

## Exculpatory Evidence

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## Back to [John Mark Karr](#)

### Why Did Boulder D.A. Extradite Karr?

- Once Karr's arrest was made public by Thai authorities, Boulder DA Mary [Lacy](#) asserted "There is much more work that needs to be done now that the suspect is in custody. Our preference would have been to complete that work out of the public eye. That is obviously not possible this morning."
- [Lacy](#) also stated: "John Karr is presumed innocent. We are rightfully constrained by the code of professional conduct and the presumption of innocence from answering those questions today." Ramsey attorney Lin Wood has reiterated this view.
- Serious [questions](#) have been raised about the timing and handling of the case given that efforts to tie Karr to forensic evidence such as DNA and handwriting until after Karr's arrest; likewise, there was no effort to contact his ex-wife regarding a potential alibi. It is unclear why Lacy felt her hand was forced given that there were alternative legal procedures that could have ensured that Karr was put into custody while the investigation into his connection to the killing proceeded outside of the public glare.
- Internet poster [Cherokee](#) speculates that Thailand authorities may have been asked by Boulder authorities to pick up Karr on the basis of disturbing emails to Tracey, but were caught by surprise when Thai authorities had a public press conference in which Karr confessed. Now BDA has to play out the hand it was deal, all the while cautioning against a rush to judgment.

### Role of Michael Tracey

- An account of how Karr connected with Tracey is [here](#).
- Some on-line [posters](#) are skeptical about Tracey given that he has previously falsely accused John Gigax of the crime; they wonder whether he may have shared some generally inaccessible case materials with Karr.
- Tracey [reportedly](#) has no regrets about the decision to notify authorities; "From what I was reading, it was very troubling, and it became increasingly troubling," Tracey said of the communications from Karr, many of which focused on his sexual desire for little girls. "It would have been irresponsible" not to act on Karr's statements, he said.

### Out of Character Behavior

- The Karr family lawyer, Gary Harris, has [asserted](#): "Behavioral scientists tell us that psychopaths and pedophiles do not wait until age 37 to manifest their demons; instead they begin setting fires, torturing animals, peeping into windows, molesting children and exhibiting violent propensities early on. Karr has never exhibited any of these traits."
- This statement seems to fly in the face of the available evidence. From what is revealed on tape--even if it is all fantasy--it is fairly clear that Karr either is a fairly disturbed individual who has fantasized his tale or someone with psychopathic tendencies who has simply fabricated it for whatever perverse pleasure or attention it provided him. The known accounts of being fired from various schools for "inappropriate behavior" with little girls are consistent with his self-described behavior. Thus, while we can have some confidence based on the physical evidence that Karr is not the killer, it is not at all clear that his entire tale--including molestations of other little girls--can be dismissed out of hand and therefore at minimum the molestation of JBR would appear to be "in character."

### Physiological Evidence

- **Expert View.** Body language expert [Janine Driver](#) has a site that lists the typical indicators of truthful and deceptive people.
- **Blogger View.** "When Karr speaks to the media, he is unable to answer any important questions. He stutters for words, moves his eyes in ways that shows he has to consciously think before he speaks to say the "right things". None of Karr's words come naturally -- which they would if he was telling the truth. A killer who confesses and would finally want this done and over with -- would give some true signs that he was the killer. Karr cannot do this. Furthermore, Karr shows he is very nervous, and he flashes tiny expressions of glee which I believe represent the glee that he feels because he is actually getting away with this. It thrills him. This expression furthermore tells me that John Karr knows he is lying. He knows he didn't kill [JonBenet](#) -- at least during these interviews. If Karr suffers from delusions however, that state of mind may change and there may be times when he believes he killed her."

(from blogger [Fredette X](#))

