

The Evidence

As the battle to have the truth heard enters its eight year it is revealing to look at some of the evidence SCRO and their supporters are denying.

- When stress forced Shirley to stop working a few months after the Marion Ross murder Strathclyde Police asked Professor Colin Espie one of Scotland's leading clinical psychologists to examine her psychological state:

He reported:

'After seeing Ms. McKie on 30th July 1997, I was convinced of two things. First, that she was psychologically normal; and second, that she was telling the truth.'

The Professor was so concerned that he followed up his written report with a telephone call outlining his concerns and that his examination pointed to the possibility that the fingerprint identification was wrong.

'I was told that this was regarded as an "unthinkable" explanation, because of its implications.'

No enquiry, no second opinion. Had this information been acted on the trauma of the past 6 years could have been avoided.

- On 14, May, 1999, Shirley was unanimously cleared of charges of Perjury by her peers. The only evidence against her was a mark identified by SCRO as Shirley's.
- Prosecution forensic evidence presented by a scenes of crime officer at Shirley's trial proved that the mark could not have been left by Shirley over the period stated.
- Not one of the 54 Police officers on 24 hours security watch at the murder house or the dozens of experts and detectives examining inside saw Shirley in the house.

- In January 2000 14 Lothian and Borders Experts wrote to the Minister for Justice:

'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.'

The Report on Independent Enquiry conducted by the HMCI concluded in August 2000:

'That the mark was not made by Shirley McKie. It is (the independent experts) view that decision could have been reached at an early point in the comparison process.'

- Hundreds of experts from across the world challenged SCRO's conclusions and in May 2002 171 experts from 18 countries and 26 USA states signed a statement to the Scottish Minister for Justice calling for further enquiry.

Some of the experts were scathing in their attack. Wes Sossamon an American expert stated:

'I know of not a single latent print examiner who has viewed the images of the "identifications" that concurs with the "opinions" offered by the SCRO "experts" in these infamous cases. Indeed, our colleagues who are recognized as some of the world's foremost authorities in friction ridge skin identification have gone on record and clearly exposed these shameful fabrications for what they really are. Moreover, there are many, many more of us who have conducted our own examination of the marks in question and we can only stand with our mouths agape at this most recent turn of events.'

Another commented:

‘Let SCRO enjoy the fame and celebrity currently enjoyed by all members of the Flat Earth Society and the various apostles of crop circles, alien autopsies in New Mexico and those who profess to communicate with the dead.’

Independent experts found that SCRO had made another mistake in identifying murder victim Marion Ross’s print on a tin found in David Asbury’s bedroom. On 15 August 2002 his murder conviction was quashed by appeal court judges after they accepted that the fingerprint evidence against him was unreliable.

- In September 2002 a Petition was delivered to the Scottish Parliament signed by four world renowned experts calling for an independent examination into openness and accountability at the SC RO.
- In February last year the Lord Advocate Colin Boyd stated in a speech to the Howard League for Penal Reform:

‘The BBC Frontline Scotland programme on the case of Shirley McKie.....changed public perceptions of her case. More importantly it 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.’

How much more evidence is required before admissions are made, the guilty are punished, healing is started and this whole sordid mess can be laid to rest?