

The Basement

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The Wine Cellar Room

See [The Windowless Room](#) at DocG's Solving the JonBenet Case for discussion.

Photos

- **Hallway Leading to Room.** Several photos of the hallway leading to the wine cellar room have been posted by Internet poster [acandyrose](#).
- **Latch on Top of Door.** In his early morning search of the basement, Officer French found the door to this room latched. The latch was a piece of wood at the top of the door ([photo](#)). Because he was looking for a kidnapper's escape route to the outside of the house, Officer French did not unlatch and open this door reasoning that a perp could not have latched such a door behind him/her.
- **Light Switch.** The lightswitch was on the wall inside the room, but [lower](#) than a typical lightswitch would be placed.
- **The View from Inside the Room.** Internet poster [acandyrose](#) has posted a [photo](#) showing how the hall looked from inside the room.
- **Interior of the Room.** [acandyrose](#) has posted several photos showing the [clutter](#) in the windowless room.

Evidence Found Inside the Room

- **Condition of the Room.** "Although referred to as the "wine cellar," the room was actually used for storage and was "a dark, dirty area" with mold growing on the floor. (F. White Dep. at 228.)" (Carnes 2003:Note 14). Another description [states](#): "Next to the utility space, at the southeast corner of the basement, is the unfinished, windowless room where [JonBenet](#)'s body was found behind a closed door. The room is dank and bunker-like, with waterstained cement walls and a cement floor."
- **Location of Body.** This is the room in which JBR's body was found, sometimes termed the *windowless room*.
- **Blanket.** "John Ramsey told Det. Arndt that he had found [JonBenet](#) in the wine cellar in the basement, underneath a blanket, with her wrists tied above her head and a piece of tape covering her mouth. John Ramsey had removed the tape from her mouth before he carried [JonBenet](#) upstairs to the first floor" ([Byfield 1997:2](#)). "In the area where Det. Arndt had told Det. Everett that the decedent had been found by her father he observed two blankets on the floor in the center of the room." ([Byfield 1997:2](#)).
- **Night Gown**
 - [JonBenet](#)'s nightgown was found on the floor next to the body.
 - **Night Gown Tossed Aside.** Although there has been some speculation that it was carefully laid out, no one has offered a source for this. Internet poster [Jameson](#) never heard of its being spread out and does not believe it was. Likewise, a [screen capture](#) from the Schiller documentary shows the nightgown just tossed next to the blanket. Here's a similar photo from a different [angle](#).
 - **John Ramsey Does Not Recall Nightgown.** John Ramsey himself does not [recall](#) seeing the nightgown when he found [JonBenet](#)'s body.
 - According to a transcribed screen capture by Internet poster [Margoo](#) 2 spots of blood from the nightgown were tested and one of these matched JonBenet.
- **Partially Wrapped Presents.** Partially wrapped presents were found in the windowless room ([photo](#)). Internet poster [Olivia](#) has posted a picture of a gift wrapped in the identical paper as the small piece shown in the photo. Internet poster [Jameson](#) says that one of the presents was for Burke's birthday and was intended to be opened, so Patsy had to partially open the others to ascertain which one that was.

Why Fleet Did Not See Body in Early Morning

- Internet poster [Braveheart](#) has provided for how Fleet White did not see JBR's body when he checked the wine storage room at 6:15 AM but John Ramsey immediately saw JBR's body on the floor when he checked the identical room at 1:00 PM. More details are [here](#).
- Internet poster [docG](#) responds to [Braveheart](#)'s analysis as follows:
 - The photo provided by [Braveheart](#) demonstrates that the area around the windowless room was very well lit. The illumination seems provided by overhead fixtures, probably in more than one place, given the uniformity of the lighting. The lighting looks "natural," i.e., not from the photographer's flash, as there are no harsh shadows and in fact very few shadows at all. It clearly comes from artificial lights and not from a window, as the area is uniformly illuminated.
 - Given the early hour, prior to sunrise, we can assume the basement lights were on when White was down there on the morning of the 26th.
 - What is rarely discussed is the fact that White's eyes would have been dark adapted prior to sunrise, which means it should not have been difficult for him to see [JonBenet](#)'s body if it were, indeed, as John has claimed, visible from the door. John's eyes, on the other hand, would NOT have been dark adapted at 1 PM, when he claims he spotted the body immediately. To understand the difference I urge anyone interested to go from a room brightly illuminated by mid-day sunlight to a dark, unlit, basement room. You may be surprised at how long it takes for you to see anything at all. On the other hand, if you enter the same room after dark, or very early in the morning, you will be able to see much more clearly from the start.
 - According to White, John cried out PRIOR to turning on the light to that room. So it isn't difficult to see how White could be suspicious of John. He looked into the room that morning and saw nothing unusual. John entered the room that afternoon and immediately, without turning on the light, saw the body of his daughter.

