

## Message

**From:** Stuart Lill [GRO]  
 on behalf of Stuart Lill [GRO]  
**Sent:** 16/07/2021 16:09:25  
**To:** Declan Salter [GRO]; Avene Regan [GRO]; Rodric Williams [GRO]; Melanie Corfield [GRO]; Hannah Laming [GRO]; flagcaseadvisor [GRO]; Jennings, Thomas [GRO]; Emanuel, Catherine [GRO]; Nick Vamos [GRO]; Andrew Robinson [GRO]; Tim Perkins [GRO]; Eamon McCarthy-Keen [GRO]  
**Subject:** RE: Former Investigator email to Nick Read update

Dear All,

I have spoken to Lawrence O'Neil who has confirmed that POL has no employment obligations to Mr Thomas and that matters raised by him would not fall as an employment tribunal matter. He has raised that he may be looking to make a potential PI or negligence claim. Mr Thomas would of course have to establish loss etc.

With regards to the whistleblowing policy, this can catch and so P&P will/are drafting a proposal regarding investigating and responding to it. This is in order to ensure that we uphold our own policy and we can demonstrate that we have dealt with the issue if it were to be raised at the inquiry or elsewhere.

Having considered all the advice and views received, I have drafted the response below for consideration and comment:

*Dear Mr Thomas,*

*Thank you for your email, we apologise for any perceived delay in responding to you; this is certainly not meant as any discourtesy, however I am sure you will appreciate that the matters you raise require enquiry and careful consideration. In this regard we continue to look at the matters you raised in your first email **[and we have now instructed our external lawyers to review your latest assertions regarding Post Office's recovery of funds after conviction.][check]***

*Post Office would like to re-iterate its sincerest apologies for any negative attention you or your former colleagues have received as a result of your time at Post Office. As we stated in our email, previous failings have affected many people in many different ways and we are committed to assisting former Postmasters whose lives were affected by Post Office's historical failings.*

*It is not appropriate for Post Office to comment on the general matters you raise at this time. As you will be aware, Post Office is involved in ongoing legal proceedings and is actively supporting and contributing to the statutory inquiry led by Sir Wyn Williams.*

*You have stated that you will wait until Post Office has addressed your questions and points raised in your previous email before seeking the advice of your solicitor. Whilst it is not clear what specific matters you are referring to or why it requires advice from a solicitor, it is of course a matter for you as to whether you wish to seek legal advice.*

*Post Office once again apologises to you for the matters raised in your correspondence and how they may have affected you personally.*

Kind regards,

Stuart

**From:** Stuart Lill

**Sent:** 24 June 2021 17:00

**To:** Declan Salter <[REDACTED]>; Avene Regan <[REDACTED]>; Rodric Williams <[REDACTED]>; Melanie Corfield <[REDACTED]>; Hannah Laming <[REDACTED]>; flagcaseadvisor <[REDACTED]>; Jennings, Thomas <[REDACTED]>; Emanuel, Catherine <[REDACTED]>; Nick Vamos <[REDACTED]>; Andrew Robinson <[REDACTED]>; Tim Perkins <[REDACTED]>; Eamon McCarthy-Keen <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Former Investigator email to Nick Read update

Dear All,

Below is the response from Gary Thomas who raised issues about the performance targets given to former POL investigators (I have included the chain of emails for ease). This email is difficult to respond to for the following reasons:

1. Despite alluding to POL not answering questions in his original email, the only real question posed in that email was why former investigators have been cast aside and not communicated with (or, it seems, compensated);
2. There is a new allegation that POL were benefitting more than they were entitled to from the "benefits of crime act" (presumably PoCA);
3. It makes allegations as to the knowledge about Horizon's failings by senior POL officials and staff;
4. There is a further referral to seeking advice from a solicitor.

Whilst Mr Thomas does not say it expressly in either of his emails, this appears to be an attempt to negotiate a payment by POL, otherwise there is little need to raise or threaten speaking to a solicitor. Further allegations are made, although P&P will note that he has narrowed and clarified his previous point regarding objectives – this may be capable of narrowing the current proposed review.

It seems to me that this email conversation needs to be closed down as POL are unlikely to be able to address the issues/allegations he makes either for proper, sensible legal reasons or because Mr Thomas appears to be using it as a forerunner to seeking legal advice.

