

The Cords

1. [Back to The Body](#)
2. [Overview](#)
 - i. [Autopsy Findings](#)
 - ii. [Non-Autopsy Findings](#)
3. [Were Knots Sophisticated?](#)
4. [Could Ramseys Tie Such Knots?](#)
5. [Where Did Cord Come From?](#)

Back to [The Body](#)

Overview

Autopsy Findings

- The portion of the autopsy report dealing with the garrote and other cords found on JBR is at [Webbsleuths](#)
- **Nature of Cord.** "The white cord is flattened and measures approximately 1/4 inch in width. It appears to be made of a white synthetic material."
- **Cords on Wrist.** "Tied loosely around the right wrist, overlying the sleeve of the shirt is a white cord. At the knot there is one tail end which measures 5.5 inches in length with a frayed end. The other tail of the knot measures 15.5 inches in length and ends in a double loop knot. This end of the cord is also frayed." ([clear photo](#); [less clear photo](#)).
- **Cord Around Neck.** "Wrapped around the neck with a double knot in the midline of the posterior neck is a length of white cord similar to that described as being tied around the right wrist." ([photo](#))
- **Removal of Cord by Coroner.** "This ligature cord is cut on the right side of the neck and removed. A single black ink mark is placed on the left side of the cut and a double black ink mark on the right side of the cut. The posterior knot is left intact."
- **Wooden Stick at End of Cord.** "Extending from the knot on the posterior aspect of the neck are two tails of the knot, one measuring 4 inches in length and having a frayed end, and the other measuring 17 inches in length with the end tied in multiple loops around a length of a round tan-brown wooden stick which measures 4.5 inches in length." ([photo](#))
- "This wooden stick is irregularly broken at both ends and there are several colors of paint and apparent glistening varnish on the surface. Printed in gold letters on one end of the wooden stick is the word "Korea." The tail end of another word extends from beneath the loops of the cord tied around the stick and is not able to be interpreted."
- **Hair Entangled in Neck Knot.** "Blonde hair is entwined in the knot on the posterior aspect of the neck as well as in the cord wrapped around the wooden stick."

Non-Autopsy Findings

- **Judge Carnes Decision.**
- 1. **Complicated Knots.** "JonBenet's body was bound with complicated rope slipknots and a garrote attached to her body. (Defs.' Br. In Supp. Of Summ. J. [67](#) at 19; SMF P 163; PSMF P 163.)" (Carnes 2003:17).
- 2. **Garrote Handle from Paintbrush.** "The garrote consisted of a wooden handle fashioned from the middle of a paintbrush, found in the paint tray in the boiler room. The end of a nylon cord was tied to this wooden handle and, on the other end, was a loop with a slipknot, with [JonBenet's](#) neck within the loop. (SMF PP 157-158; PSMF PP 157-158.)" (Carnes 2003:17).
- 3. **Missing Paintbrush End.** "The end portion of the paintbrush used to construct the garrote was never found. (SMF P 159; PSMF P 159.)" (Carnes 2003:18).
- 4. **Cord Fibers in JBR Bed.** "Further, fibers consistent with those of the cord used to make the slip knots and garrote were found on [JonBenet's](#) bed. (SMF P 168; PSMF P 168.)
- **John Van Tassel**, a forensic knot analyst and corporal in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, gave expert advice on the knots to BPD, but it is unknown what his findings were except for those leaked in Steve Thomas's book.
- **Cord Wrapped Twice Around Neck?** Internet poster [MissOtisRegrets](#) claims that in her 1999 *Good Morning America* [interview](#), **Linda Arndt** said the cord was wrapped twice around JBR's neck. This is not visible in most autopsy photos because the first loop is buried so deeply in her neck. According to Internet poster [MissOtisRegrets](#) (see post at 10:14 PM, 9/24/06) [Picture #6](#) reportedly shows a picture of the neck after the first loop was removed and the second loop remained. This detail about the 2nd wrapping may have been redacted from the autopsy report.
- **Garrote Construction Instructions.** Internet poster [AntiK](#) has [posted](#) 9 photos that include step-by-step instructions on how to construct the garrote found around JBR's neck. An animated illustration of how to tie a rolling hitch (taut line hitch) is [here](#) and a similar illustration of how to tie a prusik knot (triple sliding hitch) is [here](#).
- **How the Garrote Functioned.** Internet poster [AntiK](#) has provided a clear and extensive discussion on how the garrote actually functioned.
- **How JBR Was Strangled.** Internet poster [Ruth Gerstenkorn](#) has outlined her [theory](#) about how JBR was strangled.

