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Witness Name: Angela Van Den Bogerd

Statement No: WITN09900300

Dated: 17 January 2025

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

THIRD WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANGELA VAN DEN BOGERD

I, Angela Van Den Bogerd, will say as follows:

1. I make this statement in response to a Request for Information pursuant to Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 11 December 2024. The Request concerns the witness statement of Nichola Arch dated 25 November 2024 **[WITN01220200]** and asks me to address the points made by Ms Arch within her statement.
2. In brief, Ms Arch states that I was the investigator in her case and gave evidence in her trial. However, I have never met Ms Arch, I have never been an investigator in hers or any other prosecution case and I have never given evidence in hers or any other Sub Postmaster ('SPMs') trial. I have no knowledge of the events she describes in her statement. For the reasons I

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set out below and based on the records which I will refer to, I believe this is a case of mistaken identity.

3. Although I state that Ms Arch is mistaken in her memory of me, I wish to make it clear that this statement in no way seeks to criticise Ms Arch. The way that she has described individuals having treated her is appalling.

Investigation into Ms Arch's case

4. Ms Arch describes in her statement how she reported shortfalls to the helpline and in October / November 2000, 3 people attended her branch and all introduced themselves as auditors. She states that one of these people was me. This is not correct. I was not, at any time during my 35 years at Post Office Limited ("POL") a prosecution investigator as part of the Post Office Network Security and Investigation Team ("NSIT") or an auditor. At the time in question, I was a Retail Network Manager and my responsibilities did not involve investigations or auditing.
5. Ms Arch then goes on to describe how she was taken from her branch, to the Stroud Crown Office so that more questions could be asked of her. She describes how I sat in the back of the car with her and how, when we arrived, I led her to a room in the back office and tapped in a code and then entered the room. She says how I asked if she minded if I recorded the interview and then proceeded to interview her in a threatening and intimidating manner.

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She goes on to say that she was questioned more times at later dates by the same interviewers, being a man and myself at, a police station in Stroud.

6. The person who Ms Arch is describing was not me. I never carried out audits or prosecution investigations, nor the associated interviews of Ms Arch or any other SPM. These were all carried out by the NSIT which I was not a part of. I was based in Bridgend, Wales during this time and have never worked in Stroud Crown Office.

7. On receipt of the Inquiry's Rule 9 Request, I requested disclosure of Ms Arch's case from POL and was told that her criminal file had been lost to the passage of time. I understand that Ms Arch has similarly been told that her interview tapes have been destroyed. Whilst this is disappointing both for Ms Arch and myself, I was able to obtain her case summary **[POL00460561]** and the transcripts from her January 2001 interview **[POL00458671]**, **POL00458672]** and **[POL00458673]**. At the time of the interview Ms Arch's name was Nichola Heaven. The transcript confirms that this was a further interview, with a previous interview having taken place on 19 October 2000. This aligns with what Ms Arch has said in her statement.

8. The transcript confirms that the individuals who conducted Ms Arch's interview were Elaine Davis and Paul Travers, both of the NSIT. At p.4 of transcript **[POL00458673]**, Ms Davis confirms that she and Mr Travers also interviewed Ms Arch on 19 October 2000. It is therefore my understanding that Ms Arch has confused me with Ms Davis. I can recall that Paul Travers

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was part of the NSIT but for the avoidance of doubt, I confirm that I have never worked with him or any other member of the NSIT on prosecution investigations as that was never my role.

9. In Ms Arch's statement she says about me:

"In her evidence she said she was never involved in prosecutions. This is not true. She has interviewed others, not just me. It appears that her evidence was an attempt to hide the level of her involvement because I know she conducted Mark Kelly's interview."

10. What I said in my evidence is true. I know the importance of this Inquiry and I have taken it extremely seriously, giving Sir Wyn Williams and the Core Participants honest answers to the questions put to me.

11. The roles carried out by the NSIT were completely outside of my scope and I was never involved in any SPM prosecution. I certainly never carried out any interview under caution or any form of prosecution investigation interview as this was always carried out by the NSIT. The type of interviews I did do included SPM appointment interviews; interviews with SPMs in my role as Appeals Manager, where I heard appeals against contract terminations; and interviews with SPMs where liability for robbery/burglary was being contested. From memory, I was on the panel of Appeal Managers from around October 2002. As an Appeals Manager I had the authority to reinstate SPM contracts where I felt the decision was too harsh and/or there were sufficient mitigating circumstances. In addition, as Head of Area in Wales (2001 – 2005) and in subsequent more senior roles I had the authority to

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reduce or write off payment for losses. So, on review of escalated cases to me, I would review the details and if I felt the recommendation of the NSIT was too harsh or there were mitigating reasons which meant that payment of losses should be written off or reduced, I took the decision to do so.

12. I have requested the criminal files for Mr Kelly and again, POL were unable to provide these. However, they have provided me with his criminal case file summary **[POL00105718]**. This confirms that his investigation interview took place on 5 December 2006, with p.6 confirming that those present were Mike Wilcox and Gary Thomas (interviewing officers) and Wendy Lewis (Accredited Police Station Legal Representative). I am not named here or at any point within his criminal case file summary. As confirmed in paragraph 9(e) of my first statement dated 20 March 2024 **[WITN09900100]**, in December 2006, I was General Manager for the Community Network of branches and not involved in prosecution investigations or interviews as this was not part of my role.

