

Madeleine McCann was kidnapped and 'could still be alive' says detective

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Madeleine McCann's was likely to have been abducted by an organised crime gang and could still be alive, according to a British detective that led a three year probe into the case. Dave Edgar said he also believed that the friends and family of Madeleine's kidnappers are withholding information that could lead to her discovery.

A retired detective inspector, Edgar has gone on record for the first time to reveal the results of his tireless investigation into Madeleine's disappearance. His comments coincide with Kate McCann's tenth Mother's Day since her daughter vanished.

Edgar claims there was only a narrow window of opportunity available to snatch three-year-old Madeleine from her parent's holiday home in Praia de Luz, Portugal, in 2007.

He believes the perpetrators would have therefore been well rehearsed and organised. In his view, it points to the work of a gang of child abductors with connections to prostitution.

On the basis of this theory he hopes that Madeleine is still alive and that there are people out there who know something about her kidnappers.

"They can't keep it to themselves and research has shown they always confide in someone else," he told The Mirror.

In the past, cash rewards have not induced anyone to come forward with information leading to the discovery of the abductors, but Edgar believes that an appeal to hearts and minds may be more effective.

"I think that someone else apart from the perpetrator knows and that is one of the best hopes of getting to the truth, that someone comes forward and says what they know. I'm talking about TV, posters, letters, text messages, new technology. We're talking Europe. Get the message out there."

He dismissed the theory that Madeleine's parents Kate and Gerry were responsible for her disappearance, saying: "I was looking at everything and that would include them. If I found any evidence against Kate and Gerry I would have given it to the police immediately.

"Kate and Gerry would expect no less. But I found no shred of evidence," said Edgar. We obviously look at all factors – motive, preparation, opportunity – and there was absolutely nothing."

Edgar spent 30 years with the Royal Ulster Constabulary and then Cheshire Police before becoming a private investigator. It was in this capacity that he was hired by the McCanns to look into the 2007 disappearance of Madeleine.

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