

Royal Mail Group

Witness Statement

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

Statement of	Adrian MORRIS	
Age if under 18	Over 18	(If over 18 insert 'over 18')

This statement (consisting of four (4) 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 6th day of January 2009
the

Signature

GRO

I am employed by the Royal Mail Group and have been so for approximately twenty (20) years. For the last six years I have held the position of Security Advisor for Post Office Ltd and as such I am responsible for carrying out investigations into possible criminal offences committed against the business. I also liaise and assist other law enforcement bodies with investigations where Post Office Ltd may be the target of fraud.

On the 14th January 2008 I was asked by my Investigation Team Manager, Paul Dawkins to attend West Byfleet Post Office, 14 Station Approach, West Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 6NG as he had received information that there was going to be a large audit shortage at this Post Office.

I arrived at West Byfleet Post Office at around 14.10 hours on the 14th January 2008 and was joined by my colleagues, Jon Longman and Lisa Allen. There were three Post Office auditors present at the office. They were Keith Noverre, Sue Le May and Chris Stevens. I spoke with Keith Noverre and he informed me that Mrs Seema Misra, Subpostmistress had advised him that the accounts would be around £50,000 to £60,000 short. Keith Noverre also informed me that Mrs Misra had admitted to him that she had adjusted her balancing to show a clear

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balance.

I then introduced myself and my colleagues to Seema Misra. Mrs Misra gave me two handwritten reports which had both been signed by her. The first report stated that the shortage in the Post Office was caused by staff thefts which had started from about a year and a half ago. Mrs Misra wanted to make good the losses and had made up two remittance pouches in which she was going to borrow money from friends and family in order to fill them up. I now produce this report as exhibit **AM/01**. The other report stated that there was a loss of around £2,000 in one of the stock units and again this was down to staff thefts. I now produce this report as **AM/02**.

Keith Noverre then handed me two remittance pouches which are used for dispatching excess cash at Post Offices back to cash centres. The first remittance pouch had a barcode number on it of 302124615598 and contained a remittance out slip produced on the 9th January 2008 and was said to contain £13,000. There was also a return advice slip, produced on 9th January 2008 which had been datestamped and signed by Mrs Misra. The other remittance pouch had a barcode number on of 302124615581 and contained a remittance out slip produced on 9th January 2008 for £14,000 and a return advice slip produced on 9th January 2008 which had been datestamped and signed by Mrs Misra. Neither pouch contained the cash amount that the advice slips showed. These items have been exhibited by Keith Noverre.

At 14.28 hours I cautioned Mrs Misra in the presence of Lisa Allen and Jon Longman. I outlined her legal rights by completing form CS001 which I now produce as exhibit **AM/03**. Mrs Misra agreed to a voluntary taped interview and consented to a search of her premises. Mrs Misra said that she did not require a solicitor.

At 15.19 hours Seema Misra informed me that she needed to count the shop takings and

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prepare the banking. Mrs Misra did this and gave me £475 in order to reduce the Post Office loss. I accepted this amount without prejudice to any further action being taken. I issued Mrs Misra with a receipt for this amount.

At 16.25 hours I commenced a voluntary search with my colleagues of GRO West Byfleet where Mrs Misra lived. Mrs Misra did not take up the option of having a Post Office friend present. However, her husband, Davinder Kumar Misra was present and witnessed the search. The search concluded at 16.37 and no items were seized. The search forms CS005 and CS005c are now exhibited as **AM/04**.

At 17.25 hours on Monday 14th January 2008, in an office above West Byfleet Post Office I commenced a tape recorded interview with Seema Misra. Also present was Jon Longman. Mrs Misra completed the reverse side of the form CS001 reminding her of her legal rights and also completed form CS003 indicating she did not require a Post Office friend.

The interview was concluded at 18.29 hours and consisted of two tapes. I now produce as exhibits **AM/05** and **AM/06** the two master tapes with seal numbers 060341 and 060342. I have also produced a tape summary of the interview and I produce this as exhibit **AM/07**.

In summary Mrs Misra informed me of the following. When Seema became subpostmistress she kept the staff that the previous Subpostmaster had employed and let them run the office. After a while Seema noticed that things were not quite right and reported a £1,000 loss to the police. The losses at the Post Office continued and staff either resigned or were sacked as the losses were uncovered. Although only a £1,000 loss had been reported to the police Seema said that the losses actually totalled between £89,000 to £90,000. Seema said that she had been paying money back into the Post Office to try and reduce the loss.

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Seema explained that she would try and hide the shortages by not only falsifying the cash on hand figure but also falsely declaring cash as being in remittance pouches when in fact there was none. When I showed Seema the Branch Trading Account for period 08, dated 15th November 2006 to 14th December 2006 she confirmed that the cash on hand figure of £27,993.73 and currencies awaiting collection figure of £13,070 were both falsified. I produce this Branch Trading Account as exhibit **AM/08**. I then showed Seema two further Branch Trading Statements for Branch Trading Period 02, dated 16th May 2007 to the 16th June 2007 which I produce as exhibit **AM/09** and the Branch Trading Statement for Branch Trading Period 08, dated 14th November 2007 to the 15th December 2007 which I produce as exhibit **AM/10**. Seema confirmed that the cash on hand figures and currencies awaiting collection figures on both accounts were false. Seema confirmed that all Branch Trading Statements since Branch Trading Period 08 (15th November 2006 to 14th December 2006) were false accounts.

I asked Seema what would have happened if she had shown the correct figures on the accounts and she said that the Post Office would have been taken away from her. Seema acknowledged that what she had done was dishonest. Seema said that she was the only person who completed the Branch Trading Accounts.

The total audit shortage was finalised at £77,643.87

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