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HEADLINE: Detective was too curious, trial told

A POLICE officer accused of perjury had an unnatural desire to visit the scene of a murder, a court heard yesterday.

Detective Constable Shirley McKie, 36, later denied a fingerprint found inside the death house was hers.

She denies committing perjury by telling a murder trial that she had not been in the house and the print did not belong to her.

Advocate-depute Alan Dewar, who originally prosecuted David Asbury, 21, for the murder in January 1997 of Miss Marion Ross, 51, in her home in Irvine Road, Kilmarnock, gave evidence at the perjury trial in the High Court in Glasgow yesterday.

He said that fingerprint evidence had been crucial in the case against Asbury and that any doubt could have allowed him to go free.

Mr Donald Findlay, QC, defending, asked Mr Dewar: "Did you have a single scrap of evidence, apart from the fingerprint, that she was in the house?"

Mr Dewar replied: "There was evidence that she had been at the house. A fingerprint virtually speaks for itself and she had shown a desire that didn't seem very normal to enter the house and had been refused permission.

"She had asked to go to see the precise point where the victim had been found.

"There was clear evidence that it was her fingerprint found in the house and that she had opportunities to get inside and had twice had keys to the house."

Mr Dewar said the murder jury heard that DC McKie's curiosity might have got the better of her and she made a monumental mistake by denying her fingerprint and continued to "dig a hole for herself".

Mr Findlay said that there was no record of DC McKie made by police officers logging visitors to the murder bungalow.

Mr Dewar said: "The system is open to human failure."

The trial continues.