

McCanns deny reports that Gerry is not Madeleine's father

By Aislinn Simpson in Praia da Luz

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The parents of missing Madeleine McCann have issued a furious rebuttal to an "offensive" report claiming Portuguese police believe Gerry is not her father.

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Kate and Gerry were "horrified and devastated" by the latest "absolutely untrue" slurs in the Portuguese press claiming Madeleine's DNA was different to that of her twin siblings – all three of whom were conceived by In-Vitro Fertilisation – because she has a different father.

The tabloid 24 Horas claimed British police visited a sperm bank the couple used and tracked down the four-year-old's natural father to rule him out of any involvement in her abduction.

But family spokesman Clarence Mitchell described the reports as "unwarranted, unsubstantiated and totally inaccurate".

He said that the couple planned to sue 24 Horas over the allegations about Madeleine's paternity as soon as their official suspect status was lifted.

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"We have up to a year to sue and we will do. Gerry and Kate want to concentrate on the case involving Madeleine and don't want to do anything that may compromise that while they are official suspects," he said.

"But they plan to sue 24 hours and any other media outlets that print these claims as soon as the official suspect status is lifted."

He added: "For the record, Gerry McCann is the biological father of his daughter Madeleine. A report in the 24 Horas newspaper suggesting otherwise is nothing short of lies.

"It is indeed absolutely untrue. It is offensive to suggest that Gerry is not her natural father."

Gerry McCann's mother Eileen said the 24 Horas claims were "utterly ridiculous".

"Madeleine is my natural granddaughter," she said.

"She looks like Kate and she looks like me too. Her eyes and nose are the same as mine."

A friend of the couple's said they had reacted to the unexpected attack with "complete horror and total distress".

He said: "How could a sperm donor have been eliminated when there isn't one? Gerry is the father.

"He damn well knew, because of the IVF process, that he was 100 per cent the father.

"To say it caused huge distress is an understatement."

Portuguese police apparently believe Madeleine's paternity is "very significant", because, according to a Portuguese police source quoted by the newspaper: "It explains why Madeleine's DNA profile is so different from her twin siblings DNA profiles."

This would mean that samples of hair and bodily fluids taken from the McCann's Renault Scenic, which they hired 25 days after their daughter went missing on May 3, and in their rented apartment in Praia da Luz, can only be Madeleine's, the newspaper claimed.

Yesterday, 24 Horas co-editor, Luis Fontes, said he stood by the story, which he claimed was confirmed by both Portuguese and British pathology sources as well as Leicestershire and Portuguese police.

"It's absolutely – our sources are rock solid," he said. "If they think they can sue us, bring it on."

A spokesman for the Forensic Science Service (FSS) in Birmingham, where scientists are still testing samples sent to them from Portugal, insisted the story had not come from them.

"As with any ongoing case, it is not possible to comment on matters that could jeopardise the investigation," she said.

"Our inquiries are ongoing."

A spokesman for Leicestershire Police said that they had refused to comment when contacted by 24 Horas on Wednesday.

"Leicestershire Police will not comment on any aspect of this investigation," she said. "That is a matter for the Portuguese Police as it is their investigation."

Nor would Policia Judiciaria comment further: "At this moment in time, we cannot and will not deny that news."

A source close to the family said they have been told forensic results are back on Monday.

Portuguese police are hoping they will prove Madeleine's body was in the hire car.

Speaking after a meeting with the new head of the investigation, Paulo Rebelo, PJ director Alipio

Ribeiro said Kate and Gerry could only be ruled out as suspects when the FSS results were back.

He said: "All lines of investigation are open and will continue to be open until we have more clarity on this case.

"The investigation will continue to proceed along the lines it's proceeded on until now."

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1565936/McCanns-deny-reports-that-Gerry-is-not-Madeleines-father.html>