

IN THE MATTER OF JEREMY CHARLES PATTERSON, solicitor

- AND -

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

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Mr W M Hartley (in the chair)  
Ms A Banks  
Mrs S Gordon

Date of Hearing: 12th December 2006

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## **FINDINGS**

of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal  
Constituted under the Solicitors Act 1974

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An application was duly made on behalf of The Law Society by Hilary Susan Morris a solicitor employed by The Law Society at Victoria Court, 8 Dormer Place, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5AE on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2006 that Jeremy Charles Patterson solicitor, then of HM Prison, Springhill, Grendon Underwood, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP18 0TH (now of Welton, Daventry, Northamptonshire) might be required to answer the allegations contained in the statement which accompanied the application and that such order might be made as the Tribunal should think fit.

The allegation against the Respondent was that he had been guilty of conduct unbecoming a solicitor by virtue of his conviction for dishonesty.

The application was heard at the Court Room, 3rd Floor, Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London EC4M 7NS on 12th December 2006 when Hilary Susan Morris appeared as the Applicant and the Respondent did not appear and was not represented.

The evidence before the Tribunal included the admission of the Respondent.

**At the conclusion of the hearing the Tribunal made the following Order:**

The Tribunal Orders that the Respondent, Jeremy Charles Patterson of Welton, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 5JU, solicitor, be Struck Off the Roll of Solicitors and it further Orders that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £990.24.

**The facts are set out in paragraphs 1 to 6 hereunder:**

1. The Respondent, born in 1950, was admitted as a solicitor in 1978 and his name remained on the Roll of Solicitors.
2. At all material times the Respondent was employed by the Nationwide Building Society as the Head of the Commercial Conveyancing Department based at the Society's Northampton Administration Centre.
3. In October 2003 enquiries were made within the Nationwide Building Society in relation to queries where cheques had been sent from the Commercial Conveyancing Team to the Legal Accounts Team and had not been received. As a result of those enquiries the police became involved and criminal proceedings were commenced against the Respondent.
4. The Law Society was informed that the Respondent had been charged with 20 offences of theft (relating to two offences from each year between 1994 and 2003), and that he had been served with a schedule which detailed a further 149 offences to be taken into consideration. A Law Society caseworker wrote to the Respondent for an explanation and the Respondent's solicitors replied on 24<sup>th</sup> November and indicated that the Respondent had made a series of admissions to the vast majority of offences. The Respondent's solicitors wrote further to The Law Society on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005 enclosing copies of the charges sheets.
5. At Northampton Crown Court on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2006 the Respondent was convicted of two offences of theft and was sentenced to ten months imprisonment for each offence to run concurrently.
6. A copy of the Certificate of Conviction and a copy of the Judge's sentencing remarks were before the Tribunal.

**The Submissions of the Applicant**

7. The proceedings had been served on the Respondent who had admitted the allegation at an early stage. Since the matters leading to his conviction had been discovered it was understood that the Respondent had done all he could to cooperate. He clearly accepted the likely outcome of the disciplinary proceedings. He had now been released from prison.
8. The Tribunal was referred to the sentencing remarks of His Honour Judge Stretton who said:

"...You continued these thefts when you were in a position where you had employees under you, and you continued them in small amounts over a very long period."
9. The Respondent had clearly betrayed the trust expected of any employee let alone a solicitor.
10. The Applicant sought her costs in the sum of £990.24

**The Submissions of the Respondent**

11. In a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2006 to the Tribunal the Respondent had confirmed his earlier admission of the allegation.
12. He had discussed with the Applicant whether he needed to attend the hearing and understood that in the circumstances little or no value would be added by his presence. He asked the Tribunal to understand that he meant no discourtesy by his absence. He further asked the Tribunal to accept his sincere apologies for his "dreadful behaviour which has fallen so far short of the standards expected of a solicitor".

**The Findings of the Tribunal**

13. The Tribunal found the allegation to have been substantiated indeed it was not contested.
14. This was a case in which a solicitor in the course of his employment had stolen money over a lengthy period and had been convicted and received custodial sentence as a result of those thefts. The Respondent had betrayed his employers' trust and had damaged the reputation of the profession in the eyes of the public. It was right that he no longer remain a member of the profession and right that he pay the Applicant's costs of the proceedings.
15. The Tribunal ordered that the Respondent, Jeremy Charles Patterson of Welton, Daventry, Northamptonshire, solicitor, be Struck Off the Roll of Solicitors and it further Ordered that he do pay the costs of an incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £990.24.

DATED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February 2007  
on behalf of the Tribunal

W M Hartley  
Chairman