

How many more false sightings will there be of Madeleine McCann?

by Tony Bennett, Secretary of The Madeleine Foundation

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TRANSLATIONS: Where we have used translations from the Portuguese in this article, we acknowledge with gratitude the voluntary help of a group of Portuguese translators who have laboured to help us in Britain to understand the many documents released by the Portuguese police.

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Article filed 4 March 2010



This week has seen the opening up of a new phase in what Mr Clarence Mitchell, the Chief Public Relations Officer for the McCanns, described on 19 February this year as the ‘complete mystery’ of the disappearance of Madeleine McCann.

The new phase could accurately be described as: ‘A new series of sightings prompted by Ricardo Pavia’s admission that the Portuguese police did not follow up all the sightings of Madeleine notified to them since 2007’.

This week’s press have been full of stories about possible ‘sightings’ that were not followed up. One was in New Zealand. Another was of a ‘girl in a black wig’ seen in Portugal. We’ll look at these in more detail in a moment.

There’s no doubt that the press, ever keen to run ‘Madeleine’ stories because of the continuing public interest in what really happened to her, nearly three years after the event, have seized on these new ‘sighting’ stories emerging from the McCann Team and their chief spokesman.

A. The background

The sightings stem in essence from a short passage in the evidence given in an interim hearing in the libel trial in Lisbon of *The McCanns v. Goncalo Amaral*. Mr Amaral is the former senior investigating officer on the case who wrote the book *A Verdada da Mentira - 'The Truth About A Lie'* - in which he suggested that the evidence pointed to Madeleine having died in her parents' holiday apartment. The McCanns in July 2009 served a libel writ in the Lisbon civil courts claiming 1.2 million euros (over £1 million) damages from Mr Amaral and his publishers, Guerra e Paz. That sum was the amount of profit estimated to have been made by Mr Amaral and his publishers during the year it had been on sale. It has sold around 250,000 copies in Portugal.

The McCanns claimed that by suggesting that Madeleine was dead, Mr Amaral had seriously hindered the ongoing search for Madeleine and caused them immense emotional distress.

In September, the McCanns obtained an indefinite injunction banning the sale of Mr Amaral's book and an associated DVD and documentary produced by TVI a Portuguese TV channel. Mr Amaral appealed, and his appeal was heard between 12 and 14 January 2010. There was a further hearing on 11 February. On 18 February he learnt that his appeal had failed. The banning of his book stays in place until the final libel trial, expected to be listed in June or some time after.

During the hearing, one of Mr Amaral's seven witnesses was a former colleague in the Madeleine McCann investigation, Ricardo Pavia. During his evidence, he said that there had been many sightings that the Portuguese police had not followed up, ever since the investigation was effectively archived in July 2008. The McCanns seized on this, and demanded, through their lawyers, inspection of the details of all these 'sightings'. The result is that the Portuguese police have indeed released their dossier of recent 'sightings' to the McCanns and their lawyers, and also to the media. The media has already been awash with stories of how the 'incompetent' Portuguese police had allegedly failed to follow up vital leads.

But were they incompetent - and did they fail to follow vital leads?

B. The first police report

In the interim police report by Tavares de Almeida, filed on 10 September when Goncalo Amaral was still heading up the investigation, he wrote this:

"The child's parents immediately attributed her disappearance to the action of a third party, promoting the scenario that she had been abducted. Abduction was only one of a number of possible scenarios, but the family publicised their claim that Madeleine had been abducted in a manner that had never been seen before. On the very next day, English television stations led their broadcasts with the news of Madeleine's disappearance. The media presented the abduction as the truth, although we were looking at other scenarios.

"As time went by, the abduction scenario was not confirmed. The abduction hypothesis did not stand up. For instance, no ransom was ever demanded in exchange for information by the alleged kidnappers or for the child herself.

“Nevertheless, and considering the evidence of one of the McCanns’ friends, Jane Tanner, we continued examining the possibility that Madeleine had been abducted. This went alongside the gathering of all kinds of information, working on a number of other possible scenarios”.

