

Record of Tape Recorded Interview



Person Interviewed David Charles Blakey (DB)
Place of Interview Riby Square Subpostoffice, Grimsby

Exhibit No: Number of pages: Signature of interviewing officer producing exhibit
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Date of Interview 13th May 2004
Time commenced 13:08 hours Time concluded 13:50 hours
Duration of interview 42 minutes Tape reference no 059898
Interviewing Officer(s) Paul Graham Whitaker (PW) Helen Dickinson (HD)
Other persons present

Tape counter times	Person speaking	Text
00.00	PW	This interview is being tape-recorded. My name is Paul Graham Whitaker, my colleague is
	HD	Helen Dickinson
	PW	We are officers of the Post Office Ltd Investigation team and we're employed to investigate possible criminal offences. Also present is – could you please state your full name please
	DB	David Charles Blakey
	PW	The date is the 13 th May 2004 and the time is 1.08 p.m. This interview is being conducted in an office at the Riby Square Subpostoffice in Grimsby. I want to ask you some questions about accounting irregularities arising from this office. At the end of the interview I will give you a notice explaining what will happen to the tapes, have you any objections to the interview being tape-recorded.
00.49	DB	No
	PW	O.K. Again will you please state your full name
	DB	David Charles Blakey
	PW	My Names Paul Graham Whitaker
	HD	Helen Dickinson
	PW	Because you are suspected of committing a criminal offence which may result in a criminal prosecution I must inform you that you do not have to say anything but it may harm you defence if you do not mention, when questioned something

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

		which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence, do you understand that.
	DB	Yes
	PW	Right O.K. Well what we do now is that we explain it anyway because people hear this phrase said a lot on T.V. and what have you, so we need to make sure what... what is does actually mean. O.K.
	DB	Yes
	PW	I mean first of all I am an investigator employed by the Post Office to investigate possible criminal offences, and you are suspected of having committed a criminal offence. Do you understand that.
	DB	Yes
	PW	I wish to put questions to you about this criminal offence and record your answers to those questions. Do you understand that?
	DB	Yes
	PW	Firstly a person that is being interviewed for a suspected criminal offence, does not have to say anything, so you do not have to answer my questions do you understand that?
	DB	Yes
	PW	O.K. secondly if the matter does go to court and then you say something that you do not say during this interview the court may draw its own conclusions about why you are saying it then. Do you understand that?
	DB	Yes
	PW	And thirdly anything you do say is recorded on tape and could be used in evidence. Do you understand that?
	DB	Yes
02.20	PW	Okay, right I am now showing you form CS001, side A. which explains your legal rights. If I could just ask you to fill in at the top the date and time please. I've got it as 13.10 on the 13 th of the 5 th 04.
	HD	Time, if we can work off this clock
	PW	Just put it at the side of the time.....
	DB	Sorry about that
	PW	It's no problem. Right we'll go through this form together. At the top there it says because you are suspected of having committed a criminal offence which may result in a criminal prosecution I must inform you that...and that's the caution which I have just done and explained to you. O.K. and then if we go down the form I must also inform you that. Number one you are not under arrest, secondly you are free to leave if you wish. If the interview is being conducted anywhere other than Post Office Ltd premises consent also must be obtained

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

	from the interviewee and the person entitled to grant entry to the premises to carry out the interview there. That's basically we are on your premises here. You are quite happy that we are doing it on your premises
DB	Yes Yes no problem
PW	O.K. and when it says you're free to leave obviously you're free to kick us out that's the thing, cause we're on your premises at the moment. Thirdly if you remain, you have the right to legal representation and advice including the right to speak to a Solicitor either in person or on the telephone. In brackets there it says that the Solicitor will give you advice regarding Legal Aid and ascertain the availability of the duty solicitor or assist with directory enquiries if you wish. And the fourth thing there says that you are entitled to read the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 codes of practice if you wish and these codes set out your legal rights and the rules governing the conduct of this interview. That is this book here so you are quite well within your rights if you want to have a good look through that before we continue any further. it is up to you if you want to you can., okay.
DB	No no I'm fine honestly
PW	O.K. There are a number of statements there as we've gone down the page. The first on says have you read 1 to 4 above
DB	Uh-Uh
PW	If you can just reply verbally please for the purposes of the tape
DB	Yes
PW	O.K. and then write it in there. And the second one there says do you understand 1 to 4 above
DB	Yes
PW	Okay, two statements under there, the first one is, I wish to speak with a Solicitor as soon as it is practical, or the second one there says, I do not want to speak to a Solicitor at this time. Can you just indicate which one that you are signing against please
DB	I don't.... I do not wish to speak to a Solicitor at this time
PW	Okay, thank you. And underneath that it says if you do not want to speak to a Solicitor at this time you can change you mind at any time during the interview, do you understand that?
DB	Yes
PW	If you could sign, date, time and print your name at the bottom of the from there please David
DB	?
PW	Yes 13 th again

