

File name: N Heaven 1-01.mp3

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: 00:00:02)

Moderator 1: This interview is being tape recorded. My name is Elaine Davis, I'm an officer of the Post Office Network Security and Investigation, employed to investigate possible criminal offences. My colleague is-

(TC: 00:00:14)

Moderator 2: I'm Paul Travers (ph 00.15), security manager for the Post Office (mw 00.17).

(TC: 00:00:17)

Moderator 1: Also present-

(TC: 00:00:19)

Simon James: Simon James, solicitor.

(TC: 00:00:22)

Moderator 1: Nicola, will you please state your full name, date of birth, and home address?

(TC: 00:00:27)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Nicola Jane Heaven (ph 00.28)

GRO

GRO

(TC: 00:00:34)

Moderator 1: Thank you. The date is 30th January 2001. The time is 16:10. This interview is being conducted in the Stroud police station interview room. Nicola, I'd like to ask you some questions

about documentation we have received since the interview of the 19 October 2000, which relates to pension allowance over-claims whilst you were the officer in charge at (inaudible 01.02) . At the end of the interview, I'll give you a notice to-

(TC: 00:01:06)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Can I stop you? I wasn't the officer in charge.

(TC: 00:01:11)

Moderator 1: Sorry, right.

(TC: 00:01:13)

Moderator 2: How would you describe yourself then?

(TC: 00:01:15)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, up until April this year, I was an employee of the (inaudible 01.18) .

(TC: 00:01:21)

Moderator 2: Right, and from that point onwards?

(TC: 00:01:23)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I was an employee of (inaudible 01.24) .

(TC: 00:01:26)

Moderator 2: Alright, (talking over each other 01.27).

(TC: 00:01:27)

Moderator 1: Okay. Alright, okay. At the end of the interview, I will give you notice explaining what will happen to the tapes. The time is now 16:11. You do not 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?

(TC: 00:01:49)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 01.49).

(TC: 00:01:50)

Moderator 1: Do you confirm that you've not been questioned prior to the tape machine being switched on?

(TC: 00:01:55)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:01:56)

Moderator 1: Okay. There are some legal forms now. CS001. I'd like you to read one to one to four, please. Okay, so if we can go through it. The time is 16:12 (inaudible 02.26) . We'll go through it with you. You're not under arrest. You do not have to remain at this interview. If you do remain you have the right to legal representation. Mr James is here. You're entitled to read the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Have you read one to four? Do you understand one to four? If you can put your signature? Yes, okay, thanks. Do you wish to speak to a solicitor? Mr James is here, so if you write in there, 'Mr James present.'

(TC: 00:03:11)

Simon James: What's the form again, sorry CS?

(TC: 00:03:12)

Moderator 1: 001.

(TC: 00:03:15)

Simon James: CS001.

(TC: 00:03:16)

Moderator 1: Yes.

(TC: 00:03:17)

Moderator 2: Just to interject here. Have you had ample time to discuss with your client, Mr James, prior?

(TC: 00:03:24)

Simon James: Yes. Yes, we've spoken, not just today, but we (inaudible 03.28) .

(TC: 00:03:29)

Moderator 1: Yes, okay, right. So, that one's not applicable, it's if you do not want to speak to a solicitor. I'll sign that one. Okay? Okay, Nicola. When we first spoke to you on the 19th of October last year, I showed you a schedule which I'm showing you again now, which covered schedule of P and A discrepancies for 32 weeks, and the total of the pension and allowance over claims on that schedule came to £8,325.78. During that interview, we discussed weeks 36, 37, 39 and 43, okay? We didn't go through every one, we just picked out a couple of (mw 04.48).

(TC: 00:04:49)

Simon James: P A stands for pension and allowances.

(TC: 00:04:51)

Moderator 1: Pension and allowances, sorry, yes, okay. On the weeks that we showed you, you confirmed that you prepared the documentation and you signed cash accounts for those weeks.

(TC: 00:05:03)

Nicola Jane Heaven: What do you mean by prepared?

(TC: 00:05:05)

Moderator 1: The (mw 05.04), the weekly accounts.

(TC: 00:05:06)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:05:07)

Moderator 1: For those weeks. And, when we asked you about the over claims, you explained that you sometimes got muddled, obviously, with the discrepancies.

(TC: 00:05:20)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 05.20).

(TC: 00:05:20)

Moderator 1: That you got muddled, when we asked you the reasons for all the discrepancies on the over claims, you said that you.

(TC: 00:05:26)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I didn't say I got muddled. I didn't say I got muddled.

(TC: 00:05:31)

Moderator 1: (Talking over each other 05.31).

(TC: 00:05:32)

Moderator 2: Did you say it?

(TC: 00:05:33)

Nicola Jane Heaven: The reasons I gave for the over claims, obviously, I don't know because I haven't got the full figures of the cash account in front of me, which was same on October, is that without all the transactions that make up the weekly cash account, I don't know why there was a discrepancy. That's what I said. I was asked to say how could this have happened, and I said, as a guess, because I'm not qualified in that area to know, but, as a guess, I would say, either, 'Transactions on the other side, there could be a problem with.'

