

Secret SCRO Report Released

After months of negotiation a copy of the **secret report** competed in **February 2002** clearing the SCRO experts and their supervisors of any wrongdoing in connection with their erroneous identifications of the **Shirley McKie and Marion Ross 'prints'** has been obtained.

Although allegedly prepared by an **independent non expert investigator** the report bears all the hallmarks of having been heavily influenced by SCRO in general and the four experts and their supervisors in particular.

It is extremely disturbing that this report has been accepted by the members of Strathclyde Joint Police Board, the Lord Advocate, members of the Scottish Executive and the Police.

While it is not possible to provide a detailed analysis until Shirley's legal team have fully examined the report it is clear that its conclusions are based on extremely limited enquiry that virtually ignores the facts as now known.

The report leads with the **discredited argument** that fingerprint identification is a **matter of opinion** and that it is common for experts to openly disagree:

'The Fingerprint environment

Fingerprint identification is scientifically based and has been relied upon for many years as a major source of evidence for courts.

It appears to this report that there are, however, elements that mix the science with an art and strong opinions. (My emphasis)

While I am sure the report accurately reflects fingerprinting as practiced at SCRO the report exhibits a complete ignorance of the nature of **scientific opinion**, the **principles of Ridgeology (ACE-V)** and the **checks and balances** in place throughout the rest of the fingerprint world to ensure that **incorrect identifications** are weeded out.

The report also highlights what it calls '*considerable controversy*' about the 'Shirley McKie' identification.

1. *'There have been a number of official investigations and reports that relate to the matter as well as statements in the Scottish Parliament. In these reports and statements it has been stated that there was an "erroneous" identification. This is based in particular upon on Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary 's (HMCIC) investigation and report into the SCRO Fingerprint Bureau that in turn relied upon the work of two foreign fingerprint experts, from Holland and Norway. There remains considerable controversy over this matter despite the official position. (My emphasis)*

There are Internet sites on the matter, some purporting to show the mark although close control is maintained of the original material. Each of the experts interviewed (SCRO experts) remains convinced of their identification and feel that opinion in the fingerprint world is moving in their direction. (My emphasis)

(The investigator)..... is not, however, a fingerprint expert and cannot in anyway be a final arbiter and these elements have played no part in the analysis of this report or its recommendations.'

No attempt is made to outline exactly who supports the SCRO experts and the insinuation is of some equal spread of opinion. The reality is that the investigator ignores the overwhelming mass of evidence that proves that SCRO experts were wrong in their identifications and in their failure to admit their mistakes.

Without offering any supportive information the investigator effectively throws doubt on the accuracy of the internet images and the HMCI expert's findings. He then goes on to give credence to the SCRO expert's opinion that, '***the fingerprint world is moving in their direction.***'

The report concludes:

'Issues of misconduct

This report finds no evidence of misconduct as defined above. In the case of the four suspended experts the procedures followed and the relationships maintained throughout the initial work, the preparation for the court cases and in the years following remained professional and correct. In the case of the two managers placed on non operational duties these two people carried out tasks as instructed by senior managers in a professional manner.

1. It is the opinion of this report that no conspiracy against Shirley McKie was entered into by the four experts or two managers.'

It is tempting to dismiss this report as a 'whitewash' but this only serves to hide its real nature.

Given that the '**non-expert**' investigator's brief restricted him to only interviewing the SCRO experts and their supervisors and forced him to ignore the mass of evidence against them including the HMCI's enquiries, the official Police investigation and the worldwide condemnation by hundreds of experts it is little wonder he came to the conclusions he did.

The more interesting question is who created this narrowest of briefs that made only one conclusion possible?

In essence the report is now an irrelevance however raising many more questions than it answers. It does however reveal just how far some authorities were prepared to go to cover up the truth and I can well understand why they fought tooth and nail to prevent its release.

It is hoped to provide a full analysis of the report once it has been examined by Shirley's legal team.

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