

THE SAYINGS OF CLARENCE MITCHELL: A MASTER MEDIA MANIPULATOR

This leaflet was first printed in February 2009 and revised in May 2009. It has now been updated a second time.

Clarence Mitchell now works for the PR company, Freud Communications, whose boss is Matthew Freud - the husband of Elisabeth Murdoch, who is the daughter of Rupert Murdoch. Murdoch is the world's most powerful media magnate, with major terrestrial TV, satellite and media interests in dozens of countries. So who is Clarence Mitchell and why is he employed by the world's biggest controller of news? Find out some of the answer below.

A COUPLE OF QUOTES

Carlos Anjos, head of the Portuguese police professional association, who had dealings with Clarence Mitchell, said of him: "*He lies with as many teeth as he has in his mouth*".

Clarence Mitchell in his own words, on 29 September 2007 to *Espresso*: "I was the head of the government's Media Monitoring Unit. Forty people work there and *their function is to control what comes out in the media.*"

CLARENCE MITCHELL'S CAREER

Clarence Mitchell's media career began in the late 1980s as a BBC regional reporter in Leeds. He moved to London where he covered stories about the Royals. A 2007 article on the BBC website by Laurie Margolis about him says:

"Clarence was also a presenter on various BBC news programmes, looking to make that his main career. The presenting world is a precarious and capricious one, however, and he never quite made it. Once, I was working throughout the night. Clarence was presenting hourly bulletins on BBC News 24. He did the 1am, and 2am, but at 3am a slightly dishevelled looking producer appeared doing the news. It turned out Clarence closed his eyes, sleeping through the 3am bulletin. Clarence left the BBC suddenly, becoming the Labour government's Director of its Media Monitoring Unit at the Central Office of Information. There, his job was to 'correct' bad media stories about the government and to put out the government line". A 'spinner', as some would say, or 'a professional liar' as others describe it. In May 2007 he was suddenly seconded to the Foreign Office to work as the McCanns' chief PR man, assisting another McCann spokeswoman, Justine McGuinness. In September 2007, in an unusual move, he resigned from the civil service to become the McCanns' full-time spokesman, on £75,000 a year. He remains in that role, though he has been employed for the last few months by another major PR agency, Freud Communications".

Clarence Mitchell remains employed by Freud Communications, where he can be contacted. He also works part-time for the McCanns as their chief public relations officer at a salary reputed to be around £30,000 a year. No-one is quite sure who

really finds that salary. Maybe the McCanns? Maybe the McCanns' 'Find Madeleine' fund-raising trust? Maybe the McCanns' benefactor, Brian Kennedy? Maybe the government? It is one of life's little secrets.

'AN ANGEL OF DEATH'

Margolis also noted Clarence Mitchell's strange association with controversial murder cases: "He was closely involved with the Fred and Rosemary West case, where a murderous couple had killed young girls and buried the bodies under their patio in Gloucester. He was one of the first reporters to arrive at Gowan Avenue, Fulham in south west London, when the immensely popular BBC TV presenter Jill Dando was shot dead in a murder many feel has never been satisfactorily explained". Mitchell also covered in depth the arrest and conviction of mass-murderer Dennis Nilson. When Paula Yates' partner Michael Hutchance died in mysterious circumstances in the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Sydney, Australia, in 1999, Clarence Mitchell was despatched to cover the death; more recently, in a story he worked on right up to the day he left the BBC, Clarence led coverage of the murder of the Surrey schoolgirl Millie Dowler in 2002. The case has never been solved.

"Mitchell has also written books on the Fred & Rosemary West and Jill Dando cases. He also reported extensively on the murder by Ian Huntley of Soham girls Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells. On 9 January this year, the *Independent* ran a brief article titled: 'Remember Clarence Mitchell?' It said: "Clarence Mitchell, formerly of the BBC and now spokesman for Madeleine McCann's parents, has developed a nice little niche as a spin doctor of misery. First he took on Fiona MacKeown, mother of teenager Scarlet Kelling, who was murdered in Goa. Then he started representing the parents of murdered London teenager Jimmy Mizen. And today we've discovered that Mr Mitchell is also speaking for the wife of Jeremy Hoyland, the British jet skier who went missing off the coast of Bali last October. Mr Mitchell is not charging for his services. But his presence can hardly be reassuring - the PR equivalent of an angel of death".