(TC: 00:06:16)

Moderator 1: Right.

(TC: 00:06:18)

Moderator 2: Explain what you mean by transactions on the other side.

(TC: 00:06:20)

Nicola Jane Heaven: As in, if-, because the payments are incorrect-, I mean, the fact is, the balance shouldn't have balanced, we should've had a surplus. If there isn't a surplus, the only thing I can say, the reason why there wouldn't be a surplus, is if the receipts signed-, like, if somebody came in and paid a bill and we forgot to take the cheque, we forgot to take the money, which has happened, then, that would eat up the surplus. But, without looking at all those transactions-, or the stock could've been counted incorrectly. It could be numerous things that caused the error. That's what I said, I didn't say I was muddled about it.

(TC: 00:06:59)

Moderator 2: I think, what Elaine is trying to say to you (inaudible 07.01) during the interview, you said something about the-, with the pension allowances, sometimes, you didn't set them (inaudible 07.08) (talking over each other 07.10).

(TC: 00:07:10)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, that's true yes, yes.

(TC: 00:07:12)

Moderator 2: And you may have got muddled.

(TC: 00:07:13)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, and Marlene as well, and Joyce as well, we've all cocked them up at one stage.

(TC: 00:07:19)

Moderator 2: Alright.

(TC: 00:07:20)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Okay.

(TC: 00:07:21)

Moderator 1: Well, since then, why we've called you back today, we've had the rest of the checks done, which we said to you we would be getting done. And, we've had print outs from the computer, and we've had statements from two of the pensioners and from Marlene (ph 07.37) and Anne. So, that's what we'd like to speak to you about today.

(TC: 00:07:41)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Right.

(TC: 00:07:42)

Moderator 1: Is that okay?

(TC: 00:07:43)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:07:45)

Moderator 1: Right. For the benefit of the tape, when we discuss the final account for the 18th of October, 2000, Nigel Holland (ph 08.03), the auditor, revealed a surplus of £19.94 against a declared service of £19.16. He just found it was a couple of coppers out in the difference. But when he went into the pension and allowance dockets (ph 08.18), and he checked them, and you remember that he found that for group thirteens, there were two dockets at £162.63, but only one in the (talking over each other 08.32).

(TC: 00:08:32)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 08.32).

(TC: 00:08:33)

Moderator 1: And a group seven, £292.80 claimed, but only one. So, that gave a total over claimed of £455.43 which, in theory, as we discussed, should've shown an over in the accounts. You also confirmed that you were the person, you were working alone on the days of those transactions. It

was Monday 16th and Wednesday 18th of October, yes, that you were in the office, (mw 09.08). Okay, so as we said, since we've last spoken, I've spoken to the pensioners who came in and picked up those pensions on that day and we also pulled out a transaction log for the day. This is one that shows the £162.63 transaction and this is the one, the group seven, for £292.80, but I say to say it right away is that on the day of the audit, it was found that the computer clock had not been adjusted and it (TC 00:10:00) was reading an hour early. So, consequently, each time we look at a time on these printouts, we have to be aware we need to add an hour, obviously when the clocks changed, okay? So, whenever we mention, like, 9:08 on the docket, it's in fact 10:08.

(TC: 00:10:23)

Simon James: Obviously you two are familiar with these. Can you remind us, as much as anything, explain what the transaction log does and is?

(TC: 00:10:28)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I've only done it once, so I (inaudible 10.30) .

(TC: 00:10:32)

Moderator 1: Right, each time-, I'll show you, this is a transaction log of 18th October 2000. Nicky has signed on, those are Nicky's initials and her pass, which has shown that Nicky's signed onto the computer, (talking over each other 10.55) 002.

(TC: 00:10:57)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Talking over each other 10.57) she was signing on and signing off as well, so I did the training work (ph 11.07), Marlene's coding and she'd serve customers whilst I'd be doing other things and signing (inaudible 11.16) , things like this. She couldn't log on her thing, so she'd manually (inaudible 11.21) with my name and my password.

(TC: 00:11:30)

Moderator 1: People shouldn't because each person is issued with a number, with a pass of their own, and that pass shouldn't be told, (talking over each other 11.38).

(TC: 00:11:38)

Moderator 2: (talking over each other 11.38) that that didn't happen.

(TC: 00:11:41)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I'm not saying it didn't happen on that day.

(TC: 00:11:42)

Moderator 2: No, no, I'm just saying, as a general point, that it wasn't always you.

(TC: 00:11:45)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, yes.

(TC: 00:11:46)

Moderator 2: So, could you explain these computerised (talking over each other 11.49)?

(TC: 00:11:49)

Moderator 1: Right, okay. So, this is all computer monies, so it's on 18th October, so it's 9:02, Nicky serves a customer with one pension and allowance, group fourteen, okay, she takes the docket in. She zaps the book, the pension and allowance book. She's got a-

(TC: 00:12:15)

Simon James: Scanner?

