

The Mystery of Robert Murat: From Arguido to Applause:

An examination of Robert Murat's involvement in events following the disappearance of Madeleine McCann

By Tony Bennett, April 2010



PART ONE: CHAPTERS A TO E

The other parts will follow in the coming days

IMPORTANT NOTE:

“This article must not be taken as implying that Robert Murat had any connection with the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, either before she was reported missing, or afterwards. One of our roles in the Madeleine Foundation is to continue to search for the truth about what really happened to Madeleine McCann. We hope that this article will serve this purpose. We have striven for 100% accuracy in all that we say in this and other articles. However, we invite readers to suggest anything which needs to be corrected or added to our article; see our Contacts page for how to contact us”. - Statement by the Committee of the Madeleine Foundation, April 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES: We wish to acknowledge the information and analysis about the case of missing Madeleine McCann that appears in many websites, blogs and forums on the Internet. In particular, we acknowledge the contribution of the many who have laboured voluntarily to translate important source documents from Portuguese into English. We have made use in particular of documents found at mccannfiles.com, thesergents.net, maddiecasefiles.com and gerrymccannsblogs.com. Some of our other sources are listed within the text of our article. We intend to supply a full list of sources for this article at a later date.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Committee and members of the Madeleine Foundation and all others who have helped me in any way in compiling this article.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Robert Murat first came to the notice of the British public a few days after Madeleine McCann was reported missing. Lurid headlines in the British press suggested he may have abducted Madeleine - or worse. The McCanns' friend Jane Tanner had claimed on 13 May 2007 to positively identify Robert Murat as the abductor she said she had seen at around 9.15pm on 3 May carrying away Madeleine. Murat was promptly declared an 'arguido' (person of interest, or suspect) in the investigation and interviewed at length on 14 May, just eleven days after Madeleine was reported missing.

The intention of this featured essay is simply to pull together some of the main known facts about Robert Murat, along with raising questions about his role. Not all of it may seem relevant, but the mystery of Madeleine McCann appears to be a case where little details can turn out to have considerable significance. We will look specifically at:

1. What is known about Murat before May 2007.
2. The circumstances of his travelling from England to Praia da Luz early on 1 May 2007, two days before Madeleine was reported missing.
3. His work of translating witness statements between 4 and 9 May 2007.
4. How he came to be made an 'arguido' on suspicion of being involved with the disappearance of Madeleine McCann.
5. His first statement to the police on 14 May 2007.
6. His mother's statements to the police.
7. His second statements to the police on 10 and 11 July 2007, with an analysis of 17 changes of evidence from his first statement.
8. His meeting with double glazing multi-millionaire Brian Kennedy and his lawyer Edward Smethurst on or about 13 November 2007.
9. His libel awards of £600,000- plus.
10. His 'final' speech on the Madeleine McCann mystery on 5 March 2009 at the Cambridge Union.
11. His marriage to Michaela Walczuk.

An Appendix lists his telephone calls as established by the Portuguese Police. The essay is intended to be a compilation of information about Robert Murat's connection with the police investigation into the disappearance of Madeleine McCann. Not all of it may seem relevant but this appears to be a case where little details can turn out to have considerable significance.

A. Introduction

Robert Murat is a name known to anyone who has followed, even only slightly, the case of missing Madeleine McCann.

Within days of Madeleine's disappearance, Robert Murat was identified by a *Sunday Mirror* journalist, Lori Campbell, as someone who was acting suspiciously in relation to Madeleine's disappearance. She made a telephone call to Leicestershire Police as early as Sunday, 6 May, expressing her concerns about Murat to a police officer, who hastily conveyed her suspicions to the Portuguese Police. Just eight days later, after being questioned by police, he was made a formal suspect, an 'arguido', in the Portuguese language. There followed a series of reports in the British and Portuguese press about Murat, portraying him as a sinister figure who was trying too hard to find out from police officers and journalists what was going on in the investigation. Details about his character and early life were endlessly recycled in the British media.

