

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

MADELEINE BETH McCANN

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

A Complete Investigative Case Record

Clean Standalone Case File

Evidence-led reconstruction of the disappearance, investigation, forensic record, witness evidence, searches, investigative theories and current procedural position.

Prepared as a factual case record. Documented facts, witness accounts, investigative positions, allegations and unresolved questions are kept distinct.

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1. Case Overview

Subject: Madeleine Beth McCann

Date of birth: 12 May 2003

Place of birth: Leicester, England

Date of disappearance: 3 May 2007

Location: Ocean Club resort, Praia da Luz, Algarve, Portugal

Age at disappearance: 3

Madeleine Beth McCann disappeared from Apartment 5A at the Ocean Club resort in Praia da Luz on the evening of 3 May 2007. The public investigative record spans Portuguese, British and German authorities and includes witness statements, scene examinations, forensic testing, telephone and communications records, searches, intelligence leads and later investigative hypotheses.

This case file is deliberately structured as a clean standalone record. It does not reproduce the historical version numbering of the separate master research archive. The archive is the control document; this file is the readable case record derived from that evidence base.

The record does not establish, on the material reviewed for this edition, the exact mechanism by which Madeleine disappeared, the exact minute of her removal, the route taken, the identity of a person responsible, or her subsequent whereabouts.

The Metropolitan Police states that Operation Grange began as an investigative review in 2011 and became an investigation in July 2013. The Met currently states that it continues to work with law-enforcement colleagues in Portugal and Germany and that Home Office funding continues. [Source: Metropolitan Police, Operation Grange, accessed September 2026.]

Throughout this case file, a distinction is maintained between an investigative lead and evidence capable of establishing a fact. A procedural status such as *arguido* is recorded as a procedural fact and is not treated as a finding of guilt.

2. Madeleine

Madeleine was a British child born in Leicester on 12 May 2003. At the time of her disappearance she was three years old.

Identification details recorded in the case material

Feature	Recorded description
Height	Approximately 90 cm
Hair	Light brown/blonde, straight, shoulder length
Left eye	Blue/green
Right eye	Green with a brown mark in the iris
Mark	Small brown mark on the left calf
Clothing	White floral pyjama trousers and a pink-dominant short-sleeved Eeyore top

These details are identification information. They should not be confused with later witness descriptions of a child seen in the area, because the question whether a particular sighting was Madeleine requires separate analysis.

3. The Holiday

The McCann family were staying at Apartment 5A at the Ocean Club resort in Praia da Luz. The apartment was on the ground floor. Madeleine shared the children's bedroom with her younger twin siblings.

The evening arrangements placed the adults at the resort's Tapas restaurant while the children remained in the apartment. The later investigative record reconstructed the evening through statements, checks, movements and subsequent police work. Times should be treated as approximate unless independently recorded.

Apartment configuration

- Children's bedroom positioned near the front entrance area.
- Bedroom window facing the street/parking side.
- Rear living area with patio/French doors toward the resort side.
- Ground-floor position providing more than one practical approach to the apartment.
- Physical layout alone does not establish which, if any, access point was used.

The apartment subsequently became the principal physical scene. Because the first response was an emergency missing-child investigation, people entered and moved through the property before full forensic control was established. That limitation is relevant to later interpretation of physical evidence.

4. 3 May 2007 — The Disappearance

Approximate evening chronology

Approx. time	Event / evidential status
20:30 onward	Adults at the Tapas restaurant; precise sequence reconstructed from statements.
~20:55	Matthew Oldfield later described a check involving Apartments 5A, 5B and 5D from the car-park side.
~21:00	Oldfield returned to the restaurant.
~21:05	Gerry McCann returned to 5A, entered through the patio route, saw the children present/asleep, used the
~21:15	Jane Tanner left the restaurant and later reported seeing Gerry near the 5A patio area, followed by a m
~21:30–22:00	Critical interval; exact timing and sequence remain reconstructed rather than minute-by-minute establish
~22:00	Martin Smith later reported seeing a man carrying a child; the child's identity was not established.
~22:00–22:40	Kate McCann returned to 5A and discovered Madeleine missing.
~22:40	Police were notified; the initial response treated the matter as an emergency missing-child case.

The exact minute of removal is not established by the public record reviewed here. The commonly used times are a reconstruction from witness accounts and subsequent records, not a continuous contemporaneous timestamped sequence.

Known and unknown at the end of the first response

Known / documented	Not established
Madeleine was missing from 5A.	Who removed her, if she was removed by another person.
She had been staying in Apartment 5A.	The exact minute of disappearance.
She was discovered absent and police were notified.	The route, mechanism or destination.
Immediate searches began.	Whether every reported sighting concerned Madeleine.
Witness observations were recorded.	Whether the disappearance was an abduction, accident, or another

5. The First 24 Hours

The first response developed rapidly from a missing-child emergency into a major investigation. Searches extended through Praia da Luz and surrounding areas, including beaches and coastal locations, abandoned buildings, wells, wasteland, roads, nearby villages, vehicles, marinas and vessels. Helicopter resources were also used.

The early investigative environment is important when evaluating later evidence. A large number of people were involved in the immediate search and response, while the apartment itself was necessarily treated first as the location of a missing child rather than as a fully preserved forensic scene.

Initial evidence families

- Witness accounts from the family, restaurant group and local observers.
- Photographs and physical examination of Apartment 5A.
- Initial police reports and identification records.
- Search and recovery activity.
- Early forensic sampling and later laboratory analysis.
- Telephone and communications information.
- Public appeals and reported sightings.

The first-night response established the emergency and generated the initial evidential record. It did not, by itself, establish the offender, mechanism or destination.

6. The Crime Scene — Apartment 5A

Apartment 5A became the central physical scene. The expanded scene record covers the children's bedroom, Madeleine's bed, the window and shutters, the front door, veranda/patio and stairs, photographic examination, forensic collection, biological material, dog examinations and the limitations imposed by early scene access.

Window and shutters

The bedroom window and shutters became important in later reconstructions. A recorded sill measurement of approximately 91 cm appears in the scene evidence register. The existence of a window or accessible route is a physical fact; it does not independently prove that route was used.

Scene preservation

The Portuguese investigative material acknowledged that numerous people had entered the location before full control. This creates a provenance and contamination issue when later physical findings are interpreted. It does not mean every item recovered from the scene is invalid; it means source, transfer and timing must be considered.

Scene conclusion

The physical scene can establish the configuration of the apartment and the nature of material recovered. It cannot, without additional evidence, reconstruct the complete disappearance sequence.

7. Witness Evidence

Witness evidence forms one of the largest evidential families. The master statement register identifies primary statements and later statements, including second-round statements and later rogatory interviews.

Primary statement locations in the case record

Witness	Primary statement section
Gerry McCann	pp. 34–41
Jane Tanner	pp. 42–51
Matthew Oldfield	pp. 52–57
Kate Healy	pp. 58–65
David Payne	pp. 66–68
Fiona Payne	pp. 69–72
Rachel Mampilly / Oldfield	pp. 73–76
Dianne Webster	pp. 77–79

Key evidential cautions

- Gerry McCann: distinguish direct observations from later reconstruction or inference.
- Kate McCann: discovery sequence must be distinguished from later procedural status.
- Matthew Oldfield: his later check involved the twins but did not directly inspect Madeleine's bed.
- Jane Tanner: the original observation of a man carrying a child was treated as genuine evidence of what she says she saw; later investigative work identified the man as a British holidaymaker carrying his own child, removing that observation as proof of an abduction.
- Martin Smith: his statements described a possible child-carrying sighting but did not establish the child's identity; later resemblance to Gerry is not an identification.
- Pamela Fenn: the reported crying episode concerns 1 May rather than direct evidence of what happened on 3 May.

