

Kate McCann DID Scream 'They've Taken Her' Claims New Nanny Witness

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The first eyewitness account of the frantic moments after Madeleine McCann disappeared can be revealed today.

Nanny Charlotte Pennington confirms that Kate McCann did scream: "They've taken her, they've taken her!"

The mother's precise words have become a pivotal issue in the case, with Portuguese police questioning why she would automatically assume Maddie had been abducted.

Mrs McCann's family have countered this by insisting they recall her shouting: "Madeleine's gone."

Miss Pennington, however, one of the first people to set foot in the couple's apartment after the disappearance, says she heard the mother use both phrases.

The 20-year-old Briton, who tended children for the Mark Warner holiday complex in Praia da Luz, firmly believes the McCanns are innocent.

Speaking publicly for the first time yesterday, she described Mrs McCann in the aftermath as "a broken woman" who was shuddering and unable to move.

"We are trained to comfort people in this type of situation but she was just inconsolable," she said.

Miss Pennington is considered a vital witness by Portuguese detectives with whom she spent more than four-and-a-half hours giving a statement.

She also claims British expat Robert Murat, the first suspect in the case, was in the area of the Ocean Club complex that night. He has repeatedly denied that he was there.

Talking from her mother's home in Leatherhead, Surrey, yesterday she told the Daily Mail: "I was in the apartment less than five minutes after they found that Madeleine had gone.

"When we were coming out we saw Kate and she was screaming: 'They've taken her, they've taken her!'"

"I was standing right in front of her outside the apartment's back door, in the alleyway. I was very close to her. It might not have been the first thing she said. But she definitely said it.

"I was one of three Mark Warner staff who saw her shouting it. They have all given statements to the Portuguese police saying that."

The "they've taken her" version of events was first given in the Portuguese press two days after Madeleine disappeared on May 3.

It remained unchallenged until last Thursday when a source close to the McCann family claimed Kate had actually shouted: 'Madeleine's gone!'

Miss Pennington flew out to start work at Praia da Luz on April 28 - the same day that the McCanns arrived. She had worked for Mark Warner on two previous occasions.

She was employed as a nanny in the Ocean Club resort's Baby Club, looking after children aged four to 12 months.

However, she also came into close contact with Madeleine, her two-year-old sister and brother Amelie and Sean, and their parents, both doctors aged 39.

She dismissed claims that the McCanns were not seen for six hours leading up to the disappearance.

She said: "I was helping give the children high tea. The twins were there and Madeleine and both parents.

"It was supposed to finish at 5.30pm but because they were a big group and really social, it didn't finish until about 6pm. There was nothing out of the ordinary at all."

After tea Miss Pennington went to work at the resort's evening creche, in which parents could leave their children while they went out for supper.

Just before 10pm the last mother arrived to collect her child from the creche and mentioned that she had just bumped into a man, who had been shouting a name.

"She didn't get the name, but she said it sounded something like 'Abbey, Gabby or Maddie'. We automatically went into lost-child procedure. In these situations, the first thing we do is investigate the scene.

"We knew that one of the other nanny's charges was called Maddie. We told the head of department what had happened and she took us straight to the apartment.

"There were no children in the room. The twins had been taken out already, I think by one of the McCanns' friends.

"When we were coming out we saw Kate and she was screaming: 'They've taken her. They've taken her!'

Asked if it was the only thing she said, Miss Pennington answered: "It might not have been the first thing she said. But she definitely said it. She also repeated Madeleine's name and said: 'She's gone, she's gone'.

"I couldn't really believe what I was seeing - she was just so distraught. She was screaming out and tears were running down her face.

"Everyone else was running around trying to help.

"Kate and her friend, who was looking after her, were the only ones who weren't out looking for Madeleine."

While Gerry McCann leapt into action and began frantically searching the resort, she said his wife remained outside the apartment, shuddering with tears and unable to move.

Asked why she thought Mrs McCann might have shouted "They've taken her", Miss Pennington said:

"I'm not really sure. But maybe she saw some people looking at Madeleine earlier that day, and she immediately thought that they must have taken her."

The nanny was one of three staff who steered Mrs McCann to the nearby reception area, where they asked her to describe what Madeleine was wearing.

But she remained so hysterical that she could hardly communicate.

"We get missing children all the time, and I have seen plenty of hysterical mothers. But none of them were like Kate."

She confirmed reports from the McCanns' friends that Murat was at the scene.

"He was outside the lobby just before we started on our big search," she said.

"He was adamant that he wasn't there. But he was. He was there in the road, he was just looking. It was about 10.30. He was just watching

"I didn't know his name then. But the next day he was our interpreter and I met him then. He didn't take part in the searches, but he was there."

Murat has insisted that he was at his home nearby throughout the evening of Madeleine's disappearance. Portuguese sources have claimed that he will soon be told that he is no longer a suspect.

Miss Pennington explained that she spent the rest of the evening searching for Madeleine, before finally going to bed at 4am.

The following afternoon she was one of the first people to give witness statements to the Portuguese police.

Since then, she said, she has spoken to a Portuguese detective once and to two British detectives.

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-483715/Kate-McCann-DID-scream-Theyve-taken-claims-new-nanny-witness.html>