

## **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 THREE: CHAPTER F**

#### **G. The first police interview with Robert Murat**

We've examined the history of how Robert Murat came to be identified by four of the 'Tapas 9' as either the abductor or else as a 'spotter' for a group of paedophiles. Now we'll examine the most important parts of Robert Murat's first interview with the Portuguese Police, which took place on 14 May.

After giving his background and history, Murat was first asked to explain why he had come back to Portugal on 1 May, and to give an account of his lifestyle in Portugal. He explained that he'd returned to Portugal mainly in order to hold meetings to form a new real estate company, 'Romigen', together with his girlfriend Michaela. Michaela had a daughter and they had been with Murat to England on his last three visits. He'd met her whilst working for the company *Remax* in 2005, and started going out with her, although she was married to a Luis Antonio.

Murat explained that his mother received pensions from both England and Portugal totalling around £600 a month. She had acquired her current property through inheritance and the sale of a previous property.

He said that he and his girlfriend Michaela were planning to set up a new real estate company called 'Romigen', apparently named after Robert, Michaela and a mutual friend called Genaro acosta Gonzales. Others

suggested that the 'Gen' part of 'Romigen' was derived from the word 'Genesis', but that seems most unlikely. Newspapers reported that the police were 'very keen' to talk to the elusive Mr acosta Gonzales, who appears to have hot-footed it to Huelva, over the border in Spain. We do not know if they ever traced and interviewed him.

He said he spent much of his leisure time with Michaela, going on walks with her. He used the internet, he said, to write to Michaela and to visit pornographic sites, his favourite being the explicit website at: <http://www.redclouds.com>

He added that he 'did not visit that site daily'. Incidentally, the 'Redclouds' website currently [April 2010] boasts on its website that it is: "The hugest site for Girlfriends, Wives, Co-workers and Couples going really wild and beyond - the Explicit Section of the free Voyeurweb". It appears to be confirmation of what the two witnesses we read about earlier told the police: Murat's strong interest in sex. The site is used a lot by voyeurs, and it is reasonable to speculate that that may have been Murat's prime interest in the site.

We might note at this point a comment about Murat's wife, Dawn, which appeared in the *Sun*:

"Jean Douglas, who has known the family for over 20 years, said of Dawn: 'It was a pretty dramatic fall-out. She was in a hell of a state. She flew back here with S\_\_\_\_, leaving Rob in Portugal. They had left here to start a new life abroad, but Dawn was back within months. She looked terrible, she lost a load of weight and went really skinny. She was very, very upset, but wouldn't say what had happened. A few months after she came back Dawn dyed her hair bleach blonde, which was strange. She changed her appearance. It was all very odd'."

[Source:

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/multimedia/pa/article32852.ece#ixzz0d37v415R> ]

Murat gave the police details of his email addresses; apparently he used six separate email addresses whilst Michaela used three.

He said that in his daily life, he would have meetings with business partners, or future business partners, usually either at restaurants or at Michaela's home in Lagos.

He told police that he had intended to return to England on 9 May, but had stayed behind in Portugal due to Madeleine's disappearance, and because he was helping the authorities with translations. For that reason he'd changed his return flight to 12 May and now, at the request of the police, had changed it to 19 May. He said that his journey back to England was to carry on work restoring his grandmother's house, and for a medical consultation which had been fixed for Monday 14 May.

Murat explained that he had use of his mother's car, a green VW Transporter. He didn't know the registration number. He said it was currently being repaired at the 'Autojoteca' repair shop next to Torre, Lagos. That was why on Saturday he had gone out and rented, at his mother's expense, a Hyundai Getz.

Turning to recent events, Murat said he arrived in Faro Airport at about 9.30am, flying from Exeter. He'd been staying with his grandmother in Sidmouth. His sister Samantha had two houses, one in Alphington, Exeter, the other in Exeter itself. His mother had come to meet him at the airport.

He explained that on arrival at Faro he had driven with his mother to a garage at the airport exit, where the toilets were unfortunately closed. So he didn't get any petrol there but drove on to the A22, stopping at the first service station on the M24 motorway. He and his mother had a meat pie and waffles and put some petrol in the tank. They carried on and then stopped at another service station for coffee.

