

Beyond Belief – Comment

Hi Iain

Yes I agree with your thoughts and fully disagree with the new positions given to the three members of SCRO. We experts rise and fall on our integrity and credibility and these three have shown neither of those virtues with regard to Shirley McKie's fingerprint examination. I can't call it a fingerprint identification as that has never been established, the latent print from the crime scene remains unknown. These three men know the true situation and are being manipulated by the system effectively suppressing their voice through organisational recognition. In short give them a perceived promotion and they cant disagree with management. Effective but highly questionable.

Kind regards.

K Australia (Courtesy of www.clpex.com)

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**You've been in public safety long enough! You should know the protocol.
Screw up, Move up. Do it right, you stay tight.
Don't we know!**

JK USA (Courtesy of www.clpex.com)

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I remember the BBC programme of some time ago. I came across this case again today while reading headlines from the Sunday Herald where I saw a report on the 'experts' from the SCRO being engaged on work verifying fingerprint evidence. One link led to another and I found your web site. I have spent the last hour reading the various articles and I must say I am now thoroughly depressed.

Ms McKie's treatment throughout this long and shameful farce is nothing short of disgraceful. The treatment by Lord Emslie of her case against Orr and Strathclyde Police is as disturbing as any other part of the whole sorry story.

Even if Ms McKie had been guilty of the various trumped up charges or allegations that had been made against her, she was still entitled to being treated with common decency and respect. If those Police officers had been British soldiers in Iraq, we would not have heard the last of it. The whole sorry saga is a shame on Scotland, a shame on the Strathclyde Police and, as they employ this police force, a shame on the people of the Strathclyde region. What has been done about this in Westminster?

I would like to offer my support to Ms McKie and I hope she is successful in her next action against the authorities and even this has yet more shame attached; she will not get her day in court until next year. Who said "Justice delayed is justice denied"?

Best Wishes

DV UK

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Iain/Shirley

Like you, I just can't imagine how much lower SCRO can possibly get in their cover-up of the sad events in this case. We've all heard the saying, "putting the lunatics in charge of the asylum", well, I simply cannot think of a better example to describe this latest turn of events.

What I find so incredible is that nowhere in the civilized world would something like this ever be allowed to happen, certainly not for as long as this case has been dragging on, so it just amazes me that even in the face of such overwhelming evidence and cover-up, that justice isn't being allowed to prevail. That said, with the enquiry less than a year away, let's hope the countdown has begun to see this injustice removed along with all those SCRO folks involved in this sordid mess.

Stay strong.

BL Canada

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Sunday Herald 27 March 2005 - Readers Views

Bureau's good work

Your article "Scottish Print Bureau still cannot be trusted" contains some seriously misleading assertions which require correction (News, March 20).

Allan Bayle claims that fingerprint evidence submitted by the SCRO (Scottish Criminal Records Office) is not up to standard. The national standard- previously required for court purposes was that there should be at least 16 points of similarity between prints. This standard is now being replaced by a non-numeric standard so that finger print evidence can be used in court as long as the expert is willing to speak to their identification. .

During the period of transition, SCRO have been told to supply the court with their findings even if they do not find 16 points of similarity. Therefore there will have been many cases submitted to court below the 16-point standard. This has nothing to do with poor work. To present it as such is to misrepresent the process.

Allan Bayle also says experts at other Scottish bureaux do not have any confidence in SCRO. He gives no examples. In July 2000, the Lord Advocate instructed all SCRO identifications be checked by experts from three other bureaux, one of which was Fife Constabulary. These checks lasted for 13 months during which time the identifications of SCRO were found to be 100% accurate. All bureaux staff in Scotland are subject to the same competency test.

The most recent HMIC [Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary] report is merely the latest in a series of inquiries into the work of SCRO in the wake of the McKie case. These reports have found room for improvement in the systems employed by SCRO but have found no evidence relating to incompetent or malicious identification.

Kathleen Ryall

Unison Scotland

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SUNDAY HERALD - LETTER TO THE EDITOR (NOT PUBLISHED)

Dear Sir,

The Scottish Criminal Records Office

I was intrigued to find a 'Unison' official adopting the role of apologist for the SCRO (Scottish Criminal Records Office), (Letters 27 March), instead of highlighting the integrity and honesty of the vast majority of Scots fingerprint experts many of whom will be union members. Where were her words of comfort for those experts within SCRO diligently going about their business and caught up in a scandal not of their own making?

