

What Neighbors Reported

JonBenét Ramsey Case Encyclopedia

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Secret Santa Visit

- **Carnes Account.** "On December 25, 1996, while playing at the home of a neighborhood friend, [JonBenet](#) told her friend's mother that "Santa Claus" was going to pay her a "special" visit after Christmas and that it was a secret. (SMF P 124; PSMF P 124.) The person who may have said this to [JonBenet](#) has never been identified. (SMF P 125; PSMF P 125.)" (Carnes 2003:101).
- **PMPT Account.** "Barbara Kostanick was the mother of a playmate of JBR's. She asserted: "The day before Christmas, [JonBenet](#) was at our house playing with Megan. The kids were talking about Santa, getting all excited. I asked [JonBenet](#) if she had visited Santa Claus yet. She said, "Oh, Santa was at our Christmas party the other night." Megan had seen Santa at the Pearl Street Mall, so we talked about that. Then [JonBenet](#) said, "Santa Claus promised that he would make a secret visit after Christmas." I thought she was confused. "Christmas is tonight," I told her. "And Santa will be coming tonight." "No, no" [JonBenet](#) insisted. "He said this would be after Christmas. And it's a secret" (Schiller 1999:38-39).
- **Rocky Mountain News Account.** [Reportedly](#), Patsy Ramsey has said she never heard [JonBenet](#) make the statement about Santa."
- **Forum Discussions.** Further discussion of Barbara Kostanick is [here](#).

Lights in Kitchen

- **Schiller Account.** "At about midnight, [Scott Gibbons](#), a neighbor, looked out his kitchen window toward the Ramseys' house and saw a light on in the kitchen area." (Schiller 1999:58).
- **Thomas Account.** Thomas states in his book that "A neighbor to the north would say that the butler kitchen lights were on around midnight and considered that unusual since it was the first time he had noticed that light being on in the Ramsey home... (Thomas 2000a:49). Although Thomas does not provide the name, Gibbons lived next door to the Ramseys to the immediate north ([map](#)); he would have had a direct view of the butler pantry ([diagram](#)).
- **Bluecrab Account.** According to Internet poster [Bluecrab](#) "Gibbons, from his own kitchen window, observed the "late-night" movement of people in the Ramsey kitchen who, according to Gibbons, seemed to be creeping around in the semi-darkness so as not to awaken others in the house. Gibbons also saw a light on in the butler's kitchen at about 12 midnight, the first time he had ever seen that light burning." No source is provided for this information.
- **Toltec Account.** Internet poster [Toltec](#) also states: The next door neighbor who witnessed the "strange" light in the kitchen around midnight said that it "looked like someone was moving around as not to wake anyone." No source is provided for this information.
- Schiller adds: "Sometime later, [Adam Fermeire](#), another neighbor, who was up watching TV, said he didn't notice anything strange through the window that faced the Ramseys' house"(Schiller 1999:58).
- Internet poster [Jolyanna](#) [noted](#) "in one of Patsy's interviews, she said that the family was not good about leaving lights off."

Missing Safety Light

- **Thomas Account.** "A resident directly to the south reported that the light was off in the southeast corner sunroom of the Ramsey home and thought that was odd because it was the only time she was aware in the past few years that it did not burn all night." (Thomas 2000a:49).
- **Diane Brumfitt**, another neighbor, told Detective Barry Hartkopp on December 31 that on Christmas night she did not see a light on at the southeast corner of the Ramseys' house, though there had been a safety light in that spot for years. She remembered thinking that it was unusual." Although Thomas does not name Brumfitt, the Brumfitt house is next door to the Ramseys to the immediate south ([map](#)).

