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Leicestershire Police Force

Statement from: Emma Louise KNIGHT

Occupation: Hotel Manager

Date: 30th April 2008

I am currently an employee of the Mark Warner Holiday Company, 20 Kensington Church Street, London. I have worked for this company since November 2005 and have held various positions in complexes and hotels abroad.

In March 2007 I travelled to the Mark Warner complex in Praia da Luz, Portugal. My position was Client Support Manager and my function was to receive and welcome the new guests and be available to resolve any problem that might arise during their stay.

The Praia da Luz complex covers a large area and for this reason there were several locations where I worked during the day, such as the reception, the Tapas bar area and the Millennium Restaurant.

My first contact with the couple named Gerry and Kate McCann took place in the 24 hour reception when they arrived at the resort accompanied by their 3 children. They were on holiday with a number of other families, some of them arrived by different means.

During the first part of their holiday there were no problems that were brought to my knowledge relating to their stay. I knew about their three children but I never had contact with them.

On the night of 3rd May, after having finished work, I planned to meet a group of colleagues at 22.30 to go out. At about 22.17 I received a call from Lyndsey Johnson, the Crèche Manager, informing me that the girl had gone missing. I met Lyndsey and the Service Manager, Amy Tierney, near to the Tapas Bar and we initiated the "Mark Warner procedures for the search of a missing child".

This procedure involved the distribution of leaflets that had already been prepared, with the names of the locations, for the members of staff, indicating the zones that they should search. Once the location indicated had been searched, the leaflet was returned and another one with a different location was handed over. This procedure was followed by the members of staff, but on

that night about 6 residents from the complex were also involved in the search.

I was told who the missing girl was and at the beginning of the procedure went to the McCann's apartment to obtain the girl's description and of the clothes she was wearing when she disappeared. When I arrived at the apartment, there was a lady on the terrace, whom I now know to be Kate McCann, accompanied by the wife of one of her friends, David Payne. Kate could not say a word, looked very upset and about to cry. It was Mrs Payne who provided me with the details that I needed.

I returned to the location where the leaflets were being distributed and passed on the information that I had gathered about the missing girl. Lyndsey was busy with the distribution of the leaflets and I went to search in the beach area. On my return I passed by the Duke Pub where I met other members of staff who also joined in the searches.

The hotel manager, John Hill arrived at the location from which the searches were being organised and I can confirm that he called the police. John stayed at the location and I several times went to search the grounds. I went with Amy and we searched the highest part of the complex behind the apartments. The search lasted for about 10 minutes and then we returned. At that moment John asked me to go to the apartment the girl had disappeared from and, on behalf of Mark Warner, provide all the help the family might need.

I went to the McCann's apartment, entered by the patio doors and introduced myself to Kate and Mrs Payne. I entered the apartment living room and Kate and Mrs Payne stayed in the main bedroom, from where I could hear them both crying.

The twins were still asleep in the children's bedroom and the door was half open.

A short while later, Gerry returned to the apartment accompanied by Russell. They also entered by the patio doors.

I do not remember the exact sequence of events at this time, but I do remember that I phoned John, who informed me that the police were on their way.

I remember that the police arrived between 00.00 and 00.30, entered by the main door and went to the kitchen with Gerry.

I went to the bedroom where Kate and Mrs Payne were. Kate was still upset, crying and calling

Madeleine's name, shouting "where is she?"

She also banged on the headboard. At that moment I went to check on the twins in their room and they were ok.

I remember being in the main bedroom with Kate, Mrs Payne, Gerry, Russell and David who were sitting on the bed and I sat on the floor. At that moment David suggested that the press should be contacted. Russell disagreed, saying they should keep calm and let the police take care of the situation.

At that moment Kate appeared to lose control, crying and constantly asking "where is she?" whilst banging on the bed.

Gerry remained calm throughout. On one occasion Kate and Gerry both went to the main bedroom and I could hear both of them crying.

Quite a bit later that night I remember the police asking everyone to leave the apartment. I received a call from John informing me that he had arranged for another apartment for the McCanns. I went to reception and helped Lyndsey to move the two cots to the new apartment

The McCanns went to the new apartment and I remember seeing Kate and Mrs Payne seated on the sofa, each holding one of the twins. I left the new apartment at 04.30 in the morning after instructions from John Hill. I was the last to leave, the police had already left, but I left my number saying that I was available for anything that might be needed.

After a short rest I returned to work at 08.00. I did not see Kate or Gerry during the whole morning, but went to the new apartment at about lunchtime. Kate and Gerry were not there but there were other members of the group taking care of the twins.

I remember there were helicopters flying overhead and showing them to the twins.

I remember that both Kate and Gerry were calmer that day and Kate had stopped crying. They were accompanied by family members who had travelled to Portugal and by the local priest. I remember that on the night Madeleine disappeared, Kate wanted to contact the local priest, but it was not possible to reach him by phone.

I remember being present in the apartment with Kate, Gerry and other members of the family when they gave their first press conference. Gerry sat at the table and wrote what he wanted to say to the press and Kate, although she did not want to speak to the press, accompanied Gerry and stood by his side while he read the statement. I and the others stayed at the apartment door

to observe.

During the weeks that followed, when Kate and Gerry were still staying in the complex I accompanied them and helped in the preparation of the posters for Gerry and planned the way to take the twins to the crèche without being bothered by the press. Gerry was always calm and polite, whilst Kate could not hide her emotion. At times she appeared reasonably all right at other times she would walk about crying.

In relation to the specific questions, these are my replies:

- 1. My first meeting with the McCanns occurred when they arrived at the complex and my relationship with them was purely professional as Manager of Client Support services and as a Mark Warner representative.*
- 2) I first spoke to Gerry and Kate McCann at about 23.00 on the night of 3rd May in their apartment after the disappearance of Madeleine.*
- 3) Gerry and Kate said that their daughter had disappeared and that she had been abducted.*
- 4) I would describe Kate's reaction as hysterical and desperate. Gerry was visibly upset and cried out of our earshot, but he maintained a firm position and helped in all he could.*
- 5) As mentioned previously, their emotional state was one of consternation and despair.*