

## **Did Raymond Hewlett (now dead) have anything to Do with the disappearance of Madeleine McCann?**

Article by The Madeleine Foundation, 10 April 2010

We respond to an article in today's *Sun* newspaper.

At all times when we consider articles in the *Sun* about the Madeleine McCann case, we must remember the following facts. The *Sun*, along with the *Times* and *Sunday Times*, the *News of the World*, BSkyB, SKY NEWS etc., and many more titles, are effectively owned by one man, Mr Rupert Murdoch. He takes an active part in influencing the editorial content of his newspapers.

His son-in-law, Mr Matthew Freud, is the owner and controller of one of the most powerful media, communications and media relations companies in Europe: Freud Communications, based in London.

The McCanns' chief public relations adviser for the past three years, Mr Clarence Mitchell, was until recently employed by Freud Communications. (For the next few weeks, he has leave of absence from that post as Mr Dave Cameron has employed him to help him win the General Election. Mitchell is second-in-command to the head of Cameron's Media Relations team, Andy Coulson, formerly of course the Editor of the *News of the World*. Mitchell will be back at Freud Communications after the election).

### **The *Sun* article of today**

This is the actual article we wish to comment on, by Neil Syson:

“A PAEDOPHILE who was a prime suspect in the hunt for Madeleine McCann has died - taking any secrets he had to the grave. Convicted child rapist Raymond Hewlett, 64, died of throat cancer and was cremated at a pauper's funeral in Germany four months ago.

“His ex-wife Susan, 64, and children in Telford, Shropshire, were unaware of his death. Two private detectives hired by Maddie's parents Kate and Gerry went to Aachen, Germany, at least three times in a bid to interview Hewlett. But a source said: “e always wriggled out of it, saying he was too sick to see them. He was never eliminated from the inquiry”.

“Maddie, of Rothley, Leics, was three when she vanished on holiday in Portugal in May 2007. Ex-soldier Hewlett bore a close resemblance to a straggly-haired man seen lurking near the McCann apartment.

“He was in Portugal when Maddie was snatched and left for Morocco three weeks later. And he told a pal he knew gypsies who sold children to perverts. Hewlett's German second wife Mariana, 35, refused to comment”.

### **The insinuations in the article**

This article creates a strong impression that Raymond Hewlett might well have been the person who actually abducted Madeleine, or at least might have been involved in some way. We'll pick out seven comments in the *Sun* article that lean that way, then briefly analyse each of them. Here are the seven innuendos in the article:

- 1) A PAEDOPHILE who was a prime suspect...
- 2) ...taking any secrets he had to the grave...
- 3) ..."He always wriggled out of it..."
- 4) ..."He was never eliminated from the inquiry..."
- 5) ...Ex-soldier Hewlett bore a close resemblance to a straggly-haired man seen lurking near the McCann apartment...
- 6) ...He was in Portugal when Maddie was snatched and left for Morocco three weeks later...
- 7) ...he told a pal he knew gypsies who sold children to perverts...

We'll now analyse these statements, one by one.

### **1. A PAEDOPHILE who was a prime suspect?**

It's certainly true that Raymond Hewlett was a paedophile; he had convictions for serious sexual offences against teenage girls and served three prison terms.

And he was in Portugal at the time Madeleine disappeared, only about an hour's drive away. About three weeks after Madeleine was reported missing, he travelled to Morocco. He developed throat cancer and managed to get treatment and throat surgery in Aachen Hospital, West Germany, where he was when the media storm about him broke in May 2009. Who broke the story is not 100% clear, but everything points to the McCann Team via Clarence Mitchell as the source.

When the story about Hewlett broke, West Yorkshire police said they wanted to question him in relation to an alleged sex attack on an eight-year-old in 1975 in Yorkshire, and another incident in Manchester. And detectives Det Chief Supt Max McLean and Det Chief Insp. Mark Ridley from that force did indeed travel to Germany to visit him, interviewing him and hoping to take a DNA sample, to see whether he was involved in the eight-year-old's disappearance.

One newspaper report suggested that: "Police will use the results of the [DNA] test to determine whether they match samples taken from the McCanns' holiday apartment, which so far have not been linked to anyone".

