



# Witness Statement

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

Statement of	Manish PATEL	
Age if under 18	Over 18	(If over 18 insert 'over 18')

This statement (consisting of fifty five (55) pages each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything, which I know to be false or do not believe true.

Dated the 25<sup>th</sup> day of February 2004

Signature M Patel

I am employed as an Investigation Team Manager for Post Office Ltd (POL) and have been so employed since June 1990. I am responsible for the detection and investigation of criminal activity committed by employees against the Post Office. I also liaise and assist other law enforcement bodies with investigations where Post Office Ltd may be the target of fraud.

In early December 2002, I was asked by the Money Laundering section within Post Office Ltd to contact H.M. Customs & Excise in London as their enquiries involved a Post Office outlet in Rugeley Staffordshire, which came under my geographical area of responsibility.

Upon speaking to H.M Customs & Excise in London, I was made aware of the fact that they had an enquiry ongoing into possible money laundering by an individual called **GRO** and that large value cheques, usually over £50,000 each, in the company name of RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd and made payable to Post Office Ltd were being accepted at Rugeley Post Office. H.M Customs & Excise were concerned that such large value cheques were being accepted at Rugeley Post Office and that they had not been informed about these through the normal channels under the Money Laundering disclosure procedure.

Signature **GRO**

Signature witnessed by M Bushell



**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

I was able to establish that large amounts of foreign currency, mainly Euros were being sold on a weekly basis from Rugeley Post Office and that our own Money Laundering section had not been notified by anyone at Rugeley Post Office of these large transactions as should be the case. This information was imparted to H.M Customs & Excise.

In Early January 2003, H.M Customs & Excise contacted me again and made me aware of an HSBC bank cheque that they had in their possession to the value of £112,765.96, it was drawn on the account of RPX Recycled Plastics and was dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002, made payable to Post Office Ltd and had been accepted at Rugeley Post Office for payment of Euros. I therefore initiated enquiries to try and establish the exchange rate used by Rugeley Post Office for that one transaction on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

On the afternoon of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003, before I had received the information regarding the exchange rate used on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002, I received a call from our internal Money Laundering section requesting that I urgently contact H.M Customs & Excise.

Upon contacting H.M Customs & Excise, I was made aware that earlier that morning, H.M Customs & Excise officers had made observations on **GRO**

**GRO** and Rugeley Post Office and that as a result of their observations they had arrested **GRO**. At the time of arrest, **GRO** had with him a large holdall containing a very large amount of euros in cash and a receipt from Rugeley Post Office indicating that 584,000 euros had been purchased for a sterling value of £360,493.83 at an exchange rate of 1.62. I was informed that at the time of arrest, **GRO** was about to enter the premises of the Holiday Hypermarket in Birmingham.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

I was soon able to establish that the exchange rate which should have been applied to the sale of euros that day (13.01.03) by all Post Office outlets was 1.4583 and that if a single transaction was for £5,000 worth of Sterling or more, a preferential exchange rate of 1.4752 could have been applied. Therefore it appeared that Rugeley Post Office had sold euros to **GRO** at a very preferential rate as shown below.

- 584,000 Euros bought at 1.62 exchange rate = £360,493.83 sterling paid
- 584,000 Euros at the correct exchange rate of 1.4752 = £395,878.52 sterling should have been paid.
- Therefore the transaction was underpaid by £35,384.69.

I then spoke to Mr Philip Hunt, H.M Customs & Excise officer and also Detective Inspector Mark Abbotts of the Staffordshire Major Crime Unit. I was informed that the investigation had now been handed over to DI Abbotts team by Customs & Excise to pursue what now appeared to be Theft from the Post Office as opposed to Money Laundering as first believed by H.M Customs & Excise.

I then contacted one of my team, Mandy Bushell and requested that she meet up with officers from Staffordshire Major Crime unit (MCU) with the view to arrest the Postmaster of Rugeley Post Office, a gentleman called Carl Adrian Page.

I also requested another one of my team members, Mr Colin Price to make arrangements with the Post Office Audit section to have Rugeley Post Office audited on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

I then made my way to Staffordshire Police HQ and met up with my colleague Mrs Bushell and other officers from the Major Crime Unit. I was made aware at this point that Mr Page the Postmaster had left the Post Office earlier that afternoon and had not returned to the office, I was also made aware that a person called GRO Horton, a driver, had also been arrested by Customs & Excise at the time of GRO arrest and that both were currently in Police custody.

It was agreed that Mr Page's whereabouts should be ascertained and the Police officers commenced this process, it was also agreed that Rugeley Post Office should be searched and therefore the Major Crime Unit obtained a search warrant.

Later that evening at approximately 20:50 hours together with Mrs Bushell and a number of Police Officers, I attended the premises of Rugeley Post Office, 18 Anson Street Rugeley. In order to gain access to the premises, the Police had arranged for one of the Post Office staff, Mrs Margaret Pearce to attend with the office keys. Shortly after our arrival at the Post Office, a lady who I now know to be Mrs Margaret Pearce arrived and I heard the Police officers explain to her what their intentions were. Mrs Pearce then unlocked the premises and disabled the alarms before we all went inside.

A search of the secure area of the Post Office was then conducted by the Police Officers though Mrs Bushell and I advised on the type of documentation, which should be seized. All three safes in the Post Office were also opened including the safe containing the Bureau till which was removed from it's insert. On examination of this till it was noticed that there were five (5) HSBC bank cheques contained within this till, these were seized by the Police and are now exhibited as item number NJW/5. A closer examination of these cheques showed that all were drawn from the same account (account number GRO ), RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd and all were for substantial amounts, details of each cheque are shown below.

Signature

GRO

Signature witnessed by M Bushell

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

1. Cheque No. 100148, dated 02.01.03 for an amount of £278,181.82
2. Cheque No. 100159, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00
3. Cheque No. 100160, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00
4. Cheque No. 100161, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00
5. Cheque No. 100162, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £60,493.83

The four (4) cheques dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003, in total amount to a sterling value of £360,493.83, which matched the value of the Post Office Bureau de Change receipt (Exhibit HUNT A), found on **GRO** at the time of arrest earlier that morning.

Further documentation in relation to the Bureau de Change transactions including all the Forde Moneychanger till rolls that could be found (items NJW/1 & NJW/2) were also seized by the Police.

The search concluded at approximately 2130 hours and the safes were time over locked until 08:00 hours the following morning, the office was made secure before all present left. During the course of the search, I was made aware by one of the Police Officers that Mr Carl Page, the Postmaster had contacted the Police by telephone and was due to attend the Police station later that evening.

On the following morning, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003, together with Mrs Bushell, I attended Rugeley Post Office and met up with four (4) members of the audit team, we were also met by Mrs Margaret Pearce and two other staff members. All present then went into the Post Office, which remained shut to the public for the whole of that day. The audit team then commenced a full audit of the Post Office. I later met Mr Mark Irvin the Retail Line Manager responsible for Rugeley Post Office who also attended the office and explained the situation to him, though I had appraised him briefly the previous day.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

Later that morning, I attended Staffordshire Police HQ and discussed the next course of action. It was agreed that the Post Office Investigation section would lead this enquiry and conduct any prosecution, the Police would assist with enquires mainly by providing use of their Financial Investigation team. I was also made aware at this time that a short interview had been conducted with Mr Carl Page, the Postmaster, on the previous evening and that he had denied any wrongdoings though had admitted providing **GRO** **GRO** with preferential exchange rates, which he (Mr Page) had set using his own discretion in order to bring business into the Post Office claiming that 'middle management' in the Post office were aware of this practice.

I was also informed that **GRO** was **GRO**  
**GRO**

I later returned to Rugeley Post Office and after having a discussion with Mr Mark Irvin, I contacted the Custody Suite at Stafford Police station and spoke to Mr Carl Adrian Page. I informed Mr Page that on the authority of Mr Mark Irvin, I was precautionary suspending his contract for services pending a full investigation. Mr Irvin then briefly spoke to Mr Page. I later asked Mr Irvin if he was aware of Mr Page providing preferential exchange rates to any customers to which he replied "no", I also spoke by telephone to the previous Retail Line Manager for this Post office, Mr James Coney and asked him if he was aware that Mr Page provided preferential exchange rates to any customer, again Mr Coney also denied that he knew of such a practice. Subsequently statements were taken from two of the staff members, Mrs Margaret Ann Pearce and Ms Shirley Jayn Batey.