Evidence Found Outside Wine-Cellar Room

Footprints in Basement

- "Several recently-made unidentified shoeprints were found in the basement, imprinted in mold growing on the basement floor. (SMF P 151; PSMF P 151.)" (Carnes 2003:19). In 1998 it was [reported](#) "two types of footprints, including one near the body, did not match any footwear belonging to the parents."
- **HI-TECH Print.** "In particular, a shoeprint of a "HI-TEC" brand mark on the sole of a shoe was found. (SMF P 152; PSMF P 152.) Defendants do not own any "HI-TEC" brand shoes, and none of the shoes found in their home match the shoeprint marks. (SMF P 153; PSMF P 153.)" (Carnes 2003:19). See [Hi-tech Footwear](#) at Webbsleuths forum chat.
- **Partial Print.** "Another partial shoeprint was found near where [JonBenet](#)'s body was found. (SMF P 155; PSMF P 155.) This shoeprint left only a partial logo. The owner of the "HI-TEC" shoe that made the shoeprints at the murder scene has never been identified. (SMF P 154, 155; PSMF P 154, 155.)" (Carnes 2003:19).
- **Possible Child's Barefoot Print.** Another smaller print near one of the shoe prints may possibly be that of a child. A [distance photo](#) shows the print in context. A [close-up](#) shows an outline of the print.
 - To better ascertain the size, Internet poster [Mikie](#) has traced an [outline](#) showing the foot to be roughly 6" in length--a plausible size for a 6-year old girl, as Lou Smit [reportedly](#) said it was roughly the same size as that of his granddaughter of that age. But since JBR was found [barefoot](#), [Mikie](#) has also posted an [outline](#) showing toes, making the foot about 7 inches long. Note that Mikie subsequently has concluded the print is of a carabiner or something similar (see below).
 - Internet poster [Braveheart](#) has [suggested](#) that this "print" really is of a carabiner. Internet poster [Mikie](#) has posted a [photo](#) comparison of the "footprint" (showing that it has straight sides) and a "ladder hook" which is similar to a carabiner in shape; he also has shown that a bottle opener may have been attached.

Palmprint on Wine-Cellar Door

- **Source of Print Unknown?** "In addition, on the wine-cellar door, there is a palmprint that does not match either of defendants' palmprints. (SMF P 156; PSMF P 156.) The individual to whom it belongs had not yet been identified. (SMF P 156; PSMF P 156.)" (Carnes 2003:19-20).
- **Print Belongs to Melinda Ramsey.** But a newspaper account claims: "A palm print on the door leading to that same wine cellar, long unidentified, is that of Melinda Ramsey, [JonBenet](#)'s adult half-sister. She was in Georgia at the time of the murder."... "...L. Lin Wood, the attorney representing the Ramseys, who now live in Atlanta, doesn't debate the palm print findings..." (Quotations and source provided by Internet poster [Tricia](#)).

- **Doubt About Melinda Ramsey Report.** Internet poster **Mame asserts**: "the story suggesting the handprint is confirmed to be Melinda's is just that....a story. If I recall the report came via a reporter, Charlie Brennan. Remember his footprints in the snow story??? A totally false story." Internet poster Lynette has [offered](#) 2 additional reasons for skepticism:
 - **Trip DeMuth Apparently Did Not Believe It.** From a 2006 [interview](#) with Anderson Cooper in reference to JMK:
COOPER: What about the palm print, how big is it? How crucial is it?
DEMUTH: You know, obviously if they've compared the palm print to him and it's a match, then it places him not only in Boulder County at the time of the murder, but it places him inside of that house in close proximity to where the girl was found on the day of the murder, and that's very compelling evidence."
Later DeMuth says: "So the only thing that I haven't heard about that they possibly have is the palm print. And the fact of the matter is, I hope they've got that." And..."But at the same time, if they have a palm print comparison to this guy, then my blood pressure goes down and I feel a lot better about the case. "
 - **2008 Rocky Mountain News Report.** She also quotes a story in the rocky Mountain News from July 10, 2008: "unidentified shoe and *palm prints* inside the home; a broken basement window and a disturbed window well, with material from that window well found in the room where her body was discovered; unidentified hair and fiber on the child, her clothing and the blanket covering her."

The Boiler Room

- This room was immediately adjacent to the wine cellar room, i.e., one had to walk through part of this room to get into the wine cellar room from the hall.
- In this room, immediately adjacent to the door leading to the wine cellar room, was a paintbrush tote of Patsy Ramsey's. The brush end of the broken paintbrush used to garrote JBR was found in this tote. The other end of this broken paintbrush was never found, but it may have been used to sexually assault JBR.
- The following [discussion](#) summarizes competing opinions on whether the paintbrush showed any signs of "whittling."

