

H42A Blog – The House on the Black Rock

December 28, 2016

Rocha Negra, in English, translates as 'Black Rock'.

It's a title that seems made for a movie. Yet, I have found myself increasingly of the belief that one small property sat atop the Rocha Negra may have initially been used to occult the cadaver of Madeleine McCann.

Why, and how?

This discovery started when I was recounting a couple of well known events in the McCann case: the arrival of Danie Krugel, and Kate McCann's dream of seeing Madeleine's body lying on a hill. Both of these things would appear to be related, in a way I was not expecting to find.

For the sake of this article, I will not pass comment on Danie Krugel's device, or credibility – as I believe he was potentially brought in as either a distraction, or as one who would 'find' something at an opportune time. I will go into this further on.

Kate McCann's 'dream' was referred to as a turning point in the case.

"She said she had dreamt that Madeleine was on a hill and that we should search for her there...She gave the impression that she thought she was dead – it was a turning point for us."

– Ricardo Paiva

You can read more about it in this Telegraph article:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/portugal/6977977/Madeleine-McCann-mothers-dream-was-turning-point-in-investigation-court-hears.html>

The location given for this sighting was reported in the press as the Rocha Negra. While we should be careful about taking this as gospel, it's worth pointing out that this story was never retracted, and the articles with maps are still online and they circle the Rocha Negra. There is never any hint that Kate was imagining a hill 'outside Praia da Luz'.

This phone call occurred when Gerry was away in America (in fact he seemed oblivious to the call having occurred outside the courtroom, saying cleverly that Kate never had a dream about seeing Maddie 'buried') – alone and fragile. Was she perhaps trying to point towards this area for a reason?

*Let's turn momentarily to Danie Krugel. Contact with Krugel is initiated on **June 9th**, when at 21:48 Gerry calls him for 12 minutes 38 seconds. According to the records in the PJ Files, he had been recommended via email (also from South Africa). It will be over a month before Krugel arrives in Portugal. During this time – and just after he leaves – there are a smattering of contacts between Gerry, Krugel and Susan Puren (an South African investigative journalist). It*

is later said that whilst in Portugal, the McCanns effectively ignored Krugel, and when they finally met – before Krugel and Puren left – it was a very abrupt meeting in which the South Africans were ‘made to feel like they were meeting Royals’.

This is rather at odds with the fact that it was Gerry who initiated contact. Why initiate contact and request help, only to completely ignore that help until the last possible moment?

Whilst Krugel was on site, Mark Harrison was brought in – but more on that later.

Krugel produced a map, showing the areas he had searched, and which he felt would be worth further investigation.



Krugel’s map (the irony of using an out of date historic Google Earth image is not lost on me)

While press reports had it that Krugel had ‘pinpointed an area on the beach’ or ‘believed Maddie was at sea’ confused things, I was told privately that neither of these were in fact true.

Krugel’s triangulation isn’t visible here, though there is an odd photo from the ground with an impossible-to-interpret couple of lines drawn over. With that being the case, out of curiosity I made my own ‘triangulation’, using the ‘blanket area’ pin up towards where it says ‘start of search’. This was the rough result;



Rough triangulation area (note I used the same historical map Krugel did despite the June 22nd one being more contemporary)

I started to look along the 'line' between the top and bottom of the triangle, while also noting that the path Kate described jogging up Rocha Negra via falls in this area (the white path passing the Freud villa/Casa Colina), and that it does not reach as far as the 'trig point', otherwise referred to as the 'obelisk' near the top of Rocha Negra.



Rocha Negra trig point, aka 'obelisk'

Immediately I couldn't help but notice an unfortunately shaped Villa right along the line, whose shape had me mentally labelling it the 'toilet seat'. Flicking through the historical imagery available, I noticed that it was unchanged in 2007, but by 2011 was being redeveloped, and

today is a very attractive modern villa. But aside from metaphors about caterpillars to butterflies, and an odd square structure in the back garden of the new villa (fleetingly I wondered if it was some kind of shrine), nothing really stood out aside from first impressions. Judge for yourself;



Pre-redevelopment, the 'toilet seat' villa



Modern villa as present today. Odd square shape only interesting element (not historically extant)

Not finding anything, my mind went back to Kate's words. She saw a body 'on the hill'. So far this triangulation only had me looking at the base of Rocha Negra. What if this were expanded to include the summit itself?