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

	PW	Right, thank you very much.
05.40	PW	Post Office friend form shown to DB. DB declines the offer of a friend to attend the interview
7.00		Form CS001 named as item PGW1 and form CS003 named as item PGW2
7.10		DB states that his wife Gill is the subpostmistress at Riby Square Subpostoffice and he attends the office each day after he finishes work and helps out by doing the cut off, and by balancing the office on a Wednesday. DB states that there are four other members of staff who work in the Post Office side of the business. DB confirms that his wife runs the office through the day with the other members of staff and that he comes in after he has finished work as an engineer, and does the end of day cut offs. DB states that as he is working part time at the moment he comes in at around midday then leaves the office goes home and then returns at around 4 o'clock, to do the final cut offs and the end of day paperwork. This way of working has been so since around the time the office was taken over by his wife, (7 years), as on his last job DB was finishing at around 3.30 in the afternoon. This is the case everyday with the very odd exception if DB has a golf day. DB states that he performs the balance in the main, apart from some reconciliation's such as fishing licences, and car taxes which his wife does, but DB always enters the figures on to the Horizon Accounting system and produces the Office cash account.
10.38		Discussion of the morning's events in relation to the audit of the office. DB states that his wife rang him, as he normally rings her at about 08.45 each morning to see if she has got to work O.K. DB states that his wife told him that there was no problem and mentioned that the auditors were there. D.B. stated that he spoke to his boss at work and told him that he needed to leave work as he had an issue at the Post Office. He came to Riby Square and rang the back door bell. His wife answered and enquired as to why he was there. DB told her that he needed to speak to the auditors. DB states that he came in to the office and he approached the auditors as they were waiting for the safes to open. He explained to them that there was going to be a discrepancy.
11.36	PW	I believe I am right in saying that the auditors asked you to write and explanation as it were...
	DB	Yeah
	PW	Showing you now a sheet of paper.. is that your signature on the bottom..
	DB	It is yeah
	PW	Right can I just ask you to read that please.... Is that the sheet of paper that you gave to the auditors at the time
	DB	Yes this is the one it says...About three months ago money started to go

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

		missing I covered this up hoping to replace it. My wife had been [GRO]. I can go into more detail about that later on if you wish...I've got an appointment with the bank manager next week I was hopefully going to take out a loan to replace it, where or how the moneys gone I don't know. I was hoping there was an error but it does not appear to be the case. And I wrote that briefly this morning while I was still shaking.
	PW	O.K. so that's what you gave the auditors this morning, it's actually got a date on it of 13 th of the 5 th 2004....
	DB	That's right yes...
	PW	And it signed by you. There's also a figure on there, which is £63, 259.00...
	DB	529
	PW	Sorry £529 sorry I'm looking at it upside down. Did you put that figure on.
	DB	I did yes
	PW	And what's the relevance of that figure.
	DB	That is the relevance of the cash that I knew was short....
	PW	Right...
12.55		DB states that the figure seemed to accumulate. He states that when they took over the office some time ago they suffered a few big discrepancies which he put down to someone "unsavoury" working for him. DB states that his wife suffers from asthma and whilst the office was suffering the big discrepancies a few years ago she was worrying. Some of these discrepancies came back through error notices some did not. DB states that he replaced the money and everything was above board. But it did not stop his wife from being [GRO] DB states that when the losses appeared in the account more recently he tried to protect her by not telling her. The last thing he wanted was for her to be that [GRO] again. DB states that before he knew where he was the amount had just built up and built up to where it is today. DB states that he should have told someone in the early days.
14.51		Discussion whereby DB stands by his written account that approx. 3 months ago money started to go missing.
15.05	PW	In relation to this money going missing. Where do you think it's gone?
	DB	I honestly don't know. Goodness knows...I wish I did.
	PW	Do you think it's a member of your staff that's stealing?
	DB	No I'll be absolutely honest; I trust the staff 100%.
	PW	Do you think its errors from your staff incompetence?
	DB	I think.....I don't want to point the finger at them. It's a possibility. We've got one who retired a couple of weeks ago started to make more and more mistakes but I can't.....I honestly don't know. I can't really see where the hell it's gone. I can't