Another highly influential moment in the case happened at around the same date [6 May] - a top-level decision to send one of the government's top media manipulators, Clarence Mitchell, to Praia da Luz. At the time, Mitchell was the Director of the Media Monitoring Unit at the Central Office of Information, directing, as he once boasted, 40 staff. Again, in his own words, his role there was to 'control what comes out in the media'. During the weekend of 5-6 May, it appears that a decision was made to second Mitchell from the COI to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to work full-time on the Madeleine McCann case. As we shall see later, he actually travelled to Praia da Luz on 22 May, but as this Parliamentary Question and its answer show (although the response is curiously worded), he was transferred from one department to another on Monday 7 May (7 to 31 May = 25 days):

Elliot Morley (Scunthorpe, Labour)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Mr. Clarence Mitchell was seconded by his Department to act as an official spokesperson for the family of Madeleine McCann.

Jim Murphy (Minister of State (Europe), Foreign & Commonwealth Office)

Clarence Mitchell was seconded to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, from the Central Office of Information (COI), for a period of 25

days in May 2007 to provide assistance with the media to the family of Madeleine McCann. He resigned from the COI in September 2007.

Quite why it was necessary to send such a high-profile government media manipulator to Praia da Luz has never been satisfactorily answered.

At the same time as Lori Campbell was suspecting Murat, and as Clarence Mitchell was beginning the handling the government's media campaign on behalf of the McCanns (and as the original senior detective in the case, Gonçalo Amaral, documents in his book), various members of the British security services, certainly including staff from the controversial Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), had also been flown over to Praia da Luz on an emergency basis. Among other things, they were busy compiling a profile of the person they thought might have abducted Madeleine.

By the time Murat was declared an 'arguido', these shadowy figures from British intelligence and security services were already pointing out to the Portuguese Police that Murat appeared to fit their profile of the likely abductor. Their precise role in the process whereby Murat was declared an 'arguido' may be examined in more depth in a forthcoming article.

From the moment he was declared an arguido, Murat's private life was under intense scrutiny. Lurid stories about him appeared in the newspapers, including one story in which a local translator, Gaynor de Jesus, explained how she was at school with Mr Murat and how, as a 'party trick', he used to take out his glass eye. Other witnesses came up with more graphic stories about him, which we will not repeat in this article, although they may well be of significance. We will give the references to where those statements may be located.

In a SKY NEWS item broadcast the very day Murat was made 'arguido', titled 'Journalist reported man to the police', journalist Lori Campbell used an accompanying video, provocatively titled: 'It reminded me of Soham', hinting that Murat might have been responsible for something truly awful that might have happened to Madeleine. Murat later successfully sued SKY TV for broadcasting the interview - see Chapter P of this article, below.

Much later, in an article published in the newspaper *Expresso* on 29 September 2007, the McCanns' chief public relations adviser, Clarence Mitchell, was quoted as saying: "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". It would be unusual for a person of Mitchell's stature and experience in the worlds of media control and public relations to come out with the words that he did about Murat just as a result of a careless accident. We will examine in detail how Murat came to be suspected and smeared.

We know from Mitchell's own statement that he first met Dr Gerald McCann at Leicester Police Station on 21 May when Dr McCann was on a short visit to the U.K. - among other things to collect samples of Madeleine's DNA which, bizarrely, could not be found anywhere in the apartment they were holidaying in, nor on any of Madeleine's clothes or personal items like her hairbrush or toothbrush. Mitchell says he travelled to Praia da Luz on 22 May, but neither man has disclosed whether they travelled together or not.

As noted on the blog 'thesargents.net':

<http://www.thesargeants.net/dblog/cerca.asp?cosa=prweek>

...Tony Blair's then Head of Communications, Howell James, was personally responsible for seconding Mitchell to the Foreign Office, as reported by the journal *PR Week* on 23 May.

As a matter of interest, again as discussed on 'thesargents.net' blog, Howell James had worked very closely for former Prime Minister John Major as his Political Secretary. Major holidayed on a number of occasions with the Symington Family in Portugal. A member of the Symington family, David Symington, co-owns the Ocean Club, from where Madeleine disappeared. It is also of interest to note that Howell James also enjoys very friendly relations with Tim Bell, the owner of Bell Pottinger. Mark Warners, the holiday company who had recently taken over management of the Ocean Club apartments, immediately called in Bell Pottinger to help them with their media relations, after Madeleine was reported missing. They too hurriedly sent their top media relations man, Alex Woolfall, to Praia da Luz in the immediate aftermath of Madeleine's disappearance. Tim Bell of Bell Pottinger also acted as Election Advisor to John Major.