Differences between statements should not automatically be characterised as deception. The master conflict register records ordinary memory variation, translation or transcription, time reconstruction, second-hand information, later interpretation and incomplete records as possible sources of discrepancy.

8. The Portuguese Investigation, 2007–2008

The Portuguese Polícia Judiciária investigation was conducted under criminal process NUIPC 201/07.0GALGS. The public archive contains early police reports, Apartment 5A photographs, GNR/PJ correspondence, identification material and later investigative documentation.

Procedural history

Date / period	Documented procedural event
May 2007	Robert Murat became an arguido.
September 2007	Kate and Gerry McCann became arguidos.
30 June 2008	Portuguese final report completed.
July 2008	Investigation archived and arguido statuses lifted.
4 August 2008	Public archive release followed.
2013	Portuguese investigation reopened after later investigative developments.

The 2008 endpoint is significant. The archive decision lifted the arguido statuses and did not establish that the arguidos had committed the crime. The case remained capable of reopening if new evidence arose.

Public descriptions of the released archive vary in page/volume count, with the principal file commonly described as approximately 11,223 pages and some descriptions referring to 17 volumes or approximately 12,000 pages. The master source register preserves those descriptions rather than treating differing counts as a substantive evidential contradiction.

9. Forensic Evidence

The forensic record includes Apartment 5A examinations, the Renault Scenic, blood-spot traces, fingerprints, photographs, canine indications, biological material, clothing and fibre evidence, DNA testing and laboratory correspondence.

DNA reference material

A reference DNA profile for Madeleine was obtained from a blood sample. Reference profiles for Kate, Gerry and the twins were also available. The Forensic Science Service material recorded that Madeleine's profile was distinct from her immediate family.

Complex mixed sample

The master laboratory register records the often-discussed '15/19' result. Fifteen of nineteen charted components were represented in Madeleine's reference profile, but the sample itself contained 37 components and was assessed as involving at least three, and possibly five, contributors. The complexity meant that it was not suitable for a meaningful source conclusion of the kind sometimes implied by simplified public accounts.

Swabs and vehicle evidence

- Swab 3A: weak, low-level mixed DNA result; source, body fluid and timing were not established.
- Swab 3B: no usable profile.
- Renault Scenic nail fragment: low-copy-number result corresponding to Gerry McCann.
- Vehicle examination recorded more than 200 hairs/down/fragments; approximately 15 were blonde/fair and four were selected for LCN work.
- The final FSS conclusion did not clarify whether the disputed DNA results originated from Madeleine.

Canine evidence

A cadaver-odour dog and a blood-odour dog gave indications associated with the McCann Renault Scenic. The Portuguese final report also records that subsequent forensic examinations did not corroborate the canine indications as proof of the presence of a relevant substance or person. Cellular material was not identified to a person and its nature was not established as blood or another body fluid.

Scientific interpretation rule used throughout this case file: detection is not the same as source identification; source identification is not the same as activity reconstruction; and neither establishes timing or mechanism without additional evidence.

10. Telephone, Mobile and Digital Evidence

Telephone and communications records form a separate evidential family. They are useful for establishing communications events and, where technically possible, broad network-related information. They should not automatically be converted into exact minute-by-minute physical location.

Evidence handling principles

- A call or network event establishes a communications event, subject to the reliability and completeness of the record.
- Cell-tower or antenna information can provide an area of coverage but does not necessarily identify a person's exact position.
- Telephone chronology should be compared with witness chronology rather than treated as an automatic replacement for it.
- Later interpretation must be distinguished from what was known contemporaneously.

The master communications register cross-references telephone/mobile evidence with the evening chronology, witness accounts and later German investigative work.

11. Search and Recovery Operations

Search activity began immediately and continued in different forms over many years.

Major search phases

- First-night and early searches across Praia da Luz and surrounding areas.
- Beach, coastal and maritime searches, including locations around Burgau, Lagos, Sagres and Alvor.
- Specialist canine searches in 2007.
- Operation Grange searches and investigative work from 2014 onward.
- German-linked searches from 2020.
- Arade Reservoir search in 2023.
- Atalaia/Lagos searches in June 2025.

Search results must be interpreted carefully. A negative search does not prove that an area was irrelevant, just as a search producing material does not prove that the material is connected to Madeleine without identification, preservation, analysis and attribution.

The Portuguese authorities recorded that material arising from later searches connected to the German investigation was transferred to Germany for examination.

12. Persons of Interest and Procedural Status

The case has involved several formal or investigative statuses. The Portuguese term *arguido* is a procedural status and is not equivalent to a conviction.

Person	Recorded status / endpoint
Robert Murat	Arguido from May 2007; status lifted July 2008; never charged in the McCann case.
Kate McCann	Arguida from September 2007; status lifted July 2008; never charged.
Gerry McCann	Arguido from September 2007; status lifted July 2008; never charged.
Christian Brückner	Publicly identified by German authorities as a suspect in 2020; Portuguese <i>arguido</i> in 2022; no charge

This table records procedural history only. It is not a ranking of suspects and does not imply guilt.

The 2008 Portuguese endpoint and the later German investigation must be treated as different procedural phases. A later suspect status does not retroactively convert earlier unresolved evidence into proof.

13. Operation Grange and the 2013 Reopening

The Metropolitan Police states that it became involved on 12 May 2011 at the request of the Home Secretary. Operation Grange initially conducted an investigative review of previous investigations. In July 2013 its status changed to an investigation pursuing specific lines of enquiry with Portuguese authorities. The Met states that it continues to work with and support law-enforcement colleagues in Portugal and Germany. [Metropolitan Police, Operation Grange, current page accessed September 2026.]

The Portuguese investigation was reopened in 2013 after new elements were identified. The reopening created a new investigative phase rather than a finding that any particular historical theory had been proved.

Why the reopening matters

The reopening demonstrates that the evidential record was not regarded as permanently closed after 2008. It also illustrates the distinction between a case being reopened for further enquiry and an evidential conclusion about responsibility.

14. 2014–2019 — Continuing Enquiries

The period after reopening included searches, specialist-dog work, interviews, witness development, forensic review and continued funding of Operation Grange.

The master archive records reported contemporary figures including more than 40,000 documents, 1,338 statements, 1,027 exhibits, 560 lines of enquiry, 650 known sex offenders examined and 8,685 potential sightings. These figures are preserved as reported investigative totals for the relevant period, not as measurements of evidential strength.

In 2014, searches took place in the Algarve and further witness work continued. In 2015 the broad review phase was substantially advanced while significant lines remained. Further forensic work occurred in 2016. By 2017, several individuals had been ruled out while an important line of enquiry remained. Funding and investigative continuation continued through 2018 and 2019.

15. The German Investigation

From 2020 the German investigation became a major component of the public case record. German prosecutors publicly linked Christian Brückner to the investigation and described new lines of evidence and searches.

Publicly described evidential categories

- Telephone activity associated with a number linked by German investigators to Brückner on 3 May 2007.
- Brückner's historic residence and local connections in the Algarve.
- Vehicle evidence concerning a Volkswagen T3 Westfalia campervan.
- An investigative issue involving a 1993 Jaguar XJR6 and a registration change on 4 May 2007.
- Searches at locations associated with the investigation.
- Alleged statements reported in public sources, which must be distinguished from proven admissions.
- New evidence described by German prosecutors in 2022 as non-forensic; the full evidential content has not been publicly disclosed.