I immediately sat up as I came across what I did next.

Sat atop Rocha Negra, beside the Boavista golf course, on May 30th, was an empty and seemingly derelict building. Next to it, on an adjacent lot, was a construction site. I clicked forward – the only other date the area was photographed in 2007 was, fortuitously, 3 weeks later – June 22nd. I was shocked to see that by June 22nd, this property had been demolished, and there was industrial machinery on site.

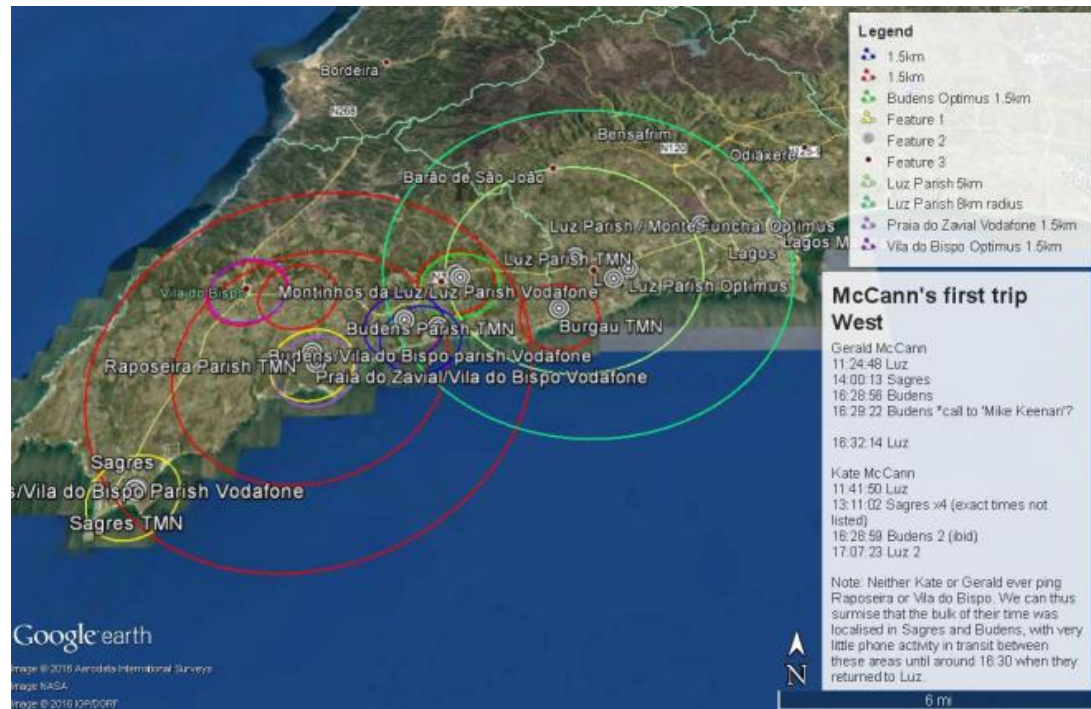
*But, surely, this was coincidental? After all there is a construction site right next to it. I decided to look before and after 2007. The furthest back I could look was September 2004 – and the property stood just as empty then as it did in May 2007. And looking forward, two facts; the adjacent construction was for a separate build, and to call the area redeveloped was an understatement; here now stands the 'Eagles Eye', a six bedroom luxury house, let by none other than **Ocean Country!** This seemed too far outside the realm of coincidence.*



Aerial shots of 'Eagles Eye' location between 2004 and 2007

Eagles Eye listing: <http://www.ocean-country.com/property-for-sale/villa-lagos-praia-da-luz/526>

Next, I cast my mind back and remembered a great blog piece I read in the past about June 9th. I am no longer able to find it, so if any reader could point me to it I would be very appreciative and credit the author. The article had described how on June 9th, nearly all of the McCann family was in Portugal, and that this was likely the day they all 'said goodbye'. This was the day before Kate and Gerry flew to Morocco, and arrived dressed in black.