C. The final police report

It was an unprecedented and worldwide media storm that the Portuguese police had to cope with. Suspicions that the parents might not be telling the truth ran alongside literally hundreds of ‘sightings’ of Madeleine in four dozen or more countries. This involved staff from the Portuguese police liaising with police officers in other countries and, of course, Interpol, so that each credible sighting could be followed up. To get a better idea of the sheer scale of the task the police faced, here is a very short extract from the final report of the Portuguese police, dated July 2008:

“We made investigations where there was news that had credibility and could have signalled the presence of the child in various locations worldwide, as well as the hundreds of enquiries carried out to confirm or dismiss them. The alleged abduction of Madeleine necessitated action by many bodies, especially the Polícia Judiciária, but also other police forces. In parallel, there was unprecedented coverage of the case in the media, both national and foreign. This was especially true in the U.K., where day after day their news at prime time included live transmissions from Praia da Luz, with many special programmes dedicated to the case.

“Some of the information had no credibility, whilst, at the other extreme, other alleged sightings required a more thorough investigation, and these are included in our Appendix. There remains a large number of supposed sightings, some receiving notable emphasis, such as those in Belgium and Morocco. These were vague or had discordant or incongruent elements, which deserved attention with a view to revisiting them in the future, should solid new information arise. In subsequent days, over 100 investigators were employed by the Portuguese Police and they received an enormous collection of diverse notifications from innumerable contacts about Madeleine’s disappearance. It required us to install a permanent police post within the Luz village. The result of such efforts is found in the documentation and the various appendices”.

The Portuguese police in their report then go on to list some of their many enquiries. Here are some examples:

- a) From pages 199 onwards we have the testimony of the witness Jeremy Wilkins...He said that he saw an individual with a strange appearance behaving oddly. This was later confirmed to be a guest who helped with the search...
- b) From pages 127 onwards, we give details of the sighting of a child, with a face similar to Madeleine’s, in a petrol station. When the images from the petrol station were shown to the parents, they said without hesitation that they were not of Madeleine.
- c) On page 134 we report on another sighting of a girl with a physical resemblance to Madeleine. We later confirmed it was not Madeleine.

- d) In addition, an attempt was made to locate an individual known to have sexually abused minors. Later we determined that he had left Portugal and was not in the country at the relevant time period.
- e) There was an investigation into reports by Denise Beryl Ashton, page 136. She reported the presence of two individuals, whom she could not identify or recognise, who claimed they were collecting for a local children's home, which would have been fraudulent. Although this took place on 3 May, we could not relate this to the disappearance of Madeleine. Neither did the description correspond to the sketch publicised widely in the media by the McCanns' Chief Public Relations Officer [Clarence Mitchell].
- f) On pages 40 to 144 we describe another alleged sighting of Madeleine. It was in fact another child.
- g) A witness, Derek Flack (for his interview see page 200), reported the presence of a suspect, who was allegedly looking at the McCanns' apartment, near a white truck or van, referred to at pages 145 and following. It was not possible to identify this person, despite an artist's impression having been computer-generated. However, we believe there are very strong possibilities that they were construction workers...
- h) In pages 161 to 197 we have reports from a Nuno Jesus. He told us that his daughter, who had clear similarities with Madeleine, was allegedly the victim of a kidnap attempt by a Polish couple. He provided the registration number of their hired car to the police. The couple were approached when on the point of returning to their native country. Nothing was detected that could incriminate them, see pages 214 to 216. The car and the place where they had enjoyed their holidays were analysed in a laboratory. Again, nothing incriminating was found.
- i) At page 148 we describe door-to-door visits to 443 houses in Praia da Luz, indicating the gigantic nature of the investigation. These places were entered and searched.
- j) At pages 208 to 210 we report on a Lance Purse, who gave us a sketch of an individual similar to a sketch submitted by another witness, who didn't identify himself. At pages 211 & 212, we reported on another person brought to our attention for the sexual abuse of minors. Further enquiries revealed nothing of relevance to the investigation...

By now, we've made the point that over 100 officers were employed investigating Madeleine's disappearance and from the above brief reports, we can see just how thorough the Portuguese police were. The Portuguese insist that all 'credible sighting' were followed up. They add:

"Within the first 24 hours, we set up an extensive operation which included the participation of several police forces and civil protection services; in total, over 130 separate organisations were involved in this operation. After 48 hours, we had mobilised a total of over 300 police forces and public bodies...hundreds of enquiries and investigations were carried out, such as the identification of and interviewing...In addition we executed door-to-door searches in the homes and tourist resorts of Praia da Luz and surrounding areas...During the days immediately following Madeleine's disappearance, over 700 persons who might possess any relevant information about the matter were formally or informally questioned...Over 2,000 separate enquiries were made by us. There was international co-operation, especially with Spain, the Netherlands and the UK...Any information with a major or even a minor level of credibility was explored by us, both here and abroad. We gave special attention to dozens of

supposed sightings or places where Madeleine might be located, most of which, in fact, were widely publicised in the press.