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

		point the finger at any member of staff and say "she won't make mistakes." ...
	PW	Right
	DB	Not to that extent and I really don't know.
16.01		Discussion regarding the part in the written statement whereby DB stated that he had been to the bank. DB states that he does not have a fixed appointment with the bank manager but he has already seen him and has been given the forms to fill in, which he has, and he was going to call the bank later today to make a second appointment.
17.30		Confirmation by PW of what DB has said in regard to where the money has gone, and his reluctance to point the finger at members of his staff. Also in regard to the money being missing for the last three months or so.
17.40	PW	I don't think your telling me the truth there are you David?
	DB	Well..
	PW	I don't think you are telling me the truth
	DB	It's sometime ago to be honest with you...
	PW	Not particularly about that. You know where the moneys gone, because you've been taking it haven't you David
	DB	No way no honestly, as God is my witness no not a chance.
	PW	So you're saying that £60,000 has gone in a matter of months and you've not drawn it to the attention of anyone, not even your wife.
	DB	No that's true
	PW	That's not true, you don't run a business like that David....
	DBNo I know you don't....but
	PW	Now come on..... I accept your candidness in relation to you've come in here and you've said yeah.. you've held your hands up to say that the moneys gone and you've been ... you've been covering up to replace it..but you cannot sit here and expect me to believe that you don't know where £60,000 has gone.
	DB	I really and honestly don't. I do not know where it's gone. I wish to goodness I did. My wife means the world to me and there is no way that I would do anything like that to her.
	PW	David you have been running this office as regards doing the balance and doing the end of day stuff for a number of years..what you say 7 years now..
	DB	Yeah
	PW	..So you know how it works..
	DB	Yeah
	PW	...You're a...I think you're a bloke who's got a decent enough head on his shoulders and I don't think you'd put up with it if £60,000 had gone over a number of months. You would....any normal person would have his staff together

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

		because..money doesn't go out of an office...
	DB	No your right
	PW	It doesn't disappear money goes out of an office through incompetence or dishonesty...
	DB	Yeah your right
	PW	...now if your staff are incompetent you get them together and you say "pull your bloody socks up" or if they are dishonest you get them together and you say "one of you is having this away", or you get on to the Police or it's sorted out that way. That's not happened has it. You know where this moneys gone because you're the one who's been taking it David. Aren't you?
	DB	No as God is my witness I'm not. No
19.50		Discussion surrounding overnight cash holdings at the office. DB states that the office runs on an amount that varies through the week between 20k and 40k. DB confirms that the cash on hand figure for the office should be in the region of 40k for the office. PW states that on looking through past weeks cash accounts, the cash on hand figure has not been 40k for a couple of years. PW states that the cash on hand figure has been steadily rising to the figure on this weeks cash account of £94, 414.49. PW states that this seems to be indicative of cash going over a number of weeks. DB reminds PW that he said it was about 3 months ago when money started missing but it could have been a little longer. DB is asked when he can pin the time down to when the cash started to go missing. DB states that he cannot remember.
22.10		PW shows DB the office cash account for week 52 of the year 2002/03. DB confirms that he prepared this. PW states that the cash on hand figure for that week was £60,000 then. PW states that he has looked through all of the cash accounts available and it is a couple of years before he gets to a point where the cash on hand figure is what it should be. 23.10
	DB	I'm not disputing the fact that the figures have been steadily climbing, but I do refute the fact that you think I took it.
	PW	So why have they been steadily climbing then..... and why have you not drawn it to anybodies attention?
	DB	That's my mistake
	PW	I can understand that you've probably got your wife's welfare at heart. But the size of the climb in respect of this. You can't expect me to believe that you didn't know or you didn't do something about it. If it's not you...if it's not you that's doing it you've got no reason to shield anybody from it. I can understand for [GRO] reasons your wife. But you can't shield this from your staff because if it's not you stealing and you don't suspect your wife. Then it's got to be your staffs