McCann movements based on phone pings, June 9th

Some interesting things come out of June 9th. It was the first time the family pinged West of Praia da Luz. Around the return to Luz Gerry is twice called by Mike Keenan of Control Risks Group (they also have a long conversation the following morning). Just after 2100 Gerry calls Father Pacheco. A few minutes later he makes his first contact with Danie Krugel. And according to press reports the next day, he also spoke to press and made some unique statements. Snipped;

“There’s been a lot of emotion in the last 10 days. In the first few weeks when I slipped into dark moments of despair I was finding it quite easy to emotionally switch a light back on, but I’ve been finding it increasingly difficult to do.

“More importantly, I don’t want to do that anymore. I want to be able to grieve and let those emotions out.”

The main countries where appeals might help had been covered, but now it was time for a break, he said.

“We’ll still meet with the Portuguese police as we have done fairly regularly and with the British police,” Mr McCann said. “But it is definitely going to be a period of reflection. We can’t keep doing the same thing week after week, the coverage will dwindle away.

“What we want to be sure of is that what we put our energy into is effective.”

*Mrs McCann said speaking in public about the search for her daughter was **a useful “distraction, but it’s time to step back from that”**.*

(.....)

Mrs McCann said the couple woke every morning hoping it would be the day Madeleine was found.

“I do actually feel close to Madeleine here [in Portugal].** She could actually be further away from here than she is from the UK but **I feel emotionally close to her here.

“People have told me that I could do the same, if not more, back in the UK, but I can’t face leaving.”

From: <http://themaddiecasefiles.com/topic4427.html>

It is odd that Gerry singles out the last 10 days – the media tour – as emotional, rather than the last month and 5 days. As has been noted by statement analyst Peter Hyatt, the focus here is very much on ‘me me me’ and not on Madeleine. The need to ‘grieve’ relates to a bereavement, this is not a word you’d expect to hear from a parent optimistic of finding their child. And Kate explicitly says she feels close to Madeleine in Portugal – a sentiment that she does not drop over the years that follow.

So June 9th Kate says she feels close to Madeleine in Portugal, late July she says she dreamed of her body lying on a nearby hill. June 9th Gerry calls Danie Krugel, late July Krugel has been and gone, after looking at the same area Kate mentioned, finding just a towel, which isn’t mentioned in the files.

Whether these things were related or not isn’t possible to say, but the cluster of events is interesting.

So, during the 3 week period in which the old property at Eagles Eye was demolished, the family potentially ‘said goodbye’, and there were possibly forensic traces left atop Rocha Negra (and/or Arao – I will write about Russell’s trip another time). June 9th falls around 14 days after the Scenic was rented. Gerry described the last ‘10’ days being hard. Is this the period Madeleine’s body was moved – before the demolition? Was it reinterred on June 9th, when everyone was West of Praia da Luz for most the day?

It is worth noting that the Hortas do Tabual chapel lies within the triangle. The later visits to the triangle would be explained easily with the idea that the couple (or Kate alone on some days)

were visiting the chapel for some peace away from Luz and the eyes of the world. That these pings start in July, and right after Kate's 'slip up' phoning Paiva (literally as soon as Gerry touched back down in Portugal in fact), may not be insignificant.

Oh, and right next to the Hortas do Tabual chapel is now a house, but in 2007 was a pretty quiet and slow construction. Just what looks like a white crate was on site;



Hortas do Tabual chapel and construction area

While it isn't possible to make any conclusions, it is certainly interesting the amount of boxes ticked between Eagles Eye and Casa da Eira - in 2007 at least.