They then went straight to their mother's home, 'Casa Liliana' in Praia da Luz, arriving between 11.30am and 12.00noon. Very soon after that, and without stopping to unpack his suitcase or even entering his mother's home, he went in the VW to see Michaela in her house in Lagos, arriving there between about 12noon and 12.30pm. He said he had with him some gifts for Michaela and her daughter.

Murat says he remained in Michaela's house until about 3.00pm to 3.30pm, chatting to all the family, including Michaela's father, Luis Antonio. He said he drank tea but 'couldn't remember' if he had had lunch there or not. He drove straight back to his mother's, arriving back there, he said, at around 4.00pm. Asked if he went somewhere else on the way there, he said he couldn't remember. He said that as far as he can remember he stayed with his mother the rest of the day.

Murat then turned to what he did on Wednesday 2 May. He says he got up around 9.00am, leaving home between 10.00am and 10.30am, drove straight to Michaela's home in Lagos in his mother's VW, and arrived at 10.40am. She was alone there and they talked for a while.

He says he left after a short while, then drove to the centre of Lagos, parked in one of the streets, and went to visit his lawyer, Francisco Pagarete. However, he wasn't there. His girlfriend Sonia was there.

He says he left and then went to meet and talk to his future real estate partners in a clothing shop, 'Putos and Graúdos', owned by a man called Jorge da Silva. The four of them, he says, discussed business - Murat, Michaela, Jorge, and Jorge's son Jason. He didn't know what time it was by then. He says they then all adjourned to a café, the name of which he couldn't remember.

After that, Murat says they went to a quieter café, located in the Lagos marina area, where they could more easily discuss their business. He remembers having a drink in that café but can't remember if the others did. He says Michaela paid the café bills.

He thinks it was about 2.00pm when they left the second café and then he and Michaela walked back to the VW, moving on to have lunch in the 'Bem Bom' restaurant in Lagos. He remembers that they ate roast beef. At about 3.20pm, they drove to the school of Michaela's 8-year-old daughter.

They all then drove to the home of Francisco Pagarete. This time, he was at home. He remembers talking about his divorce to Michaela as they drove to Pagarete's home. After apparently talking to Pagarete about business affairs for some time, he, Michaela and her daughter returned to Michaela's Lagos home. He can't remember what they talked about. It was some time before Luis Antonia came back at about 9.00pm, by which time they had sat down to a dinner of pork or turkey.

He recalls leaving Michaela's home at between 10.30pm to 11.00pm, parking his car in front of his mother's house, and chatting to his mother who was still awake. He says he spent time on the computer and played cards, and says he is 'sure' he was at home all that night, going to bed between 1.00am and 1.30am.

He says that on 3 May, the day Madeleine disappeared, he woke between 8.00am and 9.00am. He had a bath, dressed, and had a cup of tea.

He says he left home at 10.00am, and 'presumes' that he went immediately to Lagos to see Michaela. He can't remember where he parked the car. Only Michaela was at home. They talked at length about their real estate business, mostly in the kitchen. They left Michaela's apartment at about 12noon.

He says they took the road towards Portia and, before Odiáxere, turned off the roundabout on to the A22 Portimão-Lagos road. They had lunch at a service station on the M24. He says they then returned to Michaela's apartment and carried on talking about their business plans. Quite why they drove some distance out of Lagos for lunch, only to return to Michaela's apartment straightaway, is not explained.

He says they took the road towards Portia and, before Odiáxere, turned off the roundabout on to the A22 Portimão-Lagos road. (It was the area around Odiáxere where a search for a blanket took place, after a tip-off received by a Dutch Newspaper, *De Telegraaf*. There were lots of ruined and empty farmhouses for sale in and around the area at the time, and considerable demand for them from incoming Brits).

They collected Michaela's daughter from school at 3.30pm and then met up again with Jorge and Jason somewhere in Lagos, adjourning to a café with a play area for children, where Michaela's daughter played. He says they all spoke further about their plans for 'Romigen', carrying on talking until sometime between 6.00pm and 7.00pm.

