sent in the prosecutors, not only would we not be here, you'd have far more robust and efficient systems.

Explicitly:

"When POL does investigate cases, there is often a focus on 'asset recovery solutions' without first establishing the underlying root cause of the problem. This is also an example of a missed opportunity to be in a much better position to resolve problems and to benefit from process improvements."

From the overall tone of the report it's clear 2nd Sight have some sympathy with the Postmasters' plight.

### **Seema Misra**

2nd Sight are being very thorough. On the day their report came out I received a call from the Today programme asking if I could recommend a Subpostmaster who would make a good guest. I gave them the name and mobile number of Seema Misra, the lady in West Byfleet who was sent to jail whilst pregnant because she refused to plead guilty to fraud and false accounting (I would love to see the stats for the severity of punishment handed out to asian Subpostmasters against their white counterparts, but I guess each case is different...).

Since being released from prison, Seema has moved the family out of Surrey and re-trained as a make-up artist.



**GRO**

Seema (r) and Davinder Misra

The day Seema appeared on the Today programme she got a call from 2nd Sight. They'd heard her talking about her case and wanted to review it before their final report.

**'Ivy'**

Earlier today I spoke to another Subpostmaster (let's call her Ivy) who had problems with Horizon and avoided prison by the skin of her teeth. Ivy says since the 2nd Sight report came out it's been

"exciting".

She pointed immediately to prosecutions against three Subpostmasters (Susan Knight, Tom Brown and Kym Wyllie) which have been dropped since the interim report came out "due to lack of evidence".

The Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance called this "the first demonstration that we have seen that POL are serious about resolving these issues", and seems to suggest a wind change in the PO's strategy.

Ivy says she's still disgusted by the way the PO treated her but thinks they now seem to be aware that "something has to happen, because we're not going to go away."

Ivy has also had regular conversations with a man from 2nd Sight. She says when 2nd Sight man first met her she was sure he thought she was a "bandit", but the more he heard about her story, the more he was shocked, and that this pattern is being repeated higher and higher up the food chain.

But it does seem to me at the moment that the focus of 2nd Sight, POL and the politicians is on the way Subpostmasters are treated by the PO and the terms of the Subpostmaster contract, rather than Horizon's ability to function properly.

I asked Ivy if 2nd Sight man thought there was something inherently unstable within Horizon's software. Ivy is sure he does, but thinks the final report won't say problems with Horizon are "what's the word.... systemic."

Finally I asked her if she thinks the worm has turned, and that she might one day get her conviction quashed. She told me she didn't know what to think right now, but it "would be nice, at least, to get back some of the money I lost."

Alan Bates

During our conversation Ivy could not speak highly enough of Alan Bates, who runs the **Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance**, calling him "a hero". Alan is also roundly praised in the 2nd Sight report. He keeps a very low media profile, but he's always happy to natter on the phone. I asked him what's going on now 2nd Sight's report is in the public domain. He pointed me in a number of directions:

First of all he reiterated his unhappiness with 2nd Sight's investigation being commissioned and paid for by the Post Office. He thinks the PO's patronage was reflected in the interim report which went through more than 20 revisions before publication and was "reviewed and reviewed and reviewed by the Post Office until they had reviewed it flat."

Alan also told me that next week the Post Office is going to announce a case review process for Subpostmasters which has been developed with the JFSA and 2nd Sight. It will deal with existing and historic grievances, and could lead to independent mediation of individual cases.

# GRO

Jo Swinson MP, 9 July 2013

Alan also recommended we keep an eye on the government in all this. The day after the 2nd Sight interim report was released the Minister for Postal Affairs, Jo Swinson, **gave a statement to the Commons**. "It's a very watchable 45 minutes" says Alan. I've just watched it. It is. It gets particularly good at 17m55s when MPs weigh in on behalf of their Subpostmaster constituents demanding better answers from the minister.

Alan is pretty sure the government is now a) aware of the scale of the problem (whatever 2nd Sight conclude that to be) and b) wants a swift resolution, because it is trying to sell bits of POL off and can't have this hanging over it. To that end, the government wants another interim update in October.

Finally, Alan mentioned that POL are advertising for a new computer system. "To replace Horizon?" I asked. "Well it doesn't specifically say that," he replied "but I'll **send you the full advert** and you can see for yourself. It's certainly a big contract."

