

## OFF THE LEASH



# Dorothy-Grace Elder

## Holyrood: Not at all sophisticated

**B**E afraid, very afraid, to take a cause to the Scottish Parliament. All kinds of poisonous gossip about you can then be published as “evidence”: any smear will do, no proof needed.

The Justice 1 Committee’s inquiry into the fingerprint scandal shames Scotland round the world, where it’s being watched by police, lawyers, politicians, press and universities from Washington to Tokyo. All are anxious about the “Scotch botch” which has rocked fingerprint veracity worldwide.

But thousands hitting the websites are seeing repeated attempts to crucify one woman: Shirley McKie, *right*, the ex cop who dared to take on the establishment and win. No wonder she wept after giving evidence last week.

It wasn’t just that the Committee allowed shameless attempts to virtually re-try McKie – long found innocent by a proper court, not a bunch of Holyrood amateurs. Their brief is to investigate the Scottish Criminal Records Office, not her.

But what happened prior to McKie giving evidence would turn any decent person away from trusting Holyrood “justice”.

Chinese whispers were presented by the Parliament as “evidence” on its website. Also, “evidence” was printed that McKie had been in the murder house; that she was NOT in the house and the fingerprint was NOT hers have been the key points

of the whole nine-year ordeal. But what “evidence” was this? It came in claims by Les Brown, a retired Detective Chief Inspector helping SCRO staff who still deny they were wrong, although even the Scottish Executive admits that they were.

Mr Brown wrote: “I had been told by a retired police officer (unnamed) that, whilst he had been on dock duty at Paisley High Court ‘about four years ago’, he had shared dock duty with a constable from Kilmarnock. This officer (unnamed) had stated that he might be in trouble because he had allowed Shirley McKie into the murder house but, at her request, had not logged her in. When asked why, he replied ‘Because I fancied her’.”

So, one anonymous bloke spoke to a second anonymous bloke who told a third bloke (Brown) who told Holyrood... which told the world.

What must the world think of this Parliament – a bunch of backwoods hicks who use hearsay in preference to fact? The courts don’t allow that, neither would a public inquiry,

which the Executive refuses. Don’t blame Mr Brown. Spreading this gossip was entirely Holyrood’s responsibility. The cowards claim Parliamentary privilege – that should be withdrawn, they aren’t fit to have it.

Brown says he reported the tale to the Crown Office and police but they ignored it. The media did not touch this stuff until Holyrood let its own dogs loose, resulting in some screaming headlines. Note also this mysterious constable’s alleged explanation: “I fancied her”.

Is McKie paying the price for being female and attractive?