But was Raymond Hewlett, as the *Sun* claims, ever a 'prime suspect' in the Madeleine McCann case?

Well, let's quote the McCanns' own senior investigator, Dave Edgar [source: SKYNEWS, 25 May 2009]: "Speaking outside the hospital, one of the investigators Dave Edgar said: 'The gentleman that's in here [Hewlett] is *not a suspect*, he is someone who we are interested in. *I would not describe him as a suspect*. We want to eliminate him from the investigation".

In the very same SKYNEWS report, Clarence Mitchell, the McCanns' chief public relations spokesman, said: "He is a person of interest in the investigation".

So, we might ask, why does the *Sun*, wholly inaccurately, say he was a 'prime suspect'?

On a further occasion, Clarence Mitchell said: "Mr Hewlett has denied any involvement in Madeleine's abduction. Our investigators hope he will co-operate by giving them whatever information is needed so they can eliminate him from their investigation. It is clear that the man is ill and *it is clear he has information that our investigators need*."

What was meant by that is uncertain, but he was probably referring to the alleged information in a German magazine - see next section.

One observer summed up the situation as follows: “If the McCanns or their detectives truly thought that Hewlett had any information relating to Madeleine, they should have quietly and quickly approached the German police, who would have had authority to question him”.

What was meant by that is uncertain, but he was probably referring to the alleged information in a German magazine - see next section.

### **Taking any secrets he had to the grave?**

It appears that Hewlett has no secrets about the Madeleine McCann case.

One person, Peter Verran, came forward, claiming that he had spoken to Hewlett in Morocco. Verran, aged 46 last year, was a former Scots Guardsman who was running an antique business from his home in Fowey, Cornwall. Verran claimed:

“We got talking at the toilet block. Hewlett talked non-stop about the Madeleine case in the weeks after she vanished in May 2007. He brought Madeleine up straight away. He said his three-year-old daughter looked like her. He was worried that because there had been reports that Madeleine may have been spirited away to Morocco, people might think his child was her. Then he suddenly said: ‘Madeleine's not in Morocco’. I asked him what he meant and he boasted of knowing Praia da Luz really well”.

Verran added: “He said he was familiar with the Ocean Club complex where Kate and Gerry McCann were staying with their children and friends. He said he'd been there many times and often parked his van close to the apartment. He said he knew the layout of the place, the flat and the restaurant where the McCanns and their friends had been eating”.

The newspaper which carried Verran's comments stated: “Mr Verran claimed Hewlett had made wild and unfounded claims about the McCanns - both doctors, from Rothley, Leicestershire, quoting Verran as saying: ‘He said it was common knowledge among locals that Praia da Luz in general and the Ocean Club in particular was a magnet for Romanian gypsies who abduct and then traffic children. I asked him why he'd left and come to Morocco. He told me he'd had to leave Portugal in a

hurry. He said he'd packed his family up in half an hour and just driven out of the area. That was just after Maddie was taken'."

Verran says 'just after'. It appears, however, to have been three weeks after Madeleine disappeared that Hewlett took his family to Morocco. But even if we accept Verran's account, it does not appear from what he says that he had any secrets about Madeleine. He is merely saying that he knows Praia da Luz quite well.

The only other claim that Hewlett had any secrets about the disappearance of Madeleine McCann came from a totally unsourced article in the tabloid German magazine *Bild*. 'Bild' means 'a picture'. The magazine is full of pictures and its stories are often inaccurate.

Here are some extracts from a *Daily Mail* article which covered the *Bild* story:

The *Daily Mail* wrote:

"Paedophile Raymond Hewlett has allegedly said he saw Madeleine McCann twice before she vanished. The Briton, 62, has previously insisted he was miles from Praia da Luz in the Portuguese Algarve when the three-year-old went missing in May 2007. But yesterday he reportedly implied he had been close enough to see Maddie's distinctive flaw in her right eye.

"But he has told private detectives employed by the couple he will only reveal where he was the night Maddie vanished if they pay him thousands of pounds. The request has been refused. The former soldier has been discharged after throat cancer surgery in the German city of Aachen a month ago. His lawyer there confirmed he has 'a matter of weeks to live'.