(TC: 00:12:16)

Moderator 1: A scanner, scans the book, it gets registered in the system, scans another book and the figures continue down.

(TC: 00:12:35)

Simon James: All day?

(TC: 00:12:36)

Moderator 1: All day.

(TC: 00:12:37)

Nicola Jane Heaven: We don't always do that.

(TC: 00:12:40)

Moderator 2: What do you mean, you don't always do that?

(TC: 00:12:43)

Nicola Jane Heaven: If it's busy, which me and Marlene, when we went training, this is what we were told we could do, which Charlie told me on the day you came to see me because he was coming down to give me some additional training on this computer, that if it gets busy, you don't put the transaction through necessarily at that time. You can put the docket through without zapping it. You can put it through manually, and plus because we tuck the dockets behind the lamp (ph 13.11), which is what I said in the last interview, we go through them and the ones we think we haven't put on the computer, we then manually put on because of that, which me and Marlene have done many times.

(TC: 00:13:26)

Moderator 1: I've spoken to Marlene and I've got a statement from Marlene to say that Marlene zaps books through, she does it in the system.

(TC: 00:13:33)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I will zap books though.

(TC: 00:13:35)

Moderator 1: Well, we've got a statement from Marlene saying-,

(TC: 00:13:37)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, me and Brian have discussed, at one point, dismissing Marlene, and Marlene didn't want to go further with Horizon because she was meant to get to the point where she can actually transfer the balance figure, the daily cash-book figures onto the balance on a Wednesday and do it but she refused to do it because she wasn't happy with the equipment and she didn't want the responsibility of it.

(TC: 00:14:00)

Moderator 2: Yes, that's nothing to do with actually saying the boxes agree.

(TC: 00:14:01)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes but I dispute Marlene saying that she hasn't put dockets through manually because I know she has. I know that, for a fact.

(TC: 00:14:11)

Moderator 1: So, you were saying, when you're busy, you don't put the dockets through?

(TC: 00:14:14)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Not always, no.

(TC: 00:14:16)

Moderator 1: So, when would you put the docket through?

(TC: 00:14:19)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, it depends. It can either be when it's quiet. It can be any circumstance. If I zapped it and it won't zap or I think it hasn't zapped, I'll put them through twice, where I've zapped and think that it's zapped and it hasn't, so I've had to put it in again. It could be any time, or if I'm halfway through and the customer wanders off and looks around the shop, which has happened, then I think, 'Well, there's my opportunity, I can put it through now,' because I can't keep up with the computer. If I could do each transaction-, because we only get one day-, well, one-and-a-half days training on this thing and then you're left to come back in the office and run the whole office, completely new system, there was no way me or Marlene could keep up, unless we wanted queues down the street. So, on any transaction, I'm not talking just these, any transaction we've done, even if it's down to selling a stamp, even if it's down to a bill payment, we've had stacks of stuff on the desk like this and put it through when we've got a spare minute, which could be any time. It could be Marlene's walked through the day and I'll say, 'Carry on on the counter and I'll do this day.'

(TC: 00:15:29)

Moderator 1: So, if you'd sold stamps, how would you remember how much you'd sold?

(TC: 00:15:33)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I'd write it, write it on the jotter thing.

(TC: 00:15:35)

Moderator 1: So, the time you're writing it, surely, you (audio distorts 15.37) the system, (talking over each other 15.40)?

(TC: 00:15:39)

Nicola Jane Heaven: No, no way, no, because you've got to go through about five screens to sell one stamp, which I've put-

(TC: 00:15:46)

Moderator 1: Is it taking that long, Nicky?

(TC: 00:15:49)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, it does, yes.

(TC: 00:15:50)

Moderator 2: Yes, one more thing, I mean, if you're saying that it takes so long to use the equipment-,

(TC: 00:15:56)

Nicola Jane Heaven: It does at amateur stage, I'm saying. Like, maybe (talking over each other 15.59).

(TC: 00:15:59)

Moderator 1: You've been there five months now.

(TC: 00:16:00)

Moderator 2: Let me finish what I was going to say. Can I just say something now? If you're having difficulty with each of the transactions, this is giro transactions or telephone bills or something like that and you're having to put them manual or put them to one side and then do them in later, why aren't we getting problems with those? It's only the pensions that we're getting problems with.

(TC: 00:16:23)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I don't know whether you're not getting problems with those. I haven't checked them. I don't know whether you're getting problems with those.

(TC: 00:16:28)

Moderator 2: Well we're not, that's it, I mean, we're only talking to you about pensions because that's the only thing that's come to light, it's the only thing that there's a problem with.

(TC: 00:16:37)

Simon James: You say it's the only thing that's come to light, have all the others been checked?

(TC: 00:16:40)

Moderator 1: I've an error note, a list back from Chesterfield, where the paperwork goes, all the documentation, and there are just a couple there, one for April 2000, two for April 2000 and one for 3rd July 2000, those are the only (talking over each other 17.04).

