Spinning the McCanns

Off to CNN to talk with the excellent Portugese London correspondent Rita Jordao about the McCann coverage. Everyone hopes that communications between the family and the media will improve now that the redoubtable ex-BBC, ex-FCO man Clarence Mitchell is handling their public relations. Rita points out that the Portugese press has been just as scurrilous as the UK tabloids ever were. “Some of these so-called police sources named in the Portugese press could have just been cleaners in police stations” she says. But the British media are as prone to using un-named ‘sources’ to give rumours enough solidity to fill front pages. Take today’s Mirror or Sun which quote anonymous ‘sources’ who say the parents are prepared to take a lie detector test. It’s another fact-free line but if Clarence peddled it, why doesn’t he go on the record? Even Downing Street spin-doctors are now quotable and citable.

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