Options are:

1. Respond and apologise for the delay, explaining his email needed to be considered and has triggered further about the wider review taking some time and add further apologies without addresses the so called issues he has/hasn't raised;
2. Respond offering further apologies but stating that for legal reasons POL will not be addressing the matters raised in his emails further;
3. Refer the matter to P&P and/or HSF who can seek to engage Mr Thomas in dialogue in order to understand his allegations better and what he wants;
4. A combination of above;
5. Something else.

I would be grateful for input on how to proceed.

Kind regards,

Stuart

## **RECENT EMAIL**

Dear Laura Tarling / Nick Read.

May I start by thanking you for the above reply which has taken nearly 6 weeks to now receive.

I had been hopeful given the email from Laura dated the 28th May 2021, apologising for the delay for any response that you were still looking into my enquiry and that perhaps all the issues, concerns and sleepless nights raised were being taken very seriously.

Clearly I was mistaken as I have received the typical Post Office Ltd standard woolly non committal response ignoring and disregarding the issues and points I raised that after 32 years as a loyal employee I should have come to expect. You then start by saying my email raises a number of matters that you have carefully considered and acted upon. If this is the case surely it would have been prudent and beneficial to have responded to these points with answers and reasons to the questions I posed and asked.

However the above reply just focuses on admitting to the mistakes the business made, whilst looking hard to improve and address the previous mistakes in going forward. Whilst I am pleased to hear that Postmasters will now be at the heart of everything you do now this was clearly not the case previously.

You appear to have overlooked the main crux of all the issues that were fundamental and the need for my original email on the 9th May 2021 addressed to Nick Read received via Sheila Tapster and or Laura Tarling. The only point you seem to have mentioned in today's email was with regards to Post Office Employees being incentivised in bringing successful prosecutions.

You go on to mention reviewing Post Conviction Disclosure Material or more so the exercise you are undertaking as part of your wider duty to assist those wrongly convicted. I myself was not convicted but my evidence under oath in Courts and at Police Stations under PACE Interviewing ensured that some innocent individuals were convicted and sentenced. All this when the business and its senior individuals including the likes of Paula Vennels & John Scott (Head Of Security) had knowledge it was fallible and yet never shared or admitted this with its employees.

I will advise you now to save you more time that you will find nothing in any "PCDE" about any incentives for prosecutions but if you still hold historical HR records on Individuals - Personal & Business Objectives each year then I can assure you you will see the targets for Prosecutions and Financial Recovery Targets. The recoveries, if not voluntary, were carried out under the Proceeds Of Crime Act where I know the Security Team paid to train at least 3 or 4 of my colleagues to carry out such work. This meant if it was proven that the Prosecuted Postmaster was found guilty or admitted any guilt they could make serious recoveries over and above the amounts found to be missing under the Benefits Of Crime Act, including some Postmasters life savings and homes.

I have decided to mention just one case that has affected me and attach the very sad outcome and news reports on an individual I interviewed under PACE. I subsequently carried out a voluntary search of his home address obtaining financial bank records etc. The gentleman was Mr Julian Wilson from Astwood Bank Post Office in Redditch. He was forced to spend 300 humiliating hours cleaning graves as a punishment he did not commit and was dead before his name was cleared. This is just one case I struggle to sleep with at night knowing his wife Karen probably whole heartedly blames me as the Post Office Ltd Investigating Officer who conducted the enquiry and prosecution and who condemned her husband to this traumatic time and early death. The only saving grace I personally now feel is that I was just acting as the face of the Post Office as my employer who made me believe 100% that Horizon was correct and I was

therefore acting both professionally and honestly in my role. It is the Post Office that has blood on its hands knowing what it did now not me. I have numerous other cases and more than one loss of life but the Post Office now shows no care or remorse to its other employees of the time.

I guess the line in your final paragraph of today - "I am sincerely sorry if you and your former colleagues have encountered negative comment as a result of your role at Post Office" is your actual apology now that has never been forthcoming to either myself or any Security colleagues to date and is now expected to be accepted as the end of the story. Yes negative comments take place and are reminded most days even from my own family and friends knowing the role I was employed in with Post Office Ltd. This has been hard with all the television, radio and media coverage, constantly asking how I could have done that to individuals and their families and how I can actually sleep at night etc. I will tell you very badly actually and I was diagnosed with GRO on the back of this amongst other things.

As I stated in my original email on the 9th May 2021, I would await your response before taking further advice from my Solicitor. I have watched and listened to everything over several years now on "The Great Post Office Trial" on the BBC presented by Nick Wallis and the subsequent government inquiry raised by the Minister Paul Scully and chaired by Sir Wyn Williams.