Murat says that when they finished, they gave Jorge and Jason a lift in his VW to the 'bus station, returning to Michaela's at about 7.00pm He says he left for his mother's home soon afterwards, arriving about 7.15pm to 7.30pm. He can't remember if his mother was at home, but thinks she 'must have been' because by then it was too late for her to be out walking the dogs, which she usually did between 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

He thinks he may have made himself a cup of tea and then switched on the TV and maybe read a newspaper. He says he remembers thereafter talking to his mother in the kitchen until about 10.00pm to 10.30pm about his 'Romigen' business project and having a ham-and-cheese sandwich.

Contrary to what he had said previously, he did not speak to Michaela on the telephone, because between 8.00pm and 10.00pm, he said she had been at a Thursday night Jehovah's Witness meeting, and she'd switched

off her mobile 'phone. He says he might have spoken to her after 10.00pm, but can't remember.

He said that he didn't remember being on his computer that evening, but does remember hearing, at about 10.30pm or just after, a police or ambulance siren. But he didn't leave the house to investigate what that was all about. He says he went to bed about midnight that night, waking up at about 9.00am the following morning (Friday).

What he says next is quite important. He said that after taking a bath and then talking to his mother in the kitchen, his mother told him that 'something terrible has happened'. She said she had had SKY NEWS on and that a child had disappeared from Praia da Luz during the night. Murat says that he and his mother then went immediately into their garden, which had a fence about 3ft to 4ft high around it, to check if perhaps the child had somehow gained entrance to their property. They searched their greenhouse - all with no result.

Murat says he then saw a passer-by, an English-speaking person, to whom he spoke. He says the Englishman, whose name he doesn't know, confirmed that the child had vanished [NOTE: The Englishman's name was Stephen Carpenter, the father of the 'Hertfordshire' couple who had been dining in the Tapas bar with their children alongside the McCanns and their 'Tapas 9' friends the previous night when Madeleine was reported missing].

Murat said that this passer-by said the child's name was Madeleine and that he knew Madeleine's parents. Murat says he assumed that the passer-by must have been staying in the Praia da Luz Ocean Club Complex, as indeed the stranger confirmed. Murat then says that he then went to the Ocean Club with Mr Carpenter and there was immediately introduced to Dr Gerald and Dr Kate McCann, 'offering to help' them in any way he could. He said he thought he could help as he spoke both English and Portuguese.

He then says he toured several of the Ocean Club apartments with a GNR Police Officer and an Ocean Club employee, visiting all the apartments and opening up several with keys to see if Madeleine might be in one of the apartments. He says that: "Some of the apartments were closed and had 'no keys'; these apartment were reported to the GNR's senior investigator".

He says he was also introduced to John Hill, the Manager of Mark Warner, who supplied them with more keys to these other, locked, apartments. Murat told police that prior to this occasion he did not know the interior layout of the 'Ocean Club', only entering the resort for the first time after Madeleine's disappearance. He added that: "The 'binómios' arrived and began a more rigorous form of search".

Murat then became heavily involved that day (4 May) in translation work. As he told police: "Having told people I spoke both languages, I spoke to several people, including GNR Police Officers, and translated for several witnesses, right through the afternoon".

<b>A different explanation of how Robert Murat became a translator on the Madeleine case</b>
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But elsewhere (Source:

<http://gazetadigitalmadeleinecase.blogspot.com/2007/12/murat-recommended-as-translator-by.html>)

...we find an alternative explanation for how Robert Murat became a translator in Portugal in connection with Madeleine's disappearance:

#### QUOTE

Staff from Bill Henderson's office suggested the name of Robert Murat as a reliable translator who could be used in the police inquiry, in the days following Madeleine McCann disappearance. Murat was already known among diplomatic staff, as he had letters of recommendation from Norfolk Police, where he worked for Bernard Matthews, one of the largest poultry farm companies in UK, which employs hundreds of Portuguese workers.

The fact that Robert Murat has acted, before, as translator for Norfolk Police, and the recommendation issued by Bill Henderson's office, at the time the British consul in Algarve, took police to accept the suggestion, according to PJ [Portuguese Police] sources. After Murat was named a formal suspect, the police went through all translations he had done, checking their accuracy, but no problem was found, according to the same sources. Bill Henderson retired from his diplomatic post and went back to the U.K. in August.