We might also note that the experts flooding in to Praia da Luz to help the McCanns included the following:

- a) at least three officers from Leicestershire Police

- b) Sheree Dodd, a top civil servant from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who reportedly was sent back to the U.K. after querying the McCanns' account of events
- c) Two prominent members of a private security and research firm, Control Risks Group, namely Keith Farrow and Michael Keenan
- d) David Hopkins, one of the top managers of Mark Warners, and
- e) Two top members from the Skipton-based group, the Centre for Crisis: Alan Pike and Martin Alderton.

So, by mid-May 2007, Murat was an 'arguido', suspected of having abducted or killed Madeleine, and had been compared in some of Britain's news media to double child-murderer Ian Huntley. A large number of top people had been dramatically and suddenly called in to Praia da Luz to find out what had happened to Madeleine. Murat was right at the centre of an international storm and media frenzy.

Yet what a transformation there was about to be.

In July 2008, in a remarkable High Court settlement, several British newspapers agreed to pay Murat a reputed £600,000. He later got even more. In addition, his partner and soon bride-to-be Michaela Walczuk was awarded around £100,000 for alleged defamation of her, while his friend Sergei Malinka also got another £100,000. It was a huge libel payout, by any standards.

Then, to crown everything, Murat was the guest speaker at a high-profile Cambridge Union debate on 5 March 2009 on the conduct of the press. He was the star speaker in favour of a motion condemning the British tabloid press. His short, carefully scripted, speech received thunderous applause. I know, I was there. The motion that he supported that night was overwhelmingly carried. It was a personal triumph for him.

Just over a month later, on 17 April, he married his partner Michaela Walczuk.

This essay will attempt to trace the steps leading up to his arrest and being placed under 'suspect' status, and follow the various twists and turns in Murat's history up to the day he received that hero's applause at Cambridge. He had travelled in less than two years from being the chief suspect in a terrible crime to becoming the reluctant hero who had, so it seemed, been treated so shamefully by the British tabloid press. He had triumphed over adversity by receiving a standing ovation for his 15-minute speech. Hence the title for my essay: 'From arguido to applause'.

B. Robert Murat's life before the Madeleine McCann case

Robert Murat was born Robert James Queriol Eveleigh Murat, at Queen Charlotte's Hospital in London, on 20 November 1973 and, at the time of writing, is 36 years old. His parents were living in Richmond-on-Thames at the time. He married an older woman, Dawn, in 2001, and in 2002 they had a child, S____, now aged 7. That was the only child of this union. The couple are now divorced. His former wife lives in Hockering, Norfolk.

His mother, Jennifer Ann Murat, nee Eveleigh, now aged 73, lives in Praia da Luz. She had moved to Atalaia near Lagos, Portugal, within a month of Robert being born in 1973. Also living nearby in Portugal are Robert Murat's uncle, Ralph Eveleigh, and his cousin Sally Eveleigh.

Robert's father, John Henry Queriol Murat, was born on 24 January 1924 and died in Westminster, London, in 1986 aged 62 (when Robert was 12). Although his family were based in Portugal, the young John Murat was tutored in England at an exclusive boarding school, Hill Brow School (now Somerset Court), in Eastbourne. Later he went to Bradfield College where he was a contemporary of comedian Tony Hancock.

Robert Murat began his primary education at the School of Barlavento, an English language school in Portugal. Then he changed to the International School for two years. After that, he returned to study in England for a while, then returning to study at a public school in Lagos until he was 16 (1989). Then he returned to England once again to live with his maternal grandmother in southern England. He began selling double-glazing, and later worked as a car salesman for 'Nissan'. He was said to play darts and go clay pigeon shooting for recreation.

One newspaper published this sympathetic portrait of him, about his time in Norfolk, by 85-year-old Colin Shackcloth:

QUOTE

“One resident said: ‘He [Robert Murat] is ever such a likeable guy and probably one of the most helpful people you could come across. He was very conscientious when I worked with him and spent masses of time with customers - almost to the point where he would become annoying. It's just the way he is. He is one of those overly helpful people who likes

to get involved. Sometimes at work, I had to tell him to go away in a friendly way’.

