

# Oakley International

**Oakley International** was hired by the Madeleine McCann Fund in 2008.

It is a team of investigators registered in the USA. The main players for the contract between the [Madeleine Fund](#) and Oakley International were:

**Kevin Halligen**

**Henri Exton**

See at McCannFiles:

1. →[Kevin Halligen and the Madeleine McCann Fund 2008/2009](#)
2. →[Kevin Halligen and the Madeleine McCann Fund 2010-2012](#)
3. →[Kevin Halligen and the Madeleine McCann Fund 2013](#)

See also: → [Private Investigators hired by the McCanns](#)

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→[Extract](#):

Red Defence in Red Zone Intelligence Online - 09/10/2008 Washington: *An affiliate of Red Defence International, a firm headed by Britain's Kevin Halligen, the investigative concern Oakley International Group **was hired in March, 2008** to help find Madeleine McCann, the three-year-old British child who vanished in May, 2007 from a hotel on the Portuguese coast. **In late August, the Find Madeline Fund, which bankrolls the search for the child, suddenly cut all links with Oakley International, officially for "inadequate results".** It wasn't the first time that companies owned by Halligen, who took part in MI 5 operations in Northern Ireland, have encountered problems with their customers.*

The main part of the "*inadequate results*" obviously were the investigations into the [Smith's sighting](#). Oakley International elaborated the [two efits 1A, 1B](#) of the main suspect now in the centre of [Operation Grange](#).

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## Report by "The Sunday Times" on E-fits made by Oakley International

**Madeleine clues hidden for 5 years** →[The Sunday Times](#) Published: **27 October 2013** by authors Insight team: H. Blake and J. Calvert

THE critical new evidence at the centre of [Scotland Yard](#)'s search for [Madeleine McCann](#) was kept secret for five years after it was presented to her parents by ex-MI5 investigators. The evidence was in fact taken from an intelligence report produced for [Gerry](#) and [Kate McCann](#) by a firm of former

spies in 2008. It contained [crucial E-Fits](#) of a man seen carrying a child on the night of Madeleine's disappearance, which have only this month become public after he was identified as the prime suspect by Scotland Yard. A team of hand-picked former MI5 agents had been hired by the McCanns to chase a much-needed breakthrough in the search for their missing daughter Madeleine. But within months the relationship had soured. A report produced by the investigators was deemed "*hypercritical*" of the McCanns and [their friends](#), and the authors were threatened with legal action if it was made public. Its contents remained secret until Scotland Yard detectives [conducting a fresh review](#) of the case contacted the authors and asked for a copy. They found that it contained new evidence about a key suspect seen carrying a child away from the McCanns' holiday apartment on the night Madeleine disappeared. This sighting is now considered the main lead in the investigation and E-Fits of the suspect, taken from the report, were the centrepiece of a [Crimewatch appeal](#) that attracted more than 2,400 calls from the public this month. One of the investigators whose work was sidelined said last week he was "*utterly stunned*" when he watched the programme and saw the evidence his team had passed to the McCanns five years ago presented as a breakthrough.

The team of investigators from the security firm **Oakley International** were hired by the McCanns' [Find Madeleine fund](#), which bankrolled private investigations into the girl's disappearance. They were led by **Henri Exton**, MI5's former undercover operations chief. **Their report, seen by The Sunday Times**, focused on a [sighting by an Irish family](#) of a man carrying a child at about 10pm on May 3, 2007, when Madeleine went missing. [An earlier sighting](#) by one of the McCanns' friends was dismissed as less credible after "*serious inconsistencies*" were found in her evidence. The report also raised questions about "*anomalies*" in the statements given by the McCanns and their friends. Exton confirmed last week that the fund had silenced his investigators for years after they handed over their controversial findings. He said: "*A letter came from their lawyers binding us to the confidentiality of the report.*" He claimed the legal threat had prevented him from handing over the report to Scotland Yard's fresh investigation, until detectives had obtained written permission from the fund. A source close to the fund said the report was considered "*hypercritical of the people involved*" and "*would have been completely distracting*" if it became public.

Oakley's six-month investigation included placing undercover agents inside the [Ocean Club](#) where the family stayed, lie detector tests, covert surveillance and a [forensic](#) re-examination of all existing evidence. It was immediately clear that two sightings of vital importance had been reported to the police. Two men were seen carrying children near the apartments between 9pm, when Madeleine was last seen by Gerry, and 10pm, when Kate discovered her missing. The first man was seen at 9.15pm by [Jane Tanner](#), a friend of the McCanns, who had been dining with them at the [tapas bar](#) in the resort. She saw a man carrying a girl just yards from the apartment as she went to check on her children. The second sighting was by [Martin Smith](#) and his family from Ireland, who saw a man carrying a child near the apartment just before 10pm. The earlier Tanner sighting had always been treated as the most significant, but the Oakley team controversially poured cold water on her account. Instead, they focused on the Smith sighting, travelling to Ireland to interview the family and [produce E-Fits](#) of the man they saw. Their report said the Smiths were "*helpful and sincere*" and concluded: "*The Smith sighting is credible evidence of a sighting of Maddie and more credible than Jane Tanner's sighting*". The evidence had been "*neglected for too long*" and an "*overemphasis placed on Tanner*". The new focus shifted [the believed timeline](#) of the [abduction](#) back by 45 minutes. The report, delivered to the McCanns in November 2008, recommended that [the revised timeline should be the basis for future investigations](#) and that the Smith E-Fits should be released without delay.

