

May 17, 1999, Monday

HEADLINE: FINGERPRINT CASE DC TO BE OFFERED JOB BACK

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POLICEWOMAN Shirley McKie will be invited to return to work this week after being found not guilty of perjury last week.

But the Record can reveal it is almost certain the detective constable will turn down the opportunity to resume her career and will instead sue Strathclyde Police.

DC McKie, 36, will seek damages because she was strip-searched when she was arrested in her home.

A fellow officer admitted the search during evidence to a High Court jury.

DC McKie was suspended when charged with perjury in March 1998.

Following Friday's not guilty verdict, police personnel officers will meet in the next few days and will offer McKie her job back.

Last night, her father, retired police superintendent Iain McKie, said: "Shirley is still trying to get her head round all of this.

"She has lived with this for more than two years and has to come to terms with the fact she has been cleared.

He wouldn't comment on what his daughter's next move would be but added: "The ball is very much in Strathclyde Police's court."

DC McKie was charged with perjury by lying under oath seven times at the trial of 21-year-old David Asbury who was jailed for life for killing of Marion Ross, 51, in her home in Kilmarnock in January, 1997.

Police found a fingerprint on the surround of the bathroom door in the house, and four fingerprint examiners from the Scottish Criminal Records Office identified it as belonging to DC McKie.

But during her trial at the High Court in Glasgow, an American fingerprint expert said the print was not DC McKie's and she was cleared.

Asbury has lodged an appeal against his conviction. It is expected to heard some time next month.

Last night, a Strathclyde Police spokesman confirmed DC McKie's suspension would be reviewed this week and almost certainly lifted.

Meanwhile, the Crown Office is bracing itself for the first of many appeals following the history-making verdict.

It was the first time in 100 years fingerprint evidence had been challenged.

The verdict has also thrown into doubt the validity of fingerprint evidence at the forthcoming trial of two Libyans for the Lockerbie bombing.