CLARENCE MITCHELL & THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE

Clarence Mitchell has achieved much in the Madeleine McCann case. He played (according to himself) a key role in arranging for the McCanns to meet the Pope on 28 May 2007, just 25 days after Madeleine McCann was reported missing. A man with connections at the highest level, Clarence Mitchell openly boasted in a TV interview that it was he who arranged, via Roman Catholic Archbishop Cormac Murphy O'Connor, for the McCanns to visit the Pope - in what was a highly publicised visit. The Pope put pages of material about the McCanns and Madeleine on his website. But two days before the McCanns were made arguidos - 'provisional suspects' - in September 2007, the Pope wiped all references to Madeleine from his website. Margolis wrote in 2007: "I would imagine Clarence is content in his new role as the family's voice. He's centre stage on a huge story, intimately involved as ever, and on television and in the papers all the time. It was extraordinary how, last week, his intervention seemed to eliminate within hours any misgiving about the McCanns in the British media".

Who has been paying Clarence Mitchell's salary whilst he has been working for the McCanns?

This remains a mystery. We know that up to September 2007, the British government paid his salary. He left the government that month. Since then, the McCanns and Mitchell have said on the record that the 'Helping to Find Madeleine Fund' has not paid any part of his salary. They say that he was paid by 'an anonymous backer'. But Clarence Mitchell won't say who that backer is, nor why that backer is giving him so much support. In article in the *Independent on Sunday*, 1 March 2009, Mitchell contradicted previous claims that his salary was being paid by an anonymous backer. He now says he gets a retainer of £28,000 a year from the 'Helping to Find Madeleine Fund', donations to which were given to 'help find Madeleine', *not to pay the salaries of PR professionals*

Clarence Mitchell and the McCanns: **21 Issues of Concern**

Here we examine 21 of the many issues that have caused people concern about Mitchell's role in the Madeleine McCann case. At the end of our leaflet we explain how to obtain more information on the Madeleine McCann case, including our 60-page booklet: *'What Really Happened to Madeleine McCann? - 60 Reasons which suggest she was not abducted'*.

1. Allegedly being involved in tipping off the McCanns that the Portuguese police had been, or were going to, track their e-mails and 'phone calls

There were sell-sourced reports that the McCanns were tipped off that the Portuguese police were monitoring their e-mails and 'phone calls. There was naturally concern over how this information leaked to them. A former Portuguese police officer has admitted working for the Spanish private detective agency, Metodo 3. He in turn had an inside contact in the Portuguese police who supplied Metodo 3 with information about the investigation. Clarence Mitchell was asked in an interview by Simon Israel on Channel 4 how the McCanns were tipped off. He refused to answer.

2. Being forced to deny the McCanns' initial claim of a break-in

On the evening that Madeleine was reported missing, the McCanns claimed in 'phone calls to their relatives that an abductor had broken into the children's room by 'jemmying open the shutters'. This claim was reported extensively in the media. But the managers of the Mark Warners resort where the McCanns were staying, and the police, soon discovered that the shutters had not been tampered with. This forced the McCanns to dramatically change their story - one of many changes of story - to say: 'The abductor must have walked in through an unlocked patio door'. Asked about this discrepancy, Mitchell was forced to concede on the record: *"There was no evidence of a break-in. I'm not going into the detail*, but I can say that Kate and Gerry are firmly of the view that somebody got into the apartment and took Madeleine out the window as their means of escape. To do that they did not necessarily have to tamper with anything. They got out of the window fairly easily". *It is however most unlikely that an abductor could have 'got out of the window easily,' leaving no forensic trace.* The window in question was just over 2ft square and was 3ft above the ground. It was dark at the time the McCanns say Madeleine disappeared. For an abductor to have taken Madeleine through such a window, in the dark, without being seen or

heard by anyone (except the McCanns' friend Jane Tanner), and without leaving any forensic trace, is highly unlikely.

3. Smearing Robert Murat

A curious feature of the Madeleine case was the targeting of Robert Murat, a dual Portuguese-British citizen, as a suspect. A journalist who had previously worked closely with Clarence Mitchell, Lori Campbell, suspected Murat of involvement in Madeleine's disappearance and reported him to the Police. It is very likely that this followed conversations between Mitchell and her. Three of the McCanns' close friends, the so-called 'Tapas 7', also reported seeing Robert Murat close to the McCanns' apartment the evening Madeleine went missing, a claim he denied. The McCann camp made a concerted attempt, for whatever reason, to smear Murat. Clarence Mitchell himself played a key role in this: He told one newspaper:

"An outcome similar to Holly and Jessica [Soham children murdered by Ian Huntley] is possible. I don't want to, and I can't, talk about Robert Murat, but *some journalists who worked with me in Soham, and that were now in Portugal, saw resemblances between that case and Robert Murat. And I won't say more*". He was very lucky that Murat did not sue him for libel, since in 2008 Robert Murat collected a reported £600,000 in libel damages from news media and journalists whom he claimed had smeared and libelled him.