## Conclusion

To me, the 2nd Sight report represents one thing. Movement. There are an awful lot of people who have suffered, some considerably, as a result of being put in an impossible position. And it does seem as if the problems with Horizon, the Post Office's attitude and the risk-loading of the Subpostmaster contract is finally being taken seriously at the highest levels.

On a wider scale, this story has also reinforced to me the importance of journalism. I have seen, first hand, how the law can be unjust. The people who have been crushed in this case are hard-working, tax-paying and trusting - the sort of people who naturally go to authority when things go wrong.

When they found themselves being prosecuted for "crimes" they often alerted the authorities to in the first place, they believed they would be exonerated.

It is only with extreme reluctance, after they had lost their homes and jobs and been convicted as criminals, they realised they had to speak out. These are not wily, media-savvy people we are talking about. They have no support networks or effective unions. They would naturally trust a police officer, a judge or a company director over a journalist every day of the week.

As a result their belief in society has been shattered. Now they know the justice system, company prosecutors and supposedly benign employers can be heartless and wrong.

That's not to say this isn't all very curious. If the Horizon computer system is degrading into unreliability, it is doing so very slowly. As the 2nd Sight report states:

"The Horizon system involves approximately 68,000 users and processes over 6 million transactions every day. The entire population of over 11,800 branches was notified about the proposed investigation by 2nd Sight and this resulted in 14 additional cases being accepted for investigation. Whilst in no way minimizing [sic] the potential importance of the cases under

review, this level of response suggests that the vast majority of Subpostmasters and branches are at least reasonably happy with the Horizon system."

Paragraph 1.11, 2nd Sight interim report

There is also, of course, the possibility that some of the people I have read about, spoken to and dealt with were knowingly defrauding the Post Office for personal gain. I haven't read the court documents or seen the evidence in every single case.

What I do know is that many hitherto blameless people have been suspended, sacked or convicted purely on computer evidence, by prosecutors working within a justice system inclined to believe in the infallibility of computers. Without doubt a large number of Subpostmasters are isolated, poorly-trained and tied into deeply unfair contracts by a company which has a Dickensian "asset-recovery led" approach to industrial relations.

This story will go on for years. There are many who have lost everything through no fault of their own. They deserve redress. They need their convictions quashed, and they need their money and reputations back. We are a long, long way from that, but perhaps the 2nd Sight investigation, the interim report and the way in which it has been received will offer a glimmer of hope.

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Posted by Nick Wallis at 00:51 

## 27 comments:

1.



**Tracey** 14 August 2013 21:26

I'm one of the postmasters caught up in this and no-one can understand the feelings and stress you have to live with especially when members of the public say things like there's no smoke without fire. Also although I have found work it is low paid and I'm only on a temporary contract until I can clear my name, this was not what I saw for myself when I paid out every penny saved to buy a post office which was going to be my job until I retired.

**Reply**

2.

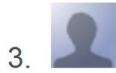


**Anonymous** 14 August 2013 22:29

My partner has been a victim of POL.  
Difference is she stood up to them and they bottled it at the Crown court. Corporate bullying by unaccountable public servants using state funding.  
Mutualisation of Post Office; are you kidding? They'll be lucky if they can give it away.  
MESSAGE TO MS P VENNELLS:  
You can prevent your contaminated brand becoming toxic, but you'll have to earn

your stratospheric salary and act quickly. The time to blag, I think you realise has passed.

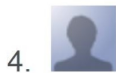
**Reply**



**Anonymous** 15 August 2013 09:28

MY WIFE TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE SO SHE COULD END THE FALSE PROSECUTION AGAINST HER, OUR WHOLE FAMILY WERE AFFECTED BY THE FALSE PROSECUTION.

**Reply**

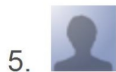


**Anonymous** 15 August 2013 19:21

A fantastic summary of a truly tragic case.  
Have hundreds of upstanding people suddenly become thieves? I doubt it.  
Upstanding citizens who are often at the heart of their communities have been forced into accepting they are criminals.

POL have so much to answer for - how many livers have been destroyed?