The potential abductor seen by the Smiths is now the prime suspect in Scotland Yard's investigation, after detectives established that the man seen earlier by Tanner was almost certainly a father carrying his child home from a nearby night creche. The Smith E-Fits were the centrepiece of the

Crimewatch appeal. One of the Oakley investigators said last week: *"I was absolutely stunned when I watched the programme . . . It most certainly wasn't a new timeline and it certainly isn't a new revelation. It is absolute nonsense to suggest either of those things . . . And those E-Fits you saw on Crimewatch are ours,"* he said. The detailed images of the face of the man seen by the Smith family [were never released by the McCanns](#). But an artist's impression of the man seen earlier by Tanner was widely promoted, even though the face had to be left blank because she had only seen him fleetingly and from a distance. Various other images of lone men spotted hanging around the resort at other times were also released.

Nor were the Smith E-Fits included in [Kate McCann's 2011 book, Madeleine](#), which contained a whole section on eight *"key sightings"* and identified those of the Smiths and Tanner as most *"crucial"*. Descriptions of all seven other sightings were accompanied by an E-Fit or artist's impression. The Smiths' were the only exception. So why was such a *"crucial"* piece of evidence kept under lock and key? The relationship between the fund and Oakley was already souring by the time the report was submitted — and its findings could only have made matters worse. As well as questioning parts of the McCanns' evidence, it contained sensitive information about Madeleine's sleeping patterns and raised the highly sensitive possibility that she could have [died in an accident](#) after leaving the apartment herself from one of two unsecured doors.

There was also an uncomfortable complication with Smith's account. He had originally told the police that he had *"recognised something"* about the way Gerry McCann carried one of his children which reminded him of the man he had seen in [Praia da Luz](#). Smith has since stressed that he does not believe the man he saw was Gerry, and Scotland Yard do not consider this a possibility. Last week the McCanns were told officially by the Portuguese authorities that they are not suspects. The McCanns were also understandably wary of Oakley after allegations that the chairman, [Kevin Halligen](#), failed to pass on money paid by the fund to [Exton's](#) team. Halligen denies this. He was later convicted of fraud in an unrelated case in the US. The McCann fund source said the Oakley report was passed on to new private investigators after the contract ended, but that the firm's work was considered *"contaminated"* by the financial dispute. He said the fund wanted to continue to pursue information about the man seen by Tanner, and it would have been too expensive to investigate both sightings in full — so the Smith E-Fits were not publicised. It was also considered necessary to threaten legal action against the authors. *"[The report] was hypercritical of the people involved . . . It just wouldn't be conducive to the investigation to have that report publicly declared because . . . the newspapers would have been all over it. And it would have been completely distracting,"* said the source. A statement released by the [Find Madeleine fund](#) said that *"all information privately gathered during the search for Madeleine has been fully acted upon where necessary"* and had been passed to Scotland Yard. It continued: *"Throughout the investigation, the Find Madeleine fund's sole priority has been, and remains, to find Madeleine and bring her home as swiftly as possible."*

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In the **The Sunday Times** (paper edition) - same day - the shortened Text was:

"THE critical new evidence at the centre of Scotland Yard's search for Madeleine McCann was kept secret for five years after it was presented to her parents by ex-MI5 investigators. The evidence was in fact taken from an intelligence report produced for Gerry and Kate McCann by a firm of former spies in 2008. It contained crucial E-Fits of a man seen carrying a child on the night of Madeleine's disappearance, which have only this month become public after he was identified as the prime suspect by Scotland Yard. But the trail was left to go cold for five years because the McCanns and their advisers sidelined the report and threatened to sue its authors if they divulged the contents. The report, seen by the Sunday Times, called for the E-Fits to be released immediately and said

*“anomalies”* in statements by the McCanns and their friends must be resolved. A source close to the McCanns said the report was considered *“hypercritical of the people involved”* and *“would have been completely distracting”* if made public.”

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Two Months later, The Sunday Times published the following excuse:

Kate and Gerry McCann and Madeleine's Fund **The Sunday Times**, Published: **28 December 2013**

In articles dated October 27 (“Madeleine clues hidden for 5 years” and “Investigators had E-Fits five years ago”, News) we referred to efits which were included in a report prepared by private investigators for the McCanns and the Fund in 2008. We accept that the articles may have been understood to suggest that the McCanns had withheld information from the authorities. This was not the case. We now understand and accept that the efits had been provided to the Portuguese and Leicestershire police by October 2009. We also understand that a copy of the final report including the efits was passed to the Metropolitan police in August 2011, shortly after it commenced its review. We apologise for the distress caused.”

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→[Latest News](#) (**01.Aug. 2014**): McCanns file a case against The Times in the High Court by Daniel Douglas via →[Twitter](#) It would seem likely the McCanns' action against The Times relates to the report published in The Sunday Times on 27 October 2013. The report was also picked up by the Daily Star, on its front page, and the Daily Mail. The Sunday Times subsequently published an apology, of sorts, on 28 December 2013.

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