4. Being forced to retract his claim that 'Madeleine is probably dead'

During early 2008, Clarence Mitchell was forced to concede that 'Madeleine is probably dead'. This caused grave embarrassment for the McCanns, who were determined publicly to maintain that Madeleine was still alive. His statement could also have had serious implications for the Helping to Find Madeleine Fund, which could only continue to operate and keep asking for donations on the premise that Madeleine was still alive. Dr Gerald McCann was forced to publicly rebuke his PR chief by insisting on his blog two days later that they remained hopeful that Madeleine was still alive.

5. Failing to explain that the 'Helping to Find Madeleine Fund' was not a charity

Interviewed by James Whale, Mitchell repeatedly refused to correct Whale when he referred to the McCanns' fund as a 'charity'. In fact, the Helping to Find Madeleine Fund is registered as a 'private trust'; its aims are not charitable and include making payments to the McCanns. It only has to make annual returns to Companies House. Beyond that, the Trust is not accountable to anyone.

6. Asking people to send money in envelopes to 'Gerry and Kate, Rothley'

Asked on the same James Whale show how people could contribute to the fund, Mitchell said: "Just put money into an envelope and send to Kate and Gerry McCann, Rothley, it'll get there". That was unprofessional - monies should have been directed to the registered office for the Fund, namely London Solicitors Bates, Wells & Braithwaite. For example, monies sent in the post could be stolen en route or would not be properly accounted for.

7. Claiming that the Fund was 'independently controlled'

Pressed about control of the 'Helping to Find Madeleine Fund', Clarence Mitchell claimed that the Fund was 'independently controlled'. This is untrue. The Trust's Directors consist mainly of members of the McCann family and their friends or acquaintances.

8. Retreating on whether or not the McCanns would take a lie detector test

The McCanns were anxious to convince the world that they were telling the truth about how Madeleine had suddenly gone missing. To bolster their claim, Clarence Mitchell announced: "Kate and Gerry McCann would have no issue with taking a lie detector test". However, two months later, after a number of lie detector experts came forward to offer their services, he announced: "Of course they are not going to take any lie detector test".

9. Making a film for TV about the McCanns' distress 'one year on' whilst at the same time claiming the McCanns were not doing so

Clarence Mitchell told the media: "The McCanns don't want to do anything about 'woe is us a year on'. That is what the tabloids would like us to do, but we are not following their agenda, we are following our own agenda" (one of many references to 'our agenda'). Weeks later, there was a two-hour long pre-recorded TV interview: 'Madeleine McCann - One Year On', clearly prepared long before his public statement, and certainly with his personal knowledge. And the programme was very much: "Woe is us a year on".

10. Issuing a 'Crimewatch'-style video clip with a description of an abductor

It has always been the McCanns who have given out descriptions of a possible abductor. The Portuguese police from early on doubted the truthfulness of claims by Jane Tanner, one of the McCanns' 'Tapas 7' friends, that she had seen an abductor. In early 2008, Clarence Mitchell announced that the McCann team were looking for a moustachioed man seen in Praia da Luz around the time Madeleine went missing. He did this in a widely-shown video clip in which he acted like a Crimewatch presenter. At a meeting at the London School of Economics on 30 January 2008, this performance, plus his commanding stance and choice of words, prompted one member of the LSE audience to ask: "Are you the police?" There was much laughter.

11. Claiming that "...whatever the Portuguese police might find in their investigation, the McCanns will have an innocent explanation for it"

To this bizarre statement, Mitchell added the equally strange comment: "There are wholly innocent explanations for any material that the police may or may not have found", prompting many to ask: "How could the McCanns and Clarence Mitchell know in advance what the police might find and know that there would be 'an innocent explanation' for everything?"

12. Claiming it didn't matter if Dr Kate McCann changed her clothes on 3 May

One of the key issues in the Madeleine McCann case is whether the McCanns and their 'Tapas 7' friends have been telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about the events of 3 May 2007, the day Madeleine was reported missing. In late 2008, a French journalist, Duarte Levy, claimed to have seen photos taken that evening conclusively proving that Dr Kate McCann had left the table during the

evening and changed her clothes. That would blow a hole in her claim that she was at the Tapas bar the whole evening. She would have had to explain why she changed her clothes. Mitchell's official response to these claims was: "So what if she did leave the table and change her clothes?" He refused to elaborate.