#### UNQUOTE

## **Murat's translation work, 4 to 9 May 2007**

Murat then said that after finishing his translation work for the day [4 May], he went to see Michaela that evening, leaving his home about 7.00pm to 7.30pm and arriving back in Praia da Luz about 11.00pm to 11.30pm. The next day (Saturday) he again did translation work, also spoke to several people from the press and media, and again drove over to see Michaela in Lagos in the evening.

He told police that his relationship with the media people he had talked to was 'somewhat troubled'.

On the Sunday (6 May), Murat says he spoke to the wife of the owner of the Batista supermarket, asking him to leave open the supermarket 'in order to supply all the people' who were now in Praia da Luz. The supermarket was not open because of a staff shortage. Apparently the owner provided several litres of water that were placed at the entrance of Block 5 of the Ocean Club Complex.

Then, on Monday 7 May, just four days after Madeleine's disappearance, someone whom he'd known since he was twelve years old, called Gaynor, told him that he was the main suspect among the many journalists in the village as having abducted Madeleine.

Subsequently, he learned that Gaynor also worked for SKY NEWS as a journalist. She told Murat that some of the journalists were comparing him with Ian Huntley, who had murdered the two Soham girls. At the same time the PJ were noting on their files:

"At this point in time we noted straightaway Murat's unusual body language, coupled with his lack of social communication skills, stating that he did not want to be photographed, nor even for us to make any allusions to his presence there".

From this point on, he said he refused to speak with journalists and alerted the police to these allegations. He said he would not give his name to any more journalists, nor allow himself to be photographed.

Stories then emerged in the newspapers that he had pornography on his computer. Murat told the Portuguese police that he did have pictures of naked women over 18 on his computer, but 'not sexually explicit'. He added that he had no photographs of men. He denied having any record of violent sex, sadomasochism, images of rape, or fetishes with children or

animals on his computer. He denied using an external USA server and said he was 'not aware' of any encrypted content on his computer.

He denied having anything to do with Madeleine's disappearance and said he knew nothing at all about the case. He was then asked some more questions about his computers and computer networks, which we examine in more detail below. Shortly following that interview, the Portuguese Police declared him a formal suspect.

## **H. The second set of police interviews with Murat - on 10 and 11 July, two months after he was made 'arguido'**

We'll take his two interviews separately.

### **Murat's police interview on 10 July**

Murat was asked to attend for questioning by Portuguese police on 10 July and told he had the right to consult a solicitor. He didn't require either a solicitor or translator to be present with him. He was asked to confirm his previous testimony. He replied, however, that on the day of his earlier interview (14 May) he was very tired and didn't remember the details of what he said on that occasion.

His previous statement was then read out to him. He confirmed the general thrust of his statement, but said he wanted to amend some of 'afmações' [details] as he said he had confused some events, in particular as regards the dates and times of when they happened.

He said that things he said happened on Wednesday 2 May he now more calmly recalled had happened on Thursday 3 May - and vice versa. And he now said there were 'other facts', including some that he now remembered having occurred in those two days that he wanted to tell police about.

The new information that he volunteered included:

- In Norfolk he had lived with his ex-wife Dawn, his own daughter S\_\_\_\_, and his wife's adopted son David in Hockering, near Norwich.
- His grandmother lived in Sidford, not Sidmouth [the two places are close to each other].

- He couldn't give details of the exact dates he worked for certain companies, but said he worked for 'Nissan' and also 'Inchcape', including vocational training in sales.
- When his father died, he returned from England to live with his mother in Portugal.
- His divorce from Dawn had been finalised on 4 July 2007.
- When visiting England he usually stayed with his sister Samantha Murat, or in her boyfriend's home, or in his late grandmother's house, which he was renovating.
- Michaela had accompanied him to England on three previous occasions, but Michaela's daughter had only accompanied on one of those three occasions, at Christmas 2006.

We might just note briefly that Murat's father died in 1986 when the young Robert Murat was 12. It is not clear what was he doing in England away from his mother. He may have been living with his father or might possibly have been placed in a boarding school. After all, his father, grandfather and uncles had all been schooled at Bradfield College and various preparatory schools. The Murats had several homes in England - in London, Dorset, Kent and Devon.

