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EDWARD McQUEEN BRUCE, age 40, born [] 1959 at Glasgow, Fingerprint Officer, [] telephone [] business address SCRO, Pitt Street, Strathclyde Police Headquarters, Glasgow, telephone []

States:-

I am a fingerprint expert with the Scottish Criminal Record Office, Strathclyde Police Headquarters, Pitt Street, Glasgow and have been an expert for 13 years.

I actually joined the Department in 1982 as a fingerprint trainee and after 5 years of training qualified as an expert.

I am often utilised as a fingerprint witness for court purposes, and am authorised by the Secretary of State for Scotland to do so.

Latterly I have been used as a floater between the teams, as I have just come off permanent night shift.

During January and March of 1997, I was working within SCRO and my duties at this time were part of a night shift team, which I think was team 2, although I may be mistaken. We were responsible for checking and processing fingerprint forms received from Divisions via livescan. In addition to this there was case work requiring to be completed for day time personnel if their work load was building up.

The case work covered the entire area of Strathclyde Police and was not restricted to any particular Division, and on occasions even stretched to other Scottish forces.

I think my team was made up of 3 or 4 officers, although I'm not totally certain who they were. I can recall working with Alistair Geddes who was my team supervisor, and possibly James and Collette Orr.

I can remember a murder occurring in the Kilmarnock area, sometime in early 1997, and I can also remember being asked to carry out some elimination work although my recollection is very vague. Because I was nightshift I don't remember playing any major part in this case. Because of the nature of the crime the special case team would have dealt with it, and my involvement would have been instigated from them. Details of my involvement would have been detailed on the work sheets, and without checking them I couldn't say for certain what I did or didn't do.

Sometime during the murder enquiry I was asked to have a look at a latent mark against an impression. I can't remember when I was asked to do this and who asked me to do it. The mark and the impression were on a comparator which was in the main office, and I think there was other people going about. I was not given any details of the mark or the impression but I took it that it was an elimination examination.

I examined the mark and found that it was very distorted around the top, which appeared to me as being caused by movement. I looked at the clear part of the mark, and as far as I can remember I was able to get about 8 (eight) points of comparison against the elimination. My feeling at the time was that the mark was the same as the elimination, although it wasn't sufficient for an identification for court purposes. I would have eliminated it because of the 8 (eight) plus points of comparison. That's what I have always been taught that although there is no hard or fast ruling concerning elimination, if I had a minimum of 8 (eight) points of comparison I could eliminate a mark, although in some circumstances I would look for more, as each mark is based on its own merits.

I advised whoever it was who asked me to check it what my result was, and I never looked at that mark again, and have never been asked to do so by anyone.

I became aware sometime after this that a mark of a police officer had been found at the murder locus, and had been identified rather than eliminated as that of Shirley Cardwell (McKie). Although I was aware of the rumours circulating regarding the mark being disputed, as far as I am aware I have never knowingly examined the mark with the elimination prints from Shirley Cardwell.

The mark I was asked to examine as previously mentioned, I learned sometime later was that of Shirley Cardwell's. Although I did not know it at the time, the significance of it, I identified it as an elimination but not as an identification for court purposes. My recollection of the mark itself at this time is very poor, however, if I had made that decision at the time of checking it I would stand by it.

During the course of this enquiry I learned from colleagues that they had been involved in an exercise where they were invited into a room and asked to do a comparison, however, I was never involved in this exercise. I can't remember who was involved in the exercise and I can't recall who had instigated it.

My criteria for identifying an elimination print is different from a court identification. For court identification it must be a minimum of 16 (sixteen) points, but for elimination purposes it is up to the individual officer. In normal circumstances I wouldn't eliminate a mark with less than 8 (eight) points, unless the mark was really clear. If that was the case fewer points may be obtained. This is how I operate today, and it was exactly the same in 1997.

Annual Leave - 12/11/2000 – 20/11/2000

Statement noted by Detective Constable 9031 Gary Ogilvie at 1410 hours on 17 August, 2000 (17/08/2000) at and is corroborated by Detective Sergeant 9103 Gary Brown.