13. Saying that 'none of the Tapas group' were wearing watches the night Madeleine went missing - and then being forced to retract that statement

Clarence Mitchell had come under pressure from journalists to explain why there were so many significant contradictions between the McCanns' and the Tapas 7's versions of events on 3 May 2007, when Madeleine 'disappeared'. There were also many discrepancies in their timelines. Mitchell tried to explain, responding: "*None of them were wearing watches or had mobile phones on them that night*".

Those journalists then confronted him with the sheer unlikelihood that all nine had neither watch nor mobile 'phone, pointed out that the McCanns and others had used their mobile 'phones that night, and produced pictures of the McCanns and their Tapas 7 friends taken in Praia da Luz that week which showed that they were always wearing watches.

Clarence Mitchell was forced into an embarrassing retreat, conceding: "Some of them were wearing watches and had mobile 'phones, some of them weren't". It is also now known from the McCanns' statements to the police, which have been publicly released, that the McCanns both had mobile 'phones with them that evening. As their official spokesman, Mitchell must surely have been briefed on this before he made his statement.

14. Falsely claiming that the McCanns had been 'utterly honest and utterly open'

On 11 April 2008, Clarence Mitchell made this bold claim: "Kate and Gerry have been *utterly honest and utterly open* with the police and all of their statements from the moment that Madeleine was taken". He later said, referring to himself and the McCanns: 'We have nothing to hide'. When addressing a largely student audience during what were called 'The Coventry Conversations', Mitchell said: "**We are always willing to co-operate with the Portuguese police**". These were bold claims to make given that...

- Dr Kate McCann was asked 48 questions by the Portuguese police when interviewed on 7 September 2007 and refused to answer any of them.
- The McCanns had refused point blank to take part in a reconstruction of the events of 3 May 2007, the night Madeleine McCann was reported missing.
- The McCanns' statements contained numerous changes of story, contradictions with the accounts of others, evasions and apparent obfuscations.

15. Claiming it would be 'hugely entertaining' to devise a cast list for a proposed film about Madeleine going missing

On 7 January 2008 it was widely reported in the media that the McCanns and their advisers were in talks with media and film moguls *IMG*, who made the film 'Touching the Void', about a possible film about Madeleine's disappearance. Clarence Mitchell was asked whether Gerry and Kate would play themselves in any film or if their roles would be played by celebrity actors. He said: "*It may be hugely entertaining and a bit of fun to speculate on a cast list*, but we are a million miles away from that sort of thing". On another occasion, he said of Madeleine: "*If she is*

dead, she is dead". These and other comments made some wonder how much 'feel' or concern for Madeleine's welfare and fate Mitchell really had.

16. Claiming it was a British cultural custom for parents to put children to bed early so they could enjoy the rest of the evening

Interviewed by Irish TV station RTE, Clarence Mitchell tried to explain why the McCanns left three young children under four on their own, several nights in a row, whilst on holiday, and dining out for the evening. He told his TV audience: "There is a cultural difference between Britain and Portugal. It is a British approach to get your children washed, bathed and in bed early in the evening, if you can, so you can have something of the evening to yourself. That's the British way of doing things. It doesn't mean it's wrong. It doesn't mean it's right". Many British parents objected strongly to Mitchell's description of them..

17. Trying to deny that the McCanns had left the children alone every night

In an interview with Jon Gaunt of TalkSport, Clarence Mitchell was trying to explain why the McCanns had left their children alone 'that night' (i.e. the night of 3 May when Madeleine was reported missing). He was quickly corrected by Gaunt who reminded him: 'But they left them alone *every night*'. Mitchell had no answer.

18. Blaming Romany gypsies for abducting Madeleine

Clarence Mitchell on one occasion pointed the finger of suspicion at Romany gypsies for having abducted Madeleine. It appeared he had no basis whatsoever for smearing this group of people. He has never apologised for making it.

19. Using an image of Mari Luz without her parents' permission

Months after Madeleine went missing, another child, Mari Luz, went missing, though in very different circumstances. Sadly she has since been found dead. The McCanns printed posters of Madeleine together with Mari Luz - without gaining the parents' prior permission. Her parents were very upset, and complained. Clarence Mitchell reacted by stating: "It's a shame that they are complaining about us in a press release. How can they be angry with us for wanting to help when all we're trying to do is find their own daughter?"

20. Being 'encouraged' that Madeleine 'may have been abducted by paedophiles'

In early 2008, stories were put about by an unknown Portuguese lawyer, Marcos Alexandre Aragao Correia, that Madeleine McCann had been abducted by paedophiles, raped, murdered and her body dumped in a dammed lake. At the time, a new drawing of a possible abductor was released, and part of the Arade Dam was searched. A friend of the McCanns was quoted as saying: "We fear that a group of two or three paedophiles may have been fishing around the apartments, casing them with a view to taking children".