13. Mr Kelly's criminal case file summary also provides the names of every person who conducted his interview and investigation and I am not listed. I have also read Mr Kelly's witness statement dated 21 January 2022 **[WITN02650100]** and I am not mentioned. The only female name that he mentions is Fiona from Post Office head office. I recall a Fiona Griffiths who worked as part of the area team at the time and so I think it is possible that he is referring to her but, of course, only Mr Kelly would be able to confirm this.

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14. I have read Mr Kelly's transcript from the evidence he gave as part of the Human Impact Hearing on 1 March 2022 [INQ00001034]. As shown below, Mr Kelly references me once, in respect of having written off his loss as Head of Area but neither in his written or oral evidence does he refer to me having interviewed him as part of a prosecution investigation.

15. Mr Kelly describes how, in November 2003, his branch experienced an armed robbery. During the robbery, a rock was thrown at the counter, and Mr Kelly had to move his head, meaning that he didn't press the panic button. He says that around £45,000 was stolen and the Post Office wrote a couple of days later saying that he was liable for the whole amount because he did not press the panic button. Mr Kelly says:

"I wrote a letter to my head of area, Ruth – that's her surname, I don't know her first name – and I wrote and said, "If you come to my office, stay behind the counter. Don't move 1 centimetre, I'll throw a brick at you. I'll gladly pay the £45,000."

After that letter, I went to see Angela, the head of area, and afterwards it was then dropped, that request for that £45,000 for the loss."

16. Due to the passage of time and no documentary evidence disclosed around this point, I cannot recall the specifics, but I was Head of Area at the time and, as referenced above, I did have the authority to overturn the NSIT's decisions in respect of the level of loss a SPM was deemed liable for and

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therefore it is feasible that I would have written Mr Kelly's loss off although I cannot remember his case. I should add that there was only one Head of Area role in Wales, and I am not aware of anyone with a surname of Ruth ever working within Wales. Although there was a Ruth Hazell who did an area manager type of role and so I think that Mr Kelly might be mixing up roles and names and referring to her. Other than this reference, I cannot see that Mr Kelly refers to me at all in his evidence or written human impact statement. This accords with my recollection that I was not involved in the prosecution interviews of Mr Kelly.

Ms Arch's trial

17. Ms Arch's trial took place on 14 April 2002, and she states that I gave evidence at her trial. This is not correct. I did not give evidence at hers or any other SPMs trial. At the time of Ms Arch's trial, I was on maternity leave, having given birth GRO on 19 March 2002. I was therefore not working at all at the time of Ms Arch's trial. POL have reviewed my personnel records and confirmed that this is correct. [WITN09900301].

18. I think that Ms Arch has confused me again with Ms Davis, the individual who carried out her interviews and investigation. I requested a copy of the witness list and any relevant documents to Ms Arch's trial and the Post Office were unable to provide this, so I cannot be sure that it was Ms Davis who gave evidence at Ms Arch's trial, but it certainly was not me.

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Additional matters covered in Ms Arch's statement

19. In addition to the above, I would like to address a few points made by Ms Arch in her statement.

20. At paragraph 3 of her statement, Ms Arch states that she went to see my second day of evidence for the Inquiry on 26 April 2024 to verify whether I was the person who gave evidence at her trial. She says:

"I sat very close to her. I knew it was her straight away. She looked straight at me and looked at me like she recognised me. She knew exactly who I was."

21. As stated above, I have never met Ms Arch. I do recall glancing at those in the Inquiry room when I took my seat to give evidence, but I cannot recall recognising or making eye contact with anyone.

22. At paragraph 7 of Ms Arch's statement she describes me as being *"quite stony-faced and business-like..."* when interviewing her in October 2000. Although, for the reasons set out above, Ms Arch, has mistaken me for someone else, I know that this has been a common description of me throughout the Inquiry, a description which was compounded through the portrayal of me in the ITV drama which aired in January 2024. I would like to take this opportunity to say that whilst I am not an openly emotional person and accept that I was typically business-like for the roles I undertook throughout my time at the Post Office, I genuinely tried to help SPMs and

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believed that I had good working relationships with those that I met. I have had to try to maintain a strong exterior throughout the Inquiry as my way of coping with what has been an enormously stressful situation.

23. I would never be “*threatening and intimidating*” as Ms Arch says that her interviewers were. Throughout my time at the Post Office my approach was always professional, and I am horrified by the nature of the questioning she describes having endured at paragraphs 11 and 12.

Statement of truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated: 17 January 2025

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No	URN	Document Description	Control Number
1.	WITN01220200	Witness Statement of Nichola Arch dated 25 November 2024	WITN01220200
2.	POL00460561	CLI Review of R v Nichola Arch - Case Summary dated 26 May 2022 (updated 20 August 2024)	POL-0213061
3.	POL00458671	Transcript of Nichola Arch (nee Heaven) interview dated 30 January 2001 part 1 of 3	POL-0213058
4.	POL00458672	Transcript of Nichola Arch (nee Heaven) interview dated 30 January 2001 part 2 of 3	POL-0213059
5.	POL00458673	Transcript of Nichola Arch (nee Heaven) interview dated 30 January 2001 part 3 of 3	POL-0213060
6.	POL00105718	Case Review: Quick Shortfall Analysis – Mark Kelly dated 9 February 2018	POL-0104830
7.	WITN09900100	First Witness Statement of Angela Van Den Bogerd dated 20 March 2025	WITN09900100
8.	WITN02650100	First Witness Statement of Mark Kelly dated 21 January 2022	WITN02650100
9.	INQ00001034	Transcript of Mark Kelly's oral evidence on 1 March 2022	INQ00001034
10.	WITN09900301	Letter from POL confirming dates of Angela Van Den Bogerd's maternity leave dated 6 January 2025	WITN09900301