“Mr Murat had a reputation, not only in the car trade but also in Hockering, as something of a Good Samaritan.

“His next-door neighbour, Colin Shackcloth, 85, said: ‘He is a lovely man, but, two years ago, I realised he was gone. I went round with a little present at Christmas, a box of chocolates and Dawn said: ‘Robert has gone back and he is stopping there’.’

“Mr Shackcloth, a retired display manager, added: ‘He always struck me as a down-to-earth kind of fellow. If you wanted anything, he would help. If you needed it, he would be round to replace a bulb for you. What he is supposed to have done just doesn’t fit. They were both very nice to us. We never had an angry word since they moved in about 11 years ago. I can’t say a bad word about him’.”

But there were other, sharply contrasting, voices. At this point we will refer to the evidence of two witnesses who came forward to the Portuguese police with what they said was relevant information about Robert Murat. The second of these two statements was from an anonymous witness.

Witnesses may be anonymous for all sorts of reasons. There are three common explanations for why some witnesses prefer to remain anonymous. Some do not give their names out of malice. Or perhaps they are attention-seekers. Others hide their real identity out of fear of repercussions.

These two witnesses both gave evidence which suggested that Robert Murat had something of a history of sexual perversion, certainly as a teenager, and also a propensity for violence. A number of comments were made by these witnesses whom the Portuguese Police found of interest.

We are not going to reproduce either of these statements in this article as they contain sexually explicit comments and other material of quite a graphic nature. Below, however, we inform you as to where you can read these two statements. They are also reproduced in full in our complete article which we’ll be pleased to send you on request - contact us via our ‘Contacts’ page.

The first witness - Carlos Manuel Mateus Costa

This was by businessman Carlos Manuel Mateus Costa and you can read his statement here on Pam-a-Lam's website:

<http://www.gerrymccannsblogs.co.uk/PJ/CARLOS-COSTA.htm>

It's in the Portuguese Police files at: Processos, Vol V, pages 1286 to 1288. Mr Costa gave his statement to the Portuguese Police on 15 May 2009.

It should be noted that he did not give his evidence anonymously and the details he gave about the sources for his knowledge about Robert Murat suggest that he is a credible witness.

[ADDITIONAL NOTE: Pam-a-Lam's website has been subject to letters from libel lawyers Carter-Ruck asking her to take down her website. At the date of publication of this article, it is still there].

The second witness (anonymous)

This second, anonymous, witness who came forward to the Portuguese Police explicitly says that she wanted to remain anonymous 'for reasons of safety'. Her 'phone call came at 8.00pm on 8 May, just five days into the investigation. It was from a 'withheld' number, and from a female, obviously speaking in her native Portuguese.

She said she thought she knew who had abducted Madeleine, and then referred to a male whom she said 'knows how to keep quiet and is quite close to the police'. We should say at this point that we don't know if this witness meant that the man was close to the local police force, the GNR, or to the national police force, the Polícia Judiciária (PJ).

She went on to give the following information about him, which clearly identifies him as Robert Murat:

- his name is Robert
- he lives in Praia da Luz
- he has an English mother, who also speaks Portuguese very well
- the man has been in and around the area since Madeleine's disappearance, supposedly with the intention of helping the investigation.

We have left out the rest of what she told the Portuguese Police for the reasons we gave above, but you can read her full statement here:
<http://www.gerrymccannsblogs.co.uk/PJ/ROBERT-MURAT.htm>

Her statement can be found in the Portuguese Police files at:
02-Processos Volume II PJ Record 8th May 2007.

What Murat said about his background and history in his first police interview (14 May 2007)

What did Murat tell the police about his background and history when he was first interviewed by the Portuguese Police on 14 May?

He was asked to give his occupation. Despite later claiming he made a living from selling real estate by advertising on the Internet, Murat told police he was ‘unemployed’.