Mitchell then commented:

"Developments such as this give Mr and Mrs McCann renewed hope. That is exactly the sort of call we want. We think the image is of such a quality that anyone who knows him will be able to identify him. Kate and Gerry are quite buoyant at the moment - every time we do something like this and move things forward it gives them

strength. We're very encouraged by this - putting all this information out, these images out, is helping Gerry and Kate in one way; simply by doing it we have got some momentum and are pushing the agenda forward on our side of the equation".

Many asked why Mitchell and the McCanns could use such words as 'buoyant' and 'encouraged' in relation to Madeleine's having possibly been raped and murdered by paedophiles.

And his use of the word 'agenda', yet again, once more prompted the question: *What was their 'agenda'?*

21. Explaining why the McCanns deliberately left their three children alone again the night after Madeleine and Sean had been crying the night before

On SKY News, Clarence Mitchell was interviewed, following a pre-recorded interview with the McCanns in which they admitted, for the first time, that two of their children had been crying on the night before Madeleine went missing. There was public outrage that the McCanns were told by their children that they had been crying the previous night whilst they were dining out, only to then leave them alone again the very next night. The SKY News presenter asked: "Why did Kate and Gerry choose to leave the children the same way the very next night?" Clarence Mitchell's reply is instructive. Here it is in full:

"That is one interpretation. Let me put it in context. On the morning of May the 3rd, the day Madeleine later went missing, she came out, and said to Gerry and Kate at breakfast, very briefly as an aside, *in no way* was she unhappy or crying and then, *in no way* was she reprimanding her parents as some reports papers have wrongly, er, said. She simply said: "Why didn't you come see - come and see me and Sean when we were crying, last night?", and Kate and Gerry were puzzled by that, because in their checks - they had been checking her every 25/30 minutes, the same as they did the next night, when she went missing - they had found nothing to suggest that she was in any way distressed or upset, they found her asleep each time.

"There was nothing wrong. Rachel Oldfield, one of their friends, was in the apartment next door, in the room adjacent to Madeleine's bedroom. She too was there all evening and heard no crying through the walls. There was nothing to suggest this had happened. So it was a puzzle to Kate and Gerry when Madeleine mentioned it. They tried to question her about it, and she just walked off laughing, and, er, happy, she *was* [note the past tense] a child and she and, and so, so she dropped it. Now they of course had a serious discussion about what had possibly gone wrong and they decided to check her more thoroughly that next night, and that's what they did. And in the context of 'leak' came from a Spanish journalist known to be very sympathetic to the McCanns].

"What happened later - her disappearance - they felt that that conversation, puzzling as it was, was very important to bring to the police's attention. They wonder why, if she cried, why she cried. Was something, or someone already in that room to make her cry and they fled when she cried? Who knows? They can't prove that, but they told the police in confidence - legally protected documentation has been in those files for 11 months - and why does it appear on the very day they were at the European Parliament? Somebody in the police doesn't want Kate and Gerry to widen the agenda

[that word again!], for whatever reason. It's wrong. It's illegal, and the Portuguese government needs to stop this...from happening in the future"

During this long reply, we see the master media manipulator at work.

He makes light of two children crying while their parents were not with them.

He justifies the McCanns' decision to go out dining with their friends and leaving all three children alone again the very night after the children told them of their crying.

He claims, without evidence, that the police leaked the story about the McCanns' children crying on their own the night before.

He claims the police have done something illegal.

Some might admire him as a master of his craft, and indeed one writer has already said that the McCanns' public relations campaign will for years to come be 'a textbook example of how to control the media and manipulate public opinion'.

But, we may ask, if this is true, whose interests has Clarence Mitchell been serving? Is he someone who is genuinely helping us get to the truth?

Or is it just possible that this person who once boasted that his job was 'to control what comes out in the media' is someone who does his best to stop us getting to the truth?

MORE INFORMATION

Coming soon: "The Madeleine McCann Case Files Volume 1", published by the Madeleine Foundation, available from the Madeleine Foundation, price £3.00 including postage. This is a collection of eight of the most important documents about the disappearance of Madeleine McCann which the Portuguese Police have now released for the public to view, and will give readers valuable insights into what really happened to Madeleine McCann.

There's also a wealth of information about the McCann case at other sites, we'd recommend in particular:

- www.mccannfiles.com
- www.gerrymccannsblogs.co.uk
- <http://themaddiecasefiles.com/>

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