Murat now began to correct other more important statements he'd previously made about events on 2 and 3 May 2007. He changed his account significantly.

He said that on the morning of Wednesday 2 May he had not in fact left his home by 10.30am, as stated previously, but in fact met with Sergei Malinka that morning at the Batista supermarket, at around 10.00am. That was a major change of story, no doubt prompted by the police having pinpointed, by looking at pings to local mobile 'phone masts from Murat's mobile 'phone, exactly where he really was that morning.

After that he'd gone to Michaela's and brought her back to his mother's home in Praia da Luz where he told police that they discussed the 'Romigen' company that apparently Sergei Malinka was also involved in, as he had been designing the website for the proposed company. He said that after a half-hour meeting, he and Malinka left together, and following that he returned home to take Michaela back to Lagos.

The Portuguese Police were naturally curious as to why Murat had not remembered, when he was questioned two months earlier, this important meeting, especially as, when first questioned, that meeting would only have taken place a few days beforehand. He justified his lack of memory

by stating that he had only had four hours' sleep the night before. He said he'd been up until about 3.00am the night before his first interview, drinking coffee and talking to an Inspector Reis S\_\_\_\_\_ at the 'Bom Vivam' bar. He'd been woken at 7.00am the following morning by officers from the Portuguese Police.

Murat confirmed that he had also that morning [2 May] paid in, in sterling cash, the sum of 287.51 euros to a bank, apparently called the Credit Agricultural Bank. He said the bank was just 200 yards or so from the house of his lawyer, Francisco Pagarete. It was after going to the bank that he'd gone to Pagarete's house. He said that this sum had come from a Lloyds Bank account in his or his mother's name, as he'd wanted to transfer it into his Portuguese bank account. This prompted concerns that Murat may have used the debit and credit cards of his mother.

Murat confirmed that he'd called at Dr Francisco Pagarate's home at about 11.00am to 11.30am - but this visit was unannounced, and he wasn't there. He now added the new details that he called Pagarete on his mobile 'phone and arranged to meet him later that day.

Referring to his meetings later in the day, he now recollected that he had, after all, met Pagarate that afternoon; also, that when he met with Jorge and his son Jason, another of Jorge's sons had been present. He now said that after meeting with Pagarete they did not, as he'd said in his earlier interview, return to Lagos with Michaela and her daughter, but instead met once again with Jorge and his sons at the café in the Marina area, to carry on talking about their proposed business plans. They left the café when the owner said he was about to close it.

Murat now remembered that he gave Jorge and one of his sons a lift in his mother's VW Transporter to the 'bus stop, then drove on to Lagos with Michaela and her daughter. They didn't arrive back until 8.00pm. Then, Michaela had begun, straightaway, to cook the dinner. He said he was now not sure that Luis Antonia returned to the house that evening. Murat said he left Lagos between 10.30pm and 11.00pm and arrived back home between 10.45pm and 11.15pm. He drove by the usual route and didn't recollect stopping anywhere. Pressed once more by the police, he now stated 'with absolute certainty' that he did not make any stops or calls on the way back home.

The police then put to him that he'd made a telephone call at around 3.42pm to Pagarete. Murat confirmed that he rang to check that he was there.

He confirmed that he was up until around 1.30am that morning, emphasising that his mother would often be up until that time, doing things like 'feeding the cats and other business' before retiring to bed.

Then there was another detail that Murat 'remembered'. He said that during the afternoon of 2 or 3 May, he had visited two apartments, both belonging to the same owner, near the 'rotunda of the Ball', in Lagos, with Michaela - apparently 'for issues related to business'. The visits took about 20-30 minutes.

Now Murat comes to various changes of story as to what happened on Thursday 3 May, the day Madeleine was reported missing. He again emphasises how tired and confused he had been when he gave his earlier statement.

Now he told the police quite a different account of that day's events.

He now said he woke at 8.00am and left the house by 8.45am. In fact, he said, he had a scheduled appointment to keep at a business tourist complex called 'Gold Bunker' in the Espiche district near Almádena. Michaela was with him. He was asked about how Michaela happened to be with him as early as 8.45am, but now remembered that she had 'come over to Praia da Luz', but didn't say how, and the police didn't press him. He said that they both then drove in his mother's VW Transporter to the meeting, arriving there at 9.30am. He says it was there in Espiche that they had a meeting, although Michaela Walczuk had claimed the meeting had taken place in her apartment.

