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HEADLINE: Expert tells jury of spinster's horrific death

A PATHOLOGIST told a High Court jury yesterday about the horrific manner in which a quiet spinster died.

Marion Ross, 51, had been stabbed in the throat and eye with a pair of scissors. A knife had also been plunged into her throat.

Professor Peter Vanezis told the High Court in Glasgow that the scissors used to stab Miss Ross were still embedded in the front of her throat right up to the handles when she was brought into the mortuary.

The wound was tracked upwards at a 45-degree angle five inches deep and had actually gone into her spine.

Mr Alan Dewar, prosecuting, handed the professor a knife which was bent 90 degrees and he agreed this could have caused the other throat wound.

The wound in her eye had penetrated the base of her skull and had gone into the brain.

There were also marks on Miss Ross's neck and face indicating she had probably been gripped.

Seven left ribs and six right ribs had been fractured, leading Professor Vanezis to the conclusion that the assailant had pinned her to the ground with much of his body weight on her chest.

Injuries to her hand also led him to conclude that Miss Ross had tried to fight off her attacker.

Professor Vanezis said that he believed Marion had first of all been stabbed in the throat with the knife, before being stabbed in the eye and the throat with the scissors.

David Asbury, 21, of Castle Drive, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire denies murdering and robbing Miss Ross in her semi-detached four-bedroomed bungalow in Irvine Road, Kilmarnock, between January 6 and 8 this year.

Defence counsel William Totten, has lodged a special defence, claiming Mr Asbury was in Kilbirnie during the relevant period.

Earlier, next door neighbour Mrs Marion Gemmell, 32, spoke of Miss Ross as a quiet sort of person who did not socialise very much. She never saw anyone visit her except for her gardener.

The court heard that Marion's body was found on the evening of January 8.

At about 3.30 that morning, Mrs Gemmell said her two Yorkshire terriers started barking like they had never barked before.

She added: "They were scratching at the door and really going mental."

Mrs Gemmell said she thought someone was breaking in. She looked outside, and saw a bin bag knocked over.

The court heard that during the probe into Miss Ross's death, police found 428 fingerprints. Of these, 235 were incomplete and fragmented.

Sixteen complete prints and two partial ones were not identified, or eliminated from the inquiry.

The trial continues.