

19 March 2008

KATE AND GERRY MCCANN SECURE FRONT-PAGE APOLOGIES AND £550,000 IN LIBEL DAMAGES FROM THE EXPRESS AND THE DAILY STAR

The Daily Express and Daily Star newspapers have today published front-page apologies to Kate and Gerry McCann for having falsely alleged that they were responsible for the death of their daughter Madeleine and that they had then conspired to cover up their actions. The Sunday Express and Daily Star Sunday will be publishing front-page apologies on Easter Sunday.

The newspapers further apologised to Mr and Mrs McCann in the High Court in London today before Mr Justice Eady.

The McCanns' solicitor, Adam Tudor of Carter-Ruck, told Mr Justice Eady that Express Newspapers (which published the titles concerned) had acknowledged the falsity of the allegations in question which were contained in over 100 articles. Many of these articles were published on the front pages of the newspapers and on their websites, accompanied by sensationalist headlines.

Express Newspapers confirmed to the Court that it now accepts that there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that Mr and Mrs McCann were responsible for the death of their daughter, or that they were involved in any sort of cover-up. In addition to apologising, the newspapers have also agreed to pay libel damages of £550,000 to Mr and Mrs McCann, every penny of which will be donated (at the McCanns' request) to the fund established to help find their daughter. Express Newspapers will also be paying the McCanns' legal costs of bringing the complaint.

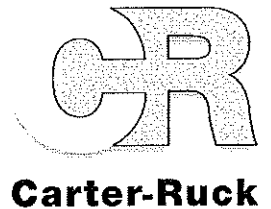
In response, Kate and Gerry McCann have stated:

"We are pleased that Express Newspapers have today admitted the utter falsity of the numerous grotesque and grossly defamatory allegations that their titles published about us on a sustained basis over many months.

The exceptional publication of these apologies, together with today's statement of full apology in open Court before Mr Justice Eady, was the only just and proper response by Express Newspapers following our complaint."

For further information, please contact:

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PRESS RELEASE

Statement on behalf of Gerry and Kate McCann 19 March 2008:

“We are pleased that Express Newspapers have today admitted the utter falsity of the numerous grotesque and grossly defamatory allegations that their titles published about us on a sustained basis over many months.

The exceptional publication of these apologies, together with today’s statement of full apology in open Court before Mr Justice Eady, was the only just and proper response by Express Newspapers following our complaint. We also wish to place on record our thanks to Adam Tudor, from Carter Ruck. Today’s result simply could not have been achieved without him

Express Newspapers rightly acknowledge that we are innocent of all allegations that we may have been involved in Madeleine’s abduction and WE would like to reiterate that there is absolutely no evidence that Madeleine is dead or has been seriously harmed.

We embarked on this course of action reluctantly, indeed with a heavy heart, as we did not wish the pursuit of it to become a distraction from our sole aim – finding Madeleine. Indeed, as long ago as last autumn our lawyers approached Express Newspapers and urged them to show greater restraint in their reporting – requests which went utterly unheeded.

The distress all this has caused members of our wider family, at a time of great emotional turmoil for them, was also a major factor in our action. Their pain over the loss of Madeleine has been compounded by having to witness the irresponsible and libellous reporting that we have successfully challenged today.

As a part of our settlement, Express Newspapers have also agreed to pay damages, by way of a donation of £550,000 to the Fund that was established to help find Madeleine. We feel it is entirely appropriate that the search for Madeleine will now benefit directly out of the wrongs committed against us as her parents.

We hope that the Portuguese authorities lift our arguido status in the very near future so that everyone can focus on finding our beautiful little girl, Madeleine.”

ENDS