A possible explanation for Murat 'remembering' his visit to Espiche is that by then, he knew that the police records of his mobile 'phone placed him at Espiche that morning.

He now told police about the details of this meeting, which he had been entirely unable to remember during his first interview with them. There, he and Michaela had met the female owner's father-in-law [unnamed in the Portuguese Police files]. He asserted that he didn't remember his name but said that he was a 'builder from Lagos'. The owner of the 'Gold Bunker' complex [also unnamed] arrived to join the meeting a little later.

They continued talking and all had lunch together - making it all the more remarkable that Murat had omitted to give details of this meeting at his earlier interview.

After lunch, Murat and Michaela had gone to the Marina in Lagos where they met with Jorge and his son again. But contrary to his previous claims, Michaela's daughter, C\_\_\_\_\_, did not accompany them that day.

Now Murat said they went to the Palmares Golf Club in the afternoon, where they remained until the time to pick up C\_\_\_\_\_, i.e. around 3.30pm. Murat said that Jorge and his son Jason were again in the car. He dropped them off near the Post Office on the way to pick up C\_\_\_\_\_. The three of them then drove to Michaela's house for 3.45pm and stayed there until around 7.30pm. He says he then drove straight home and didn't stop anywhere en route.

For the rest of the evening, he stuck to his account, but acknowledged that he made two telephone calls that night, one to Sergei Malinka at 11.39pm and another at 11.40pm to Michaela. He couldn't remember having made these calls, but acknowledged that he did make these calls although he couldn't remember what they were about. Up until recently, the *Daily Mail* was still, bizarrely, carrying on its website a public apology to Sergei Malinka for ever having suggested that the two men spoke with each other that night.

Now Murat went on to change his account of what happened the day after Madeleine was reported missing, Friday 4 May.

He had to admit that he'd 'phoned Michaela at 8.27 am, though he again couldn't remember what it was about. He admits therefore that he woke well before 9.00am that morning, the time he had previously given the police for when he had woken up.

### **Murat's police interview on 11 July**

At 10.00am on 11 July, Murat faced further questions from Inspector Paulo Ferreira. Here are the main points from this interview.

- Murat remembered that the 'phone numbers for 'Roger', 44780xxxxxxx, and 44770xxxxxxx, are both mobile 'phone numbers of two partners who buy and sell land and whom he knows professionally.
- He said he'd been in England 'about a month' before returning to Portugal on 1 May. He'd been renovating the house that used to belong to his grandmother and is now owned by his mother. He and

his mother had struck a deal; he would renovate that house in Devon; she would invest in 'Romigen'.

- His mother had paid for the trip to England.
- Whilst over in England, he'd been in contact with his sister and brother-in-law, his nephews, and his long-standing friend Mário R\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ ('Czech') who lived nearby in Exeter.
- Whilst in England he kept in internet contact with his future partners Jorge da Silva and his son Jason, and of course his partner Michaela.
- He cannot be sure if he kept in touch with Sergei Malinka during this period.
- He said that whilst in England, negotiations with his potential future business partners had stalled. This was why he decided to travel to Portugal. He wanted to progress this matter, believing that he was the only person who could do so.
- He booked his air ticket with 'flybe' by internet on the same day he travelled, namely Tuesday 1 May.
- The night before flying out, he slept in the house of sister and brother-in-law. His sister Samantha took him to the airport. He flew from Exeter to Faro.
- During his stay in England he did not have contact with the McCanns nor any of the 'Tapas 9' and he is not aware that any member of his family had had any contact with, or knew any of them beforehand.
- Asked again if he was involved on the night that Madeleine disappeared or was in Mark Warner Ocean Club helping in the searches and contacting several people, around 11.30pm to midnight, he replied again: 'Categorically, No'. He maintained that he hadn't left his mother's house after around 7.30pm that evening.

Following this further interview, the police then arranged the 'confrontation' between Murat and Rachel Mampilly/Oldfield, Russell O'Brien and Fiona Payne, which we discussed above.