“We withheld no effort in this investigation, which was probably unlike any other ever carried out in Portugal”.

D. What Ricardo Pavia said in court on 11 February 2010

After Ricardo Pavia gave his evidence in the Lisbon court on 13 January, there was a further hearing in Amaral’s appeal against the banning of his book, on 11 February. The McCanns’ Solicitor Isabel Duarte made reference in her address to the court to Pavia’s evidence. Here’s how Vanessa Allen in the *Daily Mail* reported it:

QUOTE

Portuguese police 'ignored hundreds of sightings' in search for Madeleine McCann: Sightings of the missing girl were filed as 'not relevant'

Portuguese police faced growing pressure to reopen the Madeleine McCann investigation yesterday, amid claims they ignored potential sightings of the missing girl. Detectives have refused to investigate hundreds of clues about the disappearance, including photographs of children said to bear a 'shocking' resemblance to the blonde youngster. They include a cluster of sightings in Italy and Spain which could hold the key to solving the mystery and ending the years of heartache suffered by her parents, Kate and Gerry McCann. But instead they have gone unchecked, marked as 'irrelevant' after the case was shelved, and left to gather dust in a police archive.

The McCanns' private detectives [Note: former Detective Inspector Dave Edgar and former Detective Sergeant Arthur Cowley], who are continuing the search for the missing child, did not even know the dossier existed until a Portuguese policeman let slip a reference to it during a legal hearing. Inspector Ricardo Paiva said police had received hundreds of tip-offs from witnesses convinced they had seen Madeleine and knew where she was being held. They sent in photographs of children and of locations which they believed were being used by her abductor, believing that police would investigate their claims. But arrogant detectives were so convinced by their own theory that Madeleine died on the night she disappeared, and that her parents faked her abduction, that they made no attempt to check the sightings.

The McCanns' lawyer, Isabel Duarte, has seen the dossier. She said every single statement had the same phrase scrawled across it: “This is not relevant to the investigation”. She said: “I was shocked at how much was in there, and that absolutely nothing had been done to follow any of it up. Every piece of information was treated the same way - Ricardo Paiva writes on it: ‘This is not relevant to the investigation’. He is the witness who declared in court that he believed Madeleine is dead. You cannot find a person when you are not looking for them”.

Mrs Duarte said they had not investigated any tip-offs since the case was officially shelved, in July 2008, when the McCanns were cleared as official suspects in the investigation. She said information had continued to pour in from potential

witnesses, and even from other police forces in Europe, but it was ignored, even when there were clues including photographs of girls who looked like Madeleine.

The lawyer said: "Some of them are very, very similar to Madeleine. But Kate and Gerry had never been shown them. There was information from Leicestershire Police, French police, Spanish police, and again nothing was done about it. Kate and Gerry did not even know this file existed until this week. I am going to give a copy of the file to them so that their private investigation team can follow up the information in it.

"But I am angry because it is the Portuguese investigative police who should be doing this job. They have the power and the capability to do it. It is they who should be doing it, not Kate and Gerry". Their spokesman Clarence Mitchell said they had been shocked to discover the full extent of the Portuguese police's failure to investigate Madeleine's disappearance. He said it had confirmed their worst fears about the investigation, saying: "They were shocked when they went through the file and saw what was in it, and even worse what little had been done to follow any of it up. Kate and Gerry have consistently known that potential fresh information was not being properly followed up, if at all. The tragedy of this case, which once again has been highlighted by this, is what little was done to find Madeleine. Kate and Gerry will have to do it themselves as they have been doing. They are the only ones looking for her".

UNQUOTE

E. A new series of 'sightings' are publicised

And so the McCanns, their lawyers and advisers have got hold of the file of claimed sightings, and are beginning to publicise them.

The first major one to be publicised was an alleged sighting in New Zealand. Today (4 March), however, New Zealand police said they had traced the girl in question and established that it was not Madeleine.

A witness claimed to have seen Madeleine McCann in 'The Warehouse' in Dunedin, New Zealand, more than two years ago. Retail assistant Taryn Dryfhout and a security guard saw the girl, with blue eyes and blonde hair, in December 2007. Madeleine had green eyes. Ms Dryfhout said: "I was quite stricken by the wee girl who looked just like Madeleine McCann. She was quite apprehensive to talk to me and sort of stammered over her words when she was trying to think of her name". The child eventually said her name was 'Hailey'. No doubt the child was a bit disconcerted to be suddenly asked her name.

