

**PRECOGNITION OF FIONA MCBRIDE**  
**QNE/19/40**

CB7

My full name is Fiona McBride and my date of birth is  1965. I am a Fingerprint officer with SCRO. I was a Fingerprint officer in 1997. I can be contacted on

I want to start off by saying that I cannot be sure about any dates that are mentioned within the papers. I haven't seen the paperwork for a long time, and I don't know if the dates are correct or not.

The latent print found at the locus of the Marion Ross murder scene was not only sent to SCRO for elimination purposes. It could have been identified or eliminated, or we could not have been able to do anything with it because it was too poor. In any event, the latent print was not sent on its own, it was sent with a whole lot of other work for SCRO to carry out. SCRO did not use the HOLMES system at any time during the investigation. The HOLMES system is very specialised, and is not something that SCRO are involved with.

Usually SCRO would have all police officers prints on record. In this case we could not find Ms McKie's prints on record and we had to ask her to provide a set of prints.

It is not true that Hugh MacPherson told police officers that the print was Ms McKie's without having it confirmed by other fingerprint officers. I actually remember Hugh MacPherson telling me that he was going to do a "belts and braces" job, as the print was found right next to the body and it was thought that it could have been that of the murderer. Hugh MacPherson is a very careful man and in this case he wanted to get the required sixteen points, and four persons to confirm the print. At that time it really only needed to be two persons who confirmed a print for elimination. Because of the nature of the job, and because it was a print found next to a body at a murder scene Hugh MacPherson wanted four people to confirm the print.

Hugh MacPherson asked Alistair Geddes to look at the print after him. Alistair Geddes was extremely strong on the identification, and the only thing that stopped him filling in the paper work was that he could not see the sixteen points of similarity. When Hugh brought the print

to me to ask me to look at it he told me that Alistair Geddes had looked at it and couldn't find sixteen points of similarity. I thought Hugh MacPherson had said that Alistair Geddes had found twelve points of similarity and not ten, but I can't be sure. I remember taking a long time over the print. I wanted to write on the back of the print who else had looked at it so I asked Hugh MacPherson and he said that Alistair Geddes and Charlie Stewart had both looked at it.

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I didn't know that Ms McKie had ever requested to be present when we compared the print, or that she was told that she was not allowed to be present.

With regard to the blind tests, it was unprecedented for these to happen. A blind test had not been carried out before this incident and I don't think it has been carried out since it. I wasn't actually told what was going on but I picked it up because of the amount of people that were in and out of the office. I understand that Mr Bruce found eight points of similarity but said that he needed an enlargement of the print to go any further. I think Mr Bruce said he confirmed the print for elimination but not for identification purposes. I think he was asked what he would say if he had to "stake his mortgage on it" and he said that the print was Ms McKie's. Mr Padden said that he did not want to look at the prints on the screen but wanted to look at them under a magnifying glass. He said that he would not compare the marks the way he was being asked to do. Miss McLure said that she did not want to compare the mark because it was late at night and would prefer to wait until the morning when her eyes were fresh. She was not asked the next morning to carry on with the comparison. Mr Foley was

involved in an incident when the mark went missing. All persons who had looked at the mark were asked to come forward and advise if they had seen it. At that time Mr Foley went forward and said that he had looked at the mark and had identified it as Ms McKie's. Hugh MacPherson never told police officers that five officers had refused to confirm the mark because that was not the correct position.

I can't remember if Hugh MacPherson asked me to look at the mark a second time and confirm again that it was Ms McKie's. The only reason I can think he would have done this was if a second set of prints were taken from Ms McKie. In these circumstances every person who had looked at the mark and confirmed it would have been asked to look at it again against the new set of prints and confirm that they were still of the view that the mark was that persons.

It is not true that any finger print officer would have told a lie about the prints so that we could get a prosecution and a conviction. Officers from SCRO tell the truth even if it is to the detriment of a case.

It is also not true that no experts apart from those at SCRO confirmed the mark as being Ms McKie's. The experts that disagreed with our finding were generally experts who did not have the same skills base as the officers at SCRO. I remember Zeelenberg advising that he was not used to working with marks of that quality. I remember Mr Zeelenberg giving a talk to SCRO sometime before the incident and I remember thinking that he would discard a lot of marks that we would identify. I actually remember when HMCIC became involved with the investigation and wanted to instruct experts. I told them not to go to the Dutch, but that is exactly what they done.

I am not surprised that Zeelenberg was not able to identify the McKie mark because of the quality of it. I am however surprised that he disputed the Marion Ross mark. In my view anyone with any sort of experience would have been able to compare and identify that mark. I don't know how they came to the conclusion that the Marion Ross print was wrong.

I remember when the MSP, Mike Russell went on television and said that we were all liars and the mark was not Ms McKie's. Peter Swan who is a renowned finger print expert phoned Mike Russell to say that he agreed with our identification of the print. I also remember when

the American expert, Wertheim, said that he made the comparison in 60 seconds and knew the print was not Ms McKie's. John Berry the founder member of the Finger Print Society and who is respected as an expert throughout the world heard about this and said he had to investigate it for himself. I believe he got documentation from the newspapers and from Terry Kent of the Police Scientific Development Board. Mr Kent was involved with the investigation because Ms McKie was blaming the Investigations Bureau for her print being planted and Mr Kent was brought in to investigate the allegation. Mr Kent took photographs of the print and I think he may have passed them to John Berry as he was seeking to make a comparison. John Berry believes that our identification of the print is correct. Martin Leadbetter was also involved at some point and agreed with our identification of the print but I can't remember how he came to be involved. Malcolm Graham for the defence in the Asbury trial also agreed with our identification. He was approached by the McKie's after the trial and Mr Graham said that he couldn't help because he agreed with the position of SCRO.

It is just not true that from March 1997 onwards we knew that the print was not Ms McKie's. There was no doubt in my mind that the four of us who had examined the print and confirmed it and Mr Geddes were completely satisfied that it was Ms McKie's print. With regard to knowing whether or not a prosecution would go ahead or not as a result of our comparisons, we were just not party to this information. As for the criminal investigations against us, we never found out the outcome of them. Our lawyers certainly thought that from the questions being asked of us, we were going to be charged.

At the meeting between SCRO and Rudrud and Zeelenberg the four of us who had been suspended were not allowed to attend. It was supposed to be for us to discuss with Rudrud and Zeelenberg the prints and how we had come to our differences. The meeting was not the idea of SCRO, but I don't know who organised it. I do remember that it was Mr Dunbar and Mr McKenzie that went along on our behalf. I think Rudrud and Zeelenberg had been offered the original documentation by HMCIC but refused it in favour of the stuff that they had presumably obtained from the internet. You might be interested to not that the stuff from the American web sites that had been set up by Wertheim is now being discredited by Mr Wertheim's son who is also a fingerprint expert. The son is of the view that there are now better copies of the prints available.

I am of the view that there are not numerous points of difference between the latent print and the print that was identified as Ms McKie's. Rudrud and Zeelenberg are basing their findings on the print being a continuous print and having been put down all at the one time. I do not know how they can maintain that it is in one piece, as it is obviously not. All I can say is that the print might have been outside Mr Zeelenberg's tolerance level as he is not used to working with such poor quality prints. As far as I am concerned there were numerous point of similarity between the latent print and the print later identified as McKie's.

**PRECOGNITION TAKEN BY**

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**11 SEPTEMBER 2003**