On conclusion of the audit, I was informed that the overall shortage was £645,345.18 this was made up of the five missing cheques (seized by the Police), which equated to

Signature **GRO**  
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Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**



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£642,258.79 and a further shortage of £3,086.39 relating mainly to postage provided to business customers who had yet to settle their account.

Later that day, Mrs Bushell and I attended Stafford Police station and met with DC Chris Andrews and DC Lisa Deans. I was informed that **GRO** had been bailed without further interview **GRO** he was due to return to Cannock Police station on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003. **GRO** the driver had also been bailed and was also due to return to Cannock Police station on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

It was agreed that a further interview of Mr Page should be conducted and that I should form part of the interviewing team in order to cover the internal procedures of the Post office.

At 17:17 hours on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003, I was present at Stafford Police station when a tape recorded interview in accordance with P.A.C.E was conducted by DC Andrews with Mr Carl Adrian Page, also in attendance was Mr Page's solicitor, Mr Nigel Pepper. The interview concluded at 18:46 and two (2) tape cassettes were used, tape numbers 21/CG/109/03/2 and 21/CG/109/03/3 refers. Subsequently I prepared transcripts of these two tapes, which I now produce as item numbers MP/84 & MP/85.

Mr Page was informed that there was a vast amount of documentation to examine and that he would be required to attend a further interview at a later date, Mr Page also signed authorities for the Police to investigate his bank accounts and credit card accounts.

Following the interview, Mr Page was released on bail to return to Stafford Police station on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003, after having taken advice from the Post Office Legal department in Croydon, it was agreed that of the five (5) HSBC bank cheques seized by the Police from Rugeley Post Office (item number NJW/5), four (4) of these related to the one transaction conducted on the morning of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003 and as the euros for this transaction had been seized and where currently being held by Customs & Excise, then these cheques should not be presented to the bank for clearance, however the fifth cheque for an amount of £278,181.82 and dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2003 and which Mr Page during interview had stated was in lieu of three (3) cheques which 'bounced' during Christmas 2002, should be presented to the Bank for clearance as the equivalent value of Euros had already been provided to **GRO** As a result I requested Mrs Bushell to make arrangements to present the above-mentioned cheque to a bank for express clearance and also to recover all of the exhibits taken from the Post Office during the search from the Police in Staffordshire.

Later that afternoon, I was made aware by Mrs Bushell that she had been contacted by a lady in the accounts section of the Post Office in Chesterfield who was in possession of three (3) very large value cheques accepted at Rugeley Post Office during Christmas 2002 for Bureau Transactions and all three had " Payment Stopped". Mrs Bushell informed me that she had provided my details to this lady and asked her to contact me directly.

Later that afternoon, I spoke to the lady who had earlier spoken with my colleague, Mandy Bushell. Mrs Elaine Lievesley informed me that she had copies of three (3) cheques which had all been accepted at Rugeley Post Office over the Christmas 2002 period for Foreign currency transactions, all three cheques were drawn from the same account of RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd for the amounts of £100,000.00, £ 87,272.73 and £90,909.09 and dated 20.12.02, 20.12.02 and 23.12.02 respectively. Copies of these three cheques were then faxed to my office in St Albans. Mrs Lievesley also informed

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me that she had been made aware by the Co-op Bank that two (2) further large value cheques totalling £184,332.18 were also being returned to the Post Office as payment had been stopped.

The first 3 cheques mentioned above in total equate to £278,181.82, which matches identically in value to the fifth cheque, cheque number 100148 (item NJW/5) seized by the Police from the Post Office, this cheque's value being £278,181.82.

As the value of stopped cheques was now substantial, five (5) cheques totalling £462,514.00 and therefore ultimately a potential loss to the Post Office, I sought advice from the Post Office Commercial Litigation section with regards to freezing bank accounts and assets of those concerned.

Later that day I requested one of my colleagues, Mr Michael Cooksey to recover the exhibits held by Mr Mark Irvin and to meet me the following morning to hand them over to me.

On the morning of Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003, I meet with Mr Michael Cooksey and took possession of all the exhibits NJW/1 to NJW/8, which had been seized, from the Post Office. I then took these exhibits to the Offices of Mrs Bidy Wyles, Senior Lawyer, Post Office Commercial Litigation section. Subsequently I liaised with Commercial Litigation over a number of days until Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2003, when the High Court granted freezing orders for RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd **GRO**

**GRO** and Mr Carl Adrian Page to the value of £640,000.00.

Later in the day on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003, the accounts section in Chesterfield advised me that payment had been stopped on a further cheque for an amount of £278,181.82. This cheque was in fact part of exhibit NJW/5, the fifth cheque (No. 100148) that I had

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**Witness Statement***(CJ Act 1967, s9; MC Act 1980, ss 5A(3)(a) and 5B, MC Rules 1981, r 70)*Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

made arrangements to present to the Co-op bank on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003 for express clearance.

Subsequently I received five (5) HSBC Bank Cheques from the accounts section in Chesterfield, the three (3) totalling £ 278,181.82 and two (2) further cheques totalling £184,332.18, all five (5) cheques bore the word "Payment Stopped" on the front and were drawn on the RPX Recycled Plastics Limited account, number **GRO** I now produce these Cheques as Item numbers MP/1 and MP/2 respectively.

In total the Post Office was now in possession of ten (10) HSBC bank cheques, all drawn on the RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd bank account number **GRO** Of these ten (10) cheques, six (6) of them had 'bounced' or had payment stopped, the remaining four (4) which related to the transaction of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003 had not been presented to the bank for clearance as the cash equivalent were the euros being held by Customs & Excise. In total the value of all ten (10) cheques amounted to £1,101,189.60, of the six (6) where payment had been stopped the amount stood at £740,695.82.

I have listed the details of each cheque below:-

1. Cheque No. 100140, dated 20.12.02 for an amount of £100,000.00 (MP/1)
2. Cheque No. 100142, dated 20.12.02 for an amount of £87,272.73 (MP/1)
3. Cheque No. 100144, dated 23.12.02 for an amount of £90,909.09 (MP/1)
4. Cheque No. 100148, dated 02.01.03 for an amount of £278,181.82 (NJW/5)
5. Cheque No. 100156, dated 07.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00 (MP/2)
6. Cheque No. 100157, dated 07.01.03 for an amount of £84,332.18 (MP/2)
7. Cheque No. 100159, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00 (NJW/5)
8. Cheque No. 100160, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00 (NJW/5)

Signature

**GRO**Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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9. Cheque No. 100161, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £100,000.00 (NJW/5)
10. Cheque No. 100162, dated 13.01.03 for an amount of £60,493.83 (NJW/5)

Subsequently over the next few weeks and months, I liaised with both H.M. Customs & Excise, the Major Crime unit and the Financial Investigation team of Staffordshire Constabulary and various sections within the Post Office organisation in order to further this investigation. Large amounts of documentation was received from the various sections and analysed, certain information being incorporated into various schedules compiled by me to illustrate various findings.

One of the main parts of the analysis centred around the examination of the Forde Moneychanger till rolls, items NJW/1 & NJW/2, which had been recovered from Rugeley Post Office during the Police search on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

There were a large number of till rolls recovered and an examination revealed till rolls relevant to periods in 2001, 2002 and up until 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003. Of the till rolls relevant to the year 2001, the dates ranged from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001 to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2001, covering roughly an eight month period, however this did not cover a continuous 8 month period as a quantity of till rolls were missing, in total some 4 months of the 8 month period was missing due to the lack of till rolls. For the purposes of this investigation none of the till rolls relating to 2001 have been examined, they now form part of the unused material.

The investigation has been concentrated to cover the period of 2002 and early 2003, of the till rolls which were recovered for this period they covered the period from 7<sup>th</sup> March 2002 to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003, week number 46 to week number 42 of the following financial year, however even this period is not continuous as there are several till rolls missing which cover a period of 27 working days. I have listed below the till rolls which

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**GRO**

Signature witnessed by M Bushell

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

are missing and therefore information such as any transactions conducted by GRO over those periods cannot be verified.