"Yesterday *Bild* newspaper, Germany's biggest, reported that Hewlett admitted seeing Madeleine twice and described the mark in her right eye. The report is understood to be based on 'police sources' in Germany".

Our comment on this article will be brief. The claim that Hewlett had said these things about Madeleine was 'understood to be based on police sources in Germany'. That makes it unsubstantiated, to put it kindly, or, as we would prefer to put it, worthless.

The report also claims: "He has told private detectives employed by the couple that he will only reveal where he was the night Maddie vanished if they pay him thousands of pounds".

So far as we are aware, neither the McCann Team, nor their chief spokesman Clarence Mitchell, nor the two detectives who make up the McCanns' current investigation team - Edgar and Cowley - have ever gone on the record to confirm this. Had they really spoken to Hewlett, they would have confirmed the conversation. But they have not. Indeed they have all, elsewhere, confirmed that they have never been able to talk to Hewlett. That *proves* that the *Bild* story is not only worthless, but an outright lie.

However, it did not stop Clarence Mitchell taking advantage of it, for the report added: "Clarence Mitchell, the McCanns' spokesman, said: 'In the light of the *Bild* piece, this makes it even more imperative that Mr Hewlett gives any credible information that he may have about Madeleine to the investigators as a matter of priority. We hope that he and his representatives will see sense and facilitate this interview in the near future'."

Did Hewlett carry any secrets about Madeleine McCann to the grave? Given our comments on the above two reports, then the answer must be: 'No'.

### **He always wriggled out of it?**

Actually, it was not so much Hewlett as the German authorities who wanted nothing to do with the McCanns' private investigators. At the beginning of 2009, the McCanns and Brian Kennedy had appointed former Detective Inspector Dave Edgar and former Detective Sergeant Arthur Cowley to be their seventh team of 'crack investigators' that they had employed. For more details on the controversial intelligence agencies that the McCanns have hired, please see a companion article on our website by John Whitehouse: 'The McCanns' private investigators investigated'.

In a *WordPress* article by Duarte Levy dated 27 May 2009, Levy wrote: "The two former English policemen that were hired by the McCann couple returned to England yesterday without having questioned the alleged 'suspect' in the disappearance of Madeleine, after the German authorities classified their presence in Aachen as 'a clown act', accusing them of 'trying to pressure the local judicial authorities', *using contacts among the British diplomatic representatives in Germany*."

The article also quoted Robert Deller from the hospital where Hewlett was a patient saying: "We can't prevent the British citizen from leaving

the hospital, as soon as that is possible in clinical terms, and especially if he wishes to do so". A spokesman for the police in Aachen said to the Portuguese newspaper *24Horas*: "We are willing to co-operate with the Portuguese and English authorities, but these detectives have no authority whatsoever and we'll be glad when they leave the hospital door, Them, and all the journalists that they brought along".

SKY NEWS said: "The [McCann detectives] attempted to gain access to Hewlett during a visit to a hospital in the western city of Aachen, where he is receiving cancer treatment. *They were refused entry upon arrival at reception.*

Even the McCanns' spokesman Clarence Mitchell had to admit to SKY NEWS that: "Hewlett has not refused to speak to the McCanns' detectives. Negotiations are continuing with local authorities".

Not so much 'Hewlett wriggling out of it', then, but rather the German authorities sending the amateur McCann detectives packing.

A report on 10 June referred to the McCanns' investigator Dave Edgar returning to England having failed in his bid to interview Hewlett. The newspaper article said:

"Mr Edgar said he was 'very disappointed'... 'I have been attempting to speak with Raymond Hewlett to eliminate him from our investigation into the disappearance of Madeleine McCann. *He is not a suspect*, but I was keen to interview him because of his failing health. I have tried over the past weeks to arrange this via his lawyer in Germany. These negotiations have been difficult for reasons which I do not want to go into detail about. Mr Hewlett's condition has of course been deteriorating during these negotiations. I travelled to Germany yesterday in a final effort to interview Raymond Hewlett. Regrettably that interview is not possible. From information provided by his lawyer and other sources, it is obvious that his health is such that any meaningful interview would not be possible'."

So the McCanns' senior detective admitted that Hewlett was too unwell to meet with him. And we now know of course that Hewlett died four months ago - last year.

