MEMO

TO: The Franklin Committee

FR: Jerry Lowe

DA: May 15, 1989

RE: Narrative from Kathy Sorenson, May 1, 1989

Following is the narrative you requested. Please keep in mind that I did not keep notes at the time and all of this is from memory. Also, I am only reporting what the children told me at the time. I make no claim to be totally accurate about anything I write here. I do wish to say that I have worked with children for many years and, in my opinion, the children were being truthful.

In early June, 1985, I received a phone call asking me to take two boys as foster children. Wally Webb, 16, and Kevin McChristian, 12, had run away from the Barbara and Jarrett Webb home in southern Washington County.

I had known of Wally and the Webb family for years. He had been a classmate of my daughter's in Fort Calhoun School until we moved to Blair in 1979. I had always heard that Wally was adopted as a small child and that he was some kind of relative of the Webb family. I don't know if that is correct.

I had also heard that the Webbs had adopted a sibling group of three sisters. I admired the family and was interested to learn they had adopted still another boy, Robert. I read with

interest an article in the Omaha World Herald about Mrs. Webb being honored as "mother of the year" or some such thing. The children were gathered around her in the picture accompanying the article and all looked idealic.

My older children had attended school with the Webbs' biological daughters, Annette and Glynnis. The family fascinated me. They were well dressed and well behaved. I didn't know them personally, but would observe them at school functions. The parents had an aloof and superior attitude. They were rather intimidating. Nobody knew them very well.

I agreed to take the two boys and went to the police station here in Blair to pick them up. Wally recognized me and both he and Kevin were outgoing and friendly. A police officer showed me the marks on Kevin's back which the boys said were from a beating given by one of the parents. The marks were walnut sized bruises all over his back. The officer had taken them to a doctor to be checked and no medical care was needed. I took the boys home with me.

During the time they were with our family, both boys talked about regular beatings they received from the Webbs. Each boy described the use of a black rubber "railroad prop" and drew pictures illustrating what it looked like. It was described as a strip of rubber - about 1" in diameter and maybe between 18 and 24 inches long with paddle shaped ends with holes in them. All the children in the home were beaten with this.

They also described living arrangements at the Webbs' split level home. The girls (Lisa, Tracy, Tasha, Keah McChristian and

Kristin - the Webbs' retarded biological daughter) all slept upstairs on the same level with the parents. The boys (Wally, Robert, Kevin and Ken McChristian) slept in the basement level. They were not allowed upstairs even to eat dinner unless the family had company. The girls served them downstairs. During warm months, they worked, ate and played outside all day.

Both boys talked about pornographic materials (I think magazines) in a box that was kept in the basement. The boys got into it and got in big trouble with Mr. Webb. This is probably not too unusual in a family, but is seemed to be extremely important to the boys that I know this.

They said they were not allowed to go to friends' homes or to have company. When the parents left, they would take the phones with them. School activities were not allowed. They were very isolated. Later, when the girls came to live with us, they verified all these reports.

Kevin was only with us 2-3 days before being moved to Omaha along with his brother, Ken, and his sister, Keah. They had been placed with the Webb family to be adopted. However, two years had passed and the adoption had not taken place. Because wards of the state cannot be spanked, Kevin's bruises were enough for the Nebraska Department of Social Services to remove them from the Webb home. I'm certain that their license was revoked at that time. The other children in the home were not removed because they were legally adopted.

Wally was with us until early August, 1985. During the time he was with us, he repeatedly expressed concern for Lisa. He said she had tried to run away and he was worried about her.

Wally was a tense and high strung individual. Eventually, he ran from our home and was sent to Geneva for evaluation. He was then placed at the Nebraska Children's Home and later ended up at Boys Town where he eventually graduated from high school. We received an announcement.

The Webb family took part in therapy with Wally and Shelly Gillam, a therapist at N.C.H. Shelly worked with all of the children at one time or another as they re-entered the system. The parents were not at all co-operative. In time they relinquished their parental rights to Wally. Of course, later, they did the same with all the adopted children.