#### Till rolls missing

01.03.02	to	06.03.02
16.03.02	to	18.03.02
06.05.02		
19.05.02	to	21.05.02
24.07.02	to	31.07.02
03.09.02	to	08.09.02
12.09.02	to	15.09.02
15.11.02	to	17.11.02

Each of the till rolls have now been examined to look for a number of areas as shown below:-

1. Every large transaction involving the purchase of Euros has been identified and a photocopy of that portion of the till roll taken, I produce these photocopies as item number MP/3A. The process of identifying those transactions conducted by GRO was quite straightforward as the monetary values concerned were so large. The information from these transactions has been incorporated onto a schedule covering the period from 09.03.02 to 13.01.03, I now produce this updated schedule as item number MP/3. I should add that whilst going through all of the transactions again on the Forde Moneychanger till rolls, I discovered that the entry for 31.08.02 originally had been shown on schedule MP/3 as 115,000 euros purchased with a sterling value of £69,696.97. This was not correct and the actual amount purchased that day was in fact 155,000 euros

Signature

GRO

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- with a sterling value of £93,939.39 and hence the Grand total figures have changed since the interview with Mr Page on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003. All previous copies of schedule MP/3 are now part of the unused material.
2. Every transaction where Rugeley Post Office had bought back (buy back) 1000 euros or more from a customer was also identified and similarly a photocopy of that section of the till roll taken, I produce these photocopies as item number MP/5A. In certain cases where a transaction of less than 1000 euros occurred immediately after a transaction for over 1000 euros, this transaction was also included. The information from these transactions has been incorporated onto a schedule, which I now produce as item number MP/5.
  3. Forde Moneychanger till roll Command 10 weekly summaries covering weeks 19 to 22 (01.08.02 to 28.08.02) and weeks 24 to 41 (05.09.02 to 13.01.03). Again the section of till roll relevant to the above weeks was photocopied and I produce those copies as item number MP/81.
  4. All currency transfers into the Forde Moneychanger between weeks 33 to 42, (w/e 13.11.02 to w/e 15.01.03), again the section of till roll relevant to the above weeks was photocopied and I produce those copies as item number MP/83. The information from these transfers has been incorporated onto a schedule, which I now produce as item number MP/82.

Schedule MP/3 lists every transaction for the purchase of Euros conducted by **GRO** **GRO** at Rugeley Post Office between 09.03.02 to 13.01.03, the day he was arrested. There will be some transactions missing from this schedule which correspond to the days on which Mr Whitehouse purchased Euros from Rugeley Post Office but the till rolls from the Post Office are missing, the missing dates have been identified above.

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**GRO**

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For every transaction that has been found on the till roll, I have entered the details onto the schedule. The schedule indicates the date of the transaction, the cash account week number which it falls in, the time of transaction as shown on the till roll, the amount in volume of euros purchased, the exchange rate applied to that transaction and the Sterling amount paid by **GRO** to the Post Office. There are then four further columns, the first shows an exchange rate which should have been applied on the day in question for all transactions of less than £5000 in value. This is the published rate, which is stipulated by First Rate Travel Services (FRTS), and is the exchange rate, which would appear on the daily fax, sent to each Bureau de Change on Demand Post Office outlet.

The second column shows an exchange rate, which would be applicable to any transaction of £5000 or greater in value. This exchange rate would have to be obtained by the relevant Post Office outlet by contacting FRTS directly via telephone.

The third column shows the sterling value, which should have been paid by **GRO** to the Post Office if the correct exchange rate stipulated, by FRTS had been applied by Rugeley Post Office. In every case apart from the 5<sup>th</sup> transaction on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2002 at 17:05 hours the exchange rate applied is the over 5K rate as the transactions are all above £5000 in sterling and a preferential rate could have been obtained by contacting FRTS who would have then provided the rates as shown on the schedule. As can be seen the 5<sup>th</sup> transaction on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2002 was for an amount of 4000 euros (under £5000 in value) so the normal published rate has been used for this transaction.

The fourth column then shows the difference between what **GRO** actually paid to the Post Office and what he should have paid using the correct exchange rates, the underpayment.

Signature

**GRO**

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Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

It became apparent from the time of the observations carried out by H.M. Customs & Excise officers on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003 of **GRO** that he was seen outside Rugeley Post Office at 07:47 hours though his vehicle (silver BMW) was parked outside the Post Office at 07:18 hours. Upon **GRO** arrest, a Post Office Forde Moneychanger receipt was found on his person, which was dated 13th January 2003, and the time indicated as 08:38 hours. Having been to the Post Office later that evening and the following day, I have confirmed that the internal clock built into the Forde Moneychanger had not been altered in the autumn of 2002 when British Summer Times (BST) ends and the clocks are put back by one (1) hour, hence all of the Forde Moneychanger till receipts after this period would show a time 1 hour ahead of the correct time. This would explain why the receipt found on **GRO** showed a time of 08:38 hours when observations had shown that **GRO** had left Rugeley Post Office by 07:47 hours.

For illustration if we take the first transaction on the schedule, this occurred on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002, which falls into the Post Offices cash account week number 51. The transaction was conducted at 07:57 hours and **GRO** purchased forty thousand (40,000) euros. The exchange rate, which was applied, was 1.715; the exchange rate that should have been applied (over 5K rate) was 1.5781. **GRO** **GRO** therefore actually paid the Post Office £23,323.62 when he should have paid £25,346.94 for those 40,000 euros. This meant that **GRO** under paid the Post Office £2,023.32 in just that one transaction.

In total there are one hundred and ten (110) transactions excluding the transaction of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003 recorded on schedule MP/3 and over the 10 month period **GRO** **GRO** purchased 11,172,450 euros for which he paid £ 6,725,339.50 to the Post Office, however if the correct exchange rates had been applied, **GRO** should

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by

M Bushell

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have paid £ 7,318,142.20 and therefore he has underpaid the Post Office £592,802.74.

Schedule MP/5 illustrates all of the transactions where Rugeley Post Office has bought back euros from customers in excess of 1000 notes at a time. The Post Office does offer a commission free 'Buy Back' service for foreign currency aimed at holidaymakers who have gone abroad with an amount of foreign currency and not spent all of it on holiday and have therefore returned to the united Kingdom with an amount of currency, which they would like to convert back to sterling. It would be reasonable to expect that these amounts being brought back to the UK would be relatively small amounts and therefore I set a level of 1000 euros or above as my criterion in order to compile the schedule. It would be expected that a normal holiday maker is unlikely to bring back more than 1000 euros to the UK hence I wished to examine what level of these transactions were being conducted at Rugeley Post Office. It can be seen from this schedule that the first such buy back occurs on 28.03.02 and the last recorded transaction occurs on 04.01.03 and that in total 90,830 euros were bought back by Rugeley Post Office giving a Sterling equivalent of £58,507.64. In the last column of this schedule I have added a Remarks column where I have recorded certain information mainly to do with when a transaction for the sale of Euros was conducted with **GRO** and its timeliness with a buy back.

Exhibit item number MP/81 is a number of photocopies of the relevant section of till roll relating to the weekly Forde Moneychanger Command 10 summary printout. The periods produced cover weeks 19 to 22 (01.08.02 to 28.08.02) and weeks 24 to 41 (05.09.02 to 13.01.03). Week number 23 (w/e 04.09.02) is missing as it is falls into the period of missing till rolls, however the Chesterfield copy of it is available in exhibit item number MEP/01.

A Command 10 weekly summary is a printout requested from the Forde Moneychanger

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by

M Bushell

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

at the end of the cash account week (Wednesday evening) that will provide the user with a full summary of what has been occurring within the Bureau de Change till that week. It will show a list of the currencies sold (SN) and bought (BN) that week, the total amount of sales and also the sterling value of cash held in the till. Armed with this printout it would be a simple matter of checking the amount of each currency physically held in the Bureau Till or elsewhere if currency is held in the main safe or anywhere else, against what the Command 10 summary says you should have on hand. The same would also apply to the sterling amount held in the Bureau till. If all of the amounts agree then the Bureau till is said to have 'Balanced' a term used frequently in the Post Office to signify a correct account which is neither short or over.

The Command 10 summary also indicates the revaluation figure for that week and a commission figure. Exhibit MP/81 are photocopies taken from the under copy of the Forde Moneychanger till roll, the top copy Command 10 summary must to despatched weekly to the Post Office accounting section in Chesterfield together with an attached P4833 form, the Commission and Revaluation Summary form, which shows the commission and revaluation figures which have been copied from the Command 10 summary.