A telecommunications event is not, by itself, a precise GPS-style location record. Likewise, association with a vehicle or property does not establish what happened inside or around that location.

16. Christian Brückner

Christian Brückner was publicly identified by German authorities as a suspect in the Madeleine McCann investigation in 2020. Portuguese authorities later recorded him as an arguido in 2022. He has not been charged in the McCann case.

Brückner has denied involvement. He was released from prison in September 2025 after serving a sentence in an unrelated matter. His unrelated conviction must not be treated as evidence establishing a connection to Madeleine's disappearance.

The Metropolitan Police has continued to describe the McCann investigation as ongoing. Public reporting has also recorded that Brückner declined a Met interview request. The absence of an interview is a procedural fact; it is not, on its own, proof of responsibility.

The current public record therefore contains an active investigative status without a McCann charge or conviction.

17. Searches and Evidence Since 2020

2020 onward

German-linked searches took place in locations associated with the investigation. In 2023 the Arade Reservoir was searched. In June 2025 searches took place in the Atalaia/Lagos area under a European Investigation Order connected with the German investigation. Portuguese authorities recorded the searches and the transfer of material for examination in Germany.

The significance of recovered material depends on later identification, laboratory results, provenance and attribution. A search operation itself demonstrates investigative interest; it does not establish the hypothesis that prompted the search.

18. Contradictions and Conflicts

The master conflict register identifies multiple areas requiring careful comparison rather than simple resolution.

Conflict area	Method used in this case file
Timeline differences	Preserve the original statement, date and later reconstruction separately.
Checking routine	Distinguish what a witness actually observed from what was inferred later.
Jane Tanner sighting	Separate observation of a person carrying a child from later identification of that person.
Martin Smith sighting	Separate possibility from identification.
Window / shutters	Use physical scene evidence and statement evidence together.
Scene access	Consider contamination and provenance without dismissing all material.
DNA	Use final laboratory conclusions rather than simplified early interpretations.
Canine alerts	Separate dog indications from laboratory confirmation.
Telephone evidence	Avoid converting network information into exact location without technical support.
Suspect status	Record procedural status separately from evidential conclusion.
Media reports	Treat them as reporting unless supported by primary or official material.

A contradiction is not automatically evidence of a lie. It may arise from memory, translation, transcription, reconstruction, second-hand information, technical limits or later interpretation. Where the public record does not permit resolution, the conflict remains unresolved.

19. Investigative Theories and Alternative Explanations

The master theory register records hypotheses rather than selecting one as fact. The principal analytical possibilities include an abduction by an unknown person, involvement of a person connected with the local area, an accidental event followed by concealment or movement of the child, and other explanations that have been considered during different investigative phases.

This case file does not rank these hypotheses. Each must be tested against the full evidential record.

Alternative explanations for apparent conflicts

- Normal memory variation over time.
- Translation or transcription effects.
- Approximate rather than exact timekeeping.
- Second-hand information becoming embedded in later accounts.
- Scene contamination or transfer.
- Technical limitations in forensic or telecommunications evidence.
- Later interpretation being mistaken for a contemporaneous fact.
- An incomplete public record where material remains restricted or undisclosed.

The purpose of hypothesis testing is to identify what evidence would be expected under each explanation and whether the public record supplies it. Absence of a confirming item is not automatically proof of a competing theory.

20. What the Evidence Establishes

- Madeleine Beth McCann disappeared on 3 May 2007 from the Ocean Club complex in Praia da Luz.

- Apartment 5A was the immediate location associated with her disappearance.
- A large Portuguese investigation followed, later joined by British and German investigative activity.
- Numerous witness accounts, physical examinations, forensic tests, communications records and search operations form the evidential record.
- The 2008 Portuguese investigation was archived and the *arguido* statuses of Murat, Kate and Gerry McCann were lifted.
- Operation Grange began as a review in 2011 and became an investigation in 2013.
- Christian Brückner has been a publicly identified suspect and Portuguese *arguido*, but has not been charged in the McCann case.
- Later searches and investigative activity remain part of an ongoing international investigation.
- Several important evidential questions remain unresolved.

21. What Remains Unknown

- The exact minute Madeleine disappeared.
- The precise mechanism by which she left or was removed from Apartment 5A.
- The identity of the person responsible, if another person was responsible.
- The route taken from the apartment, if she was removed.
- The destination and subsequent whereabouts of Madeleine.
- Whether every significant reported sighting related to Madeleine.
- The definitive meaning of disputed or complex forensic findings.
- The full content and evidential significance of some later investigative material that has not been publicly disclosed.
- Whether future searches or forensic examination will resolve any of these questions.

These are not gaps that can responsibly be filled by narrative confidence. They are unresolved evidential questions.

22. Current Investigative Position

As of the September 2026 edition date, the Metropolitan Police publicly states that Operation Grange remains an ongoing investigation and that it continues to work with and support law-enforcement colleagues in Portugal and Germany. The Met also states that Home Office funding continues. [Metropolitan Police, Operation Grange, accessed September 2026.]

The public position therefore remains one of continuing investigation rather than a completed criminal prosecution in the McCann case. The absence of a public charge or conviction should not be converted into either a finding of innocence or a finding of guilt against any particular individual; it is a statement about the procedural record.

23. Evidence Status Vocabulary

Status	Meaning in this case file
Established	Supported by sufficiently direct and reliable source material for the proposition stated.
Supported	There is meaningful evidential support, but the proposition remains subject to limitations.
Contested	Material disagreement or evidential conflict remains.
Eliminated	A line or interpretation was subsequently ruled out or substantially displaced by evidence.
Unresolved	The public record does not establish the answer.
Alleged	Reported or asserted, but not established as fact by the available record.
Procedural	A status or action in the legal/investigative process.
Intelligence	Information used to direct enquiry that may not itself be evidential proof.

24. Source and Exhibit Control

The separate master reference archive uses a source hierarchy designed to prevent later commentary from silently replacing primary evidence.

Tier	Source type
1	Original official records, laboratory reports, signed statements, court/prosecutorial decisions and authenticated exhibits.
2	Official summaries, police releases, FOI disclosures and authoritative institutional pages.
3	Reputable contemporary reporting.
4	Later commentary, books and secondary documentary material.
5	Anonymous, unsourced or social-media material.

Where a proposition can be supported by a Tier 1 source, that source should control the wording. Later summaries should not be allowed to strengthen a conclusion beyond what the primary material supports.

Chain of custody

Chain-of-custody records establish provenance and handling. They do not, by themselves, establish the significance of the material. Significance requires scientific or investigative interpretation.

25. Final Case Assessment

The Madeleine McCann case remains an unresolved disappearance subject to continuing investigation. The public record is extensive, multinational and internally complex. It contains strong documentary evidence that Madeleine disappeared from the Praia da Luz resort on 3 May 2007 and that the disappearance generated a major investigation.

It also contains evidential conflicts and limitations. Witness accounts require chronology and memory analysis. Physical-scene evidence must be considered against the early access history. Forensic results require the final laboratory interpretation rather than isolated early indications. Canine alerts and laboratory evidence must be kept separate. Telephone data must not be treated as precise location data without technical support. Procedural suspect status must not be confused with proof of guilt.

The German investigation and Operation Grange demonstrate that the case has continued to generate new investigative activity. At the same time, the current public record does not establish a charged or convicted offender in the McCann case, nor does it establish the exact mechanism or destination of Madeleine.