He said he had no criminal record, had never been charged with any crime, nor even arrested. Although born in London, his parents had moved to Canada when he was just two weeks old, returning to the U.K. in 1979, when Robert was six. His father died when he was twelve; thereafter he lived with his mother in Portugal, living in Lagos and Alrnádena.

In recent years Murat had also lived in England, mainly in Norfolk and, before that, in Sidford, Devon. He had an elder sister, Samantha, then aged 35, and a younger brother, Richard, then aged 28, who had both lived with him and his mother in Portugal. They now both live in England. Murat said he had four nephews, adding that he comes from a happy family with good relationships all round and frequent contact with them all.

Murat went to school in Espiche, and then attended the International School at Porches and after that Secondary School in Lagos. Since then he had been on some technical and professional courses, including an accountancy course in the U.K.

He seems to have left school early, and in his teens admitted to ‘often’ drinking and taking drugs. He appears to have left Portugal for England sometime in his late teens.

Whilst living in the south of England, he worked as a care assistant for elderly people, and then on the search and rescue of shipwrecks. He said

he had a few 'fleeting' relationships with females. More important, it was here in 1992 that he met his future wife, Dawn Chapman, when he was 19 years old and she was 27. It was during this time, apparently, that he had a motorbike accident, crashing into a wall, where he lost his right eye.

It seems that he moved to Norfolk in 1994, where he lived with Dawn. They bought a modest, semi-detached, three-bedroom house in the village of Hockering. At that time, Dawn already had a son aged six. She got divorced, and the couple married at Gretna Green in March 2001. Their daughter S____ was born 18 months later, in late 2002. Murat once described her as 'the spitting image of Madeleine'.

In Norfolk, he had a variety of jobs, including that of a salesman for a glazing and windows company, a factory worker in the meat business at Bernard Matthews' factory at Lenwade, and a car salesman, working first for *Inchcape* and then for the *Desira* car dealership in Norwich, selling Nissans, Alfa Romeos, Fiats and Citroens. After a while he became an accepted translator for Norfolk Police, frequently translating for the increasing numbers of Portuguese working in the agricultural sector in Norfolk.

The couple moved to Portugal in late 2004 or early 2005 but soon separated his wife and daughter returning to live in England in the August of that year. It seems that as soon as he moved to Portugal, he immediately became involved in selling and dealing in property.

Murat then told the police he had been making regular trips back to England to see his daughter - in October and November 2005, then again in May, June, November and December 2006. He said he made a further visit to England in January 2007. He had gone back to England again in March, when he stayed with his grandmother in Devon, returning to Portugal, as we will examine shortly, on Tuesday 1 May, two days before Madeleine was reported missing.

He added that when in the U.K. he generally stayed either with his grandmother or his sister. As a matter of interest, Murat's sister Samantha owns two homes, one in Sidmouth and one in Exeter (both in Devon). Her Exeter home is less than a mile from the house where Jane Tanner and Russell O'Brien, two of the so-called 'Tapas 9' group of the McCanns and their holiday friends, live. Strangely, Tanner and O'Brien are also near neighbours of James and Charlotte Gorrod, who were also at the resort at the same time as the 'Tapas 9'. Indeed, the Gorrods travelled out to Praia da Luz on the same plane as the McCanns on 28 April.

Soon after Murat moved to Portugal, he joined the *Remax* property company in April 2005 and worked there on two separate contracts during 2005 as a Sales Executive. In between, from September to November, he worked for portuguesehomes.com

He seems to have been popular, but apparently left suddenly stating that he had to go 'for personal reasons'. It was whilst working at *Remax*, Murat said, that he became instantly attracted to another member of the sales staff, Michaela Walczuk, a German-born Jehovah's Witness with a Polish surname. She also used the name Matias, believed to have been from a former marriage.

At the time, however, she was married to Mr Luis Antonia, whom we shall discuss further below.

Around one year later, Murat is understood to have moved into the apartment she shared with her husband Luis Antonio, apparently with his full agreement. He either stayed there or was a frequent visitor for the next few months. During this time it seems that Michaela Walczuk also began to spend a lot of time at Murat's mother's house, 'Casa Liliana'.

What Mrs Jennifer Murat told the police about her son

What did Mrs Jennifer Murat, Robert's mother, tell the police about her and her son?