Ms Dryfhout said: "The man and woman with the child were a little bit suspicious". CCTV footage in 'The Warehouse' showed a girl being led into a supermarket by a 'stout' man in shorts, while another photo in the *Daily Mail* showed a young girl in The Warehouse accompanied by the man and an older boy. In fact, the New Zealand police did investigate the alleged sighting at the time - but not as thoroughly as in recent days.

The publication of the girl's image in New Zealand caused problems for her parents, who objected to her being identified in this way. Inspector Dave

Campbell said: "We will not name the family nor give any further details about them. We ask that media outlets remove the image portraying the child and family from their coverage including websites to protect the privacy of the family". Campbell also confirmed that he'd reported the alleged sighting to Interpol at the time - over two years ago.

A private investigator in Dunedin, Wayne Idour, said he couldn't work out why the video footage of the young girl had not been aired publicly sooner, to identify her or the man and woman she was with: "I can't work out why they haven't shown the actual moving video footage of them walking through the store. I can't work out why that has never been put to the public. That, to me, would have been the logical thing to do. You can show it in a way that you are not accusing them of anything, you are just appealing for information about their identity".

The McCanns have frequently complained of an invasion of privacy. But here was the sudden invasion of the privacy of a New Zealand family.

There was another New Zealand sighting. A couple from Balclutha, Michael Griffiths and Mary Habib, said they believed they twice saw a girl resembling Madeleine on the morning of August 6 last year in Dunedin, and then in nearby Milton in the afternoon. The girl was with a man aged between 35 and 40. They reported the sightings to Balclutha police later that night, and to the official Madeleine McCann website, but received no reply from either. Mr Griffiths said: "I am 80% confident it was her", while Ms Habib said: "I am 80% plus sure".

More alleged New Zealand 'sightings' of Madeleine were reported in Alexandra and Queenstown, Otago, and have been followed up.

Another previous 'sighting' of Madeleine was again reported this week - the case of a girl in Portugal seen with gypsies, wearing a black wig, 18 months after Madeleine's disappearance. A British holidaymaker, Jean Godwin, 56, of Widnes, said she was "100% sure it was Madeleine McCann. Her eyes were wide open and my attention was drawn to her large irises. She was about 3ft 1in and about five years of age. She was white with a pale complexion. I couldn't sleep, I had my husband take me back to look. This was a young girl, in the middle of the two women and holding the hand of each. The child was wearing what was clearly a black wig. It was short, cut in a bob style and very thick. The wig was shiny and unnatural looking and out of keeping with her very pale complexion and fair eyebrows. She was very thin and I would describe her as malnourished. Her cheeks looked gaunt. I think she had a bump on her nose".

The child was seen with two gypsy women, referred to in many media reports this week as 'the fat gypsy women', in a town just 30 miles from Praia da Luz where she disappeared. One of the women was said to have been seen by another Brit tourist 'acting suspiciously' outside the McCanns' apartment on the day she vanished. Investigators feared Madeleine could have been 'held in a shack at an orange grove'. Apparently the girl in question had never been traced. But in recent days, the McCanns' private detectives say they found one of the women - a Portuguese cleaner [see below]. Jeni Weinberger, 38, is said to have also identified the cleaner (Yvone Albino) as the woman she saw in Praia da Luz the day Madeleine disappeared.



Yvone Albino, a cleaner from Silves, said to have been seen outside the McCanns' apartment on 3 May 2007

Detectives traced her to an isolated farmhouse on an orange grove in the town of Silves, north of Protimao. In the following months, she was seen to pay several visits to the property, a holiday home owned by a teacher, Mr Martins, and his partner, Miss Silveira. The inquiry team deemed them to be 'suspicious'.

The investigators' concerns were raised when they discovered a white Citroen Berlingo belonging to the couple with a child's doll on the back seat (see below) and a child's drawing among rubbish bags - even though the couple did not have young children. Mr Martins said that the doll was given him by students he had taught in the past.



A doll found in the car of a couple investigated in connection with the disappearance of Madeleine McCann

The McCann Team put out a comment that: “This is one of our strongest leads”. Another newspaper reported that “Gerry and Kate McCann were angered and shocked that the information wasn’t given to their private detectives”.