In November, 1985, we got a call from social services asking us if we would take Lisa and Tracy Webb. I remember feeling relieved to know they had gotten out somehow. They moved in and, from the beginning, they were very talkative. They stayed with us until March, 1986. We received an adoptive placement and no longer had room for them. They moved to the home of Jerry and Pat Rothemeyer just a few blocks from us. They stayed in touch with us until they moved to Omaha (I can't remember when they left Blair.). We would sometimes hear from them by phone even after they went to Omaha.

These girls told the same stories as the boys about the way the house was operated. They described an elegant living room with white carpet and crystal, etc. The children were allowed in

that room only when invited. They also described the beatings with a railroad prop and added that they were often made to strip naked before being beaten. These girls were 14 and 16 at this time.

They worried about Robert. Supposedly, he fell down some stairs years before at Webbs and hurt his leg. Without medical attention, it left a lump when it healed. Then, Mrs. Webb would tell him how ugly it was and that nobody else would want him. The girls also said he had problems and talked to inanimate objects. The Webbs had never gotten him or the others therapy.

The girls had arrived at the Webb home when they were approximately 8 and 6. Their little sister, Tasha, came a little later from another foster home where the girls said she had good care. She was not yet 2. Lisa was indignant when telling how they tied that baby to the headboard of her bed with pantyhose so she couldn't pick at her blanket. Lisa heard her crying but was not allowed to go to her. They also tied this baby to a doorknob with an extension cord or had Lisa hold her down while they beat her with extension cords or the railroad prop.

Shortly after arriving there, sexual abuse (but not intercourse) began to happen with Lisa. She was never very explicit about it, but she did describe one day in detail during a lie detector test that was administered at the Nebraska State patrol Office in Omaha. I went with her and was allowed to observe the procedure through a viewing room window. I heard her talk about a time she was beaten by Mr. Webb. She was naked and was put on a bed and placed in some weird position that I didn't

quite understand. Then he "humped" her. She insisted on using that word because she wasn't comfortable with other terms suggested. She passed the test but the Washington County Attorney, Pat Tripp, refused to file charges. He thought she was a liar who could be very convincing.

One night I heard voices around midnight. When I went to check, I found Lisa wrapped in a sheet, entering my teenage son's bedroom. I "headed her off at the pass" and then realized that under the sheet she was wearing a very sheer, white teddy (fancy, very brief lingerie). When I asked where she got it, she told me Barbara Webb had given it to her. I told her I didn't know a mother in the world who would buy something like that for her 16 year old daughter. She told me they wanted her to have nice things.

The reason the girls ended up in foster care was that Lisa had run away from the Webb home. She had gotten a ride to her aunt's in Omaha and ended up at her maternal grandmother's apartment. They called Barbara Webb who decided to let Tracy and Tasha visit, also. This was out of character for Webbs who had never allowed contact, had taken away all mementoes and pictures the girls had of their birth family and talked badly about them. She let them stay overnight. When she returned to pick them up, she arrived with two police cars and said the relatives wouldn't give the girls back. According to the girls, this was not true.

The girls acted up at home and said they wouldn't stay and would just run again. Webbs finally called social services to have them get the girls. While they were waiting to be picked

up, they were made to clean the house - though it was already clean. Tasha was tired and falling asleep, but they would not allow her to go to bed, but made her sit on a cupboard and stay awake. They kept telling Lisa and Tracy they would never see Tasha again. This was very painful for the girls, but they still insisted on leaving. They thought if they told authorities what was happening, they would get Tasha out. Of course, nothing happened.

After they had been with us a while, they began to tell the story of the Webbs' 25th wedding anniversary party. Barbara's gown was designed and sewn for her by a designer in New York (I think) and was very expensive. The girls were junior bridesmaids and had lovely gowns. The party was outside at Webbs' home and was catered by Larry King. He also furnished limousines to carry the guests from the hiway up to the house because the lane is quite long. Barbara received a lovely diamond ring from Jarrett and they went on a cruise. Lisa would tell all the details and then ask, "How can they afford this on $40,000.00 per year (This is what Lisa insisted Jarrett made as a supervisor at OPPD)? This was very typical of how she would alert us to important information without having to explain every little thing. This was the first they brought up the extravagant lifestyle ---- and the first we heard of Larry King.