The questioning of Murat recommenced in the afternoon. Murat again said that he arrived at his mother's house at between 7.00pm and 7.30pm on 3 May, which is not consistent with his mother's account, as she puts Robert's arrival at about 8.15pm to 8.30pm, *after* she returned from the supermarket. He couldn't remember what clothes he was wearing and he still couldn't remember whether his mother was there or not when he arrived. Nor could he recall what he did that evening after he got in.

The police put to him his mother's clear recollection that she came back to her house at around 8.30pm and that she recalls Robert arriving about

the same time. Murat said couldn't explain the discrepancy. He confirmed that he and his mother heard sirens at 'between 10.00pm and 10.30pm' but says again that didn't hear the sounds of dogs barking or raised voices.

Asked about his renting a grey Hyundai Getz on Saturday 12 May from Cma Auto Rent in Praia da Luz, he recalled hiring the car in the afternoon. He said he'd done so because his mother was using the VW over the weekend and the Skoda was being repaired in the garage and he had no other means of transport. His mother returned the car the following Tuesday [15 May]. He said he'd used the car to drive round the Lagos and Portimão areas, and probably drove 'no more than 60 to 120 miles'. Only he had driven it.

It was put to him that the clock in the car showed that it had been driven over 400 miles. Murat's response was: 'That's not true'. He said it must be an error by the car hire company.

Pausing there, let us look at a contemporaneous account about Murat's hiring of his car on 12 Saturday, in an article by Ian Herbert. We will immediately notice, on reading the first paragraph, that, according to this article, he apparently gives an entirely different reason for hiring out this car. Here is the article:

#### QUOTE

##### Suspect in hunt for missing girl 'wanted hire car immediately'

by Ian Herbert in Praia da Luz - Friday, 18 May 2007

"Police investigating the disappearance of Madeleine McCann in Portugal have been told how their prime suspect, the Briton Robert Murat, was impatient to rent a car two days before he was first questioned by police, because he claimed his own was needed by those involved in the search for the four-year-old.

"Staff at the Autorent 3 dealership here say they asked Mr Murat to wait until after their lunchbreak finished at 3pm last Saturday - Madeleine's fourth birthday. *But he said he needed the vehicle immediately.*

"Maria Rocco, the member of staff who received Mr Murat's call at the dealership, opposite the church where Madeleine's parents have been praying regularly, called police to report Mr Murat's request after hearing

of his arrest. He said: 'I need a car for myself because the English people who are looking for the little girl need to borrow my car', Mrs Rocco recalled. 'You could tell from his voice that he needed it in a hurry. I was puzzled. Why would he need to lend his car to somebody else [in the search]?' The revelation comes after police questioned Mr Murat's mother, Jennifer, yesterday about her son's alleged involvement in Madeleine's abduction. Yesterday it was reported that police arrived at Mrs Murat's £600,000 villa in Praia da Luz to quiz her about her role concerning her son's alibi on the night of the abduction.

"Results of these interviews will join Mrs Rocco's evidence, which was supported by the form Mr Murat signed when he collected a Hyundai Getz at 5.16pm that day. It will certainly have interested Portuguese police, since the ground search for Madeleine was being scaled down last Saturday and Mr Murat's mother's car, a green VW van, seen in the area that weekend, was available. Mr Murat has indicated that he was aware last weekend that police were tailing him. He complained to them about this shortly before the raid on his house.

"Police are also focussing their inquiries on telephone calls between Mr Murat and a Russian computer scientist, Sergei Malinka. One of these was reportedly made by Mr Malinka a few minutes after 10pm on 3 May, the time when Madeleine's parents discovered she was missing from her room at a Mark Warner resort in the Algarve town.

"The Russian left his flat in Praia da Luz on Wednesday night with police, who had removed a laptop and two computer hard drives. Mr Malinka declined to discuss his 'phone calls with Mr Murat yesterday, but insisted that videos seized from his house had no paedophile content. He confirmed his name and number were in Mr Murat's phone.

"Yesterday, Mr Malinka protested his innocence. He said: 'I am not a suspect in this case. I am merely a witness questioned like eight or nine others. Everything that has been said about me is lies...There have been claims in the press that I am some kind of sexual maniac or paedophile. It is nonsense. My career is destroyed and my life is ruined'.