Furthermore the figures in relation to the Sterling value of cash held in the Bureau Till as shown on the command 10 summary together with the revaluation and commission figure must be physically entered into the Horizon computer terminal by an operator. These figures are required to be fed into the Horizon system in order to take into account the transactions conducted by the Forde Moneychanger, which is a 'stand alone machine' and not directly connected to the Horizon system. In order to carry out the full weekly Office 'Balance' the figures from the Command 10 summary are required to be fed into the Horizon computer system which can then perform the weekly office balance and produce the weekly cash account.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by M Bushell

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

When the weekly cash account is printed off, the three figures discussed will also appear on the account. The Foreign Currency Sterling equivalent figure will appear on page 2 of the cash account in table 5 labelled 'Cash, Stock etc in Hand' at line 52. The Bureau de Change commission figure and Revaluation figure will appear on page 3 of the cash account in the Receipts table at lines 86 and 70 respectively.

Exhibit item number **MP/83** consist of several copies of the portion of Forde Moneychanger till roll relating to the transfer of currency into the office between weeks 33 to 42 (13.11.02 to 13.01.03). The information contained on these portions of the till rolls has been summarised on schedule **MP/82**, which I now produce. When the Post Office outlet receives Foreign Currency from the Stock Centre in Hemel Hempstead, it does so via a special delivery pouch conveyed by secure transport. As the insurance limit per pouch is limited to £2,500, each pouch will only contain a maximum of up to £2,500 in foreign currency, therefore if an office orders a large volume of currency, say for instance £25,000 worth, the office would receive ten (10) pouches each containing up to £2,500 of foreign currency.

Upon receipt of the currency at the Post Office outlet, a delivery advice note will have been enclosed in the pouch which will provide a breakdown of each type of currency enclosed (an example is item number **LGH/02**), the volume of currency and it's sterling value based on the exchange rate shown on the advice note. The recipient is then required to input the volume and exchange rate of each currency into the Forde Moneychanger. By performing this task the operator is effectively 'topping up' the Bureau de Change till and telling the Forde Moneychanger by how much and of what currency you are topping it up with. The Forde Moneychanger knows what currency and the value of that currency it had before (Command 10 summary) and therefore by transferring more currency into it, the Forde Moneychanger is aware of how much

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**GRO**

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## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

additional currency has been added and therefore the total volume and value of currency held in the office whether that be physically in the Bureau till itself or partly in the Bureau till and the Main safe or anywhere else used to house the bulk currency.

As sales of currency and buy backs are performed throughout the week, the Forde Moneychanger is used to perform these transactions and therefore it keeps a running tally of what has been sold and what has been bought, which ultimately allows the operator at the end of the cash account week to request the Command 10 summary at which time the Forde Moneychanger will have worked out what you started with, what was sold and bought throughout the week and what was transferred in from the stock centre and tell you what you should have left in way of both volume of currency and sterling value.

It can be seen from schedule **MP/82** that throughout the weeks in question, almost on a daily basis, large volumes of euros are transferred into the Forde Moneychanger. If the figures from this schedule are compared to the schedule supplied by Mr Hutchins, **LGH/04** it can be seen that the sterling values virtually match those for the relevant periods, the slight differences being that schedule **LGH/04** shows the sterling value of the entire order which in some cases includes other currencies as well as Euros and **MP/82** only takes into account the sterling value of the euros transferred in.

In the last week on the schedule, week number 42, it can be seen that on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2003, 150,000 euros each day is transferred into the Forde Moneychanger and as can be seen from schedule **MP/3**, Mr Whitehouse purchased 584,000 euros from Rugeley Post Office on the Morning of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

During the early part of this investigation, I was provided with a schedule compiled by Customs & Excise, which showed details of transactions from various Thomas Cook

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**GRO**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

Bureau de Change outlets in the Midlands area where **GRO** or his associates had sold large quantities of euros and converted the euros back into Sterling. The proceeds from these sales were in the majority of cases electronically transferred by Thomas Cook Retail Limited to **GRO** accounts, either his personal account or that of the Company, RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd.

This schedule commences from 16.01.02 to 04.01.03 and was used by me to carry out further examination of documentation and the production of further schedules to illustrate various findings. In due course I prepared my own version of this schedule, which I now produce at item number MP/80. The information provided by Mrs Pippa Barker, Thomas Cook Retail Limited Anti Money Laundering Compliance Officer in her two statements and the related evidence allowed me to compile the new up to date schedule. I was also able to include information from two further Bureau de Change outlets, First Choice Retail and MY Travel Financial Services who had both conducted transactions with **GRO** on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2003; this information was gained via DC Andrew Wood of the Financial Investigation Unit attached to Staffordshire Police Headquarters.

The new schedule, item number MP/80 detailed all transactions from 16.01.02 to 07.01.03 which showed that **GRO** or those acting on his behalf sold just over 14 million euros (14,042,405.00) to a number of Bureau de Change outlets, mainly to the chain of Thomas Cook Retail outlets in and around the Birmingham area over that time period and that this equated to a little over 8½ million pounds sterling (£8,598,889.69). The original schedule provided to me by H.M Customs & Excise now forms part of the unused material.

Using the information contained on schedule MP/3 (Transactions extracted from Forde Moneychanger till rolls for Rugeley Post Office) and information from schedule MP/80

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**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

(Schedule of euros sold by **GRO** to Bureau de Change outlets) and also information gained from microfilm copies of the bank cheques used by **GRO** to pay for the euros he purchased from Rugeley Post Office, I was able to prepare another schedule known as the **Euros Purchase and Deposit** schedule which I now produce as item number **MP/4**.

There are three main elements to this schedule, the first shows the details regarding the purchase by **GRO** of euros from Rugeley Post Office and this section shows the date and day of purchase together with the total volume of euros bought by **GRO**. The second section shows details of the cheque used by **GRO** to purchase the euros from the Post Office.

As mentioned previously, I arranged for microfilm copies of all cheques accepted at Rugeley Post Office over a 2-year period in the name of RPX Recycled Plastics Ltd or **GRO** to be forwarded to me from our accounting section in Chesterfield. Having examined these copy cheques, which unfortunately are of a fairly poor quality, I was able to extract those relating to the transactions shown on schedule **MP/3**, covering the period of 09.03.02 through to 13.01.03.

The copy cheques together with the relevant copy Batch Control Voucher (BCV) are part of exhibit **SB/01**; further copies of cheques prior to 09.03.02 are now part of the unused material. I must also point out that not all of the cheques in relation to the transactions shown on schedule **MP/80** have been located, this has been noted in the remarks column.

The cheque detail section of schedule **MP/80** shows the date written on the cheque itself, the amount shown on the cheque and in some instances the cheque number and the date, which appears on the BCV.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

When the Post Office despatches cheques, which have been accepted over the counter as payment for transactions or indeed deposits into bank accounts, these cheques must be despatched by the office on a daily basis so that bill payments are met and funds credited to customers accounts.

The normal process used by Post Offices is to set a time every day called the 'Cut off' time when a member of staff or the manager will collate and despatch various documentation which needs to be accounted for daily such as the cheques taken over the counter. Each serving position in the Post Office will more than likely have taken several cheques in lieu of payment from the general public over the course of the day, at the 'Cut off' time which is normally somewhere between 1630 hours and 1700 hours each day, apart from Wednesday, each counter position will hand over the number of cheques they have taken that day together with a printout showing the total number and value of the cheques. These are then collated by one individual who amalgamates all of the cheques together and obtains a total figure in relation to quantity and value.

These two figures are then entered onto the Batch Control Voucher (BCV) together with the office FAD code, the date of despatch and a datestamp impression before it and all the associated cheques are placed into a special envelope called a 'Cheque envelope' which is just slightly smaller than an A4 envelope and is coloured in distinctive red and white stripes. This envelope together with other special envelopes containing other products which are accounted for daily are then handed to the Royal Mail postman when he/she arrives at the office to collect all of the other mail, hence the reason to have a 'Cut off' time as if it was left until the office closed at 1730 hours, it would take 10 or 15 minutes to then amalgamate the cheques and other daily work which would mean the postman would be delayed, therefore all of the daily accounting work is prepared a short time before the postman arrives so that when the office closes at

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**GRO**

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## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

17:30 hours, the postmen merely have to empty the post box and be on their way.

