

## **The McCanns' private investigators – we investigate**

*by John Whitehouse, member of The Madeleine Foundation –  
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Much has been made of the McCanns' decision to use costly private investigators to search for Madeleine, allegedly because the Portuguese police were negligent in not following up proper leads. Here we look at what action the McCanns and their advisers have taken with regard to private investigators, and examine the track record of these private investigators to date.

#### **A. Control Risks Group**

On 25 May 2007, just 22 days after Madeleine was reported missing, in a BBC interview with Jane Hill, the McCanns were asked if, now that they had already netted £300,000 in their 'No Stone Unturned' fund, they would use any of that money for private investigators. Dr Gerry McCann responded: "The advice we have received is that private investigations will not help at the moment".

Despite this clear claim, a private investigation agency known as Control Risks Group announced in September that they had been helping the McCanns *since May* and *'were in regular contact' with them throughout*. Although Control

Risks Group say that their work includes carrying out various forms of private investigation, there is no evidence that they had ever had any experience or successes in the field of tracing missing persons, let alone missing children. It is in effect a complete mystery what their role was and how much money the 'No Stone Unturned' fund paid them.

But were Control Risks Group *already* involved at least 12 days before Dr Gerald McCann made his claim on the BBC that 'the advice we have received is that private investigations will not help at the moment'? It seems that they were.

For in the early afternoon of Sunday 13 May 2007, Jane Tanner, one of the McCanns' friends and the person who says she saw an abductor, spoke to 'some of the people that Kate and Gerry brought in'. Who were these 'people' brought in by Dr Gerald and Dr Kate McCann?

It is almost certain that they were two senior investigators from Control Risks Group, namely Kenneth Farrow and Michael Keenan. Mr Farrow is the ex-head of the Economic Crime Unit in the City of London Police and Mr Keenan an ex-Superintendent from the Metropolitan Police with specialist fraud and investigative experience.

It is known that they flew in to Faro Airport on the British Airways flight from Gatwick that morning. It is also known that these two men that day quizzed Jane Tanner and told them about her sighting of the alleged abductor. It has also been reported that she told these two men from Control Risks group (as she had earlier told the Portuguese Police) that she could identify the alleged abductor 'if she were to see him in profile and in context'. She then went on to positively identify Robert Murat as the abductor, leading to his being made a formal suspect in the Portuguese Police investigation.

The involvement of Control Risks Group at this early stage is highly significant. The company was apparently on a retainer by public relations company Bell Pottinger as part of a 'crisis management' team, on behalf of Mark Warner. It is quite possible that some Control Risks Group specialists were already in Praia da Luz before 13 May 2007.

Why were Control Risks Group brought in so soon? To help find a missing child? Or for other reasons?

### **B. Metodo 3**

After hiring Control Risks Group, the McCanns then went on to hire a Spanish detective agency with a controversial reputation - Metodo 3. Hiring them cost the McCanns and their 'No Stone Unturned' fund at least several hundred thousand pounds, all for no obvious benefit or results.

Different figures have been given out at different times by the McCanns and their advisers as to exactly how much money was paid to Metodo 3, who appear to have been employed for around six months, possibly quite a while longer (see below). We might also note here that the question of who was

funding Metodo 3 and the whole private investigation activity on behalf of the McCanns was blurred; it was never made clear if the 'No Stone Unturned' fund was financing Metodo 3, or multi-millionaire double glazing millionaire Brian Kennedy, who also claimed to be funding Metodo 3. Perhaps we shall never know the truth.

Once again, this particular firm of private investigators had no known track record in finding missing children. On the contrary, they were much better known for their expertise in the fields of money laundering and fraud. Also, we may note that this was a Spanish agency, and based in Barcelona, right on the very opposite side of the Iberian peninsula (which includes both Portugal and Spain). Their headquarters were therefore some 500 miles from Praia da Luz.

Many of those involved in running Metodo 3 have controversial histories. Its Director and 'leading detective', Mr. Francisco Marco, was once described simply as a 'crook' by leading Portuguese criminologist, Mr Moita Flores. Well-known Portuguese writer Joana Morais volunteered the opinion that: "I trust in Mr. Moita Flores' opinion about Francisco Marco".

A number of Metodo 3 detectives were once arrested in a phone-tapping scandal linked to leading politicians and businessmen. Five senior members of Metodo 3, including Francisco Marco, the Director, were held in 1995 amid claims of industrial and political espionage, with Marco's mother, Martina Fernandez Lado, 57, who founded the agency in 1985, being led away in handcuffs. She was arrested as she handed a client a cassette containing an allegedly illegally phone-tapped conversation.

At the same, police raided Metodo 3's Barcelona offices, seizing handguns, ammunition, listening equipment, cassettes and transcripts of taped phone calls. Subsequently Mrs Lado was found to have made 'phone calls offering a telephone tapping service for a fee of around £20,000. Mrs Lado's husband, Francisco Marco Poyuelo, and Mr Marco's brother, Francisco Gabriel Fernandez Lado, were also arrested. It must be added for the record that none of them were subsequently convicted of any offence.

Meanwhile Sergio Sancelestino, an employee of Spanish telephone company *Telefonica*, was suspected of illegal 'phone tapping and was proved to have close links with certain Metodo 3 employees.

One Spanish private investigator told the *Daily Mail* in 2008: "Metodo 3 have portrayed themselves as the best investigators in the world. The truth is they are nothing of the sort. Their murky background is riddled with controversy". Marco claimed at one time that his agency had '40 people' employed full-time or part-time in the search for Madeleine. It is far from clear what these claimed '40 people' might have been doing.

The controversy over Metodo 3 was not helped by the McCanns and their supporters giving out totally contradictory information about who was funding them. On the one hand, it was claimed by the McCanns' multi-millionaire-backer, Brian Kennedy, in a broadcast on Spanish TV channel

*Antena 3*, that he was 'wholly funding' Metodo 3. Yet on 29 November 2007, Dr Gerald McCann, on his blog, wrote that the 'No Stone Unturned' fund was paying the £50,000 a month fees. Both could not be right.

During the autumn of 2007, Mr Marco claimed that: "We believe [Madeleine] is in an area not very far from the Iberian peninsula and North Africa", adding: "We have proof of her movements after her kidnap and we know she was alive the day after her disappearance. We are not certain when she left Portugal. I talk of certainties because we know which group may have her or could have kidnapped her to then sell her on. I cannot say who she is with because we are putting together conclusive proof that we can present to the authorities". Subsequent events strongly suggest that this claim by Mr Marco was a complete fabrication. Certainly the McCanns and their most recent two-man detective team of former Detective Inspector Dave Edgar and former Detective Sergeant Arthur Cowley have not confirmed Marco's claims as true.

In December 2007, in the run-up to Christmas, Mr Marco also made widely-publicised claims that Metodo 3 were 'closing in' on Madeleine's abductors, that he 'knew who snatched Madeleine' and that Metodo 3 were 'not maybe...but very close to finding him'. He even bragged that he was '100% sure that Madeleine was still alive' and would be 'home by Christmas'. Many British tabloids covered this emotive story on their front pages, without bothering to question Marco's clearly extravagant claims. Of course this hype about Madeleine being 'home by Christmas' came to nothing, confirming - if proof were needed - that Marco was once again guilty of blatant fabrication.

In February 2008, *The Times* published a penetrating article by reporter Christine Toomey about Metodo 3, titled: "Madeleine McCann and Metodo 3: Private eyes, public lies". It is well worth looking at one or two extracts from her article.

First, Toomey noted that on the day Mr Marco bragged about Madeleine McCann being 'home by Christmas', "Metodo 3 moved from cramped premises above a grocer's shop specialising in sausages in Barcelona's commercial district, to a multi-million-pound suite of offices in a grand villa on one of the city's most prestigious boulevards. At the time, Metodo 3 were four months into a contract with the McCanns worth a reported £600,000 in total".

Second, on visiting these plush new offices, Toomey noted: "There is no discernible ringing of telephones; little sign of activity of any kind, other than a woman searching for a lead to take a pet poodle for a walk and the occasional to-ing and fro-ing of workmen putting finishing touches to the sleek remodelling of the office complex. Opposite the boardroom is an open-plan area of around half a dozen cubicles, equipped with banks of 'phones and computers. Most are empty when I arrive..."

Before her interview with Mr Marco started, his cousin Jose Luis warned Toomey sternly: "We won't answer any questions about Maddie. Maddie is off limits - is that understood?" We might ask why the secrecy, since Metodo 3 had become best known for its association with the search for Madeleine.

Toomey continued: “After talking to Marco for half-an-hour, I concluded that what motivates him - as much as, if not more than, his professed desire to present Madeleine with the doll he boasts he carries around in his briefcase to hand to her when he finds her - is a sense of self-regard, self-publicity and money”.

Toomey also noted that, up to its involvement in the Madeleine McCann case, Metodo 3 “specialised in investigating financial swindles, industrial espionage and insurance fraud”. During her interview with Marco, he referred to his six-year-old son learning to read. He boasted: “Because he can read [about the Madeleine McCann case], he knows I am the most famous detective in the world”. Asked about why the McCanns chose Metodo 3, he answered: “Because we were the only ones who proposed a coherent hypothesis about the disappearance of their daughter - our principal line of enquiry is paedophiles”.

Yet, by contrast, in an interview published just *three weeks earlier* in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, Marco had claimed that Metodo 3 ‘had around 40 people, here and in Morocco’, working there on the basis that Madeleine was smuggled to Morocco ‘where a blonde girl like Madeleine would be sought by families as a status symbol’.

Within three weeks, then, Metodo 3 appeared to have shifted from proclaiming that Madeleine had been stolen to order as a status symbol for a wealthy family, to claiming that ‘padophiles’ were now their main line of enquiry.

Marco went on to claim to Christine Toomey that Metodo 3 was ‘receiving an average of 100 calls a day from the four quarters of the globe’ and to have ‘half a dozen translators answering them in different languages’.