Early Morning Scream

- **Carnes Account.** "A neighbor who lived across the street from defendants' home, however, reported that she heard a scream during the early morning of December 26, 1996. Experiments have demonstrated that the vent from the basement may have amplified the scream so that it could have been heard outside the house, but not three stories up, in defendants' bedroom. (SMF P 148; PSMF P 148)" (Carnes 2003:7).
- **Other Accounts.** *Daily Camera* has a very detailed [account](#) of the scream. Internet poster [Margoo](#) has assembled various accounts of this scream:
 - **Scream Initially Unreported.** Stanton originally did not report the scream when interviewed by police on December 26 because "she did not want to be involved in the case" (Thomas 2000a:78-79); "When asked why she had not come forward with this information right after the homicide when detectives had canvassed the neighborhood, Stanton said she was so shocked by [JonBenet's](#) death that she at first did not make any connection to the scream. Also, since none of the other neighbors had not mentioned to her about hearing a scream, she began to doubt she actually heard it. In fact, when she told her husband he said she had probably imagined it. It was Diane Brumfitt, a friend of Stanton's, who reported this incident to the Boulder Police after her conversation with Stanton" (Sauers 1998).
 - **Time of Scream.** Stanton "told the police on January 3 that she was certain she had heard a child's scream at about 2:00 A.M. on the night of the murder" (Schiller 1999a:76-77); the scream also has been alleged to have occurred between midnight and 2:00 AM (Thomas 2000a:78-79; Sauers 1998); "She did not look at the clock, but estimated the time at somewhere between 12:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. She stayed awake and listened for any other noises for five to ten minutes, but heard absolutely nothing after that no cars, no voices, no footsteps, so she eventually went back to sleep" (Sauers 1998).
 - **Nature of Scream.** "Stanton said there had been only one scream but it was horrifying. If it came from the child, she assumed the scream had awakened her parents" (Schiller 1999a:76-77); in Thomas's account, it was a "piercing scream" (Thomas 2000a:78-79); in the Bonita Papers, Stanton "was awakened by "one loud, incredible scream". She related that it was "obviously from a child" and that it lasted 3 to 5 seconds and then abruptly stopped" (Sauers 1998).
- **Was the Scream Real?**
 - **Thomas Account.** "More than a year later we would discover that Stanton also told the detective, "It may not have been an audible scream but rather the negative energy radiating from [JonBenet](#)." The detective returned to that odd point several times during the interview, but Stanton never again mentioned the "negative energy". She insisted that she heard an audible scream, so the detective did not include the "negative energy" comment in his report. A year later he was ordered to write an amended report" (Thomas 2000a:78-79).
 - **Stanton's Doubt.** It was [reported](#) in 2001 that "Armistead is unsurprised that former Ramsey neighbor Melody Stanton, who reported hearing a scream the night [JonBenet](#) died, now believes she heard it two nights before the murder -- if she heard one at all."
 - **No One Else Heard Scream.** Internet poster [why_nut](#) has observed: "It is a valid point to question why Melodie Stanton would claim to have heard such a horrible scream, when arguably her house was further away from the source than were the houses of Scott Gibbons and Diane Brumfitt. The sound from the east side duct would not have been broadcast along a pipe directly to Stanton's house and no other. Sound radiates in a circle through air. The Barnhills did not describe hearing it. Glenn Meyer is not known to have heard it. Obviously Gibbons (who was awake at the relevant time given his report of light in the house at the time) and Brumfitt have said nothing. And Burke's own bedroom window was right above the duct opening."
 - **Hypnagogia.** Internet poster [why_nut](#) has stated: "There is a phenomenon called hypnagogia which can involve audio hallucinations when drifting off to sleep. I have personal experience with this phenomenon, and it was initially quite confusing until I came to understand what was going on. Some people, when falling asleep or waking up, may have their sleep efforts disturbed by what seems to be a very real and attention-getting sound. (In my case, I have heard the telephone ring, the doorbell ring, or my name called, when none of these events have in fact happened.) It is possible that Melodie had one of these experiences. hearing what her brain manufactured as a scream while she was heading toward sleep. It would explain why nobody else at all claims to have heard this supposedly piercing scream."
- **Why Didn't Ramseys Hear Scream?** "[Smit is among those, however, who think the basement air vent opening toward the street — and no longer connected to anything in the boiler room — could have broadcast the scream toward houses across the street without the same scream being audible in the parents' bedroom on the third floor. A source close to the family said auditory tests performed by police during a second search of the home in the summer of 1997 determined that sound travels more easily from the basement out to the street than it does up through the home's four levels.](#)"

Metal Scraping Sound

- **Schiller's Account.** "Stanton's husband had heard a crashing sound – the sound of metal on concrete – sometime after the scream" (Schiller 1999a:531-532).

Dog That Didn't Bark

- **Thomas Account.** "A third neighbour, to the West, said that her dogs who barked at anyone in the alley, just as they did when the police came to question her, made no noise Wednesday night" (Thomas 2000a:49). [Note: Wednesday refers to the night of Christmas, i.e., the night JBR died]. Thomas does not provide the name of this neighbor, but Margaret Dillon lived across the alley to the immediate west of the Ramseys ([map](#)).