Any cheques taken for transactions after the 'Cut off' time would be held in the Post office until the following day when the process would start all over again. As stated before all cheques must be despatched daily regardless of which type of transaction it has been accepted for, this includes Bureau de Change transactions.

I mentioned earlier that the cheques are to be despatched daily apart from Wednesday, this is because Wednesday evening is the Post Office's 'Balancing' day. Every Wednesday evening after the Post Office closes for business to the public the accounts for that week must be brought to account and a 'balance' performed, which is basically a verification of transactions and sales performed that week together with a verification of the money accepted at the counter. In order to perform this task the Horizon computer system is used which can provide you with breakdowns of various types of transactions etc, it also provides you with a breakdown of what stock and cash the office should hold at the end of business on Wednesday evening and then it is a process of physically checking the amount of stock and cash held in the office and comparing it with what the Horizon computer system says you should have.

All of the information relating to the weekly office balance is transferred automatically by the Horizon computer system onto a weekly cash account document, which is then printed off. The cash account document shows a summary of all of the transactions conducted that week, the amount of stock and cash on hand and a host of other accounting figures. These accounting figures basically fall into two categories, either Receipts or Payment, for instance if a customer had paid in an amount of money into their Girobank account, this would be classed as a receipt and would form part of the total value recorded in the receipts section of the cash account.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

If the Post office paid out a pension to a customer then this would be classed as a payment and would form part of the total value recorded in the payments section of the cash account. By comparing the total figure obtained in the Receipts sections with that obtained in the payments section we are able to determine if a 'Balance' has been reached. If the two figures are identical than the office is said to have 'Balanced' exactly, if however the figure obtained for receipts is higher than that obtained for payments then the account has not balanced and a surplus is recorded on the cash account on page 1 under the discrepancies table and similarly if the receipts figure is lower than the payments figure than a shortage must be declared on the cash account.

Upon completion of the cash account, two cash account documents are printed off, both should be signed by the Postmaster or office manager to signify that they are a true and accurate record of the office accounts, they should also be datestamped and then one copy is retained at the office and the other is forwarded to the accounts sections in Chesterfield where it is archived for a period of time.

As the Post Office performs the office balance on Wednesday evening after close of business, there is not a 'Cut off' time on Wednesday's and therefore any cheques taken on Wednesday right up to the point of when the office closes would be included in the office balance. As the office balance is performed after closing no documentation is despatched that night including the cheque envelope, it is normal for the Post Office outlets to retain the cheque envelope and other daily accounting documentation until the following morning (Thursday) when they would be collected by the postman on the morning collection. Wednesday's are the only time when it is appropriate not to despatch the cheques taken on that day and can be held over until the following morning after the office has been balanced.

Hence the date, which appears on the BCV, should be the date when the cheques were

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**GRO**

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

despatched and therefore I have used this date for the purposes of interpreting the delay in submitting the Whitehouse cheques shown on schedule MP/4.

The third section of schedule MP/4 is in relation to the 'deposits' **GRO** made at the various other Bureau de Change outlets as detailed on schedule MP/80. This section shows the date the deposit (selling of euros) occurred, the amount sold and any difference in the quantity from what Mr Whitehouse purchased from the Post Office to what he sold at the other Bureau de Change outlets and then any remarks I have recorded.

An examination of this schedule shows that in the majority of cases, **GRO** would purchase an amount of euros from Rugeley Post Office and later on the same day, he would sell the same number or sometimes a lesser amount of euros to the other Bureau de Change outlets. Indeed by examining the time recorded for the purchase of euros from the Post Office as shown on schedule MP/3 to the various exhibits produced by Pippa Barker of Thomas Cook Retail Limited, which also record the time the euros were sold to their outlet, it can be seen that in a number of cases the sale occurs within an hour or two of the purchase from Rugeley Post Office.

To illustrate, the first entry on schedule MP/4 shows that **GRO** purchased 40,000 euros on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002. The cheque used for payment was dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2002 (Friday) and made out for an amount of £23,323.62; this cheque was associated with the BCV dated Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

On the same day as the euros were purchased, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002, **GRO** **GRO** sold (deposited) 40,000 euros to a Thomas Cook outlet who would have then electronically credited his bank account for the sterling equivalent minus their fees. So in that instance, **GRO** merely purchased 40,000 euros from the Post

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

Office for £23,323.62 and sold the same amount to Thomas cook later that day (11:47 hours as per exhibit PB/23). By looking at schedule MP/80 you can see that Thomas Cook credited [GRO] account by £24,222.42 (having taken a £20 fee) which meant that [GRO] made £898.80 from that one transaction by buying a quantity of euros from Rugeley Post Office and taking them to Thomas Cook a couple of hours later and selling them.

Furthermore the cheque accepted by Rugeley Post Office for this transaction on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002 from Mr Whitehouse was not despatched for processing until Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002, some 4 working days afterwards, though more likely would have been despatched on Thursday morning (14<sup>th</sup>) as explained earlier.

An examination of the copy bank account statements obtained by DC Wood, item number JW/2 which is the private bank account in the name of [GRO] account number [GRO] shows that on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2002 an electronic transfer of £24,222.42 was credited to this account by Thomas Cook Retail Limited, the first working day after the euros had been sold to Thomas Cook on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002. However at the time that the money was credited to [GRO] account the cheque for £23,323.62 was still being held at Rugeley Post Office, indeed a further examination of the bank statements JW/2 shows that the cheque for £23,323.62 was not debited from [GRO] account until Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2002, some 8 working days later.

It can also be seen from schedule MP/3 that after the transaction on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002 and before the associated cheque for £23,323.62 cleared on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2002, [GRO] purchased a further 57,000 euros on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2002 and 64,900 euros on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002 for £33,333.33 and £37,994.32 respectively from Rugeley Post Office and sold the euros to Thomas Cook on the same

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**GRO**

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

day of purchase. Indeed the sterling equivalent from the sale of these two amounts was electronically credited to [GRO] account on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2002 and 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002 (the same day as the deposit) and all before the first cheque used on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002 had even been despatched let alone debited.

Effectively this meant that over the 6 day period from 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002 to 14<sup>th</sup> March 2003, [GRO] had physically walked away from Rugeley Post Office with euros in cash worth £94,651.27 at the exchange rate he had been given by Rugeley Post Office, though none of the three (3) bank cheques he had provided to the Post Office in lieu of payment had within that time been 'banked' or cleared, indeed they hadn't even left the Post Office premises until 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002. However in that same time period, [GRO] having sold the euros he had purchased in those 3 days to Thomas Cook Retail, received funds worth £95,769.54, which had been credited to his Bank account, nothing had been debited from his account for the payment of those euros to the Post Office.

Furthermore from schedule MP/3 it can be seen that had Rugeley Post Office applied the correct exchange rate to the transaction on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002 (1.5781) the amount [GRO] should have paid to the Post Office would have been £25,346.94, in this instance when [GRO] sold the same amount of euros to Thomas Cook later that morning he was given an exchange rate of 1.65 and received £24,222.42, which would have meant that rather than making a profit of £898.80, he would have made a loss of £1,124.52.

Schedule MP/4 also illustrates that [GRO] did not always sell the same amount of euros to Thomas Cook Retail as he had bought from Rugeley Post Office, for instance on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002, [GRO] purchased 64,900 euros from Rugeley Post Office and later that day he sold 60,000 euros through Thomas Cook

Signature

**GRO**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

Retail, a difference of 4,900 euros. On other occasions, **GRO** sold more euros than he had purchased that day from the Post Office.

There are a number of anomalies, which arise from the data contained in this schedule, which I will address later in this statement.

At the time of the audit of Rugeley Post Office on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003, I was made aware that included in the overall office shortage of £645,345.18 was a figure of £282,000.00 which was the difference found by the auditors in the 'AM' stock unit. The 'AM' stock unit has since been confirmed by Mr Page himself to be his main stock unit.

