

39

Compensating

A barmaid asked the catering manager if she could leave 15 minutes early to catch a bus, otherwise she would have to wait for the 3 a.m. bus, not getting home until 4 a.m. She then had to get up at 7 a.m. to get her kids off to school, but the manager refused to let her go. She tried to persuade him, but he just said that it was his decision and he did not feel like letting her go. The barmaid went back to work thinking: 'The only way to get home in time is to take a taxi, and he is going to pay for it.' With the help of a workmate, she succeeded in pilfering enough money from the cash register to cover the taxi fare.

There was also an informal rate among the employees regarding how much they could steal to compensate for their low wages and bad treatment. This was regarded as fair. One of them said:

The irony of it all is that not only are we not paid enough for what we do here, we are also compelled to pilfer a fraction of what's rightfully ours. On top of that we're expected to feel guilty and ashamed of what we have done, what a laugh ... (36)

The managers also compensated themselves for being badly treated by managers higher up in the hierarchy by stealing, and in other ways. In cases like that, much greater assets were at stake as they had access to quite different types of resources.

(Analoui and Kakabadse, 1989)