

Gerry's anger at 'dad' lies



Devoted ... Gerry and Kate leave home in Rothley

By ONLINE REPORTER

Published: 11 Oct 2007

THE father of Madeleine McCann today issued a statement saying that the missing four-year-old is his biological daughter.

Consultant cardiologist Gerry McCann was responding to speculation in the Portuguese media today that he is not the Leicestershire youngster's real father.

Clarence Mitchell, spokesman for Mr McCann and his wife Kate, said: "Due to further unwarranted, unsubstantiated and totally inaccurate speculation in the Portuguese press today Gerry and Kate McCann and their lawyers have authorised me to issue the following statement.

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

“It is indeed an absolute fabrication.”

It is understood the McCanns underwent IVF treatment for Madeleine and her younger brother and sister, Sean and Amelie.

According to Portuguese newspaper 24 Horas, however, a Policia Judiciaria (PJ) source said DNA tests conducted for police investigating the little girl’s disappearance suggest the twins have a different biological father from their older sibling.

Meanwhile Kate and Gerry were “encouraged” last night after 300 Portuguese cops smashed an 80-strong paedophile ring.

The signs of a fresh impetus in the hunt for daughter Madeleine coincided with Paulo Rebelo, the country’s second most senior policeman, being appointed its head.

The nationwide raids – code-named “Operation Predator” – targeted 75 addresses and formed Portugal’s biggest ever operation of its kind. Around 150 computers containing vile images were seized.

Until three years ago possessing child porn was only illegal in Portugal if it was to be sold on. A friend of the McCanns said: “All this shows the scale of the problem there. Hopefully the police are now looking in the right direction.”

McCann spokesman Clarence Mitchell said: “We are naturally encouraged by news of such police activity.”



Missing ... Maddie

Rebelo was last night poised to act on any fresh leads emerging from the crackdown. Sources say he will also examine all theories in a “root and branch” review of the Madeleine case.

Earlier Rebelo, 45, was briefed by major players in the probe during talks in Faro overseen by the country’s top cop Alipio Ribeiro.

Disgraced Goncalo Amaral – axed last week for accusing British police of being manipulated by the McCanns – was officially ordered to “hand over” to Rebelo.

Ribeiro, head of the country’s CID, vowed afterwards: “All lines of investigation remain open.”

However, despite the flurry of activity, reports in the Portuguese press continue to throw suspicion at Madeleine’s parents.

The four-year-old disappeared from a holiday apartment in Praia da Luz on May 3. Newspaper 24 Horas said detectives believe she was among seven kids there, including children of the McCanns’ friends. It also claimed police reckon the couple, both doctors, sedated Madeleine and their two-year-old twins Sean and Amelie.

The allegation appears to be based on tests on strands of hair.

But Mr Mitchell declared: “Kate and Gerry wish to make it categorically clear they have never ever used sedatives on their children and nor would they do so.

Hurtful

“To suggest otherwise is as outrageous as it is hurtful.”

The 39-year-olds from Rothley, Leics, are now considering legal action over the slurs.

The theory was also undermined by expert David Hill, former regional commander from the National Crime Squad. Mr Hill, now working as an executive for global security company Red24, said forensic tests on hair samples were not accurate enough.

He said: “It depends on the kind of drug taken as to how long it will be present in the hair.

“Tests on Maddie’s hair recovered from the apartment would only show what drugs she had been given, if any, in the past.

“It would be impossible to say that she had been given drugs the night she went missing.”

Meanwhile the McCanns were “delighted” that Britons who were in Praia da Luz when Madeleine disappeared are being asked to give DNA samples to police.

Leicestershire police wrote to holidaymakers saying the move would “help Portuguese police eliminate samples they have not yet been able to identify”.

Mr Mitchell said: “They are delighted as it shows the police are still looking for the kidnapper. The focus seems to have gone from building a case against them to looking for Madeleine, which is good news.”

It is believed similar testing is being carried out in countries including Germany and Holland.