Jennifer Murat said she was born 1936, nee Eveleigh, at Sidmouth in Devon. She came to live in Portugal nearly 40 years ago, in 1968 or 1969. Her late husband, John Murat, had bought a house in Burgau. She now speaks good Portuguese. She had helped her husband in his property business, but when there was a crisis in the business, on 25 April 1974, she began work as a nurse - her original profession - in Lagos Hospital. At that time her son Robert was about one year old.

She'd had three children, Samantha in 1971, Robert in 1973 and finally Richard in 1979. She said Robert had been born in London but within a month they came over to Portugal to live at Atalaia, Lagos.

In 1981, when Robert would be about eight years old, she and her three children left Atalaia and went to live at Almadena, a five-acre property with several houses in ruins on it. (It appears that by this time Murat's parents had separated). These ruins were rebuilt and let out as holiday

accommodation for tourists. They stayed there until 2002, when she moved to her present address in Praia da Luz. By that time, she had a new partner, from whom she had since separated. He had gone to live in France.

She said that Robert's only health problem was a visual problem that resulted in him losing the sight of his right eye. He had been diagnosed at the age of about nine with a detached retina, apparently of traumatic origin. It must presumably have been some kind of very severe blow to the head. She did not mention the motorcycle accident as the cause of the damage to his right eye.

Surgery did not save his right eye, from which he could not now see. He also had a thyroid malfunction. When he was about 10 years old, he had had an injury to his right knee which required surgery at a hospital in England. The only medicine she was aware that Robert took was Levothyroxine, daily, for his thyroid problem.

She said that it was in Norwich that her son met and later married his wife Dawn, whom she said was about 10-12 years older than him. Dawn already had a son by her first marriage, now aged 20. She understood that the son changed his name to Murat on their marriage. Robert and Dawn had a daughter in 2002, but separated 'the following year' [2003], apparently on amicable terms. She said that during the period Robert lived in England, he would usually visit Portugal about three times a year.

Mrs Murat said that on her mother's death in 2003, she inherited her house in Sidmouth, Devon. She said that when Robert travels to England, he stays in that house and is renovating it.

In 2003, she said, Robert came to live in Portugal with his wife Dawn and baby, intending to settle there. But it didn't work out, she says because Dawn found the language problem and being away from family and friends too difficult.

She adds that soon afterwards Robert began working in the property business, initially for *Remax* then for 'Portuguese Homes'. Later, she said, he went back to work for *Remax* for a second period. She said that that occurred because Robert didn't think he was being paid enough, and wasn't receiving the commissions to which he was entitled. He then began a project selling property on the Internet with his new girlfriend Michaela Walczuk. Michaela, a Portuguese national, already had a daughter aged about eight or nine called T_____. Murat knew that

Michaela was married to and living with a man called Luis and that she was a Jehovah's Witness.

The two accounts of Murat's early life tally in most respects; Mrs Murat may have got one or two dates wrong.

C. Murat's early morning flight from Exeter to Praia da Luz on 1 May 2007

The myriad puzzles relating to Robert Murat's subsequent involvement in the Madeleine McCann case begin with trying to explain his apparently sudden decision to fly from Exeter to Faro Airport, on the Algarve, at 7.00am on Tuesday 1 May. Murat has explained this as a response to his partner Michaela Walczuk urgently demanding him to see his solicitor in Portugal to finalise his divorce so that she and Murat could go ahead and marry. He had previously, he said, been planning to fly back out to Portugal on 9 May.

The flight booking was apparently made between 12midnight and 2am on Monday 1 May. Murat's sister appears to have driven him to Exeter Airport between 4am and 5am that morning, so he could catch his flight. Why did Murat leave this booking to the last possible moment? The later you leave it, the more the risk of not finding a seat, and the price triples or even more. We conclude that the booking was made in a hurry.

There has therefore been some speculation that Murat was summoned to Portugal by 'phone during 30 April because something untoward had already happened in Praia da Luz. The Portuguese Police have made available certain telephone records relating to Robert Murat and his friends which have added to that speculation.

These records suggest that there was quite intense telephone activity on 30 April between the landline of the home of Robert Murat and his mother in Praia da Luz and two Exeter telephone numbers, one of them being his sister's 'phone, where Robert appeared to have been staying at that time.