At the time there was also a single cheque in the Bureau de Change till for an amount of £278,181.82, part of exhibit NJW/5 and therefore this cheque and more importantly the amount became associated with the £282,000.00 shortage in the AM stock unit. However following questioning of Mr Page during the PACE interviews, Mr Page stated that the cheque for £278,181.82 was a replacement cheque given to him by **GRO** **GRO** early in 2003 to replace three (3) cheques which **GRO** had used over the Christmas 2002 period at Rugeley Post office to purchase euros, exhibit MP/1, which had all 'bounced'. With that being the case the single cheque for £278,181.82 should not have formed any part of the office balance and should not have been taken into account by the audit team, however, at that time, I nor anyone else was aware of the explanation Mr Page would give in relation to this cheque. That single cheque therefore was being held by Mr Page in the Bureau de Change till until the three (3) 'bounced' cheques (which came to exactly the same amount) were returned to the office in the form of an error notice, a method used by the Post Office accounting section to advise Post office outlets of any accounting errors which need to be rectified.

From what Mr Page has told me during interview, once he had received the error notice

Signature **GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**



## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

in relation to the three (3) bounced cheques he would have then submitted the single cheque for £278,181.82 to rectify the error.

When I became aware of this explanation, I began to examine the Post Office documentation more closely as this meant that the single cheque for £278,181.82 should not have formed any part of the accounts at Rugeley Post Office on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003 and therefore there was an unidentified loss of £282,000.00 in the 'AM' stock unit.

Examination of the audit result and specifically exhibits KO/01 and DAE/05 show that the £282,000.00 difference in the 'AM' stock unit was in relation to a figure recorded in the AM stock unit for Foreign Currency. The 'AM' stock unit as agreed by Mr Page during interview was the main Post Office safe (two safes) located in Mr Page's office and would have contained various amounts of bulk cash and stock. When the auditor's examined these safes and verified their contents on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003, they did not find £282,000.00 worth of foreign currency located in the 'AM' stock unit, indeed there was no foreign currency at all in the AM stock unit, the only foreign currency found at the Post Office that day was all contained within the Bureau de Change till insert.

As the discrepancy in the AM stock unit related to foreign currency the auditors decided to electronically transfer that shortage to the Bureau till (BU stock unit) using the Horizon computer system, in order to keeps things neat, hence exhibit DAE/05

The Bureau till (BU stock unit) had already shown a shortage as the five (5) cheques, exhibit NJW/5, had been seized from the till by the Police the day before. What wasn't known at the time is that the fifth cheque, the one for an amount of £278,181.82 had not been entered into the Forde Moneychanger or the Horizon system and was merely sitting in the bureau till awaiting the three bounced cheques and the error notice from

Signature

**GRO**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

the Post Office accounting section in Chesterfield at which time it would have been brought to account as stated by Mr Page.

The four (4) other cheques, which form part of exhibit, NJW/5 in total equate to £360,493.83 and were the four cheques used by **GRO** for the transaction conducted on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003 and had been entered into the Forde Moneychanger. As a result taking the figure for the four cheques of £360,493.83 and adding to this the £282,000.00 of foreign currency said to be in the AM stock unit we obtain a figure of £642,493.83, with other smaller discrepancies found in the accounts the final overall office shortage was £645,345.18. This figure is not based on taking the single £278,181.82 cheque into account, as it had not been entered into any of the accounts at Rugeley Post Office, either on the Forde Moneychanger or the Horizon system. However at the time of the audit and possibly due to the similarities of the two amounts, £278,181.82 and £282,000.00, the two were linked and it was not realised at the time that there was in fact an actual shortage of the 'AM' stock unit of £282,000.00.

As a result I began to examine the previous Cash accounts for Rugeley Post Office and the under copy Command 10 summary printouts. I obtained a number of weekly Cash accounts from Rugeley Post Office, and those that I could not recover from the Office itself; I obtained duplicate copies from the accounting section in Chesterfield.

I now produce the following weekly cash account documents in relation to Rugeley Post Office.

- MP/7 Cash account for week 22 (w/e 28.08.02) – Office copy
- MP/10 Cash account for week 36 (w/e 04.12.02) – Office copy
- MP/12 Cash account for week 37 (w/e 11.12.02) – Office copy
- MP/14 Cash account for week 38 (w/e 18.12.02) – Office copy

Signature

**GRO**

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

- MP/16 Cash account for week 39 (w/e 27.12.02) – Office copy
- MP/19 Cash account for week 41 (w/e 08.01.03) – Office copy
- MP/21 Cash account for week 18 (w/e 31.07.02) – Office copy
- MP/22 Cash account for week 01 (w/e 03.04.02) – Office copy
- MP/23 Cash account for week 02 (w/e 10.04.02) – Office copy
- MP/24 Cash account for week 17 (w/e 24.07.02) – Office copy
- MP/25 Cash account for week 40 (w/e 03.01.03) – Office copy
- MP/26 Cash account for week 35 (w/e 27.11.02) – Office copy
- MP/27 Cash account for week 34 (w/e 20.11.02) – Office copy
- MP/28 Cash account for week 33 (w/e 13.11.02) – Office copy
- MP/29 Cash account for week 32 (w/e 06.11.02) – Office copy
- MP/30 Cash account for week 31 (w/e 30.10.02) – Office copy
- MP/31 Cash account for week 30 (w/e 23.10.02) – Office copy
- MP/32 Cash account for week 29 (w/e 16.10.02) – Office copy
- MP/33 Cash account for week 28 (w/e 09.10.02) – Office copy
- MP/34 Cash account for week 27 (w/e 02.10.02) – Office copy
- MP/35 Cash account for week 26 (w/e 25.09.02) – Office copy
- MP/36 Cash account for week 25 (w/e 18.09.02) – Office copy
- MP/37 Cash account for week 24 (w/e 11.09.02) – Office copy
- MP/38 Cash account for week 23 (w/e 04.09.02) – Office copy
- MP/39 Cash account for week 21 (w/e 21.08.02) – Office copy
- MP/40 Cash account for week 20 (w/e 14.08.02) – Office copy
- MP/41 Cash account for week 19 (w/e 07.08.02) – Office copy
- MP/42 Cash account for week 16 (w/e 17.07.02) – Office copy
- MP/43 Cash account for week 15 (w/e 10.07.02) – Office copy
- MP/44 Cash account for week 14 (w/e 03.07.02) – Office copy
- MP/45 Cash account for week 13 (w/e 26.06.02) – Office copy

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

- MP/46 Cash account for week 12 (w/e 19.06.02) – Office copy
- MP/47 Cash account for week 11 (w/e 12.06.02) – Chesterfield copy
- MP/48 Cash account for week 10 (w/e 05.06.02) – Chesterfield copy
- MP/49 Cash account for week 9 (w/e 29.05.02) – Office copy
- MP/50 Cash account for week 8 (w/e 22.05.02) – Office copy
- MP/51 Cash account for week 7 (w/e 15.05.02) – Office copy
- MP/52 Cash account for week 6 (w/e 08.05.02) – Office copy
- MP/53 Cash account for week 5 (w/e 01.05.02) – Office copy
- MP/54 Cash account for week 4 (w/e 24.04.02) – Office copy
- MP/55 Cash account for week 3 (w/e 17.04.02) – Office copy
- MP/56 Cash account for week 53 (w/e 27.03.02) – Office copy
- MP/57 Cash account for week 52 (w/e 20.03.02) – Office copy
- MP/58 Cash account for week 51 (w/e 13.03.02) – Office copy
- MP/59 Cash account for week 50 (w/e 06.03.02) – Office copy

By also examining the top copy of the Command 10 summary printouts obtained from the accounting section in Chesterfield, item number **MEP/1** and the under copy sections of the Forde Moneychanger till rolls recovered from Rugeley Post Office, item number **MP/81**, I was able to extract the figures in relation to the Foreign Currency on hand as declared on the cash account and that shown on the Forde Moneychanger Command 10 summary printout. As stated previously those two figures should be the same as the figure shown on the Command 10 summary should be the figure fed into the Horizon Computer system by the operator, which ultimately produces the Cash account printout.

When I carried out this exercise, I noticed some differences, which I have illustrated on a further schedule called the Foreign Currency Discrepancies Schedule, which I now produce as item number **MP/6**.

Signature

**GRO**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

This schedule commences in week number 36 (week ending 28.11.01) and finishes in week number 43 (w/e 22.01.03). From the office cash accounts in my possession I have extracted the declared Cash on Hand figure for each week (page 2, table 5 line 50) and then also the declared Foreign Currency Sterling Equivalent figure for each week (page 2, table 5 line 52). I have then extracted the 'Cash Held' figure, which is in Sterling from the weekly Command 10 summaries either from those supplied to me by Chesterfield or from the under copies in my possession.