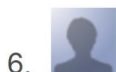
**Reply**



**Anonymous** 15 August 2013 22:26

I have Bank of Ireland ATM generated print-outs indicating more cash holdings at the end of the day than at the start, without the machine being replenished.  
Rejected notes to the value of £85 billion.  
Individual cassettes having their totals cleared.  
All cassettes showing empty, but the note totals indicating cash in the machine.  
Cassette totals transposing and then swapping back.  
I also have an ATM engineers' witness statement explaining how these anomalies occur, but the best POL could do was attempt a prosecution for theft. Needless to say POL didn't want to put this in front of a jury.  
Proof writ large POL struggle to integrate other peoples' cost collection and accounting systems to Horizon.  
I can only describe POL's actions as dimwitted and unintelligent, their mismanagement bringing a once great institution into disrepute.

**Reply**



**David Hill** 18 August 2013 06:45

I banked a cheque at my local post office so it would go into my post office ISA. What a farce that was. They wrote to me soon after and said they had cancelled my monthly direct debit from my bank into my ISA as I had overpaid into my ISA, a significant overpayment ! I rang up post office and said that I hadn't they asked me if I was sure. I said yes I had only made a few monthly DD payments of £50 and one cheque that went in which was around £2,200. This one cheque payment had caused a much larger payment into my ISA taking me above what an ISA was allowed to hold - and they say their computer system is reliable !! I dont think so. The whole episode was a real farce which took me considerable time and effort to sort out. I moved my ISA to my bank in the end as I really had, had enough.

They wrote and apologised in the end and paid me £50 for all the effort I had to make to get this sorted out! But to me as a customer this proves their system was making errors

**Reply**



**Tracey19 August 2013 23:12**

Something must be wrong, I had phone call telling me I was using the computer's even after they had blocked them and again after they had been removed. Still they won't admit I couldn't have logged on.

**Reply**



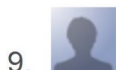
**Anonymous20 August 2013 22:37**

Hi Nick

I am also a victim of the horizon issues and in our case it was at the interface between horizon and the D.V.L.A. system last year. I paid back £1908 to rectify the difference with the assurance that the system would eventually recompense. That never happened.

The warning last year caused me to be suspended this year when I had an issue over rates applied to my A.T.M. which was caused by 'missinformation' being given to the rates authority by the Post Office. I have been reinstated but have lost considerable revenue which I can ill afford.

**Reply**



**James Arbuthnot27 August 2013 19:53**

Good stuff, and I know you will keep your eye on this extremely important issue. But one thing I would challenge you on, namely the payment by the Post Office for the investigation by Second Sight. The very fact that they were prepared to do that suggested to me that they did want, perhaps against their own apparent interest, to resolve the matter for the good of everyone, themselves included. I thought that was creditable.

And someone had to pay for it. I wasn't going to, the Government wouldn't have forked out money from somewhere else to do so, and the Post Office offered to do so despite the risk involved to their reputation. That does contrast (well, IMHO) with the cover ups we've seen elsewhere in the public sector.

James Arbuthnot

## Reply

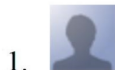


**Anonymous** 27 January 2014 13:34

Hi Mr James Arbuthnot, I think the operative word is the Post Office PAID for this report by 2nd Sight and why was it reviewed over 20 times by the Post Office before release and what exactly was changed in the report where is that information that is the question you should be asking the Post Office

## 2. Reply

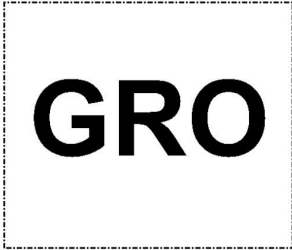
## Replies



**Ray Clarence** 27 August 2013 22:19

Perhaps the key question we would all like answered is:  
Has the systematic witch hunt targeting Subpostmasters been undertaken by "a few rogue individuals acting on their own volition" or is it a result of Post Office Ltd policy?  
If it is the former, how have these individuals been allowed to wreak such havoc?  
If the result of the latter, how has a public body been allowed commit such acts?  
Either way, the buck stops with POL. Time for them to dig deep and pay for their malfeasance.  
With respect to the payment of 2nd Sight by POL being creditable, I beg to differ. POL are on the cusp of a significant public relations disaster visiting a state owned institution. The current escalating crisis has the potential to wipe out POL as we know it.  
POL have consciously sown the wind and now they must reap the whirlwind.