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

incompetence or it's got to be your staffs dishonesty and I can't believe that you haven't got them together before this point before now and if it hasn't been you and you've not said to them. "Look were losing money at this Post Office, one of you is at it." Or "You are all incompetent" or something in that respect so that just doesn't ring true.

DB You're right I know

PW I know I'm right because I know. David I don't know what you are trying to....
You're reasons for doing it or whether you're helping anybody or think you are shielding anybody by not telling the truth but you are not telling me the truth
David, you can't sit here and expect me to believe you.

DB Maybe not but I am telling the truth

24.40 HD points out that over a 6-month period £10,000 must have gone missing, over , £1000 per month DB agrees with HD. DB states that not getting the staff together was his incompetence but his sole reason for not declaring it was his wife.
Discussion over the state of his wife's [GRO] DB recounts a story of when they first bought the office and he suspected an employee of stealing. He confronted this person one Saturday morning and the man in question handed in his notice on Monday and the losses subsequently stopped. DB states that every time that the Post Office has received an error notice his wife has had [GRO] and [GRO] DB states that if he could have got to the bank and sorted this out it would have been O.K. H.D. states that the losses would have continued and DB admits that he realises this.

27.40 PW You can't expect us to believe that you have covered up £60,000 worth of discrepancies and you have been satisfied doing it not bring it to anybodies attention, knowing that you've got to put the money back in yourself. Knowing that as well yourself...your wife's Subpostmaster obviously but as family knowing that you've got to put the money back.

DB I know it just does not sound right does it. Believe me....

PW Is it something that your wife doesn't know about. I mean we turn up on a Thursday morning to a lot of places Subpostoffices and the stories we've heard you wouldn't believe a lot of them. But I know people get in to trouble with various things..with gambling...

DB Oh no

PW ...Things that their wives or their husbands don't know about...secret lives secret mistresses...

DB (laughs) a few dreams but that's about it..
PW explains that it is not only him and HD that he has to convince, and reads him part of the caution again in which it says the court may draw its own inference if

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

		the matter goes that far.
29.30	PW	If you're quite happy to sit here and say that you've not stolen the money but you've covered up for it knowing full well that its going missing. You've not said anything to anybody, and you are quite happy to stick to that story.
	DB	I am quite happy to stick to that. That is the truth.
	PW	That's the truth
	DB	That is the sole truth.
29.50		Discussion surrounding DB's loan application. DB states that he asked him for £50,000 and the bank manager asked for building quotes as he had told him that the cash was for office building projects. DB states that after he was to contact the bank manger he would get the cash through it two days. HD tells DB that this may not have been sufficient as the amount was constantly growing. DB states that it was his intention that once he had replaced this money, the next time that the office suffered a discrepancy he was going to inform somebody.
31.24		When asked by PW DB states that he was finding the discrepancies when he balanced and checked the cash, it was short. DB recounts a story of a customers transaction being processed wrongly and causing an error.
32.36	PW	You know where this moneys gone
	DB	I really don't. I really don't know where it's gone. I really wish I did. I wish I could lay my hands on it now and go through to my wife and say here you are love.
	PW	Think about what your saying David think about what your saying. If we're to believe that you don't know where this money is. And if we're to believe that you hadn't had it. How many other people work here. There's the four ladies and your wife.
	DB	Yes
	PW	If your wife had had £60,000 over the... over a period of time
	DB	I'd know about it
	PW	You'd know about it. So we are looking a these four ladies
	DB	Yes
	PW	Now if what you are saying is true. Because we don't think it's errors perhaps because the error would come back. So were looking at these four ladies. You've just said, well you said at the start of the interview, you think there as honest as the day is long.
	DB	Yes I do
	PW	Well one of them isn't if were to believe what you say.
	DB	Mmmm
	PW	And the thing is that we've got to speak to these four ladies possibly and we've got to question the honesty and integrity of these four ladies. Now are we to do