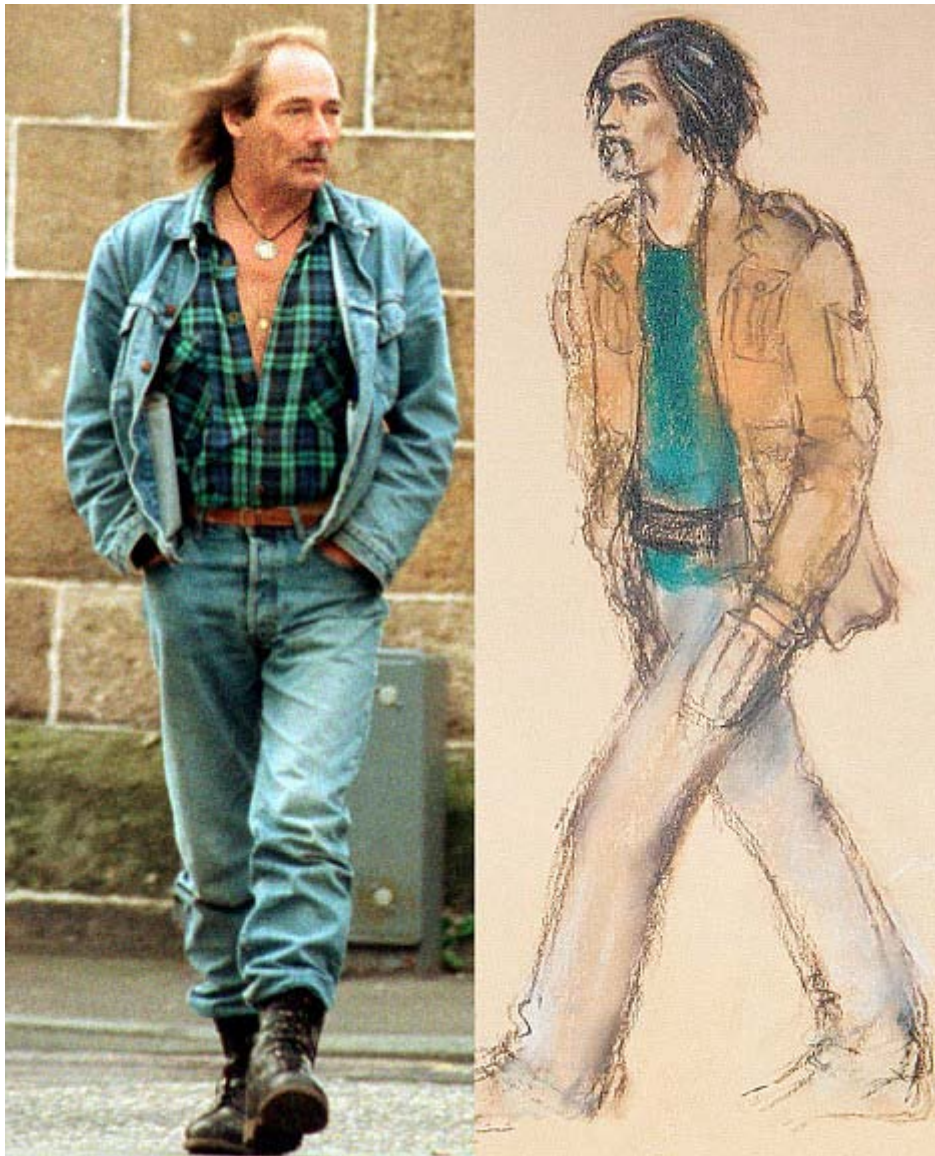
**He was never eliminated from the inquiry?**

Yes he was. The Portuguese Police investigated him. They also interviewed him. He had given them what he said was a cast-iron alibi. The police checked out his alibi and it did indeed stand up.

It is true however that the McCanns' private detectives said they were 'unable to eliminate him from their investigations'. That is a different matter entirely.

**Ex-soldier Hewlett bore a close resemblance to a straggly-haired man seen lurking near the McCann apartment?**

Below we reproduce, from the *Daily Mail*, a picture of Raymond Hewlett, on the left, and the 'straggly-haired man' to which the *Sun* refers, on the right. Below are our comments.