Toomey describes how her interview with Marco ended: “When I asked him to elaborate on the 23 missing children he claims his agency has located in the past, Marco eased himself away from the table for the first time, tilting far back in his chair. He cannot talk about that on the grounds of confidentiality, he says. Shortly after this, his cousin Jose Luis, who had sat mostly silent until now, called time on the interview with a chopping motion of his hand”.

### **C. Claims that a Metodo 3 senior investigator was a criminal**

In February 2008, another Metodo 3 private detective, known as Antonio Jimenez or ‘Antonio J.R.’ (aged 53), working for the McCanns as their ‘detective in charge of special operations’, was charged with stealing 400 kilograms of cocaine - nearly half a ton - from an illegal shipment of 1,500 kg, said to have been worth £25 million, on a ship coming from Venezuela. He had been Chief Inspector of the Drugs and Organised Crime Unit for the Barcelona police at the time those 400 kilos of cocaine went missing from the port of Barcelona. But he had left the police to work for Metodo 3 in August 2005, just when an internal investigation was looking into how those 400 kilos had disappeared. He was remanded in custody by a Barcelona court on

on charges of breach of trust, corruption, corruption of public officials and illicit criminal association.

It had been the same Antonio Jimenez of Metodo 3 who had travelled to Morocco and, whilst he was there, was able - somehow - to find a number of witnesses who claimed to have seen Madeleine. It was around the time of Jimenez's trip to Morocco that the Moroccan government took the unusual step of expelling a man who had been visiting hotels and garages in various parts of Morocco offering people money if they could claim to have seen a girl looking like Madeleine. A coincidence, perhaps.

#### **D. Metodo 3 and a strange Portuguese lawyer, Marcos Alexandre Aragão Correia**

We'll now take a little diversion to look at the secretive links between a Portuguese lawyer from Madeira, Marcos Alexandre Aragão Correia, and Metodo 3. The connection came through one of the many bizarre episodes in the mystery of missing Madeleine McCann - namely the search of the Arade Dam in southern Portugal because Mr Correia thought that Madeleine McCann's body might have been dumped there.

One newspaper highlighted the link in March 2008, as follows:

“Barcelona detectives from Metodo 3 are now also at the site [the Arade Dam] on the Algarve. A team of detectives from the Barcelona firm, Metodo 3, arrived there yesterday as there were reports that a local reservoir, the Arade, is being dragged again in the search for the body of the missing British youngster, Madeleine McCann. A team of seven divers have been at the reservoir since Monday, in what is the second search of the site. An earlier search proved fruitless five weeks after Madeleine disappeared”.

Mr Aragão Correio came to prominence when he claimed to be funding the search for Madeleine's body in the Arade Dam. But he has had a much greater involvement in the Madeleine mystery than this. For in late 2008 it was revealed that he had become the lawyer for Leonor Cipriano, the mother who murdered her own 8-year-old daughter Joana in 2004 when the poor girl stumbled upon her mother having an incestuous relationship with her uncle - her mother's brother. Both of them murdered Joana and are now serving long prison sentences. This was thanks in no small measure to the detective skills of Goncalo Amaral, the detective who led the police investigation into Madeleine's disappearance, until removed from the enquiry amidst claims that he had spoken to a journalist about British government interference in his investigation.

It was in late January 2008 that Mr Aragão Correia came forward with the dramatic news that he was sure that Madeleine's body was lying in a reservoir. He added various details which suggested that he 'knew' - as he had 'been told' - that Madeleine had been 'stolen to order' by a gang of ruthless paedophiles, who had then killed her and dumped her body at the bottom of the reservoir.

One thing is very clear about Mr Aragão Correia's claims - they chimed in perfect harmony with the repeated claims of both the McCanns and their team of public relations advisers that Madeleine had been abducted by evil men - paedophile predators. Story after story appeared in the press claiming that Madeleine had been 'stolen to order by paedophile gangs'. Sometimes it was said that the paedophile gang was operating in Belgium; more commonly they were said to be gangs based in Morocco or elsewhere in North Africa. Another version was that Madeleine had been stolen to order to satisfy the need of a wealthy North African family who wanted a white child. It was said that young white children were very much in demand by middle class North Africans, a claim which, in truth, has little foundation.

So how did Mr Aragão Correia - up until then an obscure lawyer hailing from the Portuguese island of Madeira - burst on the scene?

We'll examine first a crucial news agency report on Mr Aragão Correia, namely the Press Association's report dated 4 February 2008.

The Press Association has the highest possible reputation in the U.K. as an authoritative news source. The British broadsheets - and other British media - routinely rely on its detailed and fully researched reports. What made this particular report of outstanding value to the Press Association was that it has an 'exclusive' tag - meaning that the news they were breaking had not been revealed to anyone else.

It is well known that to develop a story in the British media, a Press Association report is one of the best ways to break it. Those who are media savvy will cultivate their Press Association contacts and use them. As we read the Press Association report, which we'll reproduce here in full below, we may be able to observe how, between them, the McCann Team and Mr Aragão Correia had conveyed to the Press Association exactly what they wanted to say.

The report was 'by-lined' to Emily Nash, who was reporting direct from the Arade Dam at Silves, Portugal. It is clear she must have talked to Clarence Mitchell and to Mr Aragão Correia at length before filing her 'exclusive' article. Here's the full report, which we'll comment on below:

QUOTE

**DIVERS HUNT FOR MADELEINE MCCANN'S BODY IN A REMOTE RESERVOIR (filed 4 February 2008 by Emily Nash)**

**EXCLUSIVE: Underworld tip-off leads to fresh search**

The search for Madeleine McCann took a grim twist yesterday as divers trawled a remote reservoir for her body. The hunt, near the Algarve resort where she went missing in May, followed an underworld tip-off to lawyer Marcos Correia. Marcos, 32, said: "They told me she was thrown into a deserted lake with murky waters. I'm convinced this is the place". It was a

search that began in hope but gave way to heavy-hearted resignation as the weeks and months went by.

Now there are fears the hunt for Madeleine McCann could end in the murky depths of a reservoir 40 miles from where she went missing. Good Samaritan Marcos Aragão Correia, 32, is paying for a team of British divers to trawl it after an underworld tip-off that she was dumped in a lake just days after being abducted.

And they have unearthed a 17ft cord he believes was used to tie up the four-year-old.

The desolate reservoir in Barragem do Arade - 150ft deep (45m) in places - has a beach and a walkway leading to a tower. It matches clues the Portuguese lawyer was given. Marcos said: "I am convinced this is the place. My sources told me Madeleine was thrown into a deserted lake with murky waters, a beach and lots of trees. I believe this would have been the best place for someone to have dumped the body, based on my investigations. It's not overlooked, has easy access by car and if you threw the body from the tower the water is 55ft deep (17m) there".

The site is also a short drive from Silves, where a trucker has told police that on May 5 - two days after Madeleine went missing - he saw a woman hand a man a child looking like her [see further on in this essay]. News of the grim lead came as Portugal's top cop conceded his men acted with 'hastiness' in making the McCanns suspects. And Marcos believes Kate and Gerry had nothing to do with Madeleine's disappearance.

He is funding the dive search - at an estimated £1,200 a day - after he told Portuguese detectives eight weeks ago about the tip-off, but was ignored.

The lawyer said: "I was able to identify the site on December 10 and immediately informed police, who did nothing. I got tired of waiting for them to act on my information, so I decided to act. I will stay here as long as is necessary to try to solve this mystery. I don't care how much the divers cost, what matters is that my conscience will be clear".

Six frogmen, working seven hours a day, are searching by touch alone as there is almost zero visibility in the lake's dark depths. Marcos is convinced the nylon cord they retrieved - of a type used on window blinds - was tragically connected to Madeleine's abduction. He said: "They have found a cord tied in knots down there, right below the tower. I have given it to police. It's logical that if you throw a body in the water, you would tie it to something to weigh it down. There's no other rubbish there. There is no reason for it to be there".

Arade Reservoir, accessible via a dirt track, is a few hundred yards from a derelict hilltop diner and a car park used as an unofficial caravan camping site. The divers are focusing their search on the base of the tower - 15ft (4.5m) from the shore - as Marcos believes the body may have been thrown from there. He explained: "I don't have enough money to pay for the entire lake to

be searched. That would take many divers and many weeks. But because of the clues I have I decided to pay for searches in this area”.

The underwater unit began their grim task last Thursday. Alan Wilson, who heads the team based in Lagos, Portugal, said: “You can't see anything down there. Everything is black because there is no light. The divers are searching entirely by touch, feeling in the silt for anything suspicious that shouldn't be there. It's a long, slow process”.

The woman said to have been seen in Silves passing a girl to a male accomplice is said to have looked like Michaela Walczuch - girlfriend of suspect Robert Murat.

Ms Walczuch has never been an official suspect and dismissed the claim as ‘ridiculous’. However, both Marcos and Metodo 3, the Spanish detective agency hired by the Mc-Canns, believe the sighting of the girl could be a crucial clue. The lawyer said: “Metodo 3 believe this lead is quite credible. They told me their investigations indicated that Madeleine was switched from one car to another, precisely in Silves”.

He added: "I don't believe Kate and Gerry did it. It could have been a single madman or a gang, I don't know."

Marcos, who was first given his tip-off three days after Madeleine went missing from Praia da Luz, visited the reservoir with Metodo 3 detectives in December. Last night [3 February 2008] the McCanns' spokesman Clarence Mitchell welcomed the possible breakthrough.

He said: “We're grateful to anyone who feels they have important information in the search for Madeleine. If his search produces significant results, he must, of course, share that information with the police and our investigators”.

Meanwhile, Portuguese police chief Alipio Ribeiro conceded at the weekend his officers showed a ‘certain hastiness’ in making Kate and Gerry, both 39, suspects. He admitted there “perhaps should have been a different evaluation... I have no doubt about that”.

