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Overview

- Internet poster [Rainsong](#) has compiled a number of sources that address the issue of staging and what to expect to see or not see at staged crime scenes.
- **What is Staging?** "Staging is a conscious criminal action on the part of the offender to thwart an investigation" (Geberth 1999).
- **Types of Crime Scene Staging.** In the most common type of staging, the perpetrator changes elements of the scene to make the murder appear as either an accident or a suicide. In the second most common type of staging, the perpetrator attempts to make the crime appear to be a sex-related homicide as when a victim is partially disrobed. A third type of staging occurs when arson is used to destroy evidence or make the death appear as a result of accidental fire (Geberth 1999).
- **Implications of Staging on Theories of the Case.** The most common form of staging cited by Geberth does not fit the JBR case since those who believe there was staging generally view it as an effort to mask an accidental death and certainly no one argues that her death looks like suicide; likewise, the third type of staging is not relevant. But the second most common form may have been present in this case.
- **On-Line Discussions.** See [Day 9: The Crime Scene Staging by u/AurelieRose](#) at Reddit.

Evidence of Staging

Overview

- Nearly all RDI theories entail staging, but some intruder theories argue that staging (e.g., fake ransom note) is sometimes done by sexual predators to avoid facing the shame of what they are actually doing.
- Thus, proof of staging is not necessarily proof for or against an intruder or the family per se.
- The central pieces of evidence that support the possibility of staging include a) the ransom note; b) the garrote/wrist ties; c) the condition and placement of the body. These are discussed below.

Misty's Theory. Internet poster

[Misty](#) argues that much of the evidence reveals staging, and systematically explains how.

The Ransom Note

- The RN seems "staged" on its face since JBR was not actually kidnapped and there was no effort to collect a ransom.
- **Staging in RDI Theories.** In all RDI staging theories of the RN, it is written *after* JBR's death as a way to "explain" it and divert attention from the true perp(s).
- **Staging in IDI Theories.** But intruder theories are mixed, with some arguing for a perp who planned the event up to a year or more in advance, including the writing of the RN; others arguing for a perp who entered the house during the Xmas period and wrote the note before the Ramseys came home and others arguing for a perp whose plans (kidnapping or otherwise) went astray.
- Internet poster [DocG](#) has suggested: "No intruder theory has ever been able to account for the note. There is simply no reason for any sort of intruder to have written it. And if someone had a plan that went astray, he would certainly NOT have left a pointless note in his own hand that could incriminate him. The note was not simply dropped on the floor as someone left in a panic, it was very deliberately displayed, page by page, on the spiral staircase. IMO the note was part of a plan involving the staging of a kidnapping, a plan that went wrong, forcing the writer to improvise. This person is still dancing on the same high wire: the talented Mr. [Ramsey](#)."

The Garrote/Wrist Ties

- Internet poster [Delmar England](#) has argued extensively that the knots are evidence of staging (see discussion of garrotte on [The Body](#) page).
- [JonBenét's](#) hair was tied into the knot behind her neck and into the knot on the stick, per the crime scene photos. This would be extremely difficult and nonsensical for an intruder to do on a living, resisting child.
- Also, the strangulation caused no internal damage to the throat.

Rebuttal to Staging Appears Poorly Executed Argument

DocG writes: In answer to the question posed above, "why did they not leave an "obvious" means of entry and exit into the house?," it looks very much like someone DID. The scene at the basement window certainly looks like a staged breakin. What else could it be? It was determined by the police on the scene, who examined that window very carefully (unlike Smit, who worked only with photos), that no one could have passed through it without leaving obvious signs. No such signs were found. Yet the window was both broken and open on the morning of the 26th. If no one passed through it, then how did all that debris from the well find its way to the floor? If it had been scooped from the well, that would explain the disturbance Smit saw in the photos he examined. Who could have scooped it? And who could have placed a suitcase directly beneath that same window? How is all this evidence to be explained if not as staging? It certainly didn't get there on its own.

Evidence Against Staging

Staging Appears Poorly Executed

- **No "Obvious" Entry or Exit Was Staged.** Most RDI proponents rest their case in part on what they view as lack of intruder evidence. But this raises a critical question: if any member of the family were staging, why was this not done much better? For example, why did they not leave an "obvious" means of entry and exit into the house?
- **Parental Testimony Conflicts with Staging Effort.** If John were involved in staging, why would he initially claim to police that he had checked all the doors that morning and found them all locked?

The Garrote/Wrist Ties

- **John Ramsey** was in the Navy and was an experienced sailor. If England's analysis is correct, this would appear to exonerate John. That is, if the intention of staging were to make it look like a "genuine" kidnapping/ransom/murder, why would John use bogus knots?
- 1. John conceivably deliberately staged the knots ineptly to throw suspicion off himself, but if he were that forward-looking, wouldn't it occur to him that bogus knots themselves would raise the risk that LE would view the situation as staged? That is, why would a real kidnapper/murderer stage anything?
- 2. **Patsy's Knowledge of Knots.** Patsy had no known expertise in knots. If she and John staged the event together, it would make no sense to put her rather than John in charge of knot-tying. But then we are back to the problems just described with imagining John as the stager.
- 3. **Burke's Knowledge of Knots.** Burke Ramsey had experience sailing, but at age 9 may have known much less about knot-tying than his father. Most BDI scenarios entail parental complicity in the cover-up/staging. But if the parents were so involved, we're back to a situation in which John would have been the logical person to do any knot-tying (or would at least "supervise" Burke's doing so).
- 4. Thus, if England's analysis is correct, it is more consistent with a) intruder staging (for whatever reason); b) Patsy staging on her own; c) Burke staging on his own.