### Known Karr Lies

- **2001 Lies to Wendy Hutchens.** A [list](#) of other lies Karr has told include a series of lies about the JBR killing he told in 2001 to **Wendy Hutchens**, a California woman.
- 1. [Newsweek reports](#) "Hutchens says he told her he broke into the Ramseys' Boulder, Colo., home on Christmas night, 1996, and lured [JonBenet](#) to the basement, where he said he fondled her while choking her with a cord. "He said she would be gasping for air, and he'd loosen up a little bit while he was sexually stimulating her," Hutchens tells NEWSWEEK." This is different than the scenario provided to Tracey in which he describes the killing as accidental and doesn't allude to her choking or gasping.
- 2. However, he also [said](#) "How would that person apologize for such an atrocity?" he asks on the tapes. "Would that person say, you know, 'I strangled your daughter, and it was so accidental, and I was so afraid, and I was so absolutely afraid.'" This is consistent with the account told to Tracey.
- 3. Likewise, the speaker in the Hutchens tapes says [JonBenet](#) quit breathing before being bashed over the head. He also talks about how he perceives sexual encounters with a child. "The weird thing about being sexually attracted to a little girl is that you really aren't going to have penetrated sex ..." the man says on the recordings. In the account to Tracey, Karr confessed to oral sex but made no mention of penile penetration.
- **2001 Lies to Father.** In 2001, Karr also had told his father that he was in jail on charges related to killing JBR when in fact he was being charged with possession of child pornography. The fact that he was willing to lie point blank to his own father may suggest the depth of his desire to become "implicated" in this case.
- **2006 Employment Application.** In an application for employment in Thailand [dated](#) March 5, 2006, Karr [gave](#) his American residence address as 4000 Paces Ferry Rd., Atlanta, GA. According to Internet poster [Candy](#), the Ramseys lived at 4007 Paces Ferry Rd. after they moved from Boulder. According to a search of 4000 Paces Ferry Road NW on zillow.com there is no such address. The house numbers jump from 3990 to 4014.

### Possible Alibi for December 25

- **Alibi from Ex-Wife.** A woman claiming to be his ex-wife [denies](#) he was the killer as he was in Alabama with her on the night JBR died. Her lawyer has stated that she now is in the process of checking photos to see if she can establish this claim with greater certainty, but she continues to believe there were no Christmases during this period in which Karr was absent from the family. The woman never [found](#) photos of Karr on Christmas Day 1996, although some speculate that's because he was taking the photos of his boys that she did find from that day. The family has produced a thank-you [letter](#) from the ex-wife proving she and the boys were there that Christmas, but no explicit mention is made of John Karr in the letter. Karr himself asserted that he was in Hamilton, AL for Xmas but that his wife would be unable to vouch for his whereabouts after that and that he "could have" flown a [LearJet](#) to get to Boulder in time.
- **Alibi from Father and Half-Brother.** The father and half-brother of John Karr [confirm](#) they can recall no Christmas since John had his children that he didn't spend Christmas with the family in Alabama or Georgia so there is no way he could have gotten to Boulder without being missed.
- It is [reported](#) "So far, there is no paper trail of Karr being in Colorado. Police in Boulder said today that they have no record of ever having contact with him."
- **Unknown Jaguar Not Karr's.** A report was made of an "unknown Jaguar seen in the area [of the Ramsey house] during a Christmas party at a friend's home on Dec. 25." John Karr was known to have driven a Jaguar, but CrimeRant [reports](#) John Karr "owned a 1987 gray Jaguar, with an original title date listed as "6/23/1997," six months or so after JBR's murder. The car is described as a 6 cylinder, 4-door sedan ... the license plate number on Karr's Jag was 49AT639. The VIN number listed as SAJAV134XHC475631." Thus, unless Karr owned a different Jaguar, his was not the car seen in Boulder.
- **Karr Boulder Visit in 2000.** Karr apparently [visited](#) Boulder in 2000 or 2001 while traveling with his family and spent most of a day at the Ramsey house; this confirms his obsession with the case and may be the source of his apparent "insider" knowledge. But it does not disprove Karr wasn't also there in 1996.

### Inconsistencies in Confession with Available Evidence

- **No Evidence of Prior JBR Meeting.**
- 1. From the get-go, Karr refuses to explain to anyone how he knew JBR. It was [reported](#) "Yet for all Karr's willingness to profess his sick love for the child and to place himself at the scene of her death, he was cagey when asked by reporters about his prior relationship with the Ramsey family. "No comment," he replied."
- 2. Similarly, in the phone conversations and e-mails with Michael Tracey, Karr repeatedly refuses to ever explain how he knew JBR, but his account also most definitely implies that he was not a stranger to her on Christmas night when he took her from her bed. He further strongly implies without ever explicitly stating so that he was some sort of teacher of hers. But we know from other available evidence

that this almost certainly is not true. He asserted there were some things he would never disclose, but claims that scattered throughout his manuscript are numerous hints about how he met her.