Did I mention that Mark Harrison actually mentioned the property in his report too? This escaped my notice totally until I looked for it;

An inhibiting factor is that since the disappearance of the child an old empty house adjacent to the Trig Point on the Rocha Negra has been demolished and all rubble removed, If she was concealed within this property the search would be unlikely to detect her now.

There are a few other disparate reasons to look at Eagles Eye as a possible area of interest, namely;

- The connection to Boavista golf course. There are many links here. There were calls to the golf course from the OC on the day of the 3rd. John Geraghty, who acquired the church keys for the family, is golf captain there. Rothley's own Danny Spillane played there and gave lessons in the region. Gerry's phone contact in Burgau, Frank Sharpe, also plays there. And HIS facebook contact, Duane Wessels, also plays there (Wessels stayed at the OC as a guest of the resort until

the day before the 'disappearance', and is involved in Algarve property). It would take just one of these people to hear about the property and gain access – with them knowing how/why or not.

– The fact the property is now advertised through Ocean Country, the estate agents run by Angus Symington. The Ocean Club was formerly owned by John Garveigh and David Symington. They are/were effectively sister companies in the same resort. There is plenty of phone traffic between them.

– The fact it sits atop the logical jogging route which the parents were known to take heading up Rocha Negra.

– The property lists having a septic tank. There is a clear concavity under the demolished structure on June 22nd. It may have been possible to hide the body beneath ground here before it was moved.

– The fact the property is so close to Casa Colina – I don't personally believe that anyone at Casa Colina was involved with whatever happened to Madeleine while alive, but jogging past it, and being in contact through the right channels, they could've been tipped off by someone there (this is the weakest aspect in fairness)

Condensing this all down into a series of basic events by their date. Each of these probably deserve an individual post each;

- *7th of May – Russell O'Brien pings outside Praia da Luz, in Aljezur. Pings show he could have pinged Aljezur from much further South than Aljezur – as far down as Arao or Barragem da Bravura*
 - Russell calls Gerry late that night, the only night there is phone contact between them aside from a 59 second call on the 5th (until one call months later)*
- *27th of May – McCanns rent Renault Scenic*
- *30th of May – Aerial photo shows old building still standing on Rocha Negra*
- *6th of June – Netherlands press conference, Gerry catches up with old colleagues at Vumc.*
 - Gerry receives a call about information from PJ but 'dismisses it'*
- *9th of June – Gerald McCann states in an evening phone call that the family are entering a week of grieving and will stop making appearances around Europe.*
 - First contact is made with Danie Krugel.*
 - Most of the family is in Portugal*
 - Pings as far South West as Sagres for the first time (though not the family's first time there), as well as Budens. Calls to Mike Keenan of Control Risks Group and Father Pacheco in this time*
- *10th of June – Morocco trip.*
- *13th of June – De Telegraaf letter hits the press, a week after the family have left Netherlands. Searches are carried out in Arao. One sole photo of an 'Aztec rug' being*

removed, and some press reports of Madeleine's dna being found. Variously referred to as the product of a mentally unstable man, or matching a letter which had tipped off the location of two missing Dutch girls a year earlier.

– Stam sighting in Amsterdam

– Gerry makes several calls to his former colleagues in Amsterdam (Beek and Nijveldt)

- *22nd of June – Aerial photo shows the property atop Rocha Negra has now been demolished. Demolition must have occurred in the period between May 30th and June 22nd – merely 3 weeks*
- *17th of July – Danie Krugel arrives and begins his searches, finding a pink towel atop Rocha Negra*
- *21st of July – Danie Krugel searches end and he returns to South Africa
– Mark Harrison arrives and begins searches in his identified 'sectors' with the aim of finding a body if Madeleine had been murdered (the sole hypothesis his presence was to analyse)*
- *22nd of July – Mark Harrison report is drafted, and laments that a property has been demolished on the Rocha Negra
– Gerry McCann flies to Washington*
- *26th of July – Gerry returns from Washington, drives straight to the 'triangle' area, likely picking Kate up on the way. Visiting the chapel in Hortas do Tabual?*

Source: h42a.wordpress.com/2016/12/28/black/