While part of me feels that these experts have the solution in their own hands and have the power to rid the barrel of the rotten apples I am taken back to January 2000 when 14 experts from Lothian and Borders Police bravely spoke out in support of my daughter. In a letter to the Minister for Justice they called the 'apparent misidentification' either 'gross incompetence' or 'a conspiracy of a nature unparalleled in the history of fingerprints.' It is alleged that 'prosper' was not the verb that would accurately describe their subsequent careers.

I was also surprised that Kathleen Ryall let slip the fact that following my daughter's botched identification all previous identifications made by SCRO experts were checked by other bureaux and found to be 100% correct. This means that after a lifetime of perfection four experts and their supervisors made two mistakes in the same case. Aside from the astronomical odds of this happening my simple logic leads me to only three conclusions – supernatural intervention, gross incompetence or criminality.

If Ms Ryall wants to know the full facts of this 8 year saga I recommend a visit to www.shirleymckie.com.

Yours faithfully,

Iain A J McKie

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Iain

Sorry I haven't got back to you before now. I have now had a chance to look at your observations on the HMCI report, and they are excellent. There is nothing I can add, except to say that your comments are very fair, and the report stinks of a complete cover up. In reading your observations it struck me that instead of fighting against you and Shirley and covering up errors, the 'Authorities' could have done so much better by acknowledging their shortcomings, apologising, providing compensation, and using your background and knowledge to make major improvements to the service, and to raise the service to the world class standard they currently pretend to be.

JB UK

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Let's see . . . Say you are the head of the SCRO and four of your fingerprint "experts" make the worst error in the history of fingerprinting in the entire United Kingdom -- not just once, but TWICE in the same case (Shirley McKie, David Asbury). An official government enquiry concludes that not only did they make the mistakes, but that they were aware the identifications were erroneous when they testified to them. The official enquiry report ends with the recommendation that the four be charged with perjury.

Okay, you are the head of the SCRO. So what do you do?

Well, you create a special quality control unit to make sure it doesn't happen again and you staff that special unit with three of the four who made the mistake and perjured themselves by testifying to it. Their new job is to verify the identifications of all the rest of the experts at SCRO.

BRILLIANT!!

KL USA (Courtesy of www.clpex.com)

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To paraphrase one of the Nazi's high command "A lie told often enough becomes the truth". It seems that we have here a classic validation of that statement.

BC USA (Courtesy of www.clpex.com)

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The sore is still festering. If SCRO and the authorities think that keeping quiet is the best policy. They are either stupid or just as incompetent as the experts who made the original errors. This is not going away. The result of all this dishonesty is affecting experts in Scotland, and the fingerprint community all over the world. It gives ammunition to the anti-fingerprint community. All because SCRO couldn't have the decency to say "sorry we have made a mistake". If this had been a doctor and he had made several mistakes, he would have been brought before the British Medical Council and sacked. It beggars belief when you see this little excuse by a spokeswoman from SCRO; 'They are vastly experienced and valued members of staff employed in a variety of fingerprint expert duties in the Glasgow bureau'. So much for justice!

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During the nearly two weeks waiting to testify in this case, I engaged in conversation with the court house personnel. In one conversation with a fine gentleman who had generously informed me of various bargain areas about Glasgow, he leaned toward me and stated he wished both and me well since he was delighted that someone was finally standing up to SCRO. "They are a bunch of arrogant xxxxxxxx," the man said.

During recesses I stood outside High Court within earshot of three of the four SCRO examiners in the great outdoor smoking section. I did not mean to eavesdrop but these individuals were not soft spoken in their comments about the opposing American cowboys. One word describes the recurring tone and attitudes expressed in the steady stream of insults, and that is arrogant.

SCRO training methods were heavily criticized after the initial inquiry, yet one aspect of training appears to be most effective then as well as now. How well an examiner can compare and individualize fingerprints seems a lower priority than acquiring the arrogance SCRO appears to demand. Obviously, this disdain for truth and justice starts at the top, and seems to be supported throughout. The action of placing the incompetent in a position to ensure that incompetence will remain is just one more example. A wise old man told me years ago that a thin line separates confidence from arrogance. Some, he said, knew they weren't really any good but bluffed with false bravado. Others, sadly, hadn't a clue, but just like being bullies.

SM USA (Courtesy of www.clpex.com)