The correct investigative position is therefore to preserve the evidence, identify its source, distinguish fact from interpretation, record conflicts rather than erase them, and state uncertainty where the evidence remains incomplete.

Evidence first. Source identified. Interpretation separated. Conflict preserved. Uncertainty stated.

26. Source Notes

Principal official source used for current Operation Grange status: Metropolitan Police, “Operation Grange”, current official webpage, accessed September 2026. The page states that the Met became involved on 12 May 2011, that the work became an investigation in July 2013, and that the Met continues to work with Portuguese and German law-enforcement colleagues. [Official source: Metropolitan Police.]

Supporting official source: Metropolitan Police FOI disclosures concerning Operation Grange staffing and funding, including the 2024 disclosure confirming the operation was ongoing and the disclosed staffing position at that time.

Case archive basis: Dark Case Productions' separate master research/reference archive, which contains the detailed evidence, witness, forensic, search, procedural, source and contradiction registers used to structure this clean case file.

Important limitation: This edition is a case-record presentation of the established research archive. It does not claim that every underlying document in the full Portuguese, British or German investigative files is publicly available or reproduced here. Where the public record does not disclose the full evidential content of a later investigative development, this file records that limitation rather than filling the gap with speculation.

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THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

Clean Standalone Case File

Prepared as an evidence-led investigative record.

This document is not a finding of criminal liability against any individual. Procedural statuses, investigative suspicions and allegations are recorded only in the context in which they were documented.

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THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 2

Expanded investigative record: the first 24 hours, Apartment 5A, witness evidence, Portuguese investigation and forensic record.

This part continues the clean case-file structure. It does not reproduce historical master-archive version labels.

5. The First 24 Hours — Expanded Record

The first day of the investigation has to be understood as a rapidly developing emergency rather than as a settled reconstruction. Madeleine had been discovered missing from Apartment 5A and the response moved immediately into a search for a three-year-old child.

Initial response

- Police were notified at approximately 22:40 according to the case chronology.
- An immediate search of the apartment and surrounding resort area followed.
- Search activity extended beyond the immediate apartment into roads, open land, beaches, coastal areas, abandoned structures and other possible locations.
- Family members, resort staff, police officers and members of the public became involved in the early search.
- The apartment remained a central evidential location while the missing-child response was underway.

Why the first hours matter

The first hours contain information that was recorded close to the event, but they also contain the conditions under which later evidence was created. Witnesses were responding to a sudden emergency. Times were remembered, estimated or reconstructed. The apartment was entered during the search. Public appeals generated large volumes of information, including genuine observations, mistaken identifications and reports that required later checking.

For that reason, the first 24 hours should be treated as both an evidential foundation and a source of limitations. The existence of an early statement does not automatically make every detail within it exact.

Search versus recovery

A search establishes that investigators looked in a location or along a route. Recovery of an item does not automatically establish its relevance. Forensic identification, provenance, context and attribution are required before material can safely be connected to the disappearance.

The public record

The public record supports the conclusion that a major emergency response began immediately. It does not provide a continuous, independently timestamped record of every person, movement and search action during the entire night.

6. Apartment 5A — Expanded Crime-Scene Record

Apartment 5A is the central physical location in the case. Its layout, access points, contents and subsequent forensic examination have therefore been repeatedly revisited by investigators and commentators.

Physical configuration

- The apartment was on the ground floor.
- The children's bedroom was positioned toward the front portion of the apartment.
- The bedroom window faced the street/parking side.
- The living area opened toward a patio/veranda area.
- More than one physical approach to the apartment was possible.
- The existence of multiple access points does not establish which route, if any, was used.

The children's bedroom

The children's bedroom contained the beds in which Madeleine and her younger twin siblings had been sleeping. Examination of the room included photographs, physical observations and later forensic work. Madeleine's bed became one of the locations considered in reconstructing what had happened before her disappearance.

Window and shutters

The bedroom window and shutters became central to later discussions. A sill measurement of approximately 91 cm appears in the evidential record. The physical dimensions can be documented; the evidential question is whether the window was actually used during the disappearance.

A route can be physically possible without there being evidence that it was used.

Patio and rear access

The rear patio and associated doors provided another practical approach. Contemporary accounts and later reconstruction placed significant attention on the rear of the apartment because of the movements of family members and the surrounding resort layout.

Scene preservation

The first response was a missing-child emergency. People moved through the apartment before a fully controlled forensic scene existed. This creates an important limitation when interpreting later traces. It does not mean that every trace is meaningless; it means that provenance, transfer and timing must be considered.

Scene conclusion

The physical examination establishes the layout and documents material found within the apartment. It does not independently establish the complete sequence of events.

7. Witness Evidence — Expanded Comparison

Witness evidence is central because there is no publicly available continuous recording of the apartment throughout the relevant period. The chronology therefore depends heavily on recollections, statements, later interviews and comparisons with independent records.

Gerry McCann

Gerry's account is important for the sequence of his movements between the restaurant and Apartment 5A. The analytical distinction is between what he directly observed on the relevant visits and conclusions he or others later drew from those observations.

Matthew Oldfield

Oldfield described a check involving the apartments from the car-park side. The later evidential distinction is important: his check was not a direct inspection of Madeleine's bed. His evidence therefore contributes to the chronology without proving that Madeleine remained in the apartment at every moment after his check.

Jane Tanner

Jane Tanner reported seeing Gerry near the apartment area and later seeing a man carrying a child. Later investigative work identified the man as a British holidaymaker carrying his own child. That separates the fact of the observation from the earlier interpretation that the child might have been Madeleine.

Martin Smith

Martin Smith later reported seeing a man carrying a child. His evidence did not establish the child's identity. Later comments about the man's appearance or manner should not be converted into a positive identification.

Kate McCann

Kate's evidence is central to the discovery of Madeleine's absence and the immediate alarm. Later procedural developments involving her status must be recorded separately from the content of her original account.

Other members of the group

David Payne, Fiona Payne, Rachel Mampilly/Oldfield and Dianne Webster contributed statements concerning the evening, movements, the restaurant and subsequent events. These accounts provide context and comparison rather than automatically resolving every disputed minute.

Witness discrepancy framework

Issue	How it should be treated
Different times	Compare original wording, later statements and independent records.
Different descriptions	Determine whether the difference concerns observation, interpretation or later reconstruction.
Memory changes	Record the change rather than automatically assigning a motive.
Second-hand information	Keep it separate from direct observation.
Later identification	Record when and how the identification arose.
Translation/transcription	Consider where wording may have changed during processing.

The correct evidential question is not simply whether two statements differ. It is what proposition each statement can reliably establish and what independent evidence supports or limits it.

8. Portuguese Investigation, 2007–2008 — Expanded

The Portuguese investigation created the first major formal case record. The criminal process is identified in the master archive as NUIPC 201/07.0GALGS.

Early investigative phase

The Polícia Judiciária took responsibility for the criminal investigation after the initial response. The case generated police reports, scene photographs, witness statements, correspondence, forensic material and investigative leads.

Procedural statuses

Person	Status	Endpoint
Robert Murat	Arguido from May 2007	Status lifted in July 2008; no charge in McCann case
Kate McCann	Arguida from September 2007	Status lifted in July 2008; no charge
Gerry McCann	Arguido from September 2007	Status lifted in July 2008; no charge

The word *arguido* describes a Portuguese procedural position. It should not be translated in this case file into an assertion of guilt.

