

May 29, 1997, Thursday

**HEADLINE: LIES WARNING FOR GIRL COP IN MURDER TRIAL;**

**Fingerprint riddle: I wasn't in death house, says detective;  
Constable Shirley Cardwell yesterday told a court she didn't visit a murder  
scene - despite the fact her thumbprint was found there**

**Iain Ferguson**

A detective yesterday told a court she didn't visit a murder scene - despite the fact her thumbprint was found there.

And Constable Shirley Cardwell was warned of the dangers of perjury.

She denied SEVEN times that she had visited the home of 51-year-old victim Marion Ross.

David Asbury, 21, denies murdering Marion at her Kilmarnock home in January and robbing her of a tin box full of cash.

Alan Dewar, defending, accused Cardwell of going to the house after "your curiosity got the better of you".

But the detective, who admitted she had access to keys, replied: "I was never in the house. I have no reason to lie."

Cardwell admitted she had never known fingerprint evidence to be wrong.

She said she couldn't explain how her thumbprint came to be on the bathroom door.

The 34-year-old, who has been off work for four months with stress, also revealed bosses had pressured her to say she may have been in the house.

She said: "I am an honest police officer. I just felt I should be believed."

At the High Court in Glasgow, Cardwell admitted she had contaminated evidence in a previous inquiry.

She wasn't wearing gloves when she handled a bag containing a baby's body.

The court heard Cardwell and another officer discovered an extension to Marion's house had been built by a firm in Kilbirmie, Ayrshire.

They visited the owner of the company, Nimrod Asbury.

He was upset, saying his grandson, David, had left a suicide note and vanished.

They later searched David Asbury's Kilbirmie home.

Cardwell said: "We found a tin with money in it in a cupboard in the room. There was around pounds 1700 to pounds 1800 in it and it was tied in bundles."

Earlier in the trial, the defence suggested Marion's fingerprints may have been put on the box AFTER her death.

The trial before Lord Dawson continues.