It has now taken you 6 weeks to send this unacceptable reply today that has not answered any of my questions or points raised. I would therefore like to give you the opportunity to reconsider the response you have sent and address my previous points along with the ones I have raised above. I do hope this can be addressed in a more timely manner now and not given the fob off reply I have clearly received.

Yours Sincerely

## **POL RESPONSE**

Dear Mr Thomas,

I am writing on behalf of Post Office Limited to thank you and respond to your email to Nick Read dated 9 May 2021.

Your email raises a number of matters that we have carefully considered and acted upon.

We are working hard to improve Post Office, address the past and fundamentally reform for the future by putting Postmasters at the heart of everything we do. Your email has drawn our attention to the prospect that Post Office employees may have been incentivised to bring successful prosecutions. We have not currently identified this to be the case, however, we have instructed our lawyers to find, recover and review relevant material as part of our post-conviction disclosure exercise ("PCDE"). It is the PCDE that has assisted those prosecuted by Post Office to have their convictions rightly overturned. The review of this material will allow Post Office to recognise and, if necessary, address this issue as part of our wider duty to those who were convicted as a result of a reliance on Horizon data.

I am sincerely sorry if you and your former colleagues have encountered negative comment as a result of your role at Post Office. These are very challenging times that have affected a significant number of people in many ways. Post Office is committed to ensuring that we learn from and do not repeat mistakes of the past. Widening our review of material in the manner described is part of that process.

Yours sincerely,

**ORIGINAL EMAIL**

Dear Nick

I am writing to you with regards to all the Horizon System prosecutions that were conducted by Post Office Ltd against Sub-Postmasters that have been successfully challenged and won in the High Court and been the subject of many news and tabloid headlines over the past few years.

My question to you and the new board now is the actual effect this whole situation has had on myself and other Investigators at that time employed by Post Office Ltd.

We were informed by Post Office Ltd that the Horizon Computer system was 100% correct and that the Horizon Data we obtained to provide evidence was all accurate and again 100% correct. We all signed the Post Office Official Secrets Act on joining the Post Office which for myself was back in 1985. I was employed to carry out numerous roles over my 32 year career and a Post Office Security Manager was one of my roles I was employed in for around 10 years. During this time I carried out several criminal investigations interviewing suspected Criminal Offences by Postmasters along with my colleagues. This included PACE tape recorded interviews both voluntarily and following individuals being arrested and at Police Stations. The arrests were based on evidence both myself and colleagues would present to the Police stating the frauds were conducted through the Horizon Computer System. I now know that all this evidence was obviously flawed and without substance. The Post Office in my opinion therefore at the time blatantly lied and duped both me and colleagues into producing incorrect evidence to the Police, submitted committal papers to both the CPS and Post Office Law department that resulted in Criminal Trials and Prosecutions.

The past few years since this scandal has been brought to light under the "Justice For Postmasters" have been to say the least difficult and traumatic. I have to live with the fact I gave evidence under oath in several Courts swearing on the bible each time and now knowing this was incorrect and lies. My family and myself have been subjected to abuse and comments that I had given false evidence that was now proven to have been known yet hidden by the Post Office board of that time.

I took redundancy from Post Office Ltd in 2017 after 32 years loyal and committed service and now have to live with all this every day as do my other Security colleagues that I have recently spoken with. We even had a proceeds of crime unit within Post Office Ltd that ensured some of these individuals lost their homes and families. In fact my yearly objectives that were bonus worthy at the time were based on numbers of successful prosecutions and recovery amounts of money to the business. I had some instances of these Postmasters committing suicide, which now sits somewhat on my conscious because of my employer. How do you think I deal with this and now actually sleep at night now knowing my actions that were backed and supported by my employer has affected the said Postmasters but also the individuals you employed to conduct this role.

I am writing to you so you also realise the effect this has had on not just the Postmasters affected but also on the employees directed and instructed by their employer Post Office Ltd to perform the Security / Investigation role at this time.

Can I ask the question and enquire why we have all been completely cast aside and left with not so much as a letter of communication or an apology whatsoever ?

Whilst compensation is being correctly awarded now to these Sub-Postmasters, I feel the employees instructed to conduct these prosecutions, arrests and searches have been completely overlooked.

I will await your response before taking further advice from my Solicitor.

Regards

Gary Thomas

Post Office Ltd 1985 -2017

Employee 22602.



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