## Reply



**Nick Wallis** 28 August 2013 22:30

I would like to respectfully swerve your challenge, Mr Arbuthnot, by pointing out that when it comes to the commissioning of the 2nd Sight investigation in the above post I was reporting Alan Bates' opinion, rather than my own.

That said, I do believe that companies never consciously act against their self-interest.

The Post Office must have taken a view that any short term monetary and reputational cost engendered by commissioning 2nd Sight is a better bind to be in than continuing their policy of denial.

They could have continued to ignore the media interest, or the fact that you and your colleagues were asking awkward questions. But that surely would have the long-term effect of turning this into a far bigger scandal than it already is.

**Reply**



**Anonymous** 30 August 2013 07:41

I to am caught up in all of this and have been since the beginning of the year having worked on horizon in several branches i could write a book on all its flaws and how it looses transactions when ever it wants to i worked for plo for over a decade but now await the possibility of prosecution i have never taken a penny from them but have had to put in many a penny over the last decade. If your horizon happens to freeze or you have a power surge or cut any transaction you have in the so called stake are gone you have no option but to reboot the system then when you run a transaction log there is nothing there it is as if that transaction did not exist and any monies are lost into the horizon void I had a transaction correction come through for lottery to the sum of just over £2000 these corrections just appear on your screen from the powers that be you have to choices settle which means you agree to cover the transaction or settle centrally which means you disagree and they are ment to send you more evidence of your supposed error i pulled all the paper work out for the lottery and settled centrally as i could not find what they were talking about they re sent it to me three times after numerous phone calls and me telling them there dates were incorrect for totals they had they realised that the error was infact for another office half way up the country had i not have had the years experience with this sort of thing i would have done what many do panic and except the lose this is just one example of many i could give at this time i have lost my job had an interview under caution lasting several hours and my bank account looked into i have rung on several occasions to find what is happening to be told they are continuing there investigations and i am one of over 60 now in review as to wethere to prosecute me or not my life is in limbo

**Reply**

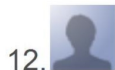
## Replies



**Anonymous**30 August 2013 21:16

Sounds about typical of the bullying tactics employed by POL. We identify the POL individuals responsible and they will be held accountable. In my own case, I do not expect the POL employees who have committed misdeeds to retain thier employment with POL. I can demonstrate fraud on the part of the contractacts manager and an intent to pervert the course of justice by the POL investigations department investigator.  
Be sure their sins will find them out.  
All depends if POL want to hold their hands up corporately or if they want to hang a few of their staff out to dry.  
Either way the individuals' involved must be starting the feel uncomfortable (and not before time).

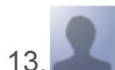
## Reply



**Anonymous**22 September 2013 00:20

The post office are simply not willing to accept any responsibility when dealing with these problems and often use bully boy tactics to get people to plead guilty of certain thingsto avoid being charged with worse offences.

## Reply



**Anonymous**28 September 2013 11:46

I have been informed by my brother [who is one of the sub-postmasters affected by this ] that a man in the Wirrall ,obviously a sub postmaster affected by this situation walked in front of a car the other day and is seriously ill in hospital . When are the P.O. going to admit their errors etc. - it is interesting that they hope to make millions from the flotation of Royal Mail as they will shortly be paying out millions to the victims of these errors.

## Reply

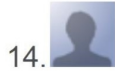
## Replies



**Anonymous**29 September 2013 20:54

When are the National Federation of Subpostmasters (NFSP) going to do anything other than align themselves with Post Office Ltd (POL)? The NFSP is a cancer within the midst of Subpostmasters. George Thomson (General Secretary, NFSP) should choose between responsibility or resignation.

### Reply



**Anonymous** 9 November 2013 16:38

I find the whole situation appalling. no one seems to be questioning the POL! Does no one think this is rather suspicious that so many Sub Postmasters are being accused of theft/fraud? My sister is included in this and in the space of 3 months I know of 3 other people also accused. I have reports from POL that show transactions on days that no one has actually logged onto the system. This includes the day after the POL auditors shut down the post office and took away the keys. Can anyone explain that!

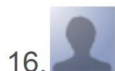
### Reply



**Anonymous** 12 November 2013 18:29

Your sister would be well advised to contact JFSA, her MP and Shoosmiths solicitors as soon as possible. I'd be highly cautious about discussing the matter with the NFSP. Collect any documentary evidence, make notes and record telephone calls with POL if possible.

