

## **How did the alleged abductor snatch Madeleine in a time slot of no more than 3-4 minutes?**

*by Barbara Nottage*

One of the curious aspects of the alleged abduction of Madeleine McCann is the extraordinarily tight timetable in which the abduction is supposed to have taken place. Dr Gerald McCann says he went to check on the children at about 9.05pm on 3 May 2007. He also said elsewhere that he had been an unusually long time in the apartment toilet, and that he had been inside all four rooms of the apartment. In addition, he told the world that he had had time during his visit to gaze down on Madeleine, whom he was to describe as 'lying in the recovery position', and to think how lucky he was to have such a beautiful daughter. By this reckoning, He could not have left the apartment until around 9.10pm or several minutes later.

Meanwhile Jane Tanner, a close friend of the McCanns, has given statements saying that she saw what she thought was a male abductor carrying Madeleine away in his arms from the apartment at around 9.15pm - although we might note here that in August 2009 at a press conference, the McCanns' chief private investigator, former Detective Inspector Dave Edgar, said that Jane Tanner might have seen a woman, not a man.

### **The abduction scenario**

So let's examine this situation more closely.

The scenario put forward by the McCanns and their friends runs as follows:

- The abductor must have been watching the apartment for several days before snatching Madeleine on 3 May.
- The McCanns went down to the 'Tapas bar' at the Ocean Club at around 8.30pm that evening, with other members of the group arriving during the next half-an-hour or so.
- Dr Matthew Oldfield 'checked the apartment from the outside' at around 9.00pm to 9.03pm.
- Dr Gerry McCann returned to his apartment (5A) from the Tapas bar to check on his children at around 9.05pm. The walk to the apartment would have taken one to two minutes. So on his own timing, he would have arrived there around 9.07pm.
- Dr Gerry McCann was briefly in all four rooms of their holiday apartment, during which time he checked his children. He also says he spent an unusually long time in the toilet - maybe up to 5 minutes, though we have never been told why. He tells us that he paused briefly over Madeleine's bed and thought to himself how very lucky he was to have such a beautiful child.
- Dr Gerry McCann says he noticed that the door to the children's room was 'wider open than before'. He says that at 8.30pm it had been open at an angle of about 45 degrees (half open). He remembers (he says) that when he went to check the children at 9.05pm, the door was now open at an angle of 60 degrees (two thirds open).

- The fact that the door - according to Dr Gerald McCann - was now (at 9.05pm) more open more than it was before (at 8.30pm), has been used by him to suggest the possibility that the abductor may have been *already in the apartment* when he checked on the children, although he says he only realised this possibility some months after the events of the day. Dr Gerry McCann has said that the abductor might have been hiding behind a door or in a wardrobe while he spent several minutes doing his 'check' on the children.
- Dr Gerry McCann must have left the room, on his own account, at between 9.10pm and 9.15pm. He then says he encountered a TV cameraman, Jeremy ('Jes') Wilkins, on the road back to the Tapas bar at the Ocean Club, and was talking to him for several minutes between 9.10pm and 9.25pm (Jeremy Wilkins confirms the meeting, but says it only lasted three minutes).
- Ms Jane Tanner (partner of Dr Russell O'Brien) says she left the Tapas bar at around 9.15pm and saw a man walking 'purposefully', with a child in his arms, along the top of the road running alongside the McCanns' apartment. She has maintained throughout that she saw this man at almost exactly 9.15pm.
- The McCanns maintain that they left their apartment *unlocked*. This contrasts however with what they said during the night of 3 May/4 May. In telephone calls to relatives, Dr Gerald McCann told them that an abductor had forced entry into the apartment by jemmying open the shutters. They appear to have changed this story after both the Manager of Mark Warners, Mr John Hill, and the police, found no evidence whatsoever of the shutters having been forced open. The McCanns now say, therefore, that the abductor must have entered their apartment *through the unlocked patio door*. But they maintain that the windows and shutters that they say they found open on Dr Kate McCann checking the children at 10.00pm were because the abductor must have made his escape via that route. They say the abductor must have opened the window and the shutters (which the McCanns say they had had left closed) from the *inside*, climbed through the window, and taken Madeleine through that window.
- Dr Kate McCann says she returned to the apartment to check on the children at 10.00pm. She says she 'knew instantly' that Madeleine had been abducted - and then so did Dr Gerald McCann, minutes later, when he says he arrived at the apartment. Dr Kate McCann later told a TV interviewer that because of the requirement for secrecy about the police investigation, she could not explain *why* she 'knew instantly' that Madeleine had been abducted. She has never explained this, even 2½ years later.

The photographs of the apartment taken by the Portuguese police on the day after Madeleine was reported missing do not show anything which would clearly point to an abduction, certainly not damaged shutters. No forensic evidence whatsoever of the alleged abductor has been found. There were no forensic traces in the room, and no fingerprints on the window, window frame or shutters except for one of Dr Kate McCann's fingerprints. The lichen on the windowsill was undisturbed.

Going by the above scenario, which the McCanns and their 'Tapas 9' friends have maintained, the abductor (if there was one) must have *either* entered the apartment *before* Dr Matthew Oldfield's check at around 9.03pm and Dr Gerry McCann's check which began at 9.05pm/9.07pm – a version put forward by the McCanns months after Madeleine was reported missing - McCanns now want us to believe - *or after* Dr Gerry McCann left at 9.10pm to 9.15pm and *before* he was (allegedly) seen by Jane Tanner at 9.15pm.

**The remainder of this article has been withdrawn pending the receipt of legal advice**

**NOTE: On 5 February 2010, the McCanns' lawyers, Carter-Ruck, wrote to us claiming that this article "implies that our clients have lied and that their daughter was not abducted" and is therefore "highly defamatory, casting (as it does), very serious doubt on the suggestion that Madeleine could indeed have been abducted".**

**The first part of Barbara Nottage's article, as reproduced above, deals purely with factual matters as stated by the McCanns themselves and their friends who were with them in Praia da Luz. At the end of her article, Barbara declared: "I conclude by saying that I am not saying the abduction of Madeleine never happened".**

**The second part of Barbara's article was headed: "The problems with this abduction scenario".**

**In the light of Carter-Ruck's letter, we are withdrawing the remainder of Barbara's article until further notice, pending our receiving legal advice on the contents of her article.**

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The Committee of The Madeleine Foundation - 9 February 2010