She told us he was a relative of Barbara. I think they said he was Barbara's cousin, but we have also heard somewhere that he is her half-brother. The girls often called him Uncle Larry or

Mr. King. They wanted us to know he was a very important and powerful man with a great deal of money.

They said he had a son named Prince for whom Lisa baby-sat on occasion - including on at least one trip that I recall. They also mentioned his wife, Aunt Alice, who they like a lot. Lisa said Larry treated her well and she always felt he liked her.

Lisa insisted she was a virgin. It was a fact she brought up frequently. She also claimed to be a straight A student. I believe she had been at one time, but certainly was not during her stay here in Blair. She was very bright and articulate. She wrote poetry and talked, talked, talked. It was usually a matter of dropping hints about parties, money spent, and other activities that they knew we would ask questions about. I believe this way she could feel like we were "guessing" and she wasn't actually betraying them in case they found out.

The girls both insinuated there was some sort of questionable connection between Webbs, King and the Fort Calhoun school superintendent, D. Finch, and principal, Kent Miller. They told of the two men being at their home often and the Webbs being at school frequently. When the Webbs went to school, they would be in the office for long periods of time and Mrs. Webb was always carrying her "big Gucci bag". Tracy said she thought there were pictures in the bag.

Lisa talked about a prostitute named Denise Mosley who was hospitalized from a beating by her pimp. She was a good friend of Barbara Webb and went to the Webb home to recuperate. This was a strange bit of information that didn't fit the image the

community saw of this family. Lisa also mentioned that Denise gained lots of weight so she wouldn't have to work for her pimp anymore. It is interesting to note that Lisa was gaining a lot of weight during the time she was telling me this.

She also talked about a prostitute bringing porn videos to the house and that Barbara Webb and this visitor would watch them. I got the impression that they were previewing them for someone. At the same time they told this, they said that Larry King had a movie studio in his house. We drew a connection whether it was intended or not. I believe this was the only safe way they had to leak much of the information they had.

They told us about the UPS truck that delivered piles of yellow envelopes to Webbs house. They said they were the size like you put pictures in. They claimed that these were piled high in Webbs' closet.

They talked about being at many parties at King's house on River Road and at another location. They were often taken to these parties at a moments notice. They said the parties were for very important people. Lisa said she could ruin a lot of people.

They talked about young men that looked like women being at the parties. They talked about long fingernails, nice legs, etc. Pictures were often being taken. Couples would go upstairs to the bedrooms. Once, Lisa tried to go up, but Jarrett stopped her and angrily warned her about it. Lisa said that often Prince would be allowed to roam around these parties as he wished. It seemed certain that sex was an important part of these parties.

Lisa talked about being flown to several cities to attend parties. Chicago, New York and (I think) Washington, D.C. were mentioned. She told of being put on display at a party in Chicago. She had to sit there naked while men were allowed with her but she was a virgin as was to remain so. She talked about men coming in with bodyguards and "credit card" I.D.s that were used to prove they were who they said they were. She once said, "I met George Bush". When we pushed for information, she said he was at one of these parties and Tracy added, "Let's just say he likes young boys." This was long before he was president. It seems like there were more exciting people to "lie" about if that's what they were doing.

They said Boys Town boys were hired by King to do lawn work and other things. After graduation, King set them up with apartments and cars. When I heard this, I contacted a friend, Julie Walters, who worked there. I asked her if she could check some of this out. She talked to Father Val Peter and he told her to check around. One prominent black woman she talked to told her that she grew up in Omaha and never heard of Larry King. She was gone for a couple years and when she returned, he was established. She and a man Julie talked to were somewhat suspicious but told Julie to be careful.

Julie met and interviewed Tracy and Lisa. She documented much of their story. This was later transcribed and is the Boys Town report everyone talks about. It was never intended to be an official Boys Town document.

The girls implied some involvement at Girls' Club in Omaha. They told us Jarrett and/or King were on the board. (I just can't remember some of this too clearly.)

