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**HEADLINE: Murder trial told of gifts 'bribe'**

A get well gift of flowers and wine was considered a bribe by the detective involved in a murder scene fingerprint controversy, the High Court in Glasgow was told yesterday.

Detective Constable Shirley Cardwell went off ill with stress after allegations that her print was found feet away from where Kilmarnock spinster Marion Ross, 51, died in her home.

She denied she had ever been at the scene and claimed she had no idea how her print got there.

She also claimed her superiors put her under pressure and did not believe her.

Chief Inspector Stephen Heath, who was in charge of the investigation into Miss Ross's murder, revealed there was "grave concern" among senior ranks over the controversy.

He told the court there was also concern for Mrs Cardwell, who went off sick, and he instructed a woman officer to take her a bottle of wine and a bunch of flowers.

Mr Heath said: "She inferred this was some sort of bribery to get her to change her story."

Earlier, Mr Heath told how he took Mrs Cardwell to Miss Ross's home and pointed out where the print was found.

She still denied being there.

"I was of the opinion she was making a monumental mistake," said Mr Heath.

On trial is Mr David Asbury, 21, of Castle Drive, Kilbirmie, who denies that between January 6 and 8, he stabbed Miss Ross in the eye and throat with a pair of scissors, at her home in Irvine Road, Kilmarnock.

He also denies stealing a tin containing a sum of money.

Mr Heath was questioned by Mr Alan Dewar, prosecuting, over a suggestion that a print from Miss Ross was planted on a tin money box while she lay in the mortuary.

The officer described the allegation, made by Mr Asbury's defence counsel William Totten several times during the trial, as "ludicrous and insulting".

The court was told the tin, house-shaped box which contained cash in £100 bundles, wrapped in the same "peculiar" way Miss Ross used as a bank employee, was discovered in a cupboard in Mr Asbury's home.

It has been alleged by the prosecution that the box contained both the accused's and Miss Ross's fingerprints.

The trial before Lord Dawson continues.