

## **Portugal Resident**

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As mainstream media in the UK continues to churn out thinly-disguised ‘rehash stories’ on the world’s most famous missing person, here in Portugal the media circus has been much more demure as we approach the date on which exactly 10 years ago three-year-old Madeleine McCann simply vanished.

No wild exclusives pointing to new “prime suspects” or landmark television events, rather a backward view at a case that may have been set up from the very beginning to remain an eternal mystery.

Keeping an incredibly low profile since his double victory at the Supreme Court in the tortuous legal battle with Kate and Gerry McCann, former PJ coordinator Gonçalo Amaral has finally given interviews to journalists working for the Cofina group, which publishes Sábado weekly magazine, and ‘people’s daily’ Correio da Manhã.

And, for reasons that have nothing to do with the insults regularly thrown at him by British tabloids, the quiet-spoken, reserved 57-year-old agrees there were some things that from the outset Portuguese police did not do right.

“I should not have allowed us to be put under pressure”, he told CM’s Sunday Magazine, adding that when the McCann family finally left Praia da Luz in September 2007, the British police that had come over to assist the Portuguese investigation also left - leaving the “sensations that they were only here to protect the couple”.

Amaral said that another mistake came in the way “the group of Brits” now known as the Tapas 7 was included in on meetings with the PJ, “to know what was going on”.

“I went to one of the first meetings and decided that I would never do that again”, he explained. “In normal conditions, in an investigation like this one, they would have been straight away considered suspects”. Instead, the way the group was brought into developments “prejudiced the investigation”, he said.

“There is an issue that the Portuguese police have to start adopting in these (kind of) cases”, Amaral added.

“Instead of leading a question and answer interrogation in which the person (being questioned) is relaxed, waiting for the question to answer, it would be better if they adopted the way of the FBI: “Here is a pen and paper, and you are going to write down, in your own time and words, everything that you did, where you went, who you were with, etc., from the moment you got up to the moment the day ended”.

The current form of interrogation used by Portuguese police “could lead people, and indicate where we (the police) want to go”, he explained.

Over various pages in both *Sábado* and *CM*, Amaral was given time to revisit his ‘politically incorrect’ theories, reasons for coming to them and suggest other lesser known ‘mistakes’ - like the failure to check CCTV cameras on the road in which an Irish family said they saw a man carrying a child in pyjamas down towards the sea.

By the time investigators realised the sighting might be crucial, the CCTV images had been recorded over.

The “Smith sighting” as it has become known could be one of the most crucial moments in the evening of May 3 before Madeleine was reported missing - yet the family never returned to Portugal to make formal statements because, in October 2007 “Amaral was removed from the case after talking to *Diário de Notícias*”, explains *Sábado*.

And here, Amaral says came another major mistake.

“I should never have retired from the PJ”, he told interviewers, stressing that instead he should have “written and published the book” (*Maddie: The Truth of the Lie*, which led to years of “brutal” litigation with Madeleine’s parents) as a member of the PJ Judicial Police.

“We were just too honest”, Amaral concluded. “And we paid for it as a result.

“For example, we sent forensic material to a British laboratory, when the testing could have been done at a Portuguese laboratory, so that we would not be accused of manipulation in the final result.

“We were naive and too diplomatic”, he said - adding that in his opinion, the ‘abduction theory’ adopted within days of Madeleine’s disappearance is a “lack of respect” to what should have been an “objective investigation”.

“If the investigation ever reaches its end and if it can be proved that the parents had nothing to do with it, then fine”, Amaral stressed - much as he has always maintained. It is simply the fact that no other hypothesis other than abduction has appeared to be allowed consideration ([click here](#)).

But while Amaral ‘returned to Praia da Luz’ to give his view of the 10 long years since Madeleine vanished, the missing girl’s parents gave an interview to the BBC in which they insisted they will be appealing the Supreme Court decision that should have handed the former police investigator back his assets, after eight years in which they were ‘frozen’.

Gerry McCann explained that what he called “the last judgement” - the ruling that upheld Amaral’s right to freedom of expression, and refused to accept the McCann’s insistence that they had been considered innocent in their daughter’s disappearance - is, in his opinion, “terrible”.

“We will be appealing”, he told the national news service.

The Daily Express suggests the couple plan to appeal “all the way to the European Court of Human Rights”, though there is still no certainty that this can be done - particularly as Supreme Court judges Roque Nogueira, Alexandre Reis and Pedro Lima Gonçalves released their 75-page ruling making references to tenets set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

In other words, Amaral’s ‘win’ relied heavily on three judges’ interpretation of laws that the ECHR has been set up to protect.

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*Photo by Bruno Colaço for Sábado which carried a six-page spread on "The Inspector's return to the scene of the crime", while CM's title for the anniversary edition was "The dead end where Maddie McCann is hidden"*

Source: <http://portugalresident.com/madeleine-milestone-amaral-agrees-%E2%80%9Csome-things-we-did-weren%E2%80%99t-right%E2%80%9D>