Other leads in the newly-released Portuguese police dossier include a report that ‘a small blonde girl had been dragged along the road to Faro airport’ on the night she went missing and another detailing how a young girl who appeared like the missing child was seen being held at gunpoint on a French motorway by a half-naked man in August 2008.

F. Problems with previous sightings

There have been hundreds, probably thousands, maybe even tens of thousands of alleged ‘sightings’ of Madeleine. I even had such a moment myself, in a pub garden in Kent in the summer of 2008. A girl of around five, blonde, and with a face not unlike Madeleine’s, was in the garden, being looked after (and not very well) by two strange looking men of different ages. A few minutes later the girl, running around and not being properly supervised, went flying into a garden seat, cutting her lip badly, it was bleeding profusely. When they became aware, the men rushed inside to get assistance. Momentarily I thought: ‘Could that have been Madeleine McCann?’

Last year, a friend of ours who definitely does not share my reservations about the McCanns claim that Madeleine was abducted became convinced she had seen Madeleine on a TV programme. She'd contacted the TV programme who had been dismissive and said: 'It's not Madeleine'. But she was not put off and begged me to pass on the number of the McCanns' private investigation hotline. "There's just that chance it could be her. I'm sure it's her", she said.

And there must be countless such stories. Madeleine has been 'seen' in Chile, on a plane to Venezuela, in Sweden, in the Phillipines, in the United States.

There was the pale-looking fair-haired girl seen on the back of a Moroccan peasant woman, whose photograph was splashed across British newspapers in September 2007. Even the staid *Daily Telegraph* ran the picture of the woman with child on its front page with the heading: "Could this be the face of Madeleine McCann?". Many who saw the picture thought it must be her. But of course it wasn't, it was a relative of the peasant woman. The family found the press attention most unwelcome.

Another person who suffered a worrying moment was a Croatian team footballer who suddenly found a woman trying to snatch his two-year-old son. The woman was convinced that it was Madeleine McCann. As the *Daily Mail* reported, when two British tourists spotted a woman leading a child with long blonde hair on the Croatian holiday island of Krk, they immediately thought it was Madeleine McCann. The couple became even more convinced that the child was Madeleine, after secretly taking a couple of photographs. One of the women grabbed the child's arm, but only then realised the child not only wasn't Madeleine, it wasn't even a little girl. The boy's father was a well-known Croatian footballer, Dino Drpic, who plays for Dinamo Zagreb, and his mother, Nives was a renowned glamour model. As the *Daily Mail* put it: "The Posh and Becks of Croatia". They were not at all happy.

Nives said: "I started getting suspicious when the British woman approached Leone and started chatting with him. Suddenly she grabbed him by the arm, apparently thinking nobody was watching him. However, when I went over she realised her mistake and apologised".



In September 2008, two holidaymakers were convinced that they saw Madeleine at Cala d'Or, a Majorcan resort, reported the sighting to local police. A British couple told police that they saw a young blonde girl matching Madeleine's description in the company of two women, both aged 40-50, who appeared to be northern European. Again the sighting was fully investigated by Spanish police.

Last year a Devon man was summoned to a local police station because someone had seen him and his eight-year-old step-daughter in a petrol garage and thought the girl was Madeleine. As it happened, she bore a very strong resemblance to the new artist's sketch shown by the McCanns on the Oprah Winfrey show four months previously. The person noted his car registration number and notified the police.

Fire protection officer Jon Hazlehurst was at home when police officers arrived on their doorstep and asked them both to go to a police station. He suffered some anxious moments, saying: "I was surprised more than anything. My first thought was that it was someone pulling a prank on me before I realised that they were quite serious. I've never been called into a police station as a possible kidnapper. The police were very polite and I understood that they had to follow up the lead, even if it didn't come to anything".

Millions of pounds and thousands of hours of police time must have been spent the world over, following up these endless false leads, often given by people utterly convinced that they had seen Madeleine.

G. The problems associated with looking for Madeleine

Let us assume for the moment that Madeleine really was abducted by a stranger between about 9.11pm and 9.14pm on Thursday 3 May 2007, as the McCanns and their 'Tapas 9' friends claim.

How realistic is it for people to carry on searching for Madeleine? The McCanns refer to the recent astonishing case of Jaycee Lee Dugard, abducted at the age of 11 and not discovered until a full 18 years later, and then only by accident. It gives them hope, they say. But being realistic, on the rare occasions that children as young as Madeleine are abducted by strangers, they are rarely found alive.