Kate and Gerry believe it could be a key step in clearing their name. A friend revealed: “They're not punching the air as they know there's still a long way to go, but it's a step in the right direction”.

Mr Mitchell added: "There was no air of celebration, but it's the sort of thing we have been waiting for. We hope that his comments are an indication police realise there's no case against Kate and Gerry and that it leads to them being eliminated from the inquiry”.

### UNQUOTE

Let us briefly summarise what this remarkable Press Association report told us. It informed us that:

- this 32-year-old lawyer, Mr Aragão, was in touch with ‘underworld sources’ - career criminals, in other words - *just three days* after Madeleine ‘disappeared’. In other words, on Sunday 6 May
- he visited this reservoir with detectives from Metodo 3 ‘in December’
- he had finally identified the site where he thought Madeleine’s body had been dumped on 10 December and informed the Portuguese police about his ideas that day - but claimed they had ‘done nothing’
- his ‘underworld sources’ had told him that Madeleine’s body had been ‘thrown into a deserted lake with murky waters, a beach and lots of trees’
- Mr Aragão Correia, by his own brilliance, had identified the Arade Dam as the *only* place which matched the description of ‘a deserted lake with murky waters, a beach and lots of trees’
- again, through his deductive powers, he had located the area near the tower as the only one to be searched
- he was a ‘good Samaritan’ who was shelling out thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of pounds out of the goodness of his heart, and based on his underworld sources. The cost of the search was at least £1,200 a day. Some estimates put the cost a great deal higher
- his ‘team of British divers’ had found a 17-foot long piece of ‘knotted cord’ that ‘could have been used to tie up Madeleine’
- Madeleine’s body could well have been thrown into the lake from the top of a tower by the lake
- Metodo 3’s investigations had apparently indicated to them that Madeleine was switched from one car to another, ‘precisely in Silves’, very close to the Arade Dam
- a woman said to have been seen in Silves, passing a girl to a male accomplice, looked like Michaela Walczuch - girlfriend of suspect Robert Murat.

We might briefly note one other newspaper report that appeared at this time:

“Lawyer Marcos Aragão Correia has said that he is sure that the body of Madeleine, who vanished from Praia da Luz, on May 3, will be found there. There are reports that objects found there already are strengthening his ‘deep conviction’. The office [of Mr Aragão Correia] claims that there is ‘a *99% possibility*’ that the body will be found there and the Portuguese paper ‘Correio da Manhã’ claims a child’s white sock has been found at the scene”.

Now we look at the reaction of the McCanns and their official spokesman, Clarence Mitchell, to this grim news that Madeleine’s body may be at the foot of a murky lake in Portugal. Most parents - and their advisers - would be utterly distraught at the possible news that their daughter had been cruelly snatched, killed and her body dumped in a reservoir. But here are their reactions:

Dr Gerald and Dr Kate McCann said they: “...believe it could be a key step in clearing their name”. A friend revealed: “They’re not punching the air as they know there’s still a long way to go, but it’s a step in the right direction”.

Clarence Mitchell said he: "...welcomed the possible breakthrough: 'We're grateful to anyone who feels they have important information in the search for Madeleine. There was no air of celebration, but it's the sort of thing we have been waiting for. We hope that his comments are an indication police realise there's no case against Kate and Gerry and that it leads to them being eliminated from the inquiry'."

To sum up their reaction to this dreadful news of Madeleine possibly being dead at the bottom of a lake, both the McCanns and their chief spokesman appear to be pleased, 'welcoming' the news' in fact - but not quite 'celebrating' or 'punching the air'.

Now let us look at the other elements in this Press Association report. The article helped to promote suggestions that:

- (a) the Portuguese police had acted 'hastily' in making Dr Gerald McCann and Dr Kate McCann suspects
- (b) the Portuguese police had deliberately ignored the vital evidence of Mr Aragão Correia's underworld sources that Madeleine had been dumped at the bottom of a murky lake - and discounted his apparently unshakeable conviction that this 'murky lake' was the Arade Dam
- (c) Madeleine's body being dumped in the Arade Dam might be linked with the suspicious sight of a woman transferring a young child to another car in the Silves area, a woman said to look like Michaela Walczuch, Mr Robert Murat's girlfriend. This neatly linked Madeleine's 'disappearance', once again, to the 'one-eyed oddball', Robert Murat
- (d) Dr Gerald and Dr Kate McCann were not responsible; Aragão Correia said: "I don't believe Kate and Gerry did it. It could have been a single madman or a gang".

Finally, in our analysis of this Press Association article, let us raise a few queries about Mr Aragão Correia's account:

- 1) Did he really receive inside information about Madeleine having been abducted within three days of Madeleine being reported 'missing'?
- 2) What did he do with the information?
- 3) He says he first contacted the Portuguese Police in December. Why the apparent 7-month delay in telling the police?
- 4) Why did his information about the 'murky' lake lead him to the Arade Dam?
- 5) Is it just a coincidence that this location, near Silves where a woman had apparently been spotted with a child soon after Madeleine 'disappeared', linked Madeleine to Robert Murat and his girlfriend?
- 6) What precisely was the link between Aragão Correia and Metodo 3? He said: "Metodo 3' believe this lead is quite credible. *They told me* their investigations indicated that Madeleine was switched from one car to another". Was there co-ordination between Metodo 3 and Aragão Correio before news of the Arade Dam searches were revealed?

To sum up, the Press Association newswire story harmonised with the abduction claim of the McCanns.

First, it gave 'legs' to the McCanns' repeated claim that Madeleine had been snatched by an evil abductor.

Second, it gave the impression that the dubious private detective agency, Metodo 3, was really on to something.

Third, the article had the bonus of making the Portuguese police look stupid on two accounts: (a) making the McCanns' suspects 'too hastily', and (b) ignoring Aragão Correia's fervent claims that Madeleine was in the reservoir.

Fourth, there was that extra detail that gave apparent credibility to the story - the alleged finding of the 17-foot knotted cord.

These aspects of the story led the McCanns and Clarence Mitchell to be pleased - a 'step in the right direction', said Dr Gerald McCann, though he was 'not punching the air'. Mitchell was then able to capitalise on the story by issuing an immediate statement in which he "urged the Portuguese authorities to act humanely by removing [the McCanns'] arguido status as swiftly as possible".

Other newspapers then added other details to Mr Aragão Correia's claims; here are some of them:

- The 'knotted cord' was found five days into the search, which was made by British divers from the local firm 'Dive Time'
- Mr Aragão Correia said that underworld sources had told him that 'Madeleine was raped, murdered and then dumped in a lake...'
- Mr Alipio Ribeiro, the National Director of the Policia Judiciaria (PJ), had told a radio interviewer at the weekend that "perhaps there should have been another assessment" before the McCanns had been declared 'arguidos'vanished.

Most significantly, Aragão Correia later changed his story that underworld sources had told him about Madeleine being raped and murdered. Challenged as to who these sources were and why he didn't take action earlier, he came up with a brand new story that he had had a 'vision' that Madeleine had been raped, murdered and her body dumped in a dam. He said he had had this vision after his first attendance at a spiritualist church in Madeira.

And Aragão Correia later emerged as the champion of murderess Leonor Cipriano, who brought a legal action, beginning in October 2008, in the Portuguese courts against Goncalo Amaral and four of his fellow-detectives, alleging that they had beaten and tortured her into making a false confession that she and her brother had murdered her daughter Joana.

The case against Goncalo Amaral in the courts seemed weak, indeed non-existent, to begin with.

As the case developed, it became clear that the Chief Prison Officer at Odemeira Prison had caused her Medical Director to file a false medical report about Leonor Cipriano's injuries.

Leonor Cipriano herself changed her story on many occasions.

During the proceedings, Aragão Correia was suspended by the Portuguese equivalent of the Law Society for professional misconduct - but was then reinstated.

The case against Goncalo Amaral was adjourned five times, mostly for mysterious reasons. It should have lasted a few days; in fact, it dragged out for six months.

At the conclusion of the trial, and entirely against the run of evidence, Goncalo Amaral was convicted by a seven-person jury of three judges and four jurors, of the offence of 'filing a false report', and given an 18-month suspended prison sentence. That enabled the British press and others to continue to portray Mr Amaral as 'the disgraced Portuguese cop'.

And what was Aragão Correia's reaction at the verdict against Mr Amaral? He told the press triumphantly: "The target has been hit".

There is no doubt much more to be told one day about the precise relationships between the McCanns, Clarence Mitchell, Brian Kennedy, Metodo 3, and the strange lawyer from Madeira, Marcos Alexandre Aragão Correia.

At the time of writing this article, Goncalo Amaral has been waiting for six months for his appeal against conviction to be heard. Why the delay? Unbelievably, because the four jurors have not been paid. Apparently, under Portuguese law, no appeal can be heard until the jury have been paid. So who is holding up these payments, and why.

#### **E. The Mark Hollingsworth article in the 'Evening Standard'**

We turn now to a very significant article in the 'Evening Standard', published on 28 August 2009, and written by journalist and investigator Mark Hollingsworth, best known for his investigations into Mark Thatcher's dealings and also MI5. He worked for Granada TV's 'World In Action' programme for five years. He is the author of nine books, notably 'Thatcher's Fortunes: The Life and Times of Mark Thatcher', 'Defending the Realm: MI5 and International Terrorism' and 'Saudi Babylon: Torture, Corruption and Cover-Up Inside the House of Saud'. His latest book, 'Londongrad: From Russia with Cash, The Inside Story of the Oligarchs', was published this year. He also contributes regularly to the 'Evening Standard' and many national newspapers.

His 'Evening Standard' article caused quite a stir, not least because one person mentioned in the piece had at one time worked for the security services.