Raymond Hewlett

'Straggly-haired man'

First, we must point out that the 'straggly-haired man' bears no obvious resemblance to the man that McCanns' friend Jane Tanner claimed to have seen at 9.15pm on the evening that Madeleine McCann was reported missing. Having said that, Jane Tanner herself, when she saw the sketch, said (for whatever reason) that there *was* a strong resemblance. The man Jane Tanner claimed to have seen was 'about 35'.

The 'straggly-haired man' was based on a description by a Mrs Gail Cooper, who had been on holiday the week before the McCanns were there. But there were strong doubts about her credibility, for two main reasons.

First, she told a different story in her second statement to the police. She first of all said she had seen this man only *once*. But in her second statement, she said she saw him *three times*.

Second, she only made her statement *after* being personally interviewed by Brian Kennedy, the double glazing multi-millionaire who, since September 2007, has personally headed up, and largely funded, the McCanns' various private intelligence agencies and individuals that they have used. These two points made the Portuguese police reject Ms Cooper's evidence. It was of no value whatsoever.

A further point is that, given that Jane Tanner had said that the man she saw was about 35 and had 'longish black hair', it is blatantly obvious that Hewlett, then aged 62 and with thinning fair hair, could not be the same person as Tanner saw (if she did indeed see anyone as she claimed).

So, did Hewlett, as the *Sun* claimed, bear a close resemblance to the straggly-haired man seen lurking near the McCann apartment?

We cannot be sure of Gail Cooper's story in any event. If she did see a man looking like this, it is a moot point as to how close the resemblance is. The strange coincidence of both men having their hands in their pockets does create a certain resemblance, but the 'straggly-haired man' looks much younger.

**He was in Portugal when Maddie was snatched and left for Morocco three weeks later?**

It appears to be true that he was in Portugal. According to him, he was camping in Fuzeta, with his wife and six children, in a Dodge truck. At Fuzeta, there was a monthly market and antiques sale. It's about one hour's drive from Praia da Luz, where Madeleine was reported missing. He left for Morocco around the end of May, three weeks after Madeleine disappeared, around the time the McCanns were meeting the Pope.

**He told a pal he knew gypsies who sold children to perverts?**

The source for this story is the couple Alan and Cindy Thompson. According to an article in the *Daily Mirror*, the Thompsons met Hewlett in 2007 while he was living with his wife and six children in a converted Dodge truck, travelling from campsite to campsite.

Thompson told the *Daily Mirror*: “Hewlett befriended us but kept quiet about his terrible past. We were mortified and disgusted to discover the truth.” They also described a conversation in which Hewlett said he was approached by some ‘Gypsy tourists’ offering to buy his daughter just before Madeleine went missing.

Mrs Thompson said: “We didn't think too much of this at the time. Ray and his family led a desperate hand-to-mouth lifestyle and someone may have thought he'd be tempted to sell one of his six children”. They also recalled him mentioning a ‘business’ trip to Morocco where there were several alleged sightings of Madeleine in the months after her disappearance.

However, severe doubt was cast on the Thompsons’ tale. It turned out that they had also had previously claimed that they knew where Bin Laden's hideout was located. When that news leaked out, their credibility was zero.

That is the sum total of the claim that Hewlett ‘knew gypsies who sold children to perverts’. The Thompsons could just be right and Hewlett may well have been approached by a ‘gypsy tourist’. What one can make of that single conversation is another matter. But we need to bear in mind that it could have been a fabrication.

However, for the *Sun*, it made good copy, and was, for them a useful item to tack on to the other six innuendos in their article.

<b>Summary and Conclusion</b>
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Our summary and conclusion:

1. The *Sun* has tried to link Raymond Hewlett in its piece today with the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, by using a series of innuendos. But when you examine the facts, there is nothing whatsoever to link Hewlett to Madeleine except that he had been in Portugal for a while and knew Praia da Luz quite well.
2. The life history of Raymond Hewlett shows yet again that when a Person commits a serious sexual offence against a child, prison Sentences need to be lengthy to avoid the risk of other children being harmed when the person is released. The rights of children everywhere to be afforded reasonable protection from predatory sex offenders like Hewlett must be paramount.

**Sources used in compiling this article include:**

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