### Reply



**Anonymous** 19 November 2013 20:55

As a software support engineer working on software errors for many years I can state that there is no such thing as a random software error or an intermittent software error. By definition if you recreate the circumstances of the event then software will recreate the failure. It is possible to have intermittent or random hardware errors but they can be identified by examination of the software output after failure

### Reply

### Replies



**Anonymous**27 November 2013 20:51

Dear Mr Software Support Engineer,

In testimony at my partner's trial, Wincor Nixdorf - the ATM provider, when explaining how figures go awry, stated "this is a known problem that occurs sporadically". I don't doubt your extensive experience in your chosen field, but please do not attempt to transpose rational thought onto the circumstances surrounding POL's own brand of logic regarding these cases. We are dealing with full blown malfeasance on the part of POL.

**Reply**

17.



**Anonymous**22 November 2013 07:25

i wrote a comment on here on the 30th of august as i am caught up in all this and have been since february this year i was interviiwed under caution at my home in april and was told i would be informed of the out come in about six weeks well i am still waiting have rang the security manager who condudted the interview to be told once that my case had been sent for review with po solicitors and to ring in another month rang again to be told still in review and i was probably at the back of the line as there were in excess of 60 cases in review so am still in limbo not knowing if they are going to try to prosecute me for something i have not done my life is still in limbo i am still unemployed not knowing what to say at job interviews as to why i left my last position my husband is now my ex husband as he divorced me due to not being able to take the presure of all this i just want all this over and done with

**Reply**

18.



**Michael Wilson**25 November 2013 13:16

my brother is caught up in all this and I am still waiting for someone to put up their hand and say " sorry " we got it wrong -you are not a thief as we alleged . I understand that one sub-postmaster living the Wirral was so distraught that he walked out in front of a car and died as a result of his injuries !! Someone from P.O. said to my brother after he was suspended and lost his job -when he enquired what he was to do to look after his family -they said "you can live off the money you stole from us !" Needless to say I have it in for that person !

**Reply**

**Replies**

1.



**Anonymous** 2 December 2013 18:43

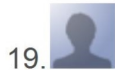
You'll be waiting a long time for someone from POL to put their hands up and admit a mistake. They have never ever made a mistake don't you know.

Even when they're wrong, they're right.

If the same standards were applied to POL staff as POL apply to Subpostmasters, there'd be a few hundred more people on the dole queue. My experience of them is they have a disproportionate number of deadbeats and no-hopers who couldn't fill-out a job application let alone organize themselves to turn up for an interview.

Very sad that a once great institution has been managed into the ground by a bunch of reckless malevolent knackers.

**Reply**



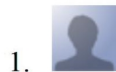
**Anonymous** 16 December 2013 02:12

Hi, I suffered a great deal from the hands of the post office and the errors on the horizon system. To the point where I was convicted of fraud, lost my business and almost lost my home. I have been battling depression that was onset by this saga. I have only just heard of the JFSA. It makes me feel a great deal better to know that I am not alone in this situation. However the horizon complaint review applications closed 18th November 2013 and I have missed this deadline.

Can anyone please advise me on how I can get my complaint heard?

**Reply**

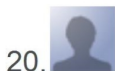
**Replies**



**Anonymous** 16 December 2013 21:22

In the first instance contact Alan Bates at JFSA.

**Reply**




**Anonymous** 13 January 2014 17:11

Why is there a deadline for horizon complaint review applications as it is obvious as more publicity helps to inform Sub-postmasters that they have recourse against the Post Office that otherwise they would be silent and accept the bullying tactics of the Post office this Mediation complaint review should be ongoing until there is

satisfaction that all Sub-postmasters past and present have been contacted and given the opportunity to put their case if they have a complaint

**Reply**

21. 

**Anonymous 18 January 2014 23:39**

So the National Federation of Sub Postmasters has been removed from the list of Trade Unions and cannot be recognised by POL for collective bargaining purposes.

What took so long for this statement of the bleeding obvious to arrive. I doubt there'll be many tears shed for the NFSP by the contributors to this blog.

The disgraceful abandonment of their members over this sordid Horizon affair beggers belief.

Talk about obtaining money (membership dues) under false pretences, not to mention the vulgar sums received from POL. Looks like it's no longer an open secret, the NFSP is a busted flush - OFFICIAL.