Outraged, this man marched into the plush offices of London Solicitors Bindman and Partners and demanded that his name be erased from the article. The full article had in the meantime been deleted from the 'Evening Standard' website, but not before eager forum-owners and posters researching the Madeleine McCann mystery had placed the revealing article on various internet websites and forums. Bindmans were kept busy in August and September writing expensive legal letters to the various website owners to get his name removed from the internet.

The Hollingsworth article began: "Disillusioned with the Portuguese police, Gerry and Kate McCann turned to private detectives to find their missing daughter. Instead the efforts of the private eyes served only to scare off witnesses, waste funds and raise false hopes".

Raising false hopes would certainly be a valid criticism of the efforts of these private investigators. Wasting money would be another sustainable criticism. But Hollingsworth went on to accuse these private detective agencies of 'scaring off witnesses'. If that were true, it would not be merely a valid criticism. It could amount in law to the crime of interfering with potential witnesses in a criminal case.

Much of the next two sections of our essay are based on the Hollingsworth article.

#### **F. Red Defence**

Hollingsworth (see below) described how by the spring of 2008 Brian Kennedy and the McCanns decided they no longer needed the services of Metodo 3. As Hollingsworth put it:

"By April 2008, nearing the first anniversary of [Madeleine's] disappearance, Kennedy and the McCanns were desperate. And so when H.E. [full name withheld at the request of Bindmans and Partners, H.E.'s Solicitors], a former undercover police officer who worked on M15 operations, and Kevin Halligen, a smooth-talking Irishman who claimed to have worked for covert British government intelligence agency GCHQ, walked through the door, their timing was perfect. Their sales pitch was classic James Bond spook-talk: everything had to be 'top secret' and 'on a need-to-know basis'. The operation would involve 24-hour alert systems, undercover units, satellite imagery and round-the-clock surveillance teams that would fly in at short notice. This sounded very exciting but, as one source close to the investigation told the 'Evening Standard', it was also very expensive and ultimately unsuccessful. 'The real job at hand was old-fashioned, tedious, forensic police work rather than these boy's own, glory boy antic,' he said".

Hollingsworth said: "But Kennedy was impressed by the licence-to-spy presentation. H.E. and Halligen were hired [by Kennedy] for a fee of £100,000 per month plus expenses. Ostensibly, the contract was with Halligen's UK security company, Red Defence International Ltd, and an office was set up in Jermyn Street, in St James's. Only a tiny group of employees did the painstaking investigative work of dealing with thousands of emails and

phone calls. Instead, resources were channelled into undercover operations in paedophile rings and among gypsies throughout Europe, encouraged by Kennedy. A five-man surveillance team was dispatched in Portugal, overseen by the experienced H.E., for six weeks”.

Hollingsworth continued: “Born in Belgium in 1951, H.E. had been a highly effective undercover officer for the Manchester police. A maverick and dynamic figure, he successfully infiltrated gangs of football hooligans in the 1980s. While not popular among his colleagues, in 1991 he was seconded to work on MI5 undercover operations against drug dealers, gangsters and terrorists, and was later awarded the Queen’s Police Medal for ‘outstanding bravery’. By all accounts, the charismatic H.E. was a dedicated officer. He later set up his own consulting company and moved to Bury in Lancashire”.

Hollingsworth then went on to describe the ‘smooth-talking’ Kevin Halligen’s role in the Kennedy-funded investigation by ‘Red Defence International’. He wrote:

“While H.E., however flawed, was the genuine article as an investigator, Halligen was a very different character. Born in Dublin in 1961, he has been described as a ‘Walter Mitty figure’. He used false names to collect prospective clients at airports in order to preserve secrecy, and he called himself ‘Kevin’ or ‘Richard’ or ‘Patrick’ at different times to describe himself to business contacts. There appears to be no reason for all this subterfuge except that he thought this was what agents did. A conspiracy theorist and lover of the secret world, he is obsessed by surveillance gadgets and even installed a covert camera to spy on his own employees.

“He claimed to have worked for GCHQ, but in fact he was employed by the Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) as head of defence systems in the rather less glamorous field of new information technology, researching the use of ‘special batteries’. He told former colleagues and potential girlfriends that he used to work for MI5, MI6 and the CIA. He also claimed that he was nearly kidnapped by the IRA, was involved in the first Gulf War and had been a freefall parachutist”.

Hollingsworth’s assessment of Halligen’s various claims was brutal. “Very little of this is true”, he wrote. “What is true is that Halligen has a degree in electronics, worked on the fringes of the intelligence community while at AEA and does understand government communications. He could also be an astonishingly persuasive, engaging and charming individual. Strikingly self-confident and articulate, he could be generous and clubbable. ‘He was very good company, but only when it suited him’ says one friend. He kept people in compartments.’

Hollingsworth continues: “After leaving the AEA, Halligen set up Red Defence International Ltd as an international security and political risk company, advising clients on the risks involved in investing and doing business in unstable, war-torn and corrupt countries. He worked closely with political risk companies and was a persuasive advocate of IT security. In 2006, he struck gold when hired by Trafigura, the Dutch commodities trading company.

Executives were imprisoned in the Ivory Coast after toxic waste was dumped in landfills near its biggest city Abidjan. Trafigura was blamed and hired Red Defence International at vast expense to help with the negotiations to release its executives. A Falcon business jet was rented for several months during the operation and it was Halligen's first taste of the good life. The case only ended when Trafigura paid \$197 million [around £125,000] to the government of the Ivory Coast to secure the release of the prisoners”.

Here there is an interesting connection with the case of Madeleine McCann. Hollingsworth in his article mentions that Trafigura ‘dumped toxic waste in landfills near Abidjan’. What he doesn't mention in the article is that dumping that toxic waste there not only breached several international health and safety laws but was also responsible for killing several Ivory Coast citizens and seriously harming hundreds of others. The toxic waste released a highly poisonous gas that was so strong it was capable of killing people.

Later, Trafigura engaged the country's leading libel lawyers, Carter-Ruck, in an attempt to defend its reputation. This move backfired spectacularly when, in October 2009, Carter-Ruck threatened ‘The Guardian’ newspaper with injunction proceedings if it reported on a Parliamentary Question about Trafigura asked by Paul Farrelly M.P. As a result, Members of Parliament and the media rounded on Carter-Ruck, accusing them of undermining Parliamentary democracy by attempting to ban the reporting of Parliamentary proceedings.

No-one could recall such a blatant attempt to interfere with the rights of a British Parliament. Despite Carter-Ruck's best efforts to stop the reporting of Paul Farrelly's question - and of course the answer to it - ‘The Guardian’ and then all the other media not only reported the Parliamentary Question but also published a great deal of other highly damaging information about Trafigura which hugely damaged the company's reputation. It was a spectacular ‘own goal’ by Carter-Ruck and their clients.

At the very same time as Carter-Ruck were representing Trafigura, Carter-Ruck were also engaged in an attempt to silence Tony Bennett and Debbie Butler of The Madeleine Foundation, by threatening them with libel proceedings over the content of the Madeleine Foundation website and the publication and distribution of their booklet: “What Really Happened to Madeleine McCann? - 60 Reasons which suggest that she was not abducted” and their leaflet: “10 Key Reasons which suggest that Madeleine McCann was not abducted”. Whilst The Madeleine Foundation agreed to halt publication and distribution of the booklet and the leaflet; others were not so reticent. The Berlin-based free speech site ‘Wikileaks’ promptly published copies of both publications, and several other internet sites did likewise, thus bringing their contents to a much wider international audience.

Earlier, the McCanns' libel lawyers had been active in Portugal, obtaining an *ex parte* injunction halting the publication of Goncalo Amaral's book on the Madeleine case: ‘The Truth About A Lie’, and making initial moves to seize his copyright - a highly unusual move by any standards - and his assets. The

McCanns were out and about trying to suppress any publication which in any way queried their abduction scenario.

#### **G. Red Defence International mutates into Oakley International**

Returning to Hollingsworth's article, he went on:

“Halligen made a fortune from Trafigura and was suddenly flying everywhere first-class, staying at the Lansborough and Stafford hotels in London and The Willard hotel in Washington DC for months at a time. In 2007 he set up Oakley International Group and registered at the offices of the prestigious law firm Patton Boggs, in Washington DC, as an international security company. He was now strutting the stage as a self-proclaimed international spy expert and joined the Special Forces Club in Knightsbridge, where he met H.E.”

Hollingsworth continued:

“During the Madeleine investigation, Halligen spent vast amounts of time in the HeyJo bar in the basement of the Abracadabra Club near his Jermyn Street office. Armed with a clutch of unregistered mobile phones and a Blackberry, the bar was in effect his office. ‘He was there virtually the whole day,’ a former colleague told the ‘Evening Standard’. ‘He had an amazing tolerance for alcohol and a prodigious memory and so occasionally he would have amazing bursts of intelligence, lucidity and insights. They were very rare but they did happen.’

So the hunt for Madeleine McCann was at that time being led by a hard-drinking Irishman - Halligen - using a London bar as the base for his operations - all funded by the ‘No Stone Unturned’ fund, or by Brian Kennedy (or both). This was the man who set up Oakley International, the fourth set of private investigators used by the McCanns and Brian Kennedy - see below.

Hollingsworth's article continued:

“When not imbibing in St James's, Halligen was in the United States, trying to drum up investors for Oakley International. On 15 August 2008, at the height of the McCann investigation crisis, he persuaded Andre Hollis, a former US Drug enforcement agency official, to write out an \$80,000 cheque to Oakley in return for a 10% share-holding. The money was then transferred into the private accounts of Halligen and his girlfriend Shirin Trachiotis to finance a holiday in Italy, according to Hollis. In a \$6 million lawsuit filed in Fairfax County, Virginia, Hollis alleges that Halligen ‘received monies for Oakley's services rendered and deposited the same into his personal accounts’ and ‘repeatedly and systematically depleted funds from Oakley's bank accounts for inappropriate personal expenses’.

So now we know that Halligen, leading the investigation into Madeleine McCann, was not only a hard drinker, but also capable of fraud and deception.