- It is possible he may have met her at the Sunburst competition in Atlanta in August of 1996, but if that was their only encounter, it seems highly improbable that JBR would remember him with any familiarity once she woke up in his arms on Xmas night (though one could argue that she was groggy and his soothing voice might have convinced her of anything at that point).
- Scarf Asphyxiation Implausible.** Internet poster [Rainsong](#) has concluded: "Karr's scenario doesn't work since the scarf itself would have left contusions even though they would have been greatly diffused. The cord, by virtue of its width, would not have "hidden" the marks of either hands or a scarf."
- No Evidence of Hanging by Wrists.** Karr allegedly hung JBR by her wrists (using the ropes found on her) in the room with the window and suitcase; it is difficult to deduce the exact amount of time she hung, since he repeatedly alludes to holding her up for at least part of the time (since he promised he wouldn't let her go even though he originally planned to do just that). But it would appear to be a minimum of several minutes and possibly 10 or more. Yet the autopsy includes no mention of any sort of marks or abrasions on her wrist.
- "Accidental" Killing Implausible.** [MSNBC](#) reports "Karr told authorities he never meant to kill [JonBenet](#). Details of her murder imply her death was intentional: "It's hard to imagine a more intentional, deliberate murder than hitting a little girl in the head so hard that she had almost a foot-long fracture in her skull and then deliberately fashioning a garrotte to twist until it buries in her neck and slowly stops her breathing," said Craig Silverman, a former Denver prosecutor." Karr's story can account for accidental strangulation (the culmination of his losing track of timing during erotic asphyxiation) and the head-blow (a mercy killing). But it does not really account for how deeply embedded into the neck the ligature was and there would have been no reason given his account for why he would have been motivated to do such a thing given that he allegedly was distraught over the death of his "princess."
- Head Blow Scenario Implausible.** Karr describes giving the head blow while JBR was still hanging. It's fundamentally unclear how physically plausible this is. There are three issues.
  - First, his account makes it sound as if her wrists were tied together since he alludes to her arms pressing against her ears when the full weight of her body hung from the rope. So somehow, the flashlight would have had to clear her upstretched arms and yet still deliver sufficient power to the right side of the skull to create the massive fracture observed at autopsy. But as he himself said, when the full weight of her body was hanging, it had the effect of bringing her arms right next to her ears. There's no way he could have gotten a clear blow to her head the arms in the way. He would have somehow had to deliver the blow from the TOP, but even this would have been difficult to achieve with the arms/rope in the way. Moreover, since Karr is right-handed, it would have made much more sense to hit her on the left side of the skull since hitting her on the right would have required a "backhand" swing unless he spun her around and hit her from the back.
  - Second, even if he had managed such blow of that force, it would seem that this either would have broken or unknotted the rope and led her to crash to the floor, OR if she were still hanging, a blow with such force surely would have left noticeable marks on her arms (the autopsy evidence suggests she was still alive when the head blow was delivered, hence at least some bruising/dyscoloration would have ensued).
  - Third, the window that Karr allegedly came through was blocked by some sort of heating vent that hung from the ceiling (this [picture](#) shows that the distance from the floor to this heating vent was at least 3, but definitely no more than 4 suitcases high. Unfortunately, we don't know the dimensions of the suitcase, but a typical basement ceiling would not exceed 8 feet. Given how much of the upper part of the window is occluded, it appears that the vent hangs down at least 1 foot, leaving 7 feet of vertical clearance. JBR was 47" tall, her feet were not touching the floor (according to Karr's account), so the combination of her feet hanging down and arms outstretched presumably added a minimum of 1 additional foot (allowing for her feet to be 3" above the floor). The point is that there is not a huge amount of space above her head to allow for the flashlight to follow a full arc from the top direction and deliver a blow to her head without hitting the vent at the top of this swing. Absent such an efficiently delivered blow, i.e., Karr swinging with all his might in an arc, it seems improbable that enough force would have been delivered.
- Karr's Scream.** His phone "confessions" are inconsistent. In an early call, he alludes to having screamed out in the basement after her death and wondering why no one ever heard that. Yet in call 7, when he provides a detailed "blow-by-blow" he never re-mentions that scream. He alludes to talking out loud to JBR and telling her to wake up and not caring if anyone heard, but there his no repeat of his earlier use of the term "scream." And in the narrative, it is unclear when such a scream would have occurred. If he truly had screamed upon her death and were worried about being heard, it would appear to muster more bravery than he evinced to have returned upstairs to place the RN in her room. On the other hand, one possible reason he thought he heard a voice when he did return there was because his prior scream had made him realize that perhaps he had awakened someone and he needed to be cautious.
- No Urine Beneath Window.** Karr noticed that JBR had wet herself while hanging ; the autopsy alludes to her bladder being completely voided, yet there have been no public reports of any urine stain found in the room with the window and suitcase.
- When/How Was JBR "Washed Down?"** Karr's very detailed account in call #7 goes into extensive detail about nearly every move he made, including how and when he re-dressed her, but he never mentions washing her down even though the forensic evidence suggests this happened. There was a bathroom in the basement, so in principle he had access to water, but his account also repeatedly alludes to never wanting to leave her alone even for a few seconds. So had he either left her alone or dragged her with him to the bathroom to be washed down, it seems unlikely he would forget such a significant detail.
- Window Not Found Open.** Karr's scenario has him panicked as he leaves the basement window. He neither said he closed the window behind him, nor does it seem plausible that he would under those circumstances (with the possible exception that he seems to have some tendency towards OCD). He makes a point of saying he cleaned up all the material on the floor before leaving and he also describes peeking through the grate to ensure no one was watching as he left the house, so it seems unlikely he would forget such an important detail. Yet neither Officer French nor Fleet White observed that window open early that morning upon first arriving at the house.
- No Clanging Grate.** A neighbor allegedly heard the sound of scraping metal between midnight and 2:00 AM. This is reasonably consistent with Karr's timeline, but again is inconsistent with the scenario he depicts. He entered the house at 5:00 through the grate, so this could not have been the sound heard. When he left the house he thought he was being pursued. It would not have made any sense to create ANY undue noise at that juncture. Indeed he describes desisting the temptation to run down the driveway for fear of calling attention to himself. Letting the grate bang shut would have made no sense.