One 'phone call, to a U.K. landline just after 9.00am, lasted over an hour. Some of these calls were to a U.K. mobile 'phone. It could perhaps have been either his mother, or his girlfriend Michaela Walczuk, who was talking to Murat. Other records show that Michaela Walczuk was also

very busy that morning [30 April] on her two mobiles, making several long 'phone calls instead of her usual short ones.

There appear to be some unusual aspects of some of the telephone records relating to the 'Tapas 9' prior to 3 May 2007. Jane Tanner appears to have received a call made at 4.12am on the previous day, Sunday 29 April. There is a strange patterns of mobile calls made at around 10.00pm on Tuesday 1 May. We also know that Dr Gerald McCann received either 12 or 14 voicemail messages on 2 May, while Dr Kate McCann began wiping calls from her mobile on the same day. These are matters we hope to explore more fully in another article.

D. Murat is suspected, and made 'arguido'

By 11 May, eight days after Madeleine had been reported missing, one of the Portuguese Police team, Inspector Pedro Varanda, had become suspicious enough about Murat to file an urgent memo to his manager. His report, filed that day, included the following observations:

“Sir,

This relates to an informal conversation I've had with Robert Murat. As you will know, today at 11.30am, Inspector Patricia Duarte and I interviewed a British citizen called Dianne Webster. We realised she could not speak Portuguese, so we sought an English-speaking interpreter.

We decided to use a fellow British citizen, Robert J.Q.E. Murat, of whom we were aware from his previous translation work. His address is Casa Liliana, Rua Ramalhete, Praia da Luz, Lagos.

After we'd finished interviewing Dianne Webster, I had an informal conversation in Portuguese with Murat. During this conversation, he displayed an unusual level of curiosity about the investigation that was developing around the disappearance of Madeleine McCann on 3 May.

To give an example, he insistently and repeatedly questioned me about the identity of possible suspects. He also questioned me about the investigation strategy of the head of our investigation. He even asked about what work the investigation team might be considering in the coming days.

I became highly suspicious. His behavior was absolutely inappropriate for

a translator. In response to such an unusual attitude, I played along, ducking the questions. I also reminded him to stick to his contractual role of translating. I pointed out that the whole investigation was still in the initial enquiry phase, and that therefore judicial secrecy rules still applied.

I also need to emphasise that the suspicions I had were reinforced when I became aware that Robert Murat would covertly attempt to catch glimpses of various documents, for example, items being prepared for the case files that make up the present inquiry.

I noticed that Murat also displayed an enormous knowledge of all kinds of matters relating to the 'Ocean Club Complex', where the events under investigation had taken place, and of the routines followed by the McCann family and their companions during their respective stays in Praia da Luz. I would add that he has persistently tried to influence the conduct of the present investigation.

He has put forward various ideas which, taken together, could be taken as suggesting that foreigners were to blame for Madeleine's abduction. I bring these matters to your attention, so you can determine what may be appropriate". By any standards, Murat had stepped a long way beyond the role of mere translator.

We now come to a most curious feature of the case - the pointing of the initial finger of suspicion against Robert Murat by *Sunday Mirror* journalist Lori Campbell. It's of interest, and possible relevance, to note that the McCanns' chief public relations adviser, Clarence Mitchell, and Lori Campbell, had previously - a few years earlier - worked very closely together on the tragedy of the two young girls from Soham, killed by Ian Huntley, their school caretaker.

There had been international media frenzy about Madeleine going missing and the world was expecting and desperately hoping for her to be found and the suspected abductor to be apprehended.

Lori Campbell was sent to Praia da Luz to cover the Madeleine McCann case. Within three days, she thought she had reasonable grounds to suspect Murat of involvement in Madeleine's disappearance. She reported him to Leicestershire Police in a telephone call on Sunday 6 May.

Only a few days later, as we shall explore below, one of the McCanns' close friends, the so-called 'Tapas 9', Jane Tanner, claimed that Murat

was the person she had seen carrying a young girl near the McCanns' apartment on the evening of 3 May. Just two days after that, another three of the 'Tapas 9' also reported seeing Robert Murat close to the McCanns' apartment the evening Madeleine went missing, a claim he strenuously denied.

