

POST OFFICE *Limited* - CONFIDENTIAL

Paper Numbers: SIMS INV 7746 / 3415

Huyton DMB – FAD 018 420

Investigation Team Manager
Post Office Limited (North)

Further to the report on page 44 of this file.

The matter was listed for trial at Liverpool Crown Court for week commencing 21 July 2003. On this day the defence requested that the case be adjourned. The reason given was they had requested documents from various financial institutions in respect of Lisa Brennan, which had not been received. The case was duly adjourned until 02 September 2003.

On Tuesday 2 September 2003, Lisa Brennan appeared at Liverpool Crown Court in front of His Honour Judge Phipps. Ms Zillar Williams prosecuted on behalf of Royal Mail Group and Mr Simms appeared for the defendant. Ms Brennan pleaded not guilty to the 32 charges on the indictment. Royal Mail Group called two witnesses, Ms Kate Rosenthal (Branch Manager Huyton Post Office®) and myself. The defence apart from Lisa Brennan did not call any further witnesses.

His Honour Judge Phipps asked the jury to retire to consider their verdicts at 1515 hours on Wednesday 03 September 2003. His Honour had asked the jury to return a verdict on all 32 counts. The jury returned at 1630 hours and the foreperson indicated that they had not reached any decisions. They were sent home for the night. The jury reconvened the following morning. At 1430 hours they returned to the courtroom and the foreperson stated that they had reached verdicts on some of the charges but not all of them. The jury returned 25 guilty verdicts, 4 not guilty verdicts and they had not reached a verdict on the outstanding 3 counts. They were asked to continue to deliberate on these counts and a majority verdict would be accepted. They returned a short while later and returned two guilty verdicts by a majority of 11 to 1 and a not guilty verdict. The jury were out for just over 6 hours in their deliberations.

The matter was adjourned for pre sentence reports and will be dealt with on Monday 6 October 2003. His honour Judge Phipps stated that a custodial sentence was one of the options open to him.

The matter was reconvened on this date at Liverpool Crown Court and all parties were in attendance. Ms Williams re iterated the case of the prosecution and asked for £3139.40 in compensation. This amount is the total of the 27 charges in which Ms Brennan was found guilty. She also asked for costs of £5,600. Mr Simms spoke on behalf of the defence and stated that Judge Phipps has before him a number of character references and a report from Ms Brennan's GP. He also stated that Ms Brennan received fortnightly the sum of £262.



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In summing up HH Judge Phipps stated that Ms Brennan had worked for the Post Office® for a number of years, which were of unblemished service. Then over a period of seven months stole £3139.10 by inflating the amount payable on the pension and allowances. She then pocketed the difference. He said that in his judgement, she knew that she would not be detected for some time. This was due to the large number of Post Offices® and that they were randomly checked at Lisahally in Northern Ireland. He went on to say that there is a position of trust for Post Office® counter clerks, those that breach this trust go to prison.


He said that he had read the bundle of testimonials and agreed that they are glowing. They showed her as a good friend, mother, work colleague and person. He had also read the report from her GP. He went on to say that Ms Brennan had told the jury that she had problems at home with her marriage; she was suffering from depression and had taken time off work. The report certifies that this problem goes back 10 years and she had also been receiving treatment. He also said that the character letters he had read also refer to these problems.

He said the reason he has been at a point to say all this was that one possibility was to suspend the period of imprisonment. However, this would be if there were exceptional circumstances surrounding the case. He went on to say that due to the illness etc, he was prepared to find that there were exceptional circumstances to this case. The appropriate sentence would be 6 months imprisonment, but this sentence would be suspended for 2 years.

He then said that he was asked to consider costs and compensation in the region of £8,600. He went on to say that Ms Brennan was unemployed and would not now find employment as she had when employed by the Post Office®. She received £262 and it would be wrong of him to impose compensation and costs. The Post Office® if they wish can take other steps to recover the amounts.

These papers are submitted in order that the outcome can be noted and that the inquiry is now completed. The papers can be filed away in due course.

S Bradshaw
07 October 2003

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