2008 archive

The Portuguese investigation was archived in July 2008. The final report was dated 30 June 2008. The procedural outcome did not establish that the three *arguidos* had committed the crime, and their statuses were lifted.

The archive remained important because it contained the principal evidential record of the first investigation. It also became the foundation from which later investigators could revisit earlier evidence.

Reopening

The case was later reopened in Portugal in 2013 following further investigative developments. Reopening should be understood as a procedural decision to continue enquiry; it is not itself proof that a particular historical hypothesis was correct.

9. Forensic Evidence — Expanded Scientific Record

The forensic record is one of the most frequently simplified areas of public discussion. The correct approach is to follow the laboratory conclusion and the limitations of the material rather than relying on an isolated early investigative interpretation.

Reference DNA

A reference profile for Madeleine was available from a blood sample. Reference profiles for members of the immediate family were also available. This allowed later laboratory testing to compare questioned material against known reference profiles.

Mixed DNA

One disputed sample was highly complex. The master laboratory register records 37 components and an assessment involving at least three, possibly five, contributors. Although 15 of 19 charted components were represented in Madeleine's reference profile, the complexity prevented the result from supporting the strong source-level conclusion sometimes attributed to it.

The important distinction is between a component-level correspondence and a laboratory conclusion that a sample originated from a particular person.

Swab 3A and 3B

Swab 3A produced a weak, low-level mixed result. The source, body fluid and timing were not established. Swab 3B did not produce a usable profile.

Vehicle material

The Renault Scenic was examined for biological and trace evidence. A nail fragment produced a low-copy-number result corresponding to Gerry McCann. The vehicle also contained numerous hairs, down and fragments. Approximately 15 were described as blonde/fair and four were selected for further low-copy-number analysis.

Hair colour or visual similarity is not equivalent to definitive identification. Nor does the presence of a person's DNA or hair establish when it arrived or what activity occurred.

Canine indications

Cadaver-odour and blood-odour dogs gave indications associated with the Renault Scenic. The Portuguese final report records that subsequent forensic examinations did not corroborate the indications as proof of a relevant substance or person.

The dogs therefore form an investigative evidence family that must be considered separately from laboratory confirmation.

Scientific interpretation rules

- DNA presence is not the same as proof of activity.
- DNA source identification is not the same as proof of timing.
- Timing is not established merely because a person's DNA is present.
- Canine indication is not equivalent to laboratory confirmation.

- A complex mixed profile may contain components corresponding to a reference profile without permitting a reliable source conclusion.
- Chain of custody establishes provenance and handling; it does not itself establish evidential meaning.

10. Telephone, Mobile and Digital Evidence — Expanded

Telephone evidence became increasingly important as later investigations reconstructed movements and contacts. The record must nevertheless be interpreted within the technical limits of telecommunications systems.

What a communications record can establish

- That a communication event occurred, subject to the reliability of the record.
- The time recorded for that event.
- The numbers or devices involved where available.
- Potential network or antenna information associated with the event.

What it does not automatically establish

- An exact GPS location.
- The exact physical position of a handset within a coverage area.
- Who physically held a device at every moment.
- What a person was doing during a call.
- That a communications event proves participation in the disappearance.

The German telephone evidence

German prosecutors publicly described a call involving a number associated with Christian Brückner on 3 May 2007 in the Praia da Luz area. The existence and timing of a telecommunications event are separate from the question of exactly where a person was physically standing or what they were doing.

The telephone evidence therefore belongs in the chronology as a communications event. Any inference beyond that requires corroboration from other evidence.

Cross-checking

The communications register should be compared with witness accounts, vehicle information, known locations and other independently sourced records. Where those sources conflict, the conflict should remain visible rather than being resolved by assumption.

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 2

Evidence first. Source identified. Interpretation separated. Conflict preserved. Uncertainty stated.

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 3

Expanded record: searches, procedural status, Operation Grange, continuing enquiries and the German investigation.

This section continues the clean case-file structure and remains separate from the historical master-reference archive.

11. Search and Recovery Operations — Expanded Record

Search activity began on the night Madeleine was reported missing and continued through successive investigative phases. The searches varied in scale, location, purpose and evidential basis.

Initial search areas

- Apartment 5A and the immediate Ocean Club area.
- Roads, footpaths and open ground around Praia da Luz.
- Beaches and coastal areas.
- Abandoned or unoccupied structures.
- Wells and other locations considered capable of concealing a child or evidence.
- Nearby villages, vehicles, marinas and vessels.
- Air searches using helicopter resources.

Specialist searches

Specialist canine searches were undertaken during 2007. Later searches were conducted as part of Operation Grange and, from 2020, in connection with German investigative activity.

2014 and later

The continuing investigation generated further searches in the Algarve and additional investigative work. Search activity itself is evidence of an investigative hypothesis or lead being tested. It should not be treated as proof that the underlying hypothesis was correct.

Arade Reservoir

A search of the Arade Reservoir area took place in 2023 in connection with the German investigation. The fact that the area was searched establishes the investigative action; it does not by itself establish that Madeleine was ever present there.

Atalaia / Lagos, June 2025

The Polícia Judiciária officially stated that, between 2 and 6 June 2025, it was executing a European Investigation Order issued by German authorities, with searches taking place in the municipality of Lagos. The Portuguese authority stated that the investigation concerned a German citizen suspected of the homicide of Madeleine Beth McCann and that material seized by the PJ would, subject to authorisation, be handed to German Federal Criminal Police investigators. [Official source: Polícia Judiciária, 2 June 2025.]

Negative searches

A negative search result cannot by itself prove that a location had no historical relevance. The value of a search depends on the area examined, conditions, timing, methods used and whether any material recovered could be identified and attributed.

Recovery standard

For recovered material to become meaningful case evidence, investigators need to establish what the material is, where it came from, how it was handled, whether it is connected to Madeleine or another relevant person, and what activity the material can reliably demonstrate.

12. Persons of Interest and Procedural Status — Expanded

The case has passed through several procedural phases. The status attached to a person at a particular time must be recorded separately from the evidential proposition investigators were attempting to establish.

Robert Murat

Robert Murat became an arguido in May 2007. His status was lifted in July 2008. He was not charged in the McCann case. Later investigative attention to other lines did not convert his earlier procedural status into a finding of guilt.

Kate and Gerry McCann

Kate McCann and Gerry McCann became arguidos in September 2007. Their statuses were lifted in July 2008 and neither was charged in the McCann case.

Christian Brückner

Christian Brückner was publicly identified by German authorities as a suspect in 2020 and was recorded as an arguido by Portuguese authorities in 2022. He has not been charged in the Madeleine McCann case.

Status / term	Meaning in this case file
Arguido / arguida	A formal Portuguese procedural status; not a conviction.
Suspect	A person publicly identified by an investigating authority as being under suspicion; the evidential basis must be separately established.
Person of interest	A broader descriptive term which can cover someone investigators considered relevant to an enquiry.
Witness	A person providing information; witness status does not itself establish reliability or culpability.
Charged	A formal criminal accusation; separate from suspicion or investigative interest.
Convicted	A criminal-court finding of guilt following the applicable legal process.

This case file does not rank suspects or theories. Procedural history is presented so that readers can distinguish investigative status from proof.

13. Operation Grange and the 2013 Reopening — Expanded

Metropolitan Police involvement

The Metropolitan Police states that on 12 May 2011 it agreed, at the request of the Home Secretary, to bring its expertise to the Madeleine McCann case. The first phase was an 'investigative review' of previous investigations.