Halligen went on:

**“Hollis was not the only victim. Mark Aspinall, a respected lawyer who worked closely with Halligen, invested £500,000 in Oakley and lost the lot. Earlier this year he filed a lawsuit in Washington DC against Halligen claiming \$1.4 million in damages. The finances of Oakley International are in chaos and numerous employees, specialist consultants and contractors have not been paid. Some of them now face financial ruin”.**

**So, Halligen was not only capable of fraud and deception, it appears he was practising it on a significant scale. We might well ask: how did such a man ever get involved in trying to track down the alleged abductor of a missing British girl?**

**Hollingsworth goes on: “Meanwhile, H.E. was running the surveillance teams in Portugal and often paying his operatives upfront, so would occasionally be out-of-pocket because Halligen had not transferred funds. H.E. genuinely believed that progress was being made. Substantial and credible reports on child trafficking were submitted. But by mid-August 2008, Kennedy and Gerry McCann were increasingly concerned by an absence of details of how the money was being spent.**

**“At one meeting, Halligen was asked how many men constituted a surveillance team and he produced a piece of paper on which he wrote ‘between one and ten’. But he then refused to say how many were working and how much they were being paid. While Kennedy and Gerry McCann accepted that the mission was extremely difficult and some secrecy was necessary, Halligen was charging very high rates and expenses. And eyebrows were raised when all the money was paid to Oakley International, solely owned and managed by Halligen. One invoice, seen by the ‘Evening Standard’, shows that for ‘accrued expenses to May 5, 2008’ (just one month into the contract), Oakley charged \$74,155 [around £50,000]. The ‘point of contact’ was Halligen who provided a UK mobile telephone number”.**

**Hollingsworth comments: “While Kennedy was ready to accept Halligen at face value, Gerry McCann - sharp, focused and intelligent - was more sceptical. The contract with Oakley International and Halligen was terminated by the end of September 2008, after £500,000 - plus expenses - had been spent. For the McCanns it was a bitter experience. H.E. has returned to Cheshire and, like so many people, is owed money by Halligen. As for Halligen, he has gone into hiding, leaving a trail of debt and numerous former business associates and creditors looking for him. He was last seen in January of this year in Rome, drinking and spending prodigiously at the Hilton Cavaliere and Excelsior hotels. He is now believed by private investigators, who have been searching for him to serve papers on behalf of creditors, to be in the U.K. and watching his back. Meanwhile, in the eye of the storm, the McCanns continue the search for their lost daughter”.**

**So on top of everything else, the man who once led - for six months - the hunt for Madeleine McCann, was in August reported to have fled from his drinking den in Rome and be in hiding in the U.K., avoiding numerous creditors. What exactly possessed the McCanns, Brian Kennedy and the McCanns’ public**

relations adviser Clarence Mitchell ever to employ such a man as their lead investigator and to describe Oakley International, as indeed Clarence Mitchell did, as ‘the big boys’ of international private investigation?

#### **H. The involvement of Brian Kennedy in co-ordinating the private investigation into Madeleine’s disappearance**

We now look more closely at the role of Brian Kennedy in overseeing the private investigations into Madeleine’s disappearance. Hollingsworth’s article places double glazing magnate Brian Kennedy at the very heart of organising and financing these private investigations.

Brian Kennedy’s business interests include his ‘Latium’ group, based at Wilmslow in Cheshire. His chief in-house lawyer, Edward Smethurst, has frequently been described as ‘The McCanns’ co-ordinating lawyer’. Smethurst’s role, therefore, includes co-ordinating the work of some of the many lawyers the McCanns have used in the case. These include: (1) Michael Caplan Q.C., regarded as Britain’s leading extradition expert; (2) Carter-Ruck and in particular their senior partner, Adam Tudor, who is paid an undisclosed monthly retainer from an undisclosed source for helping the McCanns to mount libel actions against those who suggest that Madeleine was not abducted, and (3) Bates, Wells and Braithwaite who act as lawyers to the ‘No Stone Unturned’ fund. He also co-ordinates the work of the McCanns; lawyers in Portugal. Thus we see very clearly that Brian Kennedy is in control of both the intelligence-gathering operation of the McCanns and also the McCanns’ legal operations to defend themselves. And quite possibly controls the financing of the private detective agency work as well.

The Madeleine Foundation is in possession of a report from an insider that the headquarters of Brian Kennedy’s intelligence operations into the disappearance of Madeleine McCann is a house in Knutsford, a fact partially confirmed by a ‘Belfast Telegraph’ report which we refer to at the end of this essay.

Hollingsworth gave Kennedy this favourable write-up in his article:

“The search has been overseen by the millionaire business Brian Kennedy, who set up ‘Madeleine’s Fund: Leaving No Stone Unturned’, which aimed ‘to procure that Madeleine’s abduction is thoroughly investigated’. A straight-talking, tough, burly self-made entrepreneur and rugby fanatic, he grew up in a council flat near Tynecastle in Scotland and was brought up as a Jehovah’s Witness. He started his working life as a window cleaner and by 2007 had acquired a £350 million fortune from double-glazing and home-improvement ventures. Kennedy was outraged by the police insinuations against the McCanns and, though a stranger, worked tirelessly on their behalf. ‘His motivation was sincere,’ said someone who worked closely with him. ‘He was appalled by the Portuguese police, but he also had visions of flying in by helicopter to rescue Madeleine’.”

Hollingsworth offered this description of how the McCanns' private investigation began. He wrote:

“Kennedy commissioned private detectives to conduct an investigation parallel to the one run by the Portuguese police. But his choice showed how dangerous it is when powerful and wealthy businessmen try to play detective. In September 2007, he hired Metodo 3, an agency based in Barcelona, on a six-month contract and paid it an estimated £50,000 a month. Metodo 3 was hired because of Spain's 'language and cultural connection' with Portugal. 'If we'd had big-booted Brits or, heaven forbid, Americans, we would have had doors slammed in our faces' said Clarence Mitchell, spokesperson for the McCann's at the time. 'And it's quite likely that we could have been charged with hindering the investigation as technically it's illegal in Portugal to undertake a secondary investigation'.

“The agency had 35 investigators working on the case in Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and Morocco. A hotline was set up for the public to report sightings and suspicions, and the search focused on Morocco. But the investigation was dogged by over-confidence and braggadocio. 'We know who took Madeleine and hope she will be home by Christmas,' boasted Metodo 3's flamboyant boss Francisco Marco. But no Madeleine materialised and their contract was not renewed”.

Hollingsworth went on in his article to offer a devastating critique of the Kennedy-led private investigation. He wrote:

“An investigation by the 'Evening Standard' shows that key mistakes were made, which in turn made later enquiries far more challenging. The 'Evening Standard' has spoken to several sources close to the private investigations that took place in the first year and discovered that:

- The involvement of Brian Kennedy and his son Patrick in the operation was counter-productive, notably when they were questioned by the local police [in Portugal] for acting suspiciously while attempting a 24-hour 'stake out'
- The relationship between Metodo 3 and the Portuguese police had completely broken down
- Key witnesses were questioned far too aggressively, so much so that some of them later *refused to talk to the police*
- Many of the investigators had little experience of the required painstaking forensic detective work”.

So, Hollingsworth's enquiries revealed that Kennedy's private investigation agents had 'questioned witnesses *far too aggressively*', causing them to 'refuse to talk to the police'.

Pausing there, had this 'aggressive questioning' of potential witnesses in a serious case occurred in the U.K., sufficient to cause them to 'refuse to talk to

the police', it is very likely that those guilty of carrying out and organizing such questioning would have been arrested, charged and found guilty of the criminal offence of 'interfering with witnesses'.

We cannot be sure just which witnesses Brian Kennedy and his various teams of investigators spoke to - 'aggressively'.

One strange meeting we do know about, however, is a meeting in November 2007 which involved Brian Kennedy flying out with his in-house lawyer Edward Smethurst to meet Robert Murat (then a suspect) in Portugal. Smethurst, as we saw earlier, is the McCanns' 'co-ordinating lawyer'. We know from both Kennedy and the Portuguese Police that while he was out there, he also met with representatives from Metodo 3 and the Portuguese police. Very little has emerged publicly from this mini-series of meetings in Portugal. We do know of course that, months later, on 17 July 2008, following being cleared of his 'arguidos' status, Robert Murat settled out of court for a tidy £600,000 in libel damages against a number of British newspapers.

Francisco Pagarete, Mr Murat's Portugese lawyer, confirmed that a meeting took place at Mr Murat's aunt's house in the Algarve in November. He told the BBC: "[Brian Kennedy] came here to give his support to Robert and to say he doesn't believe Robert was involved in this story in any way or sense. And he asked if Robert could help the investigation for the finding of Madeleine in any way". Mr Pagarete added that Mr Kennedy had 'promised to stay in touch with Mr Murat' but 'had not contacted him since'. Mr Pagarete also confirmed that Edward Smethurst was at the meeting.

This meeting was either on the same day, or very close, to another meeting that Brian Kennedy had with the Portuguese Police on 13 November 2007.

According to a report filed by Paulo Reis and Duarte Levy, the Portuguese Police took a call on 19 October 2007 from Alberto Carbas, head of the Anti-Abduction Unit of the Spanish Department of Criminal Investigation. They asked the PJ inspectors in charge of the investigation into Madeleine's disappearance if they were willing to have a meeting with 'a representative of Metodo 3 and an officer belonging to the Spanish unit'.

The stated purpose of this strange meeting was, apparently, to 'provide the PJ with information held by the detectives'. The Spanish police officer assured the PJ that Metodo 3 had no intention of interfering with the work of the Portuguese police, but only to pass on useful information. At the same meeting, Metodo 3 stated on the record that they were 'working for Brian Kennedy'.

The two PJ inspectors later submitted an account of the meeting, containing information exchanged and of investigations based on leads given to them by Metodo 3.

