

Mirror UK article – Don't Trust the Bodyfinder

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Kate and Gerry McCann were yesterday warned not to put their faith in controversial "bodyfinder" Danie Krugel - an ex-detective who claims to know where Madeleine's body is buried.

South African Krugel is said to have used a bizarre DNA-tracking machine that he invented to pinpoint a stretch of beach just 500 yards from McCann's apartment in Praia da Luz.

But a mum who was sent on a fruitless 4,300-mile trek after hiring Krugel and his device to track down her missing son urged Kate and Gerry: "Don't trust him."

Varenda said: "First Krugel told us Rayno was still in Knysna so we went to Knysna. Then he said he was in Port Elizabeth 150 miles away so we went to Port Elizabeth. Then he was in East London so we went there. Then he told us 'No, he's in the Transkei.'

"It was an endless track. We drove through South Africa for 4,300 miles. He absolutely convinced us saying 'Rayno is moving'. He said he must be in a truck or a car because he was moving so fast.

"Every time we left our jobs and packed up and went to these places and put articles in the newspapers. It cost us a fortune.

"But it's not the money, it's the mental torture. Being told your child is all right, he's moving around. We thought, 'Why doesn't he contact us?'"

Rayno's remains were eventually found eight months after he vanished in a forest outside Knysna. It is thought he died from a snake bite.

Varenda said: "It was clear that he had been dead for eight months because there was no flesh on the bones and there were ferns growing through the body.

"But when I phoned Danie to tell him, he was really aggressive. He said it was not possible. He blamed me.

"He said 'This is a lie. Nobody can tell you how long a body is dead'.

"He didn't want to hear he had made a mistake."

Varenda said that after her experience she would never recommend Krugel to anyone. She added: "He told us he could definitely find Rayno and we believed him. We trusted him. He told us he can find anybody, anywhere in the world.

"I feel betrayed. Eight months is one hell of a time to look for a child - to be told he is alive.

"I'd say to the McCanns 'Don't believe in him. Only believe in God.'"

It is thought the McCanns initially welcomed Krugel's help - but have since changed their minds.

A source close to Kate and Gerry, who gave Krugel a strand of Madeleine's hair after he flew to Portugal in July, said they are unconvinced by his claims and are keeping him "at arm's length".

Krugel, 42, contacted the family offering assistance two days after Madeleine disappeared on May 3 .

In July Gerry allegedly rang him back to accept his offer after receiving a string of emails urging the family to use the South African.

Krugel has told the Mirror his machine quickly traced Madeleine. He said: "I went to Praia da Luz in the middle of July and did the tests on Madeleine.

"I stayed there for four days, working at night time and all the data was the same.

"She was there in an area within walking distance of Praia da Luz but it is a very difficult area, with few houses. In my opinion the chances of her being alive are very, very slim."

He said he gave the McCanns and police a map and an aerial photo of an 800-metre area they must search.

Krugel reportedly also first suggested that sniffer dogs be bought in to search the McCann's apartment.

It was the sniffer dogs discovery of forensic evidence in the apartment that eventually led to Kate and Gerry, from Rothley, Leics, being officially designated as suspects in the case.

Krugel is a controversial figure back home in South Africa, where he insists he has solved some of the country's most baffling missing persons cases.

It has been claimed he was responsible for pinpointing the secret burial place of two young girls believed murdered by a paedophile.

After an exhaustive search by a TV current affairs show, bone fragments of two females and four males were found. However, DNA experts were unable to make any identification.

South Africa's police said he recently failed to find the body of a murdered constable after they called him in.

Krugel is also said to have refused to allow them to examine his Matter Orientation System. He is recently said to have sold the rights to the machine for almost #1million.

Scientists have rubbished the machine. Jacqueline Burke, a Johannesburg-based consultant scientist, said: "A dead person has no magnetic field, no energy - nothing. Unless you have a device planted in you, it's impossible."

But Superintendent Johan Gelderblom of Brandfort police insists Krugel pinpointed the body of a murdered six-year-old that was found lying beneath a goatskin after two police searches had drawn a blank.

Mr Gelderblom said: "I know there are lots of people who say he is lying. All I can say is that he didn't lie to me."

Krugel insists he never asks for money from the families of the missing or from police. But he has a contract with a TV company and was filmed while working on the Madeleine case. He says the footage can only be released once Madeleine is found.

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