Then - in the unlikely event that the abductor, if there is one, is keeping Madeleine alive, for whatever purpose, how likely is it that s/he would be out on the streets with Madeleine for all to see. S/he would know of course that Madeleine has green eyes with a visible coloboma defect in her right eye. That would be an additional reason for keeping her out of sight.

Even if the abductor/abductress was prepared to take the risk of Madeleine being seen in public, would s/he not disguise her in some way, for example by dyeing her hair a different colour? And how difficult would it be for the abductor/abductress to keep a child, now aged nearly seven, away from public services, such as the school, and the health centre?

What would Madeleine look like now anyway? It is not easy to project what a three-year-old will look like three to four years later. A photo-sketch has been produced which shows her to be a happy and smiling child of about 9 to 11 years of age - the one specially produced to coincide with the McCanns' appearance on the popular Oprah Winfrey Show, televised world-wide. Does that photo really narrow down the search?

On top of all that, where are we supposed to look? We have no guidance whatsoever from the McCann Team.

And who exactly are we looking for? Over the past three years, we have been given no fewer than 14 different artists' sketches of possible abductors, twelve of them men, and two of them women, one of them said to be a 'Victoria Beckham look-alike with an Australian accent'. The McCanns' current lead investigator, former Detective Inspector Dave Edgar, said at a press conference last September that Jane Tanner, the McCanns' friend who said she had seen a man carrying a child away from the McCanns' apartment, 'might have seen a woman', not a man.

Despite upwards of £2 million spent on private detective agencies, the public has not been given one single fact about who the abductor/abductress might be and where to find him/her. That is perhaps not surprising when the two main agencies used by the McCanns, *Metodo 3* and *Oakley International*, had dubious track records and were both led by con-men.

Metodo 3 was led by Francisco Marco, who notoriously boasted just before Christmas 2007 that his men were 'closing in on the abductors' and that 'Madeleine will be home by Christmas'. Kevin Halligen, the boss and owner of *Oakley International*, who replaced *Metodo 3*, is a hard-drinking con-man

currently awaiting extradition to the U.S. on fraud charges. Why did the McCann Team appoint such men to look for Madeleine?

The continuing search for Madeleine is, at least, a fulfilment of Dr Gerald McCann's prophecies in June 2007. On 3 June 2007, just one month after Madeleine had 'disappeared'; Dr Gerald McCann was already planning a 'big event' to mark Madeleine's 'abduction'. He told the press: "We want a big event to raise awareness that she is still missing...It wouldn't be a one-year anniversary, it will be sooner than that." Less than a month later, on 28 June 2007, Dr McCann said: "I have no doubt we will be able to sustain a high profile for Madeleine's disappearance in the long-term".

Many wondered at the time how Dr McCann could make a comment like that, when the world was being asked to look for Madeleine and there was always the possibility that the police might, any day, bring them news that Madeleine had been found alive. If there remained a reasonable prospect of finding her, how could you have 'no doubt', as Madeleine's father, that you could 'sustain a high profile' for her disappearance 'in the long-term'?

H. Do the McCanns and their spokesman think Madeleine is dead?

For those of us who stand accused of hindering the continuing search for Madeleine, by querying the McCanns abduction claim, the following remarks made recently by Dr Gerald McCann and their Chief Public Relations Officer, Clarence Mitchell, are significant.

Interviewed in the summer of 2009, Clarence Mitchell (who now works part-time for Freud International, owned by Matthew Freud, Rupert Murdoch's son-in-law) defended himself against accusations that he had been guilty of 'spin' about the disappearance of Madeleine, and then said: "Can I suggest that, actually, you quote me back accurately? I said: 'I believe Kate and Gerry are not responsible for Madeleine's **death**'."

Months later, on 11 December 2009, at a Court hearing in Lisbon in connection with their 1.2 million euro claim against Goncalo Amaral, Dr Gerald McCann told a gaggle of reporters: "There is no evidence that we were involved in Madeleine's **death**".

So, both Dr Gerald McCann and his Chief Public Relations Adviser, Clarence Mitchell, within a few months of each other, referred specifically to Madeleine's 'death'.

Do they perhaps acknowledge that Madeleine is dead?

Or was it just a 'Freudian slip'?

Related article:

Maddie seen 'alive' on TV <http://tinyurl.com/yj7ssrf>