The report, which is amongst the documents contained in the PJ files, indicates that right at the start of the meeting, Brian Kennedy was keen to stress that his intentions were 'purely charitable', because he felt 'concerned

about cases of child neglect and child abduction'. He stated that his concern, in this particular case, was 'only the truth and nothing but the truth', independently of knowing if the McCanns, their friends or any other person was involved or suspected.

According to the report, the Director of Metodo 3, presumably Francisco Marco himself, although he is not named, presented information to the PJ about three situations, allegedly received via their 'hotline'.

The first of these concerned an incident that the British media had already referred to, at the end of October 2007: a woman who had been babysitting at the Ocean Club, in Apartment 5A in August/September 2006, spotted a man 'hidden in the shadows', the same day that Madeleine disappeared. A story about this had surfaced in 'The Sun' on October 31.

According to the newspaper, "The nanny - identified only as M.H. - reported the frightening incident to the police in England after the hunt for Madeleine started in May, but did not speak to the police in Portugal". Clarence Mitchell added that: "This evidence supports what we have always said, that Maddie was taken from her bed by an abductor". The PJ had however ruled out this report, because the detectives considered that there was no proof that it was in any way related to Madeleine's disappearance.

The second piece of information was about the alleged existence of a paedophile image on a computer at the home of Sergei Malinka, witnessed by the fiancé of a British woman, four years ago, when he was at Malinka's house. According to this witness, he questioned Malinka on the subject and he explained that the computer belonged to a client and that he would report it later to the authorities. All of the computers at Malinka's house were seized and examined, but nothing of any relevance or suspicion was found, the PJ report indicates.

The third piece of information referred to a detailed witness statement, according to the Metodo 3 report, about a woman handing what the witness was convinced was a child, wrapped in a blanket or a sheet, over a fence to a man, next to two parked vehicles, near a town 100 miles from the Algarve. The witness, a Portuguese lorry driver, M.G., looked at several photos and picked out Michaela Walczuch (Robert Murat's girlfriend, now his wife) saying that her picture was the one that most resembled the woman he had seen.

The British media published a version of this story on 19 November 2007, but with different details. The 'METRO' wrote: "A witness spotted Murat's German girlfriend, Michaela Walczuch, in a car with Maddie, on 5 May, in central Portugal". On the same day, the 'Daily Mail' published a similar story: "According to a source, a new witness identified Michaela Walczuch as the woman seen with the missing child, in central Portugal, 160 kilometres from where she disappeared on May 3<sup>rd</sup>".

As usual, Clarence Mitchell had a few things to say to the media: "We are not going to comment on any line of the investigation except to say that we are

encouraged by the fact that our investigators seem to be making progress. Kate and Gerry are not ruling out any possibility”.

The PJ studied this incident and questioned the Portuguese lorry driver, but the facts that he described to the police were somewhat different to those reported in the British press. The lorry driver said he saw a woman handing something to a man, over a fence, wrapped in what looked like a blanket. It wasn't heavy, because they did it easily and the fence was around a 1.6 metres (5 feet). Asked if it could have been the body of a child, he responded that nothing he had seen would indicate that.

Questioned also about the positive identification of Michaela Walczuch, according to Metodo 3's report, the witness told the PJ that he couldn't see the woman's face, because he was driving his lorry at 45/50 mph, and the couple were at some distance. He only chose Michaela's photo from amongst the others Metodo 3 had shown him because she had the same hair colour and similar build.

It appears, then, that there were two meetings, one between the PJ and Metodo 3, attended by Brian Kennedy and his lawyer Edward Smethurst, the other between Kennedy, Smethurst and Robert Murat. Kennedy was therefore very much in the thick of it. But his precise role in these two meetings is unclear.

Another Kennedy mystery is why he personally contacted an Irishman, Mr Martin Smith, after he had claimed that he man he saw carrying a child at around 9.50pm on the night Madeleine was reported missing looked like Dr Gerald McCann. Here is the report of Detective Sergeant Liam Hogan of the Irish Gardai, based in Drogheda, County Lough, which refers to Kennedy contacting Mr Smith:

“I took an additional statement from Mr Smith as requested. His wife does not want to make another statement. I showed him the video clip and he stated that it was not the clip that alerted him but the BBC News at 10.00pm on 9th September 2007.

“He has been contacted by numerous tabloid press looking for stories. *He has been contacted by Mr Brian Kennedy, who is supporting the McCann family, to take part in a photo-fit exercise.* He has given no stories or helped in any photo fits. He sent a solicitor's letter to six papers in relation material that was printed that was misquoted. The 'Evening Herald' paid his solicitor's fees and all papers printed an apology. His photograph appeared in another tabloid paper and this matter is being pursued at the moment.

“I do not believe that Martin Smith is courting the press and my view he is a genuine person. He is known locally and is a very decent person”.

Why did Kennedy contact Martin Smith?

Now let us move on to examine other very significant activity by Brian Kennedy in this case. At some point, Kennedy arranged for a witness, Gail

Cooper, to meet Melissa Little B.Sc. (Hons), PS, FBI Diploma, which resulted in the sketch of a person who became known on the internet as 'monster man', with a long pointy face, moustache, long hair at the back of his head, but no glasses. His sketch appears in Folio 3979 of the Portuguese Police files. He was said by Gail Cooper to have been seen acting suspiciously in Praia da Luz days before Madeleine disappeared.

A while later, Gail Cooper discussed her sighting with the British media but added further details to her story, describing seeing 'monster man' acting suspiciously on a *three* separate occasions: firstly when he was walking in heavy rain on the beach at Luz, later that day when he called at her apartment claiming to be a charity collector, and two days later when she says she saw him hanging around a children's outing arranged by Mark Warner. She told the reporters she had found the man 'disturbing'.

In none of her alleged sightings did she see this man 'walking purposefully', yet Miss Little prepared a second sketch showing Mrs Cooper's 'monster man' striding out and in a very similar pose to that based on Miss Tanner's most recent recollection. It seems clear that Miss Little exercised a high degree of artistic licence.

The final report of the PJ submitted to the Portuguese Attorney-General in June 2008 was dismissive of Gail Cooper's evidence.

Here is an extract from that report:

"In a later phase of the investigation, detailed at pages 3965 to 4113, we deal with a claim *emanating from the private investigation instigated by the McCann couple, and publicly announced by their spokesman, Clarence Mitchell*, of a suspect who was supposedly was undertaking a collection in Praia da Luz at the time of the disappearance. A photo-fit picture of this suspect was created of this individual by a witness - Gail Cooper - who saw him, see page 3979.

"This was immediately compared with the photo-fit from Jane Tanner, despite her description not having a face (see page 3977). But Jane Tanner alleged that they were one and the same person, with an 80% degree of certainty. In order to assess the credibility of the description and of the drawing, it is important to highlight the fact that the witness (Gail Cooper) was first of all interviewed by the British authorities and in a very detailed fashion (see page 3982). She said she saw this person *only one time*, collecting at the door of the residence she was occupying during her holidays.

"However, a few months later, in a new witness statement, the same witness stated that she saw this individual *three times*, during one of which he was said to be watching, in a strange way, the children at the Paraíso Restaurant. She did not supply this information at the time of her first witness statement to the police in the U.K. After the publication of the photo-fit, we were notified of a myriad of claimed sightings of this individual, most of them from the U.K., but some also from Portugal (see page 4130).

**“All of this information was duly evaluated as to its credibility. Nothing has come of this photo-fit until now, despite innumerable persons contacting us to see they had seen persons supposedly of similar appearance”.**

**So we see very clearly how the Gail Cooper sighting of ‘monster man’ had, as the PJ put it, ‘emanated from the private investigation instigated by the McCann couple’. And we saw how it was Brian Kennedy himself who arranged for Gail Cooper to meet the ‘forensic artist’, Melissa Little.**

**Why would Brian Kennedy go to the lengths of getting Gail Cooper to draw up a sketch of ‘monster man’, when it seems his choice of witness lacked any credibility, not being able to recall whether she saw her ‘monster man’ once or three times? How did Kennedy find and contact Gail Cooper in the first place? These are among many mysteries to be revealed one day, perhaps.**

**Now we come to the highly-publicised launch of the sketch of ‘bundleman’, based on Jane Tanner’s claims to have seen the alleged abductor. This occurred in November - six whole months after Madeleine was reported missing.**

**On 22 October 2007 (Folio 3905), Dr Gerald McCann emailed Robert Small of Leicestershire Police with two sketches both prepared by Melissa Little, one of which (‘the second sketch’) was publicized in a blaze of publicity the following month and which became known as ‘bundleman’. This was the man with sleek dark hair, a dark jacket and light trousers, and was based wholly on Jane Tanner’s description of the alleged abductor.**

**The so-called ‘first sketch’ is similar to ‘bundleman’ but it is in black and white and has a nose - the so-called ‘nose-man’.**

**Dr McCann had by then become very familiar with Small, referring to him as ‘Bob’. He wrote: “Bob, Sketch 1 was the rough outline...She [Jane Tanner] was not really happy with the face and therefore Melissa decided to leave it blank”.**

**It must be remembered that at this time [October 2007] Jane Tanner was still insisting that the alleged abductor that she saw and Robert Murat were one and the same. Yet neither ‘nose-man’ [see Folio 3906] nor ‘bundleman’ was pictured wearing glasses. Since Mr Murat, as one person put it, ‘cannot see a barn door without his glasses’ and is never without them, Tanner’s sketch would appear to have ruled him out as the abductor. Yet no-one seemed to have spotted this serious inconsistency in Jane Tanner’s evidence.**

## **I. Oakley International**

**Earlier we saw how hard-drinking Irishman Kevin Halligen formed first Red Defence Intenatioanl and then, in the summer of 2007, Oakley International. Now we look at how the British press reported Oakley International’s involvement in the Madeleine McCann case.**

The first reports explain how it was revealed that the McCanns and their 'No Stone Unturned' fund had spent some £500,000 to £1 million on a firm of private investigators called 'Oakley International', described by the McCanns' chief public relations spokesman, Clarence Mitchell, as 'the big boys', thus clearly implying that they were internationally reputed and experienced private investigators.