Although this schedule commences in week 36 (w/e 28.11.01), I have not obtained the relevant figure until week 50 (w/e 06.03.02), which is when schedule MP/3, commences and is the period from which this enquiry commences.

In week 50 (w/e 06.03.02), the office cash account states that there was £133,340.07 in sterling cash, physically on the premises at close of Business on Wednesday 06.03.02. It also states that there was £15,255.02 sterling equivalent of foreign Currency physically on the premises at close of Business on Wednesday 06.03.02.

Examination of the relevant Forde Moneychanger Command 10 summary printout for week 50, part of exhibit item number MEP/1, the 'Cash Held' figure also shows the sterling value of £15,255.02 as it should do and therefore there is no inflation of the amounts declared.

Between week 50 (w/e 06.03.02) and week 12 (w/e19.06.02) the figures declared as Foreign Currency (sterling value) on the cash account match those shown on the Command 10 summary printout apart from 3 of those weeks (weeks 51, 01 &10), in weeks 51 and 10 the difference (inflation) matches the declared revaluation figure on the appropriate Command 10 summaries and therefore it would appear that whoever

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**GRO**

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## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

input those weeks figures into the Horizon Computer system mistakenly added the revaluations figure to the Cash Held figure and entered this figure into the Horizon Computer system. As for week 01, this was different by 40 pence, which is likely to have been a keying in error.

During those weeks it can be seen that the sterling equivalent of Foreign Currency physically held at the office on Wednesday evening remained between £3,000 and £38,000, whilst the Cash On hand figure ranged from £133,000.00 to £365,000.00, with the majority being in the upper £200,000 to lower £300,000 area.

In week 13 (w/e 26.06.02), there was an Audit carried out at Rugeley Post Office and as stated to me by Mr Page during interview, he was not present at the time of the audit as he was holidaying in Euro Disney, however, Mr Page did contact the office by telephone numerous times that day and spoke to both his staff and members of the audit team. It would appear that the Office accounts had not been completed when the audit team went into the office on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2002 and therefore the audit team spent most of their time completing the office accounts rather than carrying out a verification of those accounts.

Subsequently between week 14 (w/e 03.07.02) and 16 (w/e 17.07.02) there are a couple of discrepancies the 1<sup>st</sup> for just under £5,000 in week 14, and then just under £50,000 in week 16 with a Nil inflation in week 15. The large discrepancy caused in week 16 is due to the revaluation figure having being used by someone at the office to feed into the Horizon computer system rather than the 'Cash Held' figure.

In week 17 (w/e 24.07.02) the Cash on hand figure declared is £421,791.72, indeed over the month of July 2002 the cash on Hand figures have all been over the £400,000.00 level. The Foreign Currency on hand figure declared on the cash account

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**GRO**

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**Witness Statement***(CJ Act 1967, s9; MC Act 1980, ss 5A(3)(a) and 5B, MC Rules 1981, r 70)*Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

is £6,683.95, which is identical to the figure declared on the appropriate Command 10 summary printout.

The following week, week number 18 (w/e 31.07.02) the cash on Hand figure reduces to £87,162.07, the Foreign currency on hand figure increases to £191,095.97 whilst the appropriate Command 10 summary for that week indicated that the Cash Held figure was 13,595.97, a difference of £177,500.00.

Whilst conducting this investigation it became known to me that during week 18 an amount of cash, £160,000.00, was despatched from Rugeley Post Office back to the Cash Centre on the instruction of a Retail Line Manager, Mr Stephen Cartwright. Mr Cartwright and Mr Douglas Brown explain the reasons behind this course of action in their respective statements.

Subsequently there is a difference of £85,636.65 in week 19 (w/e 07.08.02) followed by two further weeks, weeks 20 & 21 (w/e 14.08.02 & 21.08.02) where there is no difference in Foreign currency declared values to the Command 10 summary figure. However from week 22 (w/e 28.08.02) through to week 41 (w/e 08.01.03) which is the last full cash account period whilst Mr Page was in charge of the office, there is a steady inflation each week commencing with an inflation of £188,000.00 (week 22) and reaching £282,000.00 in week 41, which is also the exact amount indicated as Foreign Currency in the 'AM' stock unit on the day of the Audit, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003, item number KO/01 refers.

Throughout this same period the Cash on Hand figures declared on the cash account remain lower than previously, being in the £40,000.00 to £160,000.00 bracket, when previously they had reached levels in excess of £400,000.00 and the Foreign Currency on hand declared on the cash accounts jumps from between £3,000 to £38,000 prior to

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**GRO**Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

Version 3.0 11/02



**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

week number 18 to between £100,000.00 to £450,000.00.

The evidence as borne out by the Command 10 summary printouts from week number 18 (w/e 31.07.02) onwards suggests that whoever fed in the value for Foreign Currency on Hand into the Horizon computer system at the end of each cash account week, input false figures and inflated these figures by several hundred thousand pounds at a time, leading the Post Office to believe that a higher value of foreign currency was physically held at Rugeley Post Office when in fact it wasn't, as borne out by the evidence of the audit on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003 when £282,000.00 worth of foreign currency was said to be held within 'AM' stock unit though was physically not there.

This inflation of the Forde Moneychanger Cash held figures seems to have started in week number 18, which in itself may be of relevance as that is the same week when Mr Stephen Cartwright personally oversaw the removal of £160,000.00 from Rugeley Post Office as the Post Office matrix team had considered that the office was holding too much cash and had made attempts to have some of it returned without success.

Also if you compare the figures before week 18, for instance weeks 14 to 16, if you add the cash on hand figure (column 3) to the Foreign Currency on Hand figure (column 4) you obtain a figure of roughly £425,000.00 to £465,000.00. This declaration suggests that at the end of the relevant cash account week, the office physically had on the premises, that value in cash, whether that be in sterling or foreign currency.

After week 18, from week 22 onwards, if you perform the same addition you still obtain values in the £320,000.00 to £500,000.00 bracket mark, however these figures include the inflated values in the declared foreign currency and so if the inflation is subtracted from the overall value, the values drop to between £130,000.00 to £270,000.00. By adding an inflated value to these figures they can be brought back to the level pre week

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**GRO**

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

number 18 before any cash was actually removed from Rugeley Post Office.

During one of the PACE interviews I had with Mr Page on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003, I questioned him briefly about the £282,000.00 figure in the AM stock unit and was informed by Mr Page that the figure on the Command 10 printout only related to the currency held within the Bureau till, therefore for example the Command 10 printout may say £50,000, which would mean that within the Bureau till itself there was various amounts of currency giving a total sterling value of £50,000. However, Mr Page then suggests that he would be holding an additional amount (mainly the Euros for GRO) in his main safe, which is known as AM stock and this is why there are two different figures, one on the Command 10 summary printout and a different value on the cash account. It is therefore suggested by Mr Page that the bulk of the euros destined for GRO would be held in his main safe ('AM' stock unit) and handed to GRO when he attended the office.

It is evident from schedule MP/3 and copy till rolls MP/3A that the transactions were keyed into the Forde Moneychanger when the euros were sold to GRO. Having now examined the till rolls for the bulk currency transfers received from Hemel Hempstead and produced schedule MP/82 and associated copy till rolls sections MP/83, an exercise that had not been done prior to interviewing Mr Page on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003, it is evident that the large volumes of currency received, mainly consisting of the euros for GRO were 'booked' into the Forde Moneychanger on the day of receipt.

Having keyed these entries into the Forde Moneychanger the associated value of currency held becomes part of the Bureau stock unit (BU stock unit) regardless of whether most of it was held in the main safe or not, indeed £200,000.00 worth of euros would probably not have fitted into the Bureau till.

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GRO

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**Witness Statement***(CJ Act 1967, s9; MC Act 1980, ss 5A(3)(a) and 5B, MC Rules 1981, r 70)*Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

The Post Office at Rugeley used a number of Stock units, to identify them, for instance those used by the counter staff were given alphabetical/numerical letters to distinguish them, i.e. stock unit AA or 01 etc. As mentioned previously the Bureau till was labelled and identified as stock unit BU and Mr Page had his own stock unit labelled and identified as Stock unit AM.

