

Fingerprint Facts – May 2005

- **8 January 1997.** Body of Marion Ross found in her home.
- **14 January 1997.** 'Mark' later identified as 'Shirley McKie's' fingerprint found on bathroom door surround.
- **22 January 1997.** Accused arrested. Biscuit tin containing money recovered from his home.
- **29 January 1997.** SCRO experts identify 'mark' on tin as the fingerprint of Marion Ross.
- **10 February 1997.** SCRO **expert 1** identifies 'mark' on door surround as being made by Shirley McKie.
- **11 February 1997.** Shirley McKie told of identification. Denies having ever been in murder house. SCRO expert 1 asks **expert 2** to verify identification. He declines. SCRO **expert 1** re-affirms identification to Murder Squad. Fails to inform of expert's refusal to identify.
- **12 February 1997.** **Expert 3** confirms **expert 1's** identification.
- **14 February 1997.** Identification confirmed to Shirley McKie as correct. She visits murder scene to see mark re-photographed. Refused permission to attend at SCRO to see identification process through. It would 'compromise their integrity.'
- **17 February 1997.** SCRO **experts 4 and 5** re-examine mark and confirm identification. Mark re-examined in 'blind test' by experts **6, 7, 8 and 9**. They refuse to confirm the identification. This information is not passed onto the Police.
- **10 March 1997.** Joint report by experts **1, 3, 10 and 11** confirming the 'Shirley McKie identification'.
- **May 1998.** 'Shirley McKie mark' examined by Home Office expert who declares that it is not a 'plant' or a 'forgery'. He is not qualified to comment on the accuracy of the identification.
- **March 1999.** 'Mark' examined by defence experts Wertheim and Grieve. They agree that it was not made by Shirley McKie.
- **May 1999.** Following further examination defence experts begin to suspect that the SCRO court presentation has been 'manipulated.' High Court rejects the SCRO fingerprint evidence. Prosecution forensic evidence presented by a scenes of crime officer proves that the mark could not have been left by Shirley over the period stated. Shirley McKie found unanimously 'not guilty' of perjury.

- **July 1999.** Lord Advocate refuses to order enquiry into SCRO
- **December 1999.** BBC Scotland engages 4 English experts to independently examine the 'Shirley McKie mark'. They unanimously conclude that, 'the mark was not made by Shirley McKie'.
- **January 2000.** 14 Lothian and Borders Experts write to the Justice Minister: *'At best the apparent 'misidentification' is a display of gross incompetence by not one but several experts within the bureau. At worst it bears all the hallmarks of a conspiracy of a nature unparalleled in the history of fingerprints.'*
- **7 February 2000.** SCRO experts give presentation to Police Chiefs (ACPOS) and confirm their identification of the 'Shirley McKie mark'. They do not inform their audience that 5 SCRO experts refused to confirm the identification. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCI) asked by ACPOS to carry out an early inspection at SCRO.
- **March 2000.** Pat Wertheim examines biscuit tin found in murder accused's house and states that the 'mark' was not made by Marion Ross.
- **April 2000.** Expert Bayle examines the biscuit tin and concludes that the 'mark' was not made by Marion Ross.
- **April 2000.** Experts Grieve, Wertheim and Bayle having examined the SCRO productions agree there is evidence of cropping of images, poor marking up, out of focus photography and other actions that lead them to conclude that evidence was being manipulated.
- **June 2000.** Two independent international experts brought to Scotland by the HMCI state that the mark was not made by Shirley McKie and, *'that decision could have been reached at an early point in the comparison process.'* Police Major Inquiry team, under Deputy Chief Constable of Tayside, established to investigate the circumstances surrounding the two erroneous identifications.
- **June 2000.** The Minister for Justice and the Lord Advocate apologise to Shirley McKie in the Scottish Parliament and confirm that the SCRO 'identification' was wrong. Police Major Inquiry team, under the Deputy Chief Constable of Tayside, established to investigate the circumstances surrounding the two SCRO errors.
- **August 2000.** Presentation of 'Shirley McKie identification' by SCRO experts at Scottish Police College. Tulliallan to the two international independent experts. Both experts totally reject the SCRO conclusions. Experts at the National Forensic Training Centre at Durham following examination, state that both the 'Shirley McKie and Marion Ross identifications' are wrong.

- **October 2000.** Police report recommends prosecution of SCRO experts and possibly others within SCRO. Lord Advocate refuses to take action.
- **2001 – present.** International fingerprint conferences feature discussion on the 'Scotch Botches'. SCRO officers responsible are suspended, re-instated cleared of wrongdoing by an internal enquiry and no disciplinary action is taken against them. Hundreds of experts from across the world join in the condemnation of SCRO via the internet.
- **May 2002.** Statement by World Experts. 171 experts from 18 countries including 26 USA states agree that the SCRO is wrong in the 'Shirley McKie identification'. They use internet images previously used by SCRO in their Tulliallan presentation.
- **August 2002.** David Asbury Conviction Quashed: The Crown offers no evidence at the appeal and accepts that *'The fingerprint evidence was unreliable'*
- **Sept. 2002.** Petition to the Scottish Parliament by 4 world renowned experts seeks an enquiry into Openness and Accountability within SCRO. To date no action has been taken.
- **February 2002.** The Lord Advocate Colin Boyd states, *'The BBC Frontline Scotland programme on the case of Shirley McKie..... helped uncover what where at best serious defects in the analysis of fingerprinting at the Scottish Criminal Records Office and forced the authorities, including myself, to act to ensure that such a case would not happen again.'*
- **December 2003.** Lord Wheatley allows Shirley McKie's civil action against the SCRO to go to trial. He indicates dissatisfaction with the SCRO's position on key issues including the attempt to claim that the print was Shirley's without giving reasons.
- **August 2004.** New report received from America proving conclusively that SCRO was wrong in identifying Shirley's fingerprint.