Here's extracts of how the appointment of Oakley International was reported in two British newspapers.

First, extracts from Niall Firth's article in 'The Daily Mail' on 13 August:

"Kate and Gerry McCann have hired a team of crack U.S detectives to lead the hunt for their missing daughter Madeleine, it has emerged. The unnamed US firm is said to have been offered a £500,000 six-month contract by the Find Madeleine Fund to help spearhead the search. A friend of the McCanns said: 'The hunt for Madeleine is becoming more and more international and it was felt that a truly international firm was now needed to lead the inquiry. These really are the big boys. They are absolutely the best, but they are extremely secretive and cloak-and-dagger about what they do'."

The article continued:

"The friend said: 'Since their appointment, Metodo 3 has very much taken a back seat and they are now concentrating primarily in Portugal and Spain and across the Straits of Gibraltar into north Africa, where they have their main contacts. The American agency is pretty much handling everything else'."

"The secretive firm is said to employ ex-FBI, CIA and U.S special forces, FBI, CIA and U.S special forces. The McCanns' spokesman, Clarence Mitchell, said: 'Kate and Gerry made it clear from the outset they would leave no stone unturned in finding Madeleine and that means employing the very best people in any given field. It is correct that an international firm of investigators have been appointed. But I am unable to say anything at all about them because of the covert nature of their work and the need for secrecy, not only in looking for Madeleine, but also in relation to previous operations'."

He report went on:

"The McCanns now have detectives working around the world at a reported cost of £166,000 a month. Among the possible sightings they are following up, apparently ignored by Portuguese police, is one by a British yachtsman on the Caribbean island of Margarita last May".

Pausing here, the following points are noteworthy. First, it's clear from the article that Metodo 3 are still being employed, since the McCanns' 'friend' - whoever that may be - states explicitly that they were still engaged in investigating in Portugal, Spain and north Africa. Second, the Oakley International contract was worth £500,000 over 6 months - that's £83,333 per month. But the newspaper reports that £166,000 a month was being spent by the McCanns and their fund. So who was being paid the other half of

that £166,000? - as Oakley were only getting half that amount. Finally, let us note the use of the term 'crack detectives', a term used more than a few times by McCanns' spokesman Clarence Mitchell.

Now let us compare that with what Hollingsworth told us about the boss of the Oakley International, Kevin Halligen. The friend told the 'Daily Mail': "[This is] a truly international firm...These really are the big boys. They are absolutely the best..." Yet it turns out that it was a firm set up by hard-drinking con-man Kevin Halligen, now on the run from a number of creditors, somewhere in the U.K.

Now let us turn to Jerry Lawton's article the following day (14 August) in 'The Star'.

'The Star' headline read: "Desperate Kate and Gerry McCann have forked out £500,000 on an 'A-Team' of former top spooks to find missing daughter Madeleine".

It continued: "The couple now have 'a global operation' of dozens of retired FBI, CIA and even MI5 agents dedicated to solving the mystery of her disappearance. The top secret team has been given six months to solve the riddle. Doctors Kate and Gerry, both 40...have been reassured their new team of private eyes will follow up every lead around the world. Their spokesman Clarence Mitchell said: "There is a global operation working for Kate and Gerry. They are internationally-based with components in Britain, America, Europe and other countries where sightings have been made. The new team, appointed three months ago, is half way through a six-month contract. For security reasons we can't go into detail of the experts involved but it would not be wrong to say some are former military and police personnel with a degree of expertise'."

The report added: "The couple's Spanish-based detective agency Metodo 3 are still working on an £8,000-a-month retainer. They are being kept on because of their local knowledge and contacts".

The hype from Mitchell was intense...'global operation', 'internationally based', 'dozens of retired FBI, CIA and even MI5 agents', and 'following up every lead around the world'. But enquiries by those on Madeleine internet forums researching the case soon revealed that the firm was only set up in the summer of 2007, in fact by Kevin Halligen as we saw above - and only *after* Madeleine McCann had been reported missing. It appeared to consist of just two or three people registered as Directors.

Oakley International had absolutely no track record of successfully investigating the 'disappearance' of missing children, nor indeed much else. And as Hollingsworth's article revealed, in stark contrast to Mitchell's extravagant claims, this so-called 'international operation' was run by a hard-drinking Irishman, Kevin Halligen, with some unregistered mobile 'phone amongst the beer glasses on his pub table.

When double glazing magnate Brian Kennedy asked him how many staff he had working for him, the answer wasn't 'dozens of retired FBI, CIA and even MI5 agents'. As we saw above, when asked how many men constituted one of his 'surveillance teams', he "produced a piece of paper on which he wrote 'between one and ten', but then refused to say how many were working and how much they were being paid".

#### **J. 'A crack team of 12 senior detectives'**

Just before Christmas 2008, the McCanns' public relations spokesman, Clarence Mitchell, announced that the McCanns had now broken with Oakley International. Brian Kennedy was reported to have found them to be ineffective. Instead, announced Mitchell, the 'No Stone Unturned' fund and Brian Kennedy (nobody was quite sure which) were now funding 'a crack team of twelve senior British detectives', said to include top ex-MI5 and MI6 intelligence operatives. This was now the fifth team of 'crack detectives' employed by the McCanns. It sounded very impressive. But at no time were the British media ever given the names of any of these twelve top detectives. Little was ever heard about their activities.

#### **K. Dave Edgar and Arthur Cowley**

Then, in the spring of 2009 we heard about a sixth detective team. This time it was a brand new duo. The boss was former Cheshire and Northern Ireland Detective Inspector Dave Edgar; his assistant was former Cheshire Detective Sergeant Arthur Cowley.

They came to prominence in a series of public relations exercises promoted by the McCanns' public relations chief, Clarence Mitchell.

The first was a blitz of publicity about a convicted paedophile, Raymond Hewlett, currently ill in a hospital in north Germany. This resurrected the 'paedophile abduction' angle, and a spate of stories appeared in the British press about paedophiles said to have been resident in Portugal at the time Madeleine was reported missing. Hewlett himself was ruled out as a suspect, and there were near-farcical scenes as Edgar flew out to Germany to interview Hewlett, only to be refused access to him by the German authorities. The names of other paedophiles said to have been in Portugal at the time of Madeleine's disappearance were touted in the British press, once again giving the erroneous impression that the beautiful Portugues Algarve coast was a haven for paedophiles.

In another public relations exercise, a press conference was summoned in August in order to explain that Madeleine might have been snatched to order, carried on a private yacht to Barcelona, and then spirited away to Australia. To add 'spice' to the reports, we were told that the woman who might have been involved in taking Madeleine to Australia was a 'Victoria Beckham look-alike'.

We were then informed that this woman was 'thought to have' an Australian accent and had spoken to a professional British man at around 2.00am in

downtown Barcelona close to the port. We learnt that the man, before meeting the woman, had visited several bars that evening. According to Dave Edgar, 'he had been drinking, but was not drunk'. We were then informed that the man in question had 'agonised' for two years before disclosing the conversation he had had with the 'Victoria Beckham look-alike'.

All that we were told about what the woman was alleged to have said to him was: 'Have you seen my daughter?', or 'Have you got my daughter?'. Clarence Mitchell, who presided over the press conference, and Dave Edgar, pronounced this conversation as 'significant'. They explained that the press conference had been called so that this woman, presumably Australian, could be identified and come forward. A publicity blitz followed in Australia. Meanwhile Mitchell and Edgar said that the British man, said to be a bank manager, who spoke to the woman was declining to be identified 'for personal reasons'.

Mark Hollingsworth in his article referred to this public relations exercise in the following terms:

"It was billed as a 'significant development' in the exhaustive search for Madeleine McCann. At a recent dramatic press conference in London, the lead private investigator, David Edgar, a retired Cheshire detective inspector, brandished an E-fit image of an Australian woman, described her as 'a bit of a Victoria Beckham look-alike', and appealed for help in tracing her. The woman was seen 'looking agitated' outside a restaurant in Barcelona three days after Madeleine's disappearance. 'It is a strong lead', said Edgar, wearing a pin-stripe suit in front of a bank of cameras and microphones. 'Madeleine could have been in Barcelona by that point. The fact the conversation took place near the marina could be significant.'

"But", continues Hollingsworth, "within days reporters discovered that the private detectives had failed to make the most basic enquiries before announcing their potential breakthrough. Members of Edgar's team who visited Barcelona had failed to speak to anyone working at the restaurant near where the agitated woman was seen that night, neglected to ask if the mystery woman had been filmed on CCTV cameras, and knew nothing about the arrival of an Australian luxury yacht just after Madeleine vanished".

He added: "The apparent flaws in this latest development were another salutary lesson for Kate and Gerry McCann, who have relied on private investigators after the Portuguese police spent more time falsely suspecting the parents than searching for their daughter. For their relations with private detectives have been frustrating, unhappy and controversial ever since their daughter's disappearance in May 2007".

Hollingsworth, it seems, was raising the uncomfortable suggestion that this whole press conference was not a genuine attempt to follow up an alleged sighting of Madeleine, but merely a public relations exercise.

Dr Martin Roberts, in an article written on 7 August 2009, the day after the press conference, made the following observations on this press conference:

“Unexpectedly, as if from the depths of the Black Lagoon, the McCann case has acquired both a new witness and a new (female) suspect. Opening yesterday's press conference, Clarence Mitchell intoned: ‘The investigators or I will not be revealing any detail of what was said to the witness by the woman’. Less than 24 hours later and the press are chorusing *exactly* what was said to the witness by the woman; well, almost, anyway.