## "Inconsistencies" That Appear to Be False Alarms

- No Semen Found.** [MSNBC](#) reports "Karr told investigators he drugged and sexually assaulted [JonBenet](#) before killing her, but an autopsy performed a day after her death revealed no drugs in her body. She had a vaginal abrasion, but the autopsy made no conclusions about whether she had been raped. No semen was found on her body." However, in the phone confession, there was no indication that his definition of "having sex" with JBR included penile penetration.
- No Drugs Found.** It was originally reported in [The Smoking Gun reports](#): "While a Thailand immigration official has said that John Karr, who was arrested yesterday in Bangkok for the girl's murder, reportedly claimed to have drugged the child before raping her, the autopsy notes that a "blood drug screen" was negative." Follow-up [statements](#) by Thai authorities suggest this official may have been confused or misinterpreted what Karr claimed; Karr now has been reported saying that events during the killing were a "blur." Moreover, even if Karr made this claim, Internet poster [GlassHouse](#) asserts that Dennis Rader used chloroform and that it would not leave a trace on a toxicology test, hence there is not necessarily an inconsistency between his claims of having drugged her and there being no positive toxicology findings in the autopsy report. Chloroform [disappears](#) quickly from the body with each exhalation, but it also "frequently causes convulsion, and tongue biting is one common side effect."
- No Pick up From School Possible.** It also was originally [reported](#) "investigators in Thailand have told the Associated Press that Karr has made several other statements to them, including claims that he picked [JonBenet](#) up from school the day she was killed..... [JonBenet](#) was on Christmas vacation at the time, so school was not in session..." But this statement was subsequently [retracted](#) as it apparently was based on a documentary that a Thai official had seen about the case, not an actual assertion by Karr.

## No Handwriting Match

- Internet poster [Cherokee](#) claims Karr's handwriting from his high school yearbook does not match the RN.

## Lack of Hard Evidence

- To date, there have been no revelations that the suspect can be tied to the crime in terms of DNA or other "hard" evidence. On August 28, just hours before he was to be arraigned, it was [leaked](#) that the DNA did not match and that no charges will be filed.
- The suspect is being discussed extensively at [Forums for Justice](#) and [Websleuths](#), forums in which many lean towards an RDI theory and hence are inclined to doubt Mr. Karr is the murderer.