It seems that, between them, those four - Jane Tanner, Fiona Payne, Dr Russell O'Brien and Rachael Oldfield/Mampilly - made a determined attempt, for whatever reason, to smear Murat as the likely abductor.

Much later, in an interview with the newspaper *Expresso*, published on 29 September 2007, Clarence Mitchell was asked: "Whilst you were a journalist, following the case of Jessica and Holly in Soham, the children were found dead 2 weeks later. Did you predict the same ending to this case?"

Mitchell replied: "I thought that by this time she would have been found dead or alive, but an ending similar to the case of Jessica and Holly is possible. I don't want to and can't speak about Robert Murat - but some of the journalists that worked with me in Soham, and that were recently in Portugal, saw similarities between the case and Robert Murat - more than this I will not say".

Given that Mitchell had publicly hinted once again that Robert Murat might turn out to be 'another Ian Huntley', it was surprising that when Murat later sued various newspapers for libel, he did not also include Clarence Mitchell.

When first identified as a suspect, Murat said he was 'a scapegoat' for something he did not do, and, days later, after being named as a suspect, told SKY NEWS that being made an 'arguido' had 'ruined his life'.

Later he somewhat melodramatically described the whole situation in an interview with the *Daily Mail*, published on 2 June 2007, in these words: "Basically, I'm just an ordinary, straightforward guy who's the victim of the biggest f___-up on this planet - if you'll excuse the language".

Still later, in October, he told the BBC his situation had become 'very, very difficult', while in January 2008 Mrs Murat spoke out in a BBC interview, saying it was time her son's 'suspect' status was reviewed and pointing out that the police had not contacted him for months.

We'll return now to the sequence of events that led to Murat's being pulled in for questioning. He was made an 'arguido' on Monday 14 May, immediately following a positive identification of him as the alleged abductor by the McCanns' friend Jane Tanner, which we deal with in more detail later. He was questioned later that day. Below, we examine in detail the information Murat gave to police on 14 May, but perhaps first we should discuss how the identification that Robert Murat was the abductor was made by Tanner. We also need to examine the separate, but clearly related, claim by three other members of the 'Tapas 9' group that they saw Robert Murat hanging around the Ocean Club complex near the McCanns' apartment on the night that Madeleine disappeared. But before all that we'll look at what Murat did on the Friday and Saturday after Madeleine was reported missing.

E. Murat's activities on 4 and 5 May, as described by Paulo Reis

We'll sketch in here a few impressions about Murat's activities on 4 and 5 May, based on an article filed in May 2007 by Portuguese journalist Paulo Reis. Here are his main observations:

- Murat was seen near the Ocean Club early on 4 May and talked to several journalists
- He was casually dressed, in jeans, blue plastic sandals and a blue-and-white check shirt
- Murat initiated talks with two Portuguese journalists. According to the journalists' recollections, he claimed he knew Madeleine's parents, knew they were doctors, and said he was 'deeply disturbed with the abduction' because he had also a three-year-old daughter who, by coincidence, was also called Madeleine
- That day, Murat 'seemed to be everywhere, helping British journalists with translations, buying water in Batista supermarket to take to the GNR (Guarda Nacional Republicana) policemen guarding the area, asking if there was any news about Madeleine and even giving some predictions, like: 'They will never find the child, probably she is already in Spain'
- The following day the same happened. Around 7.00pm, a Portuguese journalist says he saw Murat sitting at a table of Batista's supermarket terrace, chatting with Sergei Malinka, as shown on the next page:



Terrace outside the Batista supermarket where Murat and Malinka chatted on the evening of 5 May

The following day, Sunday 6 May, Murat was rarely seen. By then he appears to have got wind of the fact that some journalists were identifying him as a possible suspect.

During the following weekend (12 to 14 May), Murat hired a car and made various trips in it. By this time, the Portuguese Police already had him under surveillance. They had apparently also received briefings about him from unknown members of a team from the British security services. These no doubt included personnel from CEOP and formed the team of British officers who claimed to have come up with a profile of the alleged abductor and identified Robert Murat as closely matching that profile.

END OF PART ONE