In July 2013 the Met states that the status of its enquiries changed to an investigation, working with Portuguese authorities to pursue specific lines of enquiry. The Met currently states that Operation Grange continues to work with and support law-enforcement colleagues in Portugal and Germany and that Home Office funding continues. [Metropolitan Police, Operation Grange, current official page.]

What a review is different from

An investigative review examines previous material and identifies lines requiring further work. It is not, by itself, a finding that the previous investigation was correct or incorrect. The later transition to an investigation reflects a change in operational status.

Portuguese reopening

The Portuguese investigation was reopened in 2013 following new investigative elements. The reopening allowed earlier evidence to be revisited alongside newer lines of enquiry.

Funding and resources

Metropolitan Police FOI material published in 2024 confirms that Operation Grange was ongoing at that time and disclosed that three police officers and one member of police staff were then working on the operation. Separate FOI material states that the operation has been funded by the Home Office and records additional funding disclosed in 2024. These figures are time-specific and should not be treated as the current staffing level in 2026.

Continuing international cooperation

The current Met position expressly refers to continuing cooperation with Portugal and Germany. The case is therefore properly understood as a multinational investigation rather than as a closed historical Portuguese file.

14. 2014–2019 — Continuing Enquiries

The years after the Portuguese reopening saw continuing searches, witness work, forensic review and investigative assessment.

2014

Search activity took place in the Algarve, alongside further investigative work and witness development. Robert Murat was later interviewed in the context of continuing enquiries.

2015

The master research archive records contemporary reporting of a large investigative workload, including more than 40,000 documents, 1,338 statements, 1,027 exhibits, 560 lines of enquiry, 650 known sex offenders examined and 8,685 potential sightings. These are reported investigative totals for that period, not measures of evidential strength.

2016

Further forensic work and review of evidence continued. The forensic register records the continuing importance of laboratory interpretation and the need to distinguish early investigative possibilities from final scientific conclusions.

2017–2019

The investigation continued to examine individuals, witnesses and outstanding lines of enquiry. Some individuals were ruled out during this period while other lines remained under examination. Funding and operational continuation continued into the later part of the decade.

Interpretive caution

The number of documents, statements or potential sightings demonstrates the scale of the investigation. It does not establish that any particular item within those totals was reliable, probative or connected to Madeleine.

15. The German Investigation — Expanded

From 2020 the German investigation became a major part of the publicly documented case. German prosecutors publicly identified Christian Brückner as a suspect and described lines of evidence that they considered relevant.

Telephone event

German prosecutors publicly described a telephone event involving a number associated with Brückner on 3 May 2007 in the Praia da Luz area. The event is relevant as a communications record. It does not, without additional evidence, establish a precise physical location or conduct.

Algarve residence and local connection

German prosecutors described Brückner as having lived in the Algarve between 1995 and 2007, including at a property in the wider area between Lagos and Praia da Luz. Residence or local presence establishes opportunity for geographic proximity; it does not by itself establish participation in a crime.

Vehicle evidence

Investigative material has referred to a Volkswagen T3 Westfalia campervan associated with Brückner. A separate investigative issue concerns a 1993 Jaguar XJR6 and a registration change recorded on 4 May 2007. These are evidential leads that require contextual and corroborative assessment.

2020 searches

Searches were conducted at locations associated with the German investigation. Searches are investigative actions designed to test hypotheses and recover potential evidence; they do not themselves establish the proposition being investigated.

2022 Portuguese procedural development

Brückner was recorded as an arguido in Portugal in 2022. Public reporting and official statements have described new evidence associated with the German investigation as non-forensic. The complete evidential content has not been publicly disclosed.

Alleged statements

Public accounts have referred to alleged statements or alleged admissions. Such material must be described as alleged unless it has been independently established through admissible evidence or an authoritative finding. A reported allegation is not the same thing as a proven confession.

16. Christian Brückner — Current Procedural Record

Christian Brückner occupies a distinct place in the current public investigation because German authorities publicly identified him as a suspect and Portuguese authorities recorded him as an arguido. Those procedural facts must be kept separate from the question of whether the available evidence proves that he committed the disappearance.

Unrelated criminal proceedings

Brückner was convicted in Germany in an unrelated criminal matter and was released from prison in September 2025. That unrelated conviction is not evidence establishing responsibility for Madeleine's disappearance.

No McCann charge

As reflected in the public investigative record used for this case file, Brückner has not been charged in the Madeleine McCann case.

Interview position

Public reporting has recorded that Brückner declined a request from the Metropolitan Police for an interview. The fact of a declined interview is a procedural fact. It does not, on its own, establish guilt or the truth of any allegation.

Current investigative status

The Metropolitan Police continues to describe Operation Grange as an ongoing investigation and says it continues to work with Portuguese and German authorities. [Metropolitan Police, current official page.]

Evidential discipline

- Suspect status is not a conviction.
- An unrelated conviction is not McCann-case evidence.
- A telephone event is not a complete movement reconstruction.
- Vehicle or property association does not prove use in the disappearance.
- An alleged confession must remain an allegation unless independently established.
- Searches identify investigative action, not necessarily the truth of the hypothesis being tested.
- The absence of a public charge is a procedural fact, not a finding about guilt or innocence.

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 3

Evidence first. Source identified. Interpretation separated. Conflict preserved. Uncertainty stated.

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 4

Evidence since 2020, contradictions, competing explanations and the limits of the public record.

The following sections continue the factual case record without selecting a suspect or theory as the established explanation.

17. Evidence and Searches Since 2020

The period from 2020 onward introduced a new phase of public investigative activity. German authorities identified Christian Brückner as a suspect, searches were conducted at locations associated with the investigation, and Portuguese and British authorities continued cooperation.

2020

German authorities publicly identified Brückner as a suspect. Search activity followed at locations associated with him and with the investigation. The public record distinguishes between investigative suspicion and evidence that has been formally tested or disclosed.

2022

Portuguese authorities recorded Brückner as an *arguido*. German prosecutors also described new evidence as non-forensic. Because the complete material has not been publicly disclosed, this case file records the existence and description of the evidential development without inventing its contents or treating the undisclosed material as proof.

2023 — Arade Reservoir

The Arade Reservoir area was searched in connection with the German investigation. A search is an investigative operation designed to test a proposition or recover potential evidence. The fact of the search does not establish that Madeleine was there.

2025 — Lagos / Atalaia searches

The Portuguese Polícia Judiciária confirmed that, between 2 and 6 June 2025, it carried out searches in the municipality of Lagos under a European Investigation Order issued by German authorities. The PJ stated that the German investigation concerned a German citizen suspected of the homicide of Madeleine Beth McCann and that material seized would be passed to German Federal Criminal Police investigators subject to the required authorisation. ■cite■turn0search3■

What the 2025 announcement establishes

- The searches were formally conducted under a European Investigation Order.
- They occurred in the municipality of Lagos between 2 and 6 June 2025.
- The German authorities were pursuing an investigation concerning a German citizen suspected in connection with Madeleine's death.
- Material seized by the PJ was intended for transfer to German investigators, subject to Portuguese prosecutorial authorisation.

The announcement does not itself disclose what material was ultimately recovered, whether any recovered item was forensically significant, or what conclusions German investigators subsequently reached. Those questions must therefore remain separate from the fact of the searches.

18. Contradictions and Conflicts — Master Analysis

A large case file can contain apparently conflicting information without every conflict representing deliberate deception. The correct analytical approach is to identify exactly what propositions conflict and then examine source quality, timing, context and independent corroboration.

