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HEADLINE: Policewoman in fingerprints row lands plum post

Gerard Burke

A WOMAN detective whose evidence in a murder trial could have led to a killer walking free has landed a posting as a mounted officer.

The appointment surprised colleagues who had expected Detective Constable Shirley Cardwell to be reprimanded instead of 'rewarded' following the High Court trial in Glasgow.

They are astonished she has been given the posting while the Crown Office is still deciding whether to take action following her behaviour in court and before a police disciplinary hearing has made its report .

Earlier this year DC Cardwell gave evidence which officers believe could have jeopardised their chances of getting a killer convicted.

In May and June the 34-year-old told the High Court about her part in an investigation into the murder of spinster Marion Ross.

The Kilmarnock-based officer had discovered a tin containing \$1,800 in the bedroom of the accused, 21-year-old David Asbury.

Both Asbury's and the victim's fingerprints were found on the tin. But interest in the trial centred on DC Cardwell's fingerprints, which had been found in the bathroom of Mrs Ross's home, although she had been denied permission to go inside.

During the trial she denied seven times that she had ever been there. One officer said of her new post: 'We're all stunned. It appears she is being rewarded for being embroiled in this controversy.'