(TC: 00:17:03)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I haven't been at Barton (ph 17.05) since-, I've been on Horizon five months, it was installed July 1st, I think.

(TC: 00:17:09)

Moderator 1: July, so July, August, September, October, sorry, four months.

(TC: 00:17:13)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I was on holiday for three weeks.

(TC: 00:17:17)

Moderator 2: Those are the only errors that have come to light.

(TC: 00:17:19)

Nicola Jane Heaven: That you've noted.

(TC: 00:17:20)

Moderator 1: No, no, that have come back from Chesterfield, that came back yesterday.

(TC: 00:17:23)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, so we're taking their word for it that that's the only things we've done wrong. Is that what you're saying to me?

(TC: 00:17:29)

Moderator 1: Well, Chesterfield are the people who will know because all your paperwork, your cash accounts, go to Chesterfield, then you get reports of all the errors that are reported.

(TC: 00:17:39)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Apart from stock sales and that type of thing.

(TC: 00:17:40)

Moderator 1: They would have come back to you from the rem unit. They would have come back because they balance as well with you, don't they?

(TC: 00:17:49)

Simon James: (Inaudible 17.51).

(TC: 00:17:50)

Moderator 1: The remittance unit where Nicky would get all her stock, the stamps.

(TC: 00:17:57)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I order what we sell, in theory, but if, say, the stock is counted incorrectly or the cash is counted incorrectly or the cash hasn't been taken for a particular item-,

(TC: 00:18:13)

Moderator 1: Then your balance is going to show, isn't it?

(TC: 00:18:16)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Not if there's a surplus on the pension thing, it isn't.

(TC: 00:18:19)

Moderator 2: We're talking about documentary stuff here, we're not talking about stock or anything like that, okay? What we're trying to make you understand, right, is that if you have pension allowance documentation that is causing you-, and actually putting it in the computer and the time it takes, that you're having to do it manually later on, right, and you're having difficulties with similar types of transactions, like giro or telephone-,

(TC: 00:18:46)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, they're not similar.

(TC: 00:18:48)

Moderator 2: They are similar, in as much as you've got a piece of paper, right, and you're exchanging cash.

(TC: 00:18:52)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes but we're talking about 300 docketts a week to not even 100 of anything else.

(TC: 00:18:58)

Moderator 2: Nicky, you're misunderstanding me. I'm not trying to split hairs, right, what I'm trying to demonstrate to you is the difference between a paper transaction, right, and a stock

transaction, yes, right, telephone bills, giros, this sort of thing are paper transactions, yes? Stock transactions involve somebody giving you cash and you give them their stuff, right, for where there's no audit trail, right? With receipts and with payments where you've got paper transactions, there's an audit trail, yes, because if a giro customer comes in and says, 'I want to give you £100,' and you deposit £100, with the form, yes, you send the form off to Girobank, right, and the money goes in your till, yes? If you were to lose that form, right, sooner or later, the customer would be complaining that the money hadn't been posted into his account, yes?

(TC: 00:19:53)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:19:54)

Moderator 2: Right, okay, so that is where the error notice is generated.

(TC: 00:19:56)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes but if we did the transaction, (TC 00:20:00) which has happened with me and Marlene, and you're busy putting the transaction through the computer to get that right and you forget to take the money, their account will still be credited, won't it? My argument is, what Elaine was saying, or you, I can't remember which one of you, but one of you said that, 'Why is it that we've only got that quantity of errors to the dockets?' All I would say to that is because we don't do even closely near to as many of those as we do of the dockets. The dockets are the major transaction of that office.

(TC: 00:20:39)

Moderator 2: We're not (inaudible 20.41) .

(TC: 00:20:42)

Nicola Jane Heaven: You're asking me for an explanation and that's the only one I can think of, is that that is the majority of the business we did, a major majority against anything else.

(TC: 00:20:57)

Moderator 1: Right, we'll go back to the two customers then, 16th, which was the Monday 16th October. Now showing Nicky the transaction log for 16th, and if you go down the times.

(TC: 00:21:18)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 21.18).

(TC: 00:21:22)

Moderator 1: Okay, if you want to know anything about it, we'll-

(TC: 00:21:24)

Moderator 2: You struggle to understand the operation of the system?

(TC: 00:21:27)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, the whole thing, yes, because Anne had to come up three times to try and get (inaudible 21.31) and also (inaudible 21.35) chance to come, which he offered but we didn't get round to that.

(TC: 00:21:41)

Moderator 2: All this is is a list of all the transactions that you conducted at the office on that day, that's all it is, okay, in simple terms.

(TC: 00:21:53)

Simon James: Can this distinguish between those that are put in manually and those that are scanned?

(TC: 00:22:02)

Moderator 1: Not that I'm aware of but I'm not an expert in that field, I just need to clarify that.

(TC: 00:22:11)

Moderator 2: I will say, at this moment, there are other enquiries going on about that particular aspect. We haven't had the results of these enquiries yet.