The Train and Storage Room

- The train room was the other half of a large [room](#) containing the storage that had the [broken window](#) through which Lou Smit believes an intruder might have entered the house. Anyone getting to that storage room window would have had to enter through the door leading into the train room area and pass through the train room area to get to the back part of that room beyond two closet areas that separate the train "room" portion from the storage space.

Chair Blocking Door

- **John Ramsey's Report.** **John Ramsey** reported finding a chair blocking the door to the train room when he was in the basement on the morning of December 26. In his 1998 police interviews he [stated](#) (p. 155:lines 7-13): "I went in this room here. This door was kind of blocked. We had a bunch of junk down here and there was a chair that was in front of the door. Some old things. I moved the chair, went into this room, went back in here. This window was open, maybe that far." It is clear from the last sentence that John is referring to the train room.
- **Why Didn't Fleet White Report a Chair Blocking Door?** Internet poster **Athena** has pointed out that Fleet White, who had searched the basement that morning prior to John ([6:06 AM](#)), did not report this chair blocking the door even though he reported seeing the train room window. One possibility is that he simply forgot. A second is that to get into the train room, he may have moved the chair in front of the door leading to the wine cellar room. Since he also reports looking inside the wine cellar room that morning, he may have simply moved the chair back in front of train room door to unblock the door leading back to the wine cellar room, which was immediately adjacent ([floor plan](#)).
- **Why Didn't Officer French Report a Chair Blocking Door?** Many believe that Officer French inspected the basement immediately on his arrival at the house around 5:59 AM ([chronology](#)). But according to Steve Thomas's account, French did not search basement until after 8:10 AM ([chronology](#)). This is likely after John Ramsey searched the basement (in the [7:00-8:00 AM range](#)), hence John presumably had moved the chair by that point.
- **Could Intruder Leave Door Blocked?** But this raises a question of how an intruder could get through that door to escape out the window and leave the chair blocking the door. Internet poster **Tricia** has elaborated on the issues raised by John's evidence.

Suitcase Beneath Window

- **Where Found.** "A hard-sided suitcase was discovered below the open window" ([Rocky Mountain News; photo](#)). A schematic showing the location of the suitcase vis-a-vis the window is [here](#).
- **Suitcase Dimensions.** This appears never to have been officially reported. According to Internet poster Sally, who had a Samsonite suitcase that appeared to be similar, the exterior was 30" x 20.75" x 9.5" at the largest spans (see [message posted by Sally on May-31-01 at 07:35 PM \(EST\)](#)).
- **Out of Place.** "John Ramsey said the suitcase was not in that area of the basement before, suggesting that someone moved it there. In addition, if the suitcase had been under the window for a long time, dust and debris would have collected on it. But little was there" ([Rocky Mountain News](#)).
- **Glass Shard.** "A pea-size piece of glass was found on top of the suitcase, within what might be a partial footprint. Smit surmises the glass may have come off the intruder's shoe as he stepped on the suitcase to get out." However, "police have said privately that what looks like a footprint on the suitcase isn't a footprint" ([Rocky Mountain News; close-up photo](#)).
- **Suitcase Unlatched.** Internet poster **Olivia** has noted "if you look at the close up pictures of the suitcase, it does appear that the suitcase is unlatched and not securely closed, with a clothing restraint hanging out."
- **Suitcase Contents.** A pillow sham and duvet (comforter) were found in the suitcase.
- **Was JBR Placed in Suitcase?** There is conflicting [fiber evidence](#) suggesting that fibers from the sham and duvet inside the suitcase were found on JBR's body. Some have speculated someone attempted to place JBR inside the suitcase to remove her (dead or alive) from the house. Internet poster **Mikie** has done a [drawing](#) showing how this might be possible.

The Basement Bathroom

- **Evidence Taken by Police.** The search warrants show that police took toilet parts from the Ramsey house, although they do not list which bathrooms these were taken from. Internet poster **Antik** has observed: "If you go to the following [site](#) and scroll down to the basement floor plan and look to the left you'll see a photo of the basement toilet. The tank has been removed and is sitting on the floor. The lid to the toilet and the lid to the tank both appear to be missing. The toilet seat is in place."

Storage Room Next to Laundry

- **Open Window.** An open window with chair beneath was located in the storage room adjacent to the laundry and train room [photo](#). As with many photos in this case, it is uncertain when this was taken and whether the window was actually open and the chair underneath it on the morning of 12/26/96.
- **Window Leads to Crawl Space?** Moreover, as can be seen in this [exploded view](#) of each floor of the house, it appears that this window opened into some sort of crawl space beneath the hall where the writing pad was located. Neither Lou Smit nor any other member of BPD ever suggested this window as a possible means into or out of the house, so there presumably is no outdoor access from that crawl space.
- **Potential Hiding Place?** In principle, a perp interested in hiding JBR's body for an extended period could have placed her in this area, but finding this location would have required walking through both the laundry room and storage room: if an intruder killed JBR, it's not obvious s/he even saw this room.