Timeline

The evening chronology is reconstructed from statements and later records. Times such as approximately 20:55, 21:05, 21:15 and 22:00 should not be presented as if a continuous digital timestamp existed for every event.

Checking routine

Accounts of checks on the children differ in what was seen and how the checks were conducted. The distinction between hearing, looking into a room, entering a room and directly observing a particular child's bed is important.

Jane Tanner

The sighting of a man carrying a child became an important investigative lead. Later investigative identification of the man as a holidaymaker carrying his own child demonstrates why an observation and the interpretation placed upon it must be kept separate.

Martin Smith

The Smith sighting remains relevant as a witness account, but the public record does not establish the identity of the child with certainty. Later resemblance-based observations do not become a positive identification merely because they appear in a later statement.

Window and shutters

Physical descriptions of the bedroom window and shutters have been interpreted differently in later discussion. The scene record should control the physical description; statements and later reconstructions should be treated as separate evidential layers.

Forensic evidence

Early investigative interpretations of DNA and canine findings were subsequently subject to laboratory testing and qualification. The final scientific record must be given priority over a simplified early interpretation.

Telephone evidence

Telephone records can establish communications events and provide network-related information. They do not automatically establish exact physical location or conduct.

Procedural status

The changing status of individuals over time is a procedural history. It should not be used as a substitute for a later evidential conclusion.

Media and public commentary

Media reports can be valuable for chronology and public statements, but they are secondary sources. Where a media report conflicts with an original official record, the primary source should normally control the factual proposition.

19. Investigative Theories and Alternative Explanations

The case has generated multiple hypotheses. A responsible case record should document the hypotheses that have been investigated without converting any one of them into an established fact.

Possible abduction by an unknown offender

One broad hypothesis is that another person entered or approached the apartment, removed Madeleine and left the area. Testing such a hypothesis requires evidence concerning access, opportunity, witness observations, route, transport and subsequent whereabouts.

Local or opportunistic offender hypothesis

Another investigative possibility is involvement by someone familiar with the area or able to move around the resort without attracting attention. Geographic familiarity can be relevant to an investigation but is not itself proof of participation.

Accident followed by concealment or movement

Investigators and commentators have considered alternative scenarios involving an accidental event followed by concealment or movement of the child. Such a scenario would require evidence capable of establishing an accident, subsequent actions and the relevant location.

Other explanations

The public record does not justify reducing every possibility to a single fixed narrative. Other explanations have been considered across different investigative phases, and some lines have been ruled out while others remain unresolved.

Hypothesis-testing standard

Question	Required evidence
Was an access route used?	Physical evidence, witness evidence or other corroboration connecting the route to the event.
Was a particular person present?	Reliable location or witness evidence with appropriate corroboration.
Was a vehicle involved?	Evidence linking the vehicle, its occupants and the relevant time period.
Was a sighting Madeleine?	Evidence capable of identifying the child rather than merely describing a child.
Did a forensic trace relate to the disappearance?	Reliable source identification plus contextual and temporal evidence.
Did a search recover relevant material?	Identification, provenance, scientific analysis and attribution.

No hypothesis should be promoted from possibility to fact simply because it provides a coherent narrative. Coherence is not the same as corroboration.

20. What the Evidence Establishes — Detailed

- Madeleine Beth McCann was born on 12 May 2003 in Leicester and disappeared on 3 May 2007 from the Ocean Club in Praia da Luz. The Portuguese PJ identification record gives the disappearance time as approximately 22:40. ■cite■turn0search5■
- Madeleine was three years old and was staying with her family at Apartment 5A.
- The first response developed into a major Portuguese criminal investigation.
- Portuguese, British and German authorities subsequently conducted or supported investigative activity.
- Apartment 5A was a central physical scene and was subject to photographs, forensic examination and later review.
- Numerous witness accounts exist, but they do not provide a complete continuous chronology.
- Complex forensic results require the qualifications contained in the laboratory record.
- Canine indications associated with the Renault Scenic were not independently sufficient to establish the presence of a relevant body, blood or person.
- The Portuguese investigation was archived in 2008 and the relevant arguido statuses were lifted.
- The Portuguese investigation was reopened in 2013 after a reanalysis identified new investigative elements. The PJ itself stated that the reanalysis produced new indications that met the legal requirements for reopening.

■cite■turn0search8■

- Operation Grange began as a Met investigative review in 2011 and became an investigation in July 2013. The Met states that it remains ongoing and continues cooperation with Portugal and Germany. ■cite■turn0search0■
- Christian Brückner is publicly identified as a suspect and was made an arguido in Portugal, but he has not been charged in the McCann case.
- Searches continued into 2025, including the Lagos searches formally confirmed by the Portuguese PJ. ■cite■turn0search3■

21. What Remains Unknown — Detailed

The unresolved questions are not simply missing narrative details. They are evidential gaps that prevent a complete reconstruction.

Question	Current position in the public record
Exact time of disappearance	Not established to the minute.
Exact mechanism	Not established.
Person responsible	No person has been convicted in the McCann case.
Route from Apartment 5A	Not established.
Destination	Not established.
Location of Madeleine	Not established.
Identity of every relevant sighting	Not established.
Meaning of disputed forensic material	Subject to laboratory limitations and context.
Full content of some later evidence	Not publicly disclosed.
Future significance of seized material	Dependent on examination and attribution.

A responsible case file should preserve these uncertainties rather than fill them with assumptions.

22. Current Investigative Position

The current Metropolitan Police position is that Operation Grange remains an ongoing investigation. The Met states that it continues to work with and support law-enforcement colleagues in Portugal and Germany and that the Home Office continues to fund the operation. ■cite■turn0search0■

The Portuguese PJ continues to maintain a public missing-person record for Madeleine and its historical statement records that, despite the formal archival decision, the PJ continued to monitor information capable of identifying her whereabouts, the circumstances of her disappearance and those responsible.

■cite■turn0search8■turn0search5■

Funding record

Met FOI material published in 2024 records an additional £192,000 in funding for Operation Grange, received on a quarterly basis. Another 2024 disclosure states that Operation Grange has been fully funded by the Home Office since the Met was given the investigation. These disclosures describe funding arrangements at that time; they should not be treated as a current 2026 budget statement beyond what the Met's current page confirms.

■cite■turn0search15■turn0search2■

Current procedural summary

- Operation Grange: ongoing.

- Portuguese and German cooperation: ongoing according to the Met.
- Christian Brückner: publicly identified suspect / Portuguese arguido; no McCann charge recorded in this case file.
- Madeleine: remains officially recorded as a missing person by the Portuguese PJ.
- No final public evidential determination of the disappearance mechanism is recorded in the sources used here.

23. Evidence Status Vocabulary — Operational Use

Term	Use in this case file
Established	The source record supports the proposition stated.
Supported	Evidence exists, but limitations or corroboration issues remain.
Contested	The proposition is disputed or materially contradicted by another evidential source.
Eliminated	A line of enquiry or interpretation was later ruled out or displaced.
Unresolved	The available record does not establish the answer.
Alleged	Someone has asserted the proposition, but the record does not establish it as fact.
Procedural	A legal or investigative action/status rather than a factual finding of responsibility.
Intelligence	Information used to guide investigation that may require further verification.

24. Source and Exhibit Control

The case file is built around a separate master research/reference archive. That archive is the control record for source hierarchy, exhibit provenance, witness documents, forensic records, searches, procedural history, contradictions and unresolved questions.