Were Knots Sophisticated?

- "The slipknots and the garrote are both sophisticated bondage devices designed to give control to the user. (SMF PP 161, 164; PSMF PP 161, 164.)" (Carnes 2003:17). "Evidence from these devices suggests they were made by someone with expertise using rope and cords, which cords could not be found or "sourced" within defendants' home. (SMF P 169; PSMF P 169.)" (Carnes 2003:17).
- **Michael Kane Assessment.** Special prosecutor **Michael Kane** (in response to Mary Keenan's statement that she supported the Carnes decision) [stated](#): "First of all, the thing I was going to say is if Mary Keenan has reached this conclusion, she clearly has not reviewed her own file because I don't want to get into a lot of specifics about this because of ethical reasons, but there are clearly in the police file answers to a lot of the things that the court said had never been established. I mean, I can give you-I don't know where this came from that these were sophisticated knots. I don't know that anybody had the opportunity to untie those knots who was an expert in knots, but the police department had somebody who fit that category and that was not the opinion of that person. These were very simple knots."
- **AntiK Assessment.** Internet poster [AntiK](#) has done extensive experiments with the garrote and [argues](#) that "the ligature/garrote and the knot used for it's construction is very simple. It's basic – kindergarten. There is nothing complex or complicated about it. anyone – anyone – who claims otherwise is wrong."
- **Delmar England Assessment.** Likewise, Internet poster **Delmar England**, a self-reported expert in knots, has provided an in-depth [analysis](#) arguing that the garrote and wrist ties were done by someone with *no* familiarity with knots, hence they were part of staging. He has updated his analysis [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Rainsong Rebuttal of England.** A thorough rebuttal of England's analysis has been put up by Internet poster [Rainsong](#) [here](#).

Could Ramseys Tie Such Knots?

- **No.** "No evidence exists that either defendant knew how to tie such knots. (SMF P 162; PSMF P 162.)" (Carnes 2003:18).
- **Yes.** Critics of the Carnes opinion note that John Ramsey had naval experience, that both he and Patsy were active sailors, and Burke Ramsey was in Scouts, all of which would have given them some expertise in knot-tying. Internet poster [Tricia](#) argues that the knot was a Prusik not that easily could have been tied by any of the Ramseys.

Where Did Cord Come From?

- **Never Sourced to Ramsey Home.** "sources for the...cord used in the crime were never located, nor sourced, to defendants' home." (Carnes 2003:10).
- **Stansport Cord.**
- 1. **Description.** The cord used was traced to Stansport; it comes in 50' and 100' lengths ([item #N-50](#)). According to Internet poster [heymom](#) it is also known as "Coghlan's Cord."
- 2. **Where Sold.** Authorities [determined](#) that this cord was sold at Boulder Army Store and [McGuckin's](#). Internet poster [BluesStrat](#) has provided a [picture](#) of similar cord taken at [McGuckin's](#) Hardware store by Frank Coffman (aka [Masked Man](#)).
- 3. **Purchased by Patsy?** Steve Thomas's book claimed that a receipt from [McGuckin's](#) for the exact amount of this particular type of cord was traced to the Ramseys. However, Coffman's photograph listed above suggested that the cord actually sold for a different price.
- **Parachute Cord.** In a November 25, 2006 48 Hours show, a brief view was provided of a report prepared by Tripp [DeMuth](#) summarizing the case evidence that would exculpate the parents. A screen capture (by Internet poster [WhyNut](#)) of the page shown on suggests that police may have been seeking "parachute cord" as this may have been the type of cord used for strangulation. Such cord looks [very different](#) from the cord seen in autopsy photos. The [DeMuth](#) report appears to have been prepared in 1997 (Internet poster [Candy](#) claims 1/15/97 ([11-26-2006 12:22 PM post](#)), but this date likely in reference to a DNA report that was perhaps included as an attachment to [DeMuth's](#) summary of the evidence to date). Authorities did not identify the cord as Stansport until [mid-1998](#).
- **American Girl Doll Cord.** Some believe that the cord came from an American Girl [doll](#) owned by JBR.
- 1. **American Girl Doll Cord Not a Match.** However, it is very clear from the autopsy [photos](#) and from the language used in the autopsy that the cord used for the wrist ties and the garrote was *flat* and not rounded and hence could not have come from the doll.
- 2. **American Girl Doll Cord Too Short.** Internet poster [Sue](#) also has [reported](#) that in comparing the length of the cord used for the garrote vs. the cord from one of her American Girl dolls, the latter cord would be too short unless 2 of them were tied together (but there is no evidence of the latter).