(TC: 00:22:23)

Simon James: Not with you there. Forgive me, I'm not (talking over each other 22.31).

(TC: 00:22:30)

Moderator 2: No, no, it's okay, we've been told that we may, right, be able to identify every manually-produced transaction but as I said, I'm still waiting for that information to come back.

(TC: 00:22:47)

Simon James: Okay.

(TC: 00:22:51)

Moderator 1: Now, this transaction we've got here for 9:08 on the computer system, it's been entered, as you can see, 9:08, that same value of £162.63 has also been entered at 11:11, according to the computer, yet there was only one docket for that value in the list.

(TC: 00:23:22)

Simon James: Sorry, how do you (inaudible 23.23) this? Oh, that's 16th, yes, I'm with you, yes.

(TC: 00:23:25)

Moderator 1: This is 16th, okay, that's the transaction number, of 59794, so that's the number of the transaction, okay? There was only one docket taken in that time that was checked on audit. But that docket, a docket for the same value went through the system at eleven minutes past eleven. Now, there is no second docket. Okay.

(TC: 00:23:59)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:24:00)

Moderator 1: Okay. So, you went to speak to the customer, okay? For the first time when that one was entered, you put a pension for £162.64 plus another pension £40.40, giving the customer a total of £203.03. Okay?

(TC: 00:24:28)

Moderator 2: The customer cashed his own and his wife's pension at that time. So, that's the two, that's basically the two transactions.

(TC: 00:24:35)

Moderator 1: Right, if you go to eleven minutes past eleven these are the all the transactions that appear for that morning. So, if you confirm she was the only person working in the office that morning.

(TC: 00:24:53)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 24.53) I don't know.

(TC: 00:24:59)

Moderator 1: (Inaudible 25.01) find. Showing everyone it's 11:11, £162.63 which is not there. When that pension was cashed there were two stamps purchased at the same time. One for 90 pence and one for 27 pence. So, that customer clearly took out £161.64 (inaudible 25.29) . I spoke to the customer.

(TC: 00:25:32)

Simon James: How do you work out if the customer is on the (inaudible 25.34) ?

(TC: 00:25:37)

Moderator 1: From the book-, well from the value and we've got the docket.

(TC: 00:25:40)

Simon James: Right.

(TC: 00:25:42)

Moderator 1: As well. So with the docket, I went to speak to the customer and asked him when he went to the office, what time he went to the office, what he did at the office. And he confirmed that he goes to the office earlier rather than late. And that he always cashes his wife's pension 40.40 at

the same time. Okay? So, there's nothing to tie up the second entry with him (ph 26.13).

(TC: 00:26:16)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 26.16).

(TC: 00:26:17)

Moderator 1: So, we've got one docket that's missing like we had along with all the other ones for the other weeks from that check (ph 26.26).

(TC: 00:26:26)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:26:27)

Moderator 1: Okay, so he's confirmed that he visits the office and his statement will tie in to this transaction.

(TC: 00:26:35)

Nicola Jane Heaven: To the first one?

(TC: 00:26:36)

Moderator 1: To the first transaction.

(TC: 00:26:36)

Simon James: What are you saying happened at eleven minutes past?

(TC: 00:26:39)

Moderator 1: So, at eleven minutes past eleven we've got a docket put through that is not-,

(TC: 00:26:47)

Moderator 2: It doesn't exist.

(TC: 00:26:48)

Moderator 1: It doesn't exist.

(TC: 00:26:50)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But, if I-,

(TC: 00:26:51)

Simon James: The stamps, the stamps have gone out though.

(TC: 00:26:53)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But if I'd have put that docket in the pile and thought-, or didn't know whether it's gone through the computer or not because that's all I can say how I've done that, is I've thought, 'Oh, I haven't put that one through.' And I've put it through.

(TC: 00:27:10)

Simon James: And you've gone back and rescanned it?

(TC: 00:27:11)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes. Because they're all put together. They're just in a heap on the desk.

(TC: 00:27:15)

Moderator 2: Okay. So why didn't you rescan the £40.40 then?

(TC: 00:27:19)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I don't know. I don't know why I didn't. Because I didn't rescan every single docket, did I?

(TC: 00:27:26)

Moderator 2: But if you keep a bundle in front of you-,

(TC: 00:27:27)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But, I mean, for one I wouldn't have rescanned any because I wouldn't have the book. But all we do, there is no system for this. So, if we've got, say, if all that's gone through the computer, that we think, 'Oh, that hasn't.' Or we think they haven't. And if we think it hasn't we'll put it through again.

(TC: 00:27:46)

Moderator 2: Nicola, you said that they'd all be in a (mw 27.49) they'd all be there, right? This chap has come in with two pensions right? One for 160-odd pounds, one for 40-odd pounds, right? They're both together, right?

(TC: 00:27:58)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:27:58)

Moderator 2: They presumably slipped under your mat whatever it is. We can wait for-,

(TC: 00:28:01)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes. There'll be about 80 of them.