They talked about a kid who had been shot and killed at a party in Omaha a short time before. They said that it wasn't an accident. They thought he had talked or tried to pull away.

Lisa talked about a private jet and kids being flown to other cities by King. Once she told about someone being taken to a new location because of wanting out or talking.

The girls were frightened of Webbs' attorney, Gary Randall. They said they saw him drive by on several occasions. This really scared them. They felt King's money would buy everybody off - it would be their word against these powerful adults. It was also traumatic for them knowing their little sister, Tasha, was still with the Webbs.

They told us Casey Randall, Gary's brother, was Larry's "maid." The Randalls are white. Casey is gay (rumored). This fits with some of the other stories we heard later of King's white "slaves".

Barbara Webb's mother, Helen Phillips/Caldwell, had a son, Shawn. They lived with Webbs at some point for a while. The girls said he was always trying to seduce Tracy. He had a suitcase filled with paraphernalia used for devil worship. He was waiting to get into the navy. The girls did not like him.

According to the girls, Helen Caldwell had hidden the railroad props when social service people came and then removed them from the home. Tasha told us this at a later date.

Kirstin and I talked to a Mrs. Jones who lives near Webbs. I think she told us she was a distant relative to Webbs or Washingtons (girls biological family name). I think she's the one who told us that Helen Phillips/Caldwell had been a prostitute. I also think she told us that Barbara Webb's father had an affair and Larry King was a child resulting from that affair. This would make them half brother and sister.

I talked to Shirley Armstead, the neighbor closest to Webbs. They have not gotten along for years. Armsteads are very fine people. I could see the fight as another way to keep people from getting too close. Wally and Kevin would go and visit them when Webbs left. They knew things were not good for the kids, but were afraid to get involved.

Once we were at the bus station in Omaha and Lisa pointed out a nicely dressed gentleman and said he was a pimp. When we asked how she knew, she said that they dress in code. She and Tracy also recognized some Boys Town boys and insisted on visiting with them. Where did they know them from?

Lisa often said the whole mess with King was political - Republican - and that he was very important and powerful. He knew important and famous people. Then she would say it was no use talking because it would be his word against hers.

The girls said they often went to school with bruises and would hide in order to dress for gym, etc. They told about a gym teacher making them undress and checking for marks. I don't know if anything was ever reported.

Name brand clothing became important to Lisa, Tracy and Wally. They all talked about shopping at Younkers and other expensive stores. They would refer to the "Bill Blass suit" or the "Gucci bag". I am raising a large family and I know what it costs to dress them. If, as Lisa said, Jarrett was making $40,000.00 per year, it would not be enough to buy these kinds of clothes. Appearance was everything.

Barbara Webb sang in a church choir and, they said, has a beautiful voice. Once in awhile, the (King and Webb) would sing together.

We passed notes from Lisa and Tracy to Tasha and Robert by sending them to school with other children. Tasha would answer. Robert was so frightened that he went directly to the office. That would not be an usual thing for a kid to do with that sort of problem.

Lisa ran up hundreds of dollars worth of phone bills while she was with us. I hadn't caught on to the fact that she was making long distance calls and once I was, I wasn't successful at controlling it. It might be interesting for you to check and see who she was in touch with at that time.

We were in Omaha one day and passed a fancy, new looking home. It was in a neighborhood where everything else was old. Tracy and Lisa said it belonged to Shirley Jordon. Tracy said that was where little boys go. They also talked about Cleopatra's - a business that King and Jordon were partners in.

A couple, Charles and Nella Johnson, showed up to visit the girls. They were from Offut, I think. They had called Nebr.

Children's Home to find a child to befriend for Christmas. They met Wally and learned of the girls from him. They seemed very nice, but I grew to be uncomfortable about them. One time the girls had been allowed to visit their grandmother, Opal Washington. While they were there, the Johnson's showed up and stayed a long while. They wanted to buy the girls some new clothes so they took them shopping. They bought them bras. It seemed a little unusual and the girls were very uncomfortable. They were just too, too interested in the kids. They asked a lot of questions. I guess they stayed involved with Wally for a long time.

The girls had been gone several months before we finally heard that Tasