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HEADLINE: Murder trial jury told cousin was held

THE cousin of a woman who was found in her home stabbed to death with a pair of scissors, told a jury yesterday that murder-squad detectives questioned him for up to 12 hours after his fingerprints were found in the house.

Security guard James Campbell, 51, said he went to Miss Marion Ross's home in Irvine Road, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, after her body was found with scissors still sticking in her throat.

Mr Campbell was giving evidence at the High Court in Glasgow, in the trial of Mr David Asbury, 21, of Castle Drive, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, who denies murdering Miss Ross between January 6 and 8 this year.

Addressing Mr Campbell, prosecuting advocate Ms Fiona Daves said: "You were the prime suspect and the police took away all of your clothing.

"Police searched your house, dug up your garden, took you away for questioning.

"It must have been very upsetting. How did you feel?"

Mr Campbell of Ochil Place, Bellfield, Kilmarnock, replied: "I don't know. My wife took it all very badly."

He said police tested his alibi, going over the route around various Ayrshire towns which he drove while working his shift as a supervisor on the day Miss Ross was killed.

On one occasion, he was held at the police station and questioned for 12 hours until after 11pm.

Asked about his fingerprint found on the bathroom door next to where Miss Ross's body was found, he said: "I don't remember touching the door when I was called to the house."

His brother, William, 47, of Western Road, Galston, told how he was also questioned extensively by police when his fingerprints were found in the house.

Miss Ross, 51, a former bank teller, died after being stabbed in the throat and eye.

Mr Asbury has lodged an alibi that he was elsewhere at the time of the killing.

The court has heard that when detectives searched Mr Asbury's home they found a house-shaped biscuit tin in a red tool box. It contained £100 bundles of money which had been rolled up in a "peculiar" way.

Former Royal Bank of Scotland colleague Mrs Linda Thomson, 37, was shown photographs of the bundles and said they were wrapped the same way Miss Ross used to do.

The court heard that Mr Asbury worked for 14 weeks with his grandfather on an extension to Miss Ross's house in 1995.

The trial before Lord Dawson continues.