(TC: 00:28:03)

Moderator 2: Yes, okay. So, sometime when you've got a free minute or whatever it is you're going to think to yourself, 'Oh, I haven't scanned that one in.' Or, 'I haven't entered that in manually.' Whatever term you use, right? 'I'm going to do that now,' right? Well, 160-odd pounds one has been entered. So, where's the £40?

(TC: 00:28:23)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I'm guessing from three and half months ago, that, I thought that would've gone

through.

(TC: 00:28:30)

Moderator 2: But they're both together. They both would've been together.

(TC: 00:28:33)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But they wouldn't be together necessarily on my desk, would they?

(TC: 00:28:36)

Moderator 1: Well, yes, if you served the customer and took out two dockets-,

(TC: 00:28:38)

Nicola Jane Heaven: No, because they're not filed, are they?

(TC: 00:28:40)

Moderator 1: No, but if you could've put a dog clip.

(TC: 00:28:44)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But I don't need to do a dog clip.

(TC: 00:28:44)

Moderator 1: Like there.

(TC: 00:28:45)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I mean, I put the clip-, they just go under the mat. They slide under as we do them.

(TC: 00:28:50)

Moderator 2: Okay. So, if I come in with two others (ph 28.53), right? And you haven't got time to

zap them, okay? You put them under your mat, yes?

(TC: 00:28:57)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Or I zap one and then they'll go under there (ph 29.58), so you void it (ph 30.00). I've done that before now, so that I can serve the next one.

(TC: 00:29:05)

Moderator 2: But he wants both of these cashed at the same time, yes?

(TC: 00:29:06)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:29:08)

Moderator 2: Okay. You've given him the cash to the value of the two orders, alright. So, you've given him both through at the same time.

(TC: 00:29:14)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:29:15)

Moderator 2: Okay, you haven't been able to zap them at the time, so you stick them under your mat. Some time later you think, 'Right, I have to put those two in manually,' or those 22 in manually, however many there are. They're going to be together, aren't they?

(TC: 00:29:25)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, but doing 80-odd a day, on a Monday morning, no. You haven't got time to consciously think, 'Right, well, that one's gone through but that one hasn't. I'll put that there and do this.' You just shove them under. I mean, we all do.

(TC: 00:29:44)

Moderator 2: Okay.

(TC: 00:29:45)

Moderator 1: Right. Okay, that's the first customer then.

(TC: 00:29:48)

Simon James: What's (inaudible 29.48) the stamps going (inaudible 29.50) ?

(TC: 00:29:59)

Moderator 2: No.

(TC: 00:30:00)

Moderator 1: (TC 00:30:00) No, (inaudible 30.01) .

(TC: 00:30:02)

Moderator 2: It could be genuine, it could be bogus.

(TC: 00:30:02)

Simon James: Unless there was a customer there at the time.

(TC: 00:30:08)

Moderator 1: The stamps have gone through on the same transaction as the pension. Because instead of giving the pension, £162.63, the cash that's gone to the customer was that minus a £90 and a £27.

(TC: 00:30:29)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Unless I've forgotten to do the screen.

(TC: 00:30:32)

Moderator 1: So, then you would have given the next customer £200-odd too much.

(TC: 00:30:37)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, no, because I know he's only just bought stamps, don't I.

(TC: 00:30:40)

Moderator 2: Whatever. I mean, the fact is that there is no explanation for that particular-, it's just not there.

(TC: 00:30:49)

Nicola Jane Heaven: What are you saying?

(TC: 00:30:51)

Moderator 2: Well, there's no explanation for that order because it isn't there. It doesn't exist.

(TC: 00:30:54)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, and it's just the same as what we've said from the start, that there's been orders gone through and they've been duplicated for some reason.

(TC: 00:31:07)

Simon James: That's (inaudible 31.07) ?

(TC: 00:31:08)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:31:10)

Simon James: Or are you saying that all discrepancies are of that nature? They're repetitions of something previously.

(TC: 00:31:15)

Moderator 1: They'd already gone. That's right, yes. All the discrepancies are to where-,

(TC: 00:31:23)

Simon James: Or repetitions of something earlier.

(TC: 00:31:25)

Moderator 1: Something else, yes, (inaudible 31.26) . A similar thing then with the second customer with the £292.80 docket.

(TC: 00:31:35)

Nicola Jane Heaven: On the same day.

(TC: 00:31:37)

Moderator 1: No, this was on the Wednesday. Again, you were working on your own that day. Anne or Marlene wasn't in (ph 31.43), but you did say you were on your own. Both of these days, you were working on your own. The first one's gone through at 09:08 and the second one at 10:14. Again, I've spoken not to the actual customer, but to the (mw 32.00) who comes in to pick up that, and she confirms that the first transaction, or the first entry onto the computer would have been the time that she actually came through. We'd like to show you on that one-, (ph 32.17) is at 10:14. Now showing you the transaction log for the 18th of October. And I'd like you to have a look at, you can actually see the transaction at 10:14, which is this one, okay. Now, when you say you were busy, I mean, there's busy and busy. I mean, I don't know what your interpretation of busy is. I mean, Chalford's a small office. Wednesday's quieter than Monday probably.

