

Police could ruin woman in prints row

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A FORMER police officer who took the Strathclyde force to court over a wrong-fingerprint row that lasted seven years now faces financial ruin over expenses.

Shirley McKie, 40, may lose her home and face bankruptcy as Strathclyde Police pursue a claim for her to meet legal costs, which are expected to be a minimum of (pounds) 13,000 and could rise to (pounds) 20,000.

The force is legally entitled to take steps to recover costs after she failed in an attempt to win compensation.

But Ms McKie and her father Iain, himself a retired police superintendent, with 30 years service, have asked Chief Constable Willie Rae to reconsider.

The charges arose when police wrongly insisted a fingerprint in the house of murdered Kilmarnock woman Marion Ross was from Ms McKie.

The former detective constable had been wrongfully accused of lying on oath during a murder trial when the question of her fingerprints was raised.

But in 1999 she was eventually cleared of committing perjury when she successfully proved the fingerprint was not hers.

Although she failed in her compensation case against the police she is continuing with an action against the Scottish Executive.

During the saga Ms McKie suffered ill health and was forced to give up her police job.

She now says she feels the police "have kicked her in the teeth".

Ms McKie said: "The whole thing has cost me my job and my career. I've lost relationship after relationship, and to be quite frank I've almost lost my life on a few occasions."

The force confirmed proceedings had begun, pointing out it was usual for the successful party to win expenses.