“During a conversation which 'lead investigator' Dave Edgar described as lasting ‘two or three minutes’ (as long as it takes to boil an egg) the woman is said to have asked the same question three times. That explains, perhaps, why ‘The Sun’ and The ‘Daily Mirror’ quote her as asking: ‘Have you got her? Have you got the child?’, whereas The Daily Express rendition is: ‘Are you here to deliver my new daughter?’ Or were there two independent 'leaks' to the press perhaps?

“This sharply-dressed lady is clearly not the sharpest tool in the shed if it took her a full three minutes to recognise a case of mistaken identity. But maybe it was good old British bravado that sustained her interest in a married, middle-aged, wannabe playboy. A source close to the investigation in Portugal told the ‘Daily Express’, apparently: ‘The new witness is a senior bank manager. He was in Barcelona for his brother's stag do. He was not drinking because he was keeping an eye on his brother’. The source might have done well to share this detail with Dave Edgar who, when asked about the same individual at the press conference, said: ‘The witness had been drinking. He wasn't drunk’.

“Clearly, an interval of two years and the intrusion of 'personal reasons' stimulated selective amnesia in this instance.

“Turning to the seemingly mischievous female (an antipodean speaker of Castillian and/or Catalan - or 'Strine' even), it is worth paging back 24 hours to yesterday's press conference, and the following exchange which took place shortly before its conclusion [DE = Dave Edgar].

Q: “How does this match what...what happened in Portugal? You suspect that she arrived in Barcelona by yacht. How does this match what could have happened in Praia da Luz?”

DE: “All I say is, it...it's something we looked at. It's possible to get there by yacht. It's, erm...a busy port, Barcelona, it, errr...you know, there's yachts there from all over the world. There's cruise ships land there, there's ferry ships land there so it...it's entirely possible” (i.e. that she arrived by yacht).

Q: “And how does this match...the previous E-fits that you had of the man that was seen by Jane Tanner in Praia da Luz? Do these two stories match at all?”

DE: “Well, obviously, the Jane Tanner sighting, she's...her perception was it was a man and this...this is a woman. We obviously haven't...Jane Tanner could have been wrong - it could have been a woman, erm...so we've got an open mind on that”.

This admission by former Detective Inspector Dave Edgar that Jane Tanner 'might have seen a woman' at 9.15pm on Thursday 3 May, the night Madeleine went missing, was truly extraordinary. Time and time again she insisted that she had seen a man and had given a detailed and accurate description of him. She had maintained in her rogatory interview with Leicestershire Police in April 2008 that she 'wanted to be believed'. Yet now Edgar totally undermined her various statements by saying she might have mistaken a woman for a man.

Just as extraordinary, there had to date been no fewer than 14 photofits, E-fits and artists' impressions of the alleged abductor issued at different times, who were given a wide variety of names on the internet such as 'egghead-man', 'bundleman', 'George Harrison man', 'Cooperman', 'monster man' and 'spotty man'. Yet now the McCanns latest 'crack' team of the detectives were suggesting that we should be searching for a woman, not a man.

But there was at least one more bizarre public relations twist to come from the McCann Team and Dave Edgar. On 13 September, the 'Belfast Telegraph' carried the following story: "Ulster detective leading the hunt on why he thinks she's being held captive just like Jaycee Dugard".

Jaycee Lee Dugard was abducted in the U.S.A. from near a bus stop on her way to school when she was 11 years old. She had dramatically turned up alive at the age of 25, having been held prisoner and used for sexual purposes by her abductor for 14 years. It was a remarkable story by any yardstick.

It followed recent stories of Natascha Kampusch, the Austrian girl found alive after years, having been kidnapped; the awful details of the Fritzl 'house of horror' in Paderborn, Germany, and a similar story from England about a man who had sexually abused his daughters for years and fathered children by them.

In the 'Belfast Telegraph' report, Aaron Tinney wrote:

"The Ulster detective leading the search for Madeleine McCann today reveals his most chilling theories yet, exclusively to 'Sunday Life'. Hardened ex-RUC cop Dave Edgar told us he is convinced that little Maddie is *imprisoned in a hellish lair* - just like kidnapped sex slave Jaycee Lee Dugard.

"He insisted the 'back from the dead' reappearance of Jaycee - and the cases of Austrian cellar girls Elisabeth Fritzl and Natascha Kampusch - confirmed his suspicion. And despite fresh leads taking his probe to Australia and Barcelona, the east Belfast man insists the golden-haired youngster is being held just 10 miles from where she was snatched in Praia da Luz two years ago.

"But he warned that the sprawling wilderness where he believes Maddie is languishing is almost impossible to search completely. Belfast-born Dave revealed the grim theories when he opened his case files to us. We spent the day at the Cheshire office he uses to conduct the world's biggest missing person case.

**“‘Sunday Life’ can now lift the lid on how his Alpha Investigations Group private eye agency really operates and what it is like to search for the world’s most famous missing youngster, who disappeared two years, four months and 10 days ago. When we visited Dave’s headquarters, U.S. kidnap victim Jaycee Lee Dugard had still not been rescued and the world had long forgotten her name. But even then, Dave said he was convinced Maddie was entombed by an abductor in a cellar or dungeon, like Austrian cellar victims Natascha Kampusch and Elisabeth Fritzl.**

**“‘Maddie is most likely being held captive, possibly in an underground cellar, just like Natascha or Elisabeth, and could emerge at any time’, he told us.**

**“Days later, news broke that tormented Jaycee had been freed from the foul compound where she was abused for 18 years by monster Phillip Garrido. Dave simply said: ‘This just supports my theory that Maddie is alive and imprisoned’.**

**“There was further backing for his theory when American boy Ricky Chekevdia was found hiding with his mother in a tiny ‘secret room’ two years after he was kidnapped while caught in a custody battle. Former Detective Inspector Dave, who grew up on Belfast’s Woodstock Road, was drafted in by Kate and Gerry McCann last November after Spanish investigators failed to find new leads.**

**“Renowned for leaving no stone unturned in his UK murder investigations, Dave now spends his days with a four-strong team probing every lead that comes in to his office. His partner Arthur Cowley has more than 30 years’ policing experience in north-west England - and the pair are backed up by a translator and an ex-police administrator. They have sifted through thousands of emails, answerphone messages and letters to get that one breakthrough lead.**

**“Last month, the information took Dave’s probe to Australia and Barcelona to track a ‘Victoria Beckham lookalike’ suspect, who spoke with an Australian or New Zealand accent. She was seen asking two British tourists at a marina in Barcelona if they were there to deliver her ‘new daughter’ - three days after Maddie disappeared. But he told us he is now back to focusing on his original theory.**

**“He still feels Maddie was snatched by a man spotted by the McCanns’ friend Jane Tanner, one of the so-called ‘Tapas Seven’ who dined with them the night Maddie went missing. Dave said: ‘Jane is a very reliable witness and there were other sightings of this man, who Jane saw carrying a little girl in a blanket, in the days leading up to the disappearance’. He feels this is the lone prowler who has Maddie stashed in a cellar or dungeon in the lawless villages around Praia da Luz.**

**”But Dave warned: ‘This rural, sprawling terrain makes it extremely difficult to search. You could quite easily keep a child there for years and no-one else would know. The person who has Maddie is most likely a paedophile or a**

person so desperate for a family they were willing to kidnap for it. 'I wouldn't like to speculate on what is happening to her'.

"Dave says the region where he feels Maddie is being held has attracted many strange characters, including convicted sex offenders. 'I don't want to generalise or make gross exaggerations, but there are people there living on the edges of society', Dave said. He added there were as many as nine child sex attacks in the area round Praia da Luz from 2005 to 2007 and the victims included British kids. Some happened as close as 20 miles from Praia da Luz, and six of them were on girls between the ages of three and 10. He is now investigating leads on six child sex offenders, 78 other rapists and sex attackers and 22 vagrants.

"In a glimmer of hope, Dave said: 'The key thing is no body has been found. When paedophiles kill, they often dump the body nearby, and this isn't the case here. Even if Maddie had been dumped in the sea nearby the resort, the ocean often gives up his victims. Until I find evidence that she is dead, I will keep going'.

"And his plans for the future? 'I don't know. We could still be sitting here in 10 years. If Maddie is being held, she may be being brought up to speak a different language and not even remember her own name or where she was from. All we can do is try and keep public awareness high - and try and reach as much of that mountainous region outside the resort as we can'."

Nothing has been heard since then of anyone combing this 'lawless' lands for hidden underground lairs, however.

And with a few comments on this latest twist to the Madeleine McCann mystery, we must leave our investigation of the McCanns' investigators there.

We have the solemn word of Dave Edgar, the man who claimed just one month earlier that the woman with an Australian accent in downtown Barcelona was 'a strong lead', that he is now 'convinced' that Madeleine is being kept alive in a 'prison lair' in the 'lawless' area 10 miles around Praia da Luz.

Our question is simply: can we believe him?

## L. Summary

So how can we sum all this up?

The McCanns have hired at least six sets of so-called private detective or intelligence agencies over a period of 2½ years, maybe even more. It is doubtful whether they have yet obtained *any* useful information whatsoever about the whereabouts of Madeleine McCann, or who the abductor, if there was one, might be.

**On the other hand, there are suspicions in certain quarters that some of these agencies may not have been pursuing the hunt for Madeleine but might have been working to an altogether different agenda.**

**None of these six sets of private detectives has any proven track record of searching successfully for missing or abducted children. One of them - Metodo 3 - is tainted with much more than a whiff of criminality within its ranks. Another firm (Oakley International) had only just been set up after Madeleine disappeared and quite simply has no track record for anything. The McCanns, or, we should say, the 'No Stone Unturned' fund and/or Brian Kennedy, appear to have spent up to £2 million or maybe much more on these six agencies so far, with no discernible result. The search has lurched in recent times from a dying paedophile in a German hospital to a yacht bound for Australia and back to a 'prison lair' in the lawless hills around Praia da Luz.**

**Exactly what have all these expensive detective agencies achieved?**

**[15,640 words]**