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

		that? Because that's the only option that I can see. You are going to have to put these four ladies, were going to have to sit them down and interview them, because from what you are saying that's our only option.
	DB	Yes
	PW	Because we want to know who's stolen our money.
34.15		DB states that he cannot believe any of the staff could do it. DB goes through the members of staff and rules out two, as they have not been here long enough. Db states that how he looks at it he cannot see any member of staff taking the cash however he admits he may be naïve. DB states that he owes them loyalty.
38.34		PW goes through who can be ruled out of the equation, and states to DB that his wife cannot be ruled out at this stage. PW states that he feels the discrepancies are down to dishonesty, and that to be thorough he may have to see all members of staff including DB's wife. However PW states that he feels that this can be avoided as he feels that DB has something he may wish to tell PW.
40.52	DB	No
	PW	David money doesn't go missing like that it doesn't go missing I've been doing this job a number of years and it doesn't go missing. Somebody takes it. Now I don't know whether you think its better that you'll admit to the covering up to the false accounting or the covering up of it, and it will be alright as long as you don't admit to the stealing cause that's not the case....
	DB	..No..
	PW	...I mean this cash account..this cash account is an accounting document isn't it
	DB	Yes
	PW	This figure £94, 414.49
	DB	Yes
	PW	This is on the cash account for week number 7 2004 / 2005 horizon cash account final. Who has signed this cash account
	DB	I did
	PW	When did you produce this cash account
	DB	Last night
	PW	Right. It says that there was £94,414.49 cash on hand at the office
	DB	Yes
	PW	Is this figure true and accurate
	DB	No
	PW	It's not
	DB	No
	PW	So this account is a false account
	DB	It is

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

PW	When you put this account....when you submitted this account, you knew it was false didn't you.
DB	Yes
PW	And you knew it was wrong to put it in false
DB	Yes
PW	And the reason you out it in false was because the money wasn't there so you made up this figure
DB	Correct
PW	And you knew how much has gone missing because you told us in your note that
DB	Yeah
PW	That....the thing you gave to the auditors this morning saying what had happened. So by virtue of that, as far as I can see, you've already...you're false accounting..
DB	Yes
PW	False accounting which is a criminal offence, which is why we're sat here with the tapes on..
DB	Yes
PW	So like I say, I don't know whether you think in your own mind that because you've admitted to false accounting that we don't think you've stolen it or its better to admit to false accounting and not to stealing it because I can't see the...the logic in that..
DB	No
PW	..particularly and I just don't think it's true, I think you've had it I think you've had the money, I think it started..I'll tell you, I think it started a number of years ago and you've had a drip drip drip a bit here a bit there and it's come to today when the auditors have turned up because you haven't had an audit her for a number of years, I don't know whether you thought well I'm never gonna get one or what, but the auditors turned up today and you thought, I've been caught, that's me done, and you've had a think about it and though well if I say I've covered it up it'll be alright, nothing will happen, that's what I thinks happened but its....
DB	No
PW	I think you've stolen it
DB	No that's not true
PW	So you are still sticking by the story that you have had..
DB	Yeah... as wild as it seems...
PW	And it is wild
DB	...that's the truth, I am guilty of covering up,
PW	Yes
DB	And false accounting

Record of Tape Recorded Interview (continued)

	PW	Right
	DB	And that is it
	PW	Right. When was the first time you submitted an account that you knew to be false.
	DB	Exact date I...(Tape buzzer sounds)
43.50		PW states he wishes to stop the tapes there, as he would prefer to do so. DB signs tape seal 059898, and signs the tape seal.
44.35		Tapes stopped at 13.50 in order that the interview is continued on a fresh set.