"Mr Malinka remains one of the investigation's 100 witnesses, rather than a suspect like Mr Murat, but the policeman leading the inquiry, Oligario Sousa, did not rule out that situation changing. '[He is] not a suspect but it could be in the course of the investigation that something could change', he said. 'It's a very dynamic investigation'.

“Mr Malinka, who moved to Portugal from Moscow seven years ago, says he spent several weeks helping Mr Murat and his German girlfriend, Michaela Walczuk, set up a property website a year ago. He said Mr Murat was a client, not a friend, despite reports that they had been photographed together several times after Madeleine's disappearance. ‘I had a working relationship with him [Robert]. How friendly can you be with a client?’ he said.

## UNQUOTE

It is clear that by the date of that article, many serious rumours were in full swing about Murat and his friend Malinka. We might note that that weekend, Dr Gerald and Dr Kate McCann were discussing a possible visit to the Roman Catholic shrine at Fatima in Ourém. The 400 miles that Murat had driven would have enabled him to travel to Fatima and back. Or he could have reached Lisbon and back within the 400 miles, or even Huelva in Spain and back. Did someone want to meet him covertly and insist that he travelled in a hired car? Or did Murat need to meet someone?

One additional mystery is that Murat used his ex-wife's Norfolk address in Hockering, Norfolk, when he hired the Hyundai Getz, which he ‘needed in a hurry’ from Auto Rent. Why not give his local address or, if he wanted to give an English address, that of one of his sisters in Devon? The questions about Murat’s actions just seem to pile up.

The police then asked an important question in the interview. They wanted to know why he had apparently not made any calls on his mobile ‘phone between 3.00pm on Wednesday 2 May and late on the evening of Thursday 3 May. Murat couldn’t explain it except to say that he was ‘with Michaela most of the time and she was the person he most frequently ‘phoned’. The significance of this is that the mobile ‘phone records of Dr Gerald McCann showed that he switched off his mobile ‘phone within six minutes of Murat doing so and switched it on again some 32 hours later again within six minutes of Murat doing likewise. It is a coincidence of timing that cries out for an explanation. One suggestion made is that they both used Pay-as-you-Go mobiles during this period, discarding them later.

We might note at this juncture the responses the two men gave as to whether they already knew each other. When reporter Sandra Felgueiras asked Dr Gerald McCann whether he already knew Robert Murat, Dr

McCann hastily said: "I'm not going to comment on that" whilst his body language clearly showed that he was uneasy with the question. As one observer noted: "The absence of a firm denial makes the positive answer much more likely to be correct".

Robert Murat's answer to a similar question was: "'I've never met the man before and the idea that I'd met him when he was campaigning for the Labour Party is laughable. I've been a Conservative all my life." (*Daily Express*, 14 September 2007).

Murat then went on to tell police that he'd never entered the apartment where Madeleine was, neither before nor since she disappeared.

The police now questioned Murat about other matters. The police had his landline and mobile 'phone records. They put to him the numbers held in his mobile 'phone and asked whom he'd been ringing. His answers, for the record and for anyone wanting to analyse his telephone records, are in Appendix 1. We are unsure whether they yield anything of significant interest.

He was asked if he knew someone who owned a boat. He said his uncle had a boat stored at the back of his home. Last year, when he worked for 'Remax', he had sold an apartment to a Snr I\_\_\_\_ and he knows that he possesses a boat, but doesn't know where this boat is, and never saw it. He only had a business relationship with Snr I\_\_\_\_\_.

Murat added that he thought that a friend of Michaela's husband Luis, called Steve, also had a boat, but he'd never seen it and wasn't sure. Murat also noted that he knew Nelson P\_\_\_\_, who was the son of Carlos P\_\_\_\_, who had an 'embarcação', but Murat never saw it nor knew where it was kept. Asked if on the day Madeleine disappeared, or subsequently, he had been around the Marina or the port area, he said he had not.

Murat was then shown a photograph by the police, and identified the man in the photo as a Romanian man that he knew who had done some gardening at his mother's house. Murat had been seen talking to the Romanian after Madeleine disappeared, and said he'd been asking the Romanian if he could translate into Romanian an appeal for people to look for Madeleine.

END OF PART THREE
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