Once the Currency received from Hemel Hempstead had been keyed into the Forde Moneychanger, as clearly it was being, as indicated on schedule MP/82, the value of the BU stock unit would increase by that amount 'booked' in. No other stock units would increase in value even if the euros themselves were placed in the main safe, AM stock unit. For the value to increase in the AM stock unit an operator would be required to manually key that value into the Horizon computer system and associated it with the AM stock unit.

Since all of the currency being received from Hemel Hempstead was being correctly keyed into the Forde Moneychanger it could not be booked in under AM stock unit as well. Furthermore if an amount of currency had not been 'booked' into the Forde Moneychanger then the command 10 weekly summary could not illustrate correctly how much currency had been sold during the course of the week as the Forde Moneychanger would not be 'aware' of the existence of other currency held in the Post Office as it had not been 'booked' into the system.

For instance in week 42 (week commencing 09.01.03), schedule MP/82 shows that on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2003 at 10:47 hours, 150,000 euros with a sterling value of £92,177.23 was 'booked' into the Forde Moneychanger. On the following day, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2003 at 14:46 hours a further 150,000 euros with a sterling value of £92,489.83 was 'booked' into the Forde Moneychanger. Then on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>

Signature

**GRO**

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

January 2003 at 11:39 hours a further 150,000 euros with a sterling value of £92,707.05 was 'booked' into the Forde Moneychanger. Therefore within the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 days of cash account week number 42, Rugeley Post Office had taken delivery of and 'booked' in 450,000 euro with a sterling value of £277,374.11 into the Forde Moneychanger.

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003, the day of **GRO** arrest, Mr Page sold to **GRO** **GRO** 584,000 euros for which **GRO** paid £360,493.83.

An examination of item number DAE/01, a Command 2 and Command 3 printouts produced from the Forde Moneychanger by the auditor Mrs Edwards on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2003 indicated that during the course of that week (week number 42) there had been 44 transactions where notes (currency) had been bought amounting to a sterling value of £371,082.58 and that the balance of currency left as shown on the Command 2 printout indicated a sterling value of £21,263.79.

Of the £371,082.58 worth of currency sold that week, £360,493.83 was as a result of **GRO** **GRO** transaction in the early hours of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003, which only leaves a little over £10,000.00 worth of other currency sales. There could not have possibly been anymore euros at the office, as everything received from Hemel Hempstead since at least week number 33 (w/e 13.11.02 when schedule MP/82 commences) had been 'booked' into the Forde Moneychanger upon receipt and therefore the figure of £282,000.00 shown in the AM stock unit is false, indeed further Horizon balance printouts for AM stock unit, recovered from the office by me, show similar figures of foreign currency held which identically match the inflated figures shown on my schedule MP/6 for the corresponding week.

Signature

**GRO**

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## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

I recovered from the archived office files at Rugeley Post Office, certain documentation in relation to various cash account weeks and the Bureau (BU) stock unit and the AM stock unit, these were the only documents I could locate at the office in relation to the BU stock unit and the AM stock unit for the period in question.

I now produce the following exhibits:-

MP/8 Horizon Office snapshot printout for week 22 (w/e 28.08.02) showing a foreign Currency sterling figure of £283,616.12

MP/9 Horizon Bureau Stock final balance printout for week 22 showing a foreign Currency sterling figure of £95,616.12.

MP/11 Horizon Office snapshot printout for AM Stock unit week 36 showing a foreign Currency sterling figure of £255,000.00.

MP/13 Horizon Bureau Stock final balance printout for week 37 showing a foreign Currency sterling figure of £98,936.38.

MP/15 Horizon Office final balance printout for AM Stock unit week 36 showing a Foreign currency sterling figure of £270,000.00

MP/17 Horizon Office final balance printout for AM Stock unit week 39 showing a Foreign currency sterling figure of £272,000.00

MP/18 Horizon Bureau Stock final balance printout for week 39 showing a foreign Currency sterling figure of £15,775.05.

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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### Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

MP/20 Horizon Office final balance printout for AM Stock unit week 41 showing a Foreign currency sterling figure of £282,000.00

Furthermore as shown by schedule MP/3, the large volumes of euros being sold to GRO occur from at least 9<sup>th</sup> March 2003, yet throughout March 2002 through to June 2002, the value declared on the weekly cash account relating to Foreign currency on hand compared to the Cash Held figure on the Forde Moneychanger till roll (Command 10 printout) is exactly the same as it should be and there are no inflated figures, therefore there could not have been an additional amount of euros being held in Mr Page's main safe (AM stock unit) awaiting collection by GRO. However since the incident with the RLM in week 18 (w/e 31.07.02), there would continually be two different figures being declared, the correct one on the Command 10 printout, which was being sent to Chesterfield and an inflated one in the relevant section of the Cash account.

Following the initial interview I had with Mr Carl Page at Stafford Police station on the evening of Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003, Mr Page was released on Police bail to return to Stafford Police Station on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003. Subsequently on that day, Mr Page was further bailed to return to Stafford Police Station on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

Both GRO and GRO who had been arrested on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003, were initially interviewed by Officers from H.M Customs & Excise. GRO was later further interview by Police Officers from Staffordshire Major Crime unit, when the investigation was passed over to them and subsequently GRO was bailed to return to Cannock Police Station on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003 at which time he was released from Police bail with no further action being taken against him by

Signature

GRO

Signature witnessed by

M Bushell

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**Witness Statement**

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

Continuation of statement of **MANISH PATEL**

either the Police or the Post Office.

**GRO** after having being interviewed by Customs & Excise and whilst still in Police detention, **GRO**

**GRO** subsequently he was bailed **GRO** to return to Cannock police station on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003 at which time he was further bailed upon my instruction to attend Stafford Police Station on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, together with my colleague, Mr Colin Price, I commenced a tape recorded interview in accordance with P.A.C.E with **GRO**, also in attendance throughout the interview was **GRO** solicitor, Mr Ghulam Sohail. The interview commenced at 11:24 hours and concluded on tape number two at 12:57 hours.

I now produce the mater tape reference number 21/CG/995/03/01 as item number MP/86 and tape reference number 21/CG/995/03/02 as item number MP/87. Subsequently I have prepared a transcript of this interview, which I now produce as item numbers MP/88 and MP/89.

It can be seen that at the commencement of the interview, I was handed by Mr Sohail a typed statement from **GRO** which contained a few handwritten amendments. I was informed by Mr Sohail that this prepared statement was the only information **GRO** **GRO** proposed to provide at this interview and that he would not be answering any further questions put to him.

I read out the statement handed to me by Mr Sohail in full on tape for the record. The statement also bore an original date of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003 that had been crossed out and a manuscript entry of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 written over it. Mr Sohail explained that the

Signature

**GRO**

Signature witnessed by **M Bushell**

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## Witness Statement

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

Continuation of statement of MANISH PATEL

statement had been prepared in readiness for an interview on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003, the 1<sup>st</sup> bail return date from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003 and as no further interview had taken place that day, the prepared statement had just been amended to reflect the date of the interview conducted on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

The original Statement was retained by Mr Sohail though I was provided with a copy of it, which I now produce as item number MP/103.

Although further questions were put to GRO and documentation shown to him throughout the course of the tape-recorded interview, GRO chose to reply "no comment" to all of my questions apart from one question in tape number 2 at about 34 minutes when I asked GRO about whether Mr Page had ever queried him over the post dated cheques he handed over, Mr Whitehouse replied "no" to this question.

Later that day on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, Mr Page had also been bailed to return to Stafford Police station and in the delay in interviewing GRO in the morning, that interview not concluding until 12:57 hours and Mr Page's arrival at 12:00 hours further compounded by the fact that Mr Page had arrived at the Police Station without a solicitor and when informed that a further interview would take place, he suggested that he would like to have a solicitor present. Although the Custody Sergeant made attempts to contact the solicitor requested by Mr Page, this person was unavailable and therefore a Duty solicitor was contacted. It transpired that a duty Solicitor was already present at Stafford Police Station though was with another client and by the time she had finished with her first engagement and then spoken to Mr Page, I was informed by the Custody Sergeant that we had about 45 minutes left before Mr Page had been in Custody for a total period of 24 hours.

Signature

GRO

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