

Madeleine Dad Saves Man's Life, then Thief Strikes

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THE father of Madeleine McCann helped to save the life of a fellow passenger who had collapsed on his flight to London - then had his wallet stolen shortly after landing.

Gerry McCann, a consultant cardiologist, was on an early-morning flight from Faro in Portugal when the crew appealed for anyone with medical training to help a man who had become ill.

Mr McCann (39), of Rothley, Leicestershire, England, helped to stabilise the passenger before he was taken to hospital after landing in England.

Following his arrival in London, he had his wallet stolen after taking money from a cash machine near the Foreign Office in Whitehall.

Irreplaceable

The wallet also contained irreplaceable photographs of Madeleine (4) who was taken from Praia da Luz in the Algarve 48 days ago.

He was beginning a 24-hour trip to Britain.

Although Mr McCann and his wife Kate, a locum GP, have flown many times before, it is the first time that either of them has had to go to someone's aid in the air as a doctor.

Mr McCann recalled the drama in his blog on the 'Find Madeleine' website: "Helped a passenger on the flight who collapsed. He was ill enough to require a full assessment on arrival and went off to hospital in an ambulance."

He added: "Unfortunately, shortly after arriving in London I had my wallet stolen which meant I was running late."

Mr McCann said that he managed to get to all his meetings, which involved interviewing candidates for the role of campaign manager, designed to keep Madeleine's profile high.

But he said it was finally time for the attention to be turned away from him and his wife, in order to allow them to look after their two-year-old twins, Sean and Amelie.

Protecting

"The role for Kate and I in the campaign will not be nearly be so public," he said in his blog.

Tomorrow, however, the McCanns will go before the cameras again as they mark 50 days since Madeleine disappeared with the simultaneous release of 50 green and yellow balloons in around 50 countries.

Meanwhile, Portuguese detectives are investigating claims from a holidaymaker that a girl resembling Madeleine was seen three weeks ago in the back of a horse-drawn cart close to where she was abducted.

Andre van Wyk (66), a retired pilot, said a woman in the cart quickly covered the sleeping child's face with a shawl.

He had been so suspicious, he said, that he trailed the cart to a gypsy camp near the town of Portimao, about ten miles from where Madeleine disappeared. (©The Times, London)

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