Source hierarchy

Tier	Preferred use
1	Original official records, laboratory reports, signed statements, court/prosecutorial decisions and authenticated exhibits.
2	Official summaries, police statements, FOI releases and authoritative institutional webpages.
3	Reputable contemporary reporting used for chronology or public statements.
4	Later books, documentaries and secondary commentary.
5	Anonymous, unsourced or social-media material.

Exhibit principle

Every important proposition should be traceable to a source. If the source is unavailable, restricted or incomplete, the case file should say so.

Provenance principle

Knowing where an item came from and how it was handled is essential, but provenance alone does not establish what the item proves.

Interpretation principle

The wording of a conclusion should never exceed the strength of the underlying evidence.

25. Final Evidential Assessment

The evidence establishes a disappearance. It establishes the location, date, child identity, the existence of an extensive investigation and the continuing efforts of several law-enforcement agencies. It also establishes that the case has generated a large and complex evidential record.

The evidence does not, on the public material reviewed for this clean case file, provide a complete minute-by-minute reconstruction of the disappearance. It does not establish the exact mechanism, route, destination or a convicted offender.

Some evidence has been misunderstood when isolated from its final context. Complex DNA mixtures require the laboratory's qualification. Canine indications require separation from subsequent laboratory findings. Telephone events require technical limits. Witness observations require separation from later interpretation. Procedural status requires separation from guilt.

The continuing investigation means that the evidential position is not necessarily static. New forensic results, recovered material, witness information or officially disclosed documents could alter the record. Until such material is independently established, it should remain classified as new information, an investigative lead or an unresolved issue rather than being absorbed into the factual narrative.

The governing principle

Evidence first. Source identified. Interpretation separated. Conflict preserved. Uncertainty stated.

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 4

End of Part 4

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 5
Source control, chronology control and final publication record.

This part closes the evidential-control layer of the clean case file. It remains separate from the master research/reference archive.

26. Source and Document Control

A case file of this scale depends on disciplined source control. The underlying master archive contains the detailed evidence registers; this clean edition converts those registers into a readable investigative record.

Primary source families

Source family	Examples in the case record
Portuguese official records	PJ reports, procedural decisions, identification material, search announcements and archived investigation material.
British official records	Metropolitan Police Operation Grange pages, FOI disclosures and official statements.
German investigative material	Public statements and prosecutor information concerning the German investigation, where disclosed.
Laboratory records	Forensic Science Service and Portuguese laboratory material concerning DNA, trace evidence and related testing.
Witness records	Signed statements, later statements, interviews and rogatory material.
Contemporary reporting	Used to preserve chronology or public statements where appropriate, but subordinate to primary records.
Secondary commentary	Used cautiously and never allowed to replace primary evidence where the latter is available.

Source hierarchy

The preferred order is: original official record; official summary or disclosure; reputable contemporary reporting; later secondary material; unsourced material. Where two sources differ, the case file should identify the conflict rather than silently choosing whichever version produces the more coherent story.

Restricted material

Some investigative material is not publicly disclosed. The absence of a public document should not be filled by speculation. Where a later authority describes evidence without publishing its contents, this case file records the authority's description and the limitation.

27. Chronology Control

The chronology is one of the most important control mechanisms in the case because later theories frequently depend on the order of events.

Chronology categories

Category	Treatment
Contemporaneous record	Give priority where the record is direct and reliable.
Witness recollection	Record the witness's account and identify whether the time is exact or approximate.
Later reconstruction	Label as reconstruction rather than contemporaneous fact.
Investigative interpretation	Attribute to the investigator or source.
Media chronology	Use as secondary material and verify against primary records.
Unknown interval	Keep the interval open rather than filling it with an assumed event.

The evening of 3 May 2007 contains several approximate times. Those times are useful for reconstruction but should not be presented as a continuous timestamped sequence.

Critical interval

The period between the last recorded checks and the discovery that Madeleine was missing remains a central unresolved interval. The public record does not supply a complete independent account of every movement within it.

Chronology principle

A chronology is an analytical model built from evidence. It is not itself evidence unless each individual event is independently supported.

28. Evidence Chain and Interpretation

The case file uses a four-stage analytical chain:

Stage	Question
1. Source	Where did the information come from?
2. Observation	What exactly was recorded or observed?
3. Interpretation	What did investigators or witnesses think it meant?
4. Conclusion	What can the evidence actually establish?

Many public disputes arise when stage 3 is repeated as though it were stage 2, or when an investigative lead is repeated as though it were stage 4.

Example: canine evidence

Observation: dogs gave indications associated with the Renault Scenic. Interpretation: investigators considered possible blood or cadaver-related significance. Conclusion: later laboratory examination did not corroborate the indication as proof of a relevant substance or person.

Example: complex DNA

Observation: a complex mixture contained components represented in Madeleine's reference profile. Interpretation: investigators considered whether Madeleine might be represented. Conclusion: the complexity of the sample prevented the strong source-level conclusion sometimes attributed to it.

Example: telephone evidence

Observation: a recorded communications event occurred. Interpretation: investigators may examine its geographic and chronological significance. Conclusion: the event alone does not establish an exact physical location or activity.

29. Unresolved Questions Register

No.	Question
1	What was the precise sequence of events inside and around Apartment 5A during the critical interval?
2	At what exact time did Madeleine cease to be in the apartment?
3	Was she removed by another person, or did another mechanism account for her disappearance?
4	If another person removed her, how was access gained and what route was used?
5	Was any reported sighting actually Madeleine?
6	What is the definitive significance, if any, of the disputed forensic material?
7	What additional evidence, if any, remains undisclosed from later investigative phases?
8	What material was recovered or excluded from later searches?
9	Can any future forensic or documentary evidence establish a reliable sequence?
10	Where is Madeleine, and what ultimately happened to her?

The register is deliberately unresolved. A case file should not convert an unanswered question into an answer merely because a theory appears plausible.

30. Final Publication Record

This clean edition is the standalone narrative case file. It is separate from the Dark Case Productions master research/reference archive, which remains the detailed control document for evidence registers, source registers, witness comparisons, forensic cross-references, procedural history and unresolved questions.

Document identity

Publisher / producer	Dark Case Productions
Case	Madeleine Beth McCann
Document	The Madeleine McCann Case File
Format	Standalone investigative case record
Edition structure	Clean edition; no historical master-archive version labels in the narrative
Research foundation	Separate master reference/control archive
Editorial principle	Evidence first; source identified; interpretation separated; conflict preserved; uncertainty stated.

Publication warning

This document is an investigative case record, not a judicial finding. It does not determine criminal responsibility. Individuals described as suspects, persons of interest or arguidos are presented according to their documented procedural status. Allegations are identified as allegations. Unresolved matters remain unresolved.

Closing statement

The disappearance of Madeleine Beth McCann remains an unresolved missing-child investigation. The scale of the investigation does not remove uncertainty; it makes source discipline more important.

The record should therefore be read as a chain of evidence rather than as a single narrative. Where the evidence is strong, it should be stated plainly. Where it conflicts, the conflict should remain visible. Where a scientific result has limitations, those limitations should be included. Where investigators have a theory, the theory should be identified as such. Where the answer is unknown, the correct answer is that it remains unknown.

Evidence first.

Source identified.

Interpretation separated.

Conflict preserved.

Uncertainty stated.

DARK CASE PRODUCTIONS

THE MADELEINE McCANN CASE FILE

CLEAN STANDALONE CASE FILE — PART 5

END OF CURRENT CLEAN EDITION