(TC: 00:32:58)

Nicola Jane Heaven: No, it's just a long day (ph 32.59) on a Wednesday.

(TC: 00:33:00)

Moderator 1: Right. The customer previous to this transaction, if this was a transaction, was at 10:07, okay. Then there's the seven minutes before this transaction, there were no dockets (mw 33.22) was put in.

(TC: 00:33:26)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But that could be the same docket, couldn't it.

(TC: 00:33:30)

Moderator 1: We've got one docket and it's been emptied twice.

(TC: 00:33:32)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes.

(TC: 00:33:34)

Moderator 1: So, if it's been emptied at-,

(TC: 00:33:36)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Because they haven't got a docket now, but what I'm saying is the docket's wrong, (inaudible 33.41) exactly the same as I said, the docket would still be on my desk.

(TC: 00:33:45)

Moderator 1: Right. Why didn't you put it in before? (talking over each other 33.49)

(TC: 00:33:49)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, it's because I'm in the middle of the balance. It's the balance day on a Wednesday. (Inaudible 33.53), that's the only thing. I mean, all the mornings are busy and it always been in the office. Most people are out and about in the mornings. But in between time, on a Wednesday, usually from, sort of, 08:30 onwards, I start the balance. I don't wait until 01:00 before any of the balance. So, I'm counting stock, all the safe would be emptied, the stock will be out. So, the only thing I could say that I do in between transactions, on a Wednesday I would be doing the balance in between the transactions, or getting the balance prepared as far as I can go for 01:00. Or talking to customers, or out in the shop. I could be doing anything. So, as the shop's mine (ph 34.44) as well, so I would be out.

(TC: 00:34:48)

Moderator 1: So, you wouldn't see putting the dockets through as a priority to get them into the system?

(TC: 00:34:53)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Not necessarily.

(TC: 00:34:55)

Moderator 2: Not on a Wednesday?

(TC: 00:34:58)

Nicola Jane Heaven: In what way do you mean a priority? I mean, yes, by the end of Wednesday, I will lift up the mats and things to make sure the dockets have gone through by 1 o'clock, by the time I've formed the balance, yes. I don't sit there and think, 'Well, it doesn't matter if I put the dockets through or not, I'll do the balance anyway.' So, they're a priority to that respect, but counting the stock correctly is as much of a priority as the docket. So, if I'm in the middle of counting the stock and a customer comes in for a pension, I won't sit there and say, 'Oh, well, I'll maybe complete all of that process and come back to that,' because they're both as important as one another. So, odds are I could sit there and say, 'Well, I've finished counting that, I'll sort that out in a minute,' or either way.

(TC: 00:35:45)

Moderator 1: So, even when it's quieter on a Wednesday, you wouldn't necessarily-,

(TC: 00:35:48)

Nicola Jane Heaven: It's not quiet on a Wednesday because there's too much to do on a Wednesday. I mean, yes, from your transaction-,

(TC: 00:35:52)

Moderator 1: But between the customers?

(TC: 00:35:54)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, from your transactions, it's quieter on a Wednesday than it is on a Monday, definitely. But there is a lot of paperwork to do on a Wednesday that we wouldn't do on any other day.

(TC: 00:36:05)

Moderator 1: No, that's fair enough.

(TC: 00:36:06)

Nicola Jane Heaven: So, that compensates as in how busy it is.

(TC: 00:36:09)

Moderator 1: But if you've got a customer, just one customer there, are you saying then that you wouldn't zap that up? Because you'd be checking stock or something?

(TC: 00:36:23)

Nicola Jane Heaven: It really depends on what I was doing at the time. I mean, what happens if you zap the book and it doesn't zap? I've had that. I haven't not zapped it because I don't want to zap it. I've not zapped it because the system will not let me zap it.

(TC: 00:36:42)

Moderator 1: But how often does that happen?

(TC: 00:36:44)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Oh, loads of times. It happened when they installed the equipment. It happened the whole thing crashed when I installed it and we couldn't zap one docket at all, all morning. We had to put all of those through manually. It kept coming up, 'We cannot check this system at the moment,' or something like that. A message on the screen all morning, on the whole morning it was installed. You can check what's in the book.

(TC: 00:37:07)

Moderator 2: As Elaine said, I mean, the transaction prior to that one was at 10:07. That transaction was at 10:14. The next transaction was at 10:21. I mean, there's almost fifteen minutes where you've got one customer.

(TC: 00:37:22)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, but you're talking about Post Office times. Remember, I can take anything up to £200 a week just in greetings cards that we're doing at the same counter as well. So, I might not be busy on the computer, but I can either be busy on the balance sheet itself, I'll be busy counting stock, I could be busy selling goods to a customer. There's loads of reasons. There could be a card rep in the building at the same time.

(TC: 00:37:50)

Moderator 2: And I'm just looking down to the transactions here. I mean, there are regularly fifteen to twenty minute gaps between customers coming in.

(TC: 00:37:56)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Yes, and you're talking 09:00 until 01:00.

(TC: 00:38:00)

Moderator 2: Alright, I'm just pointing something out to you, that's all.

(TC: 00:38:02)

Nicola Jane Heaven: And I've said time and again, on a Wednesday morning, you are busy. You've got four hours to serve all the customers, do any shop work that needs to be done, plus the whole balance. Because I don't sit there all Wednesday afternoon doing the balance. And plus I'm doing a balance on a thing I know absolutely nothing about. I've had two people come down the Post Office to help me with the balance. One person said, 'I've arrived at my first training on the computer to do a balance.' The girl turned up an hour later and said, 'I haven't got the time to do it. If you move out of the way, I'll do it.' And me and Marlene have sat there and she did all of the balance herself. So, that was one first teaching that I had. The second one was slightly better, showed me how to do it. Then I called Anna the following two weeks because I didn't have a clue what the hell they were talking about. So, we're talking five weeks.

(TC: 00:38:54)

Moderator 1: But if it's the case, okay, I accept that and I accept going over onto the computer system is not easy. I accept all of that. But why are we only having problems with the pensions and allowances? If you couldn't understand the system, you'd obviously been able to do the balance, to produce the balance, to produce the end of the day reports.

(TC: 00:39:15)

Nicola Jane Heaven: So was Marlene. I mean, we go on this training course and they give us a certificate to say after one and a half days that we have performed everything wonderfully and that we get this certificate so we can use the equipment. If that's the case, then why does Marlene come back after her training and can't balance at all?

(TC: 00:39:34)

Moderator 1: Right, well, that's besides the point.

(TC: 00:39:37)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, it's not to me, because she's carried on working there and she's done as much work as I have on the computer and nothing was said to her. She rang me 05:00 that day. Nobody had spoken to her that day at all and she could be making exactly the-

(TC: 00:39:52)

Moderator 1: What, are you telling me Marlene does the computer now (ph 39.54)?

(TC: 00:39:55)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, how do I know? I'm not there when she's there. I mean, I've had eleven phone calls.

(TC: 00:39:59)

Moderator 1: You were saying Marlene (TC 00:40:00) does?

(TC: 00:40:00)

Nicola Jane Heaven: I've had eleven phone calls in one day from Marlene. I've driven up there at 03:30 in the afternoon where she's done so much stuff on the computer she hasn't got a clue what the hell's happened any more and rang me and said, 'I'm going to have to shut. Can you come and try and sort out what I've done?' Which I have. I'm not accusing anybody. What I'm saying is to be fair to everybody, then there's no way Marlene should have been treated any differently to me.

(TC: 00:40:31)

Moderator 1: Right, well, here at the moment, I'm speaking to you about it. And what I'm

confused, if you like, for a better word, is that if this system is so difficult to you, which I understand, as I said, I haven't got a problem with that, why is it only the pensions that we've got problems with? All the end of the day reports you get off no problem, the reports to Chesterfield.

(TC: 00:40:56)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But I've said this, you've asked me this, and all I can say is we do, say approximately so don't quote me on this, an approximate figure of £25,000 a week in dockets, which is, like, 300 transactions in dockets. Now, I don't know how many transactions we do a week, but in proportion and percentage, that is a lot of pensions and allowances in accordance to the total overall business we do.

(TC: 00:41:22)

Moderator 1: But surely the more you're doing, the more used you get to doing it? It becomes second nature.

(TC: 00:41:26)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Well, not if you don't know how to use the equipment properly, no. You do the same-,

(TC: 00:41:29)

Moderator 2: Can I just say something? The Horizon system came in when? In July of 2000, yes?

(TC: 00:41:39)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Inaudible 41.39).

(TC: 00:41:42)

Moderator 2: No, what I'm going to say is, do you use this (ph 41.43)? The cash accounts don't reflect in any way that you have any problem in balancing the accounts, alright. The losses and gains for the period from the time you started the computer system is no better or no worse than it was when you were using the manual system. So, if you were having that many-,

(TC: 00:42:07)

Nicola Jane Heaven: (Talking over each other 42.07) balances that I do, seven on the computer.

(TC: 00:42:10)

Moderator 2: If you were having that many problems with it, then I would have expected to see the cash account at the end of the week (inaudible 42.15) .

(TC: 00:42:18)

Nicola Jane Heaven: But I've only done, sort of, five balances on the Horizon-

(TC: 00:42:20)

Moderator 2: Five balances or 55, there's no indication there that you are struggling with the system. Because if you were struggling with the system, then your accounts would be all over the place.

(TC: 00:42:34)

Nicola Jane Heaven: So, why did I ask for additional training?

(TC: 00:42:37)

Moderator 2: I don't know.

(TC: 00:42:38)

Nicola Jane Heaven: Why did I ask Anne? Did you ask Anne what I was like on it?

(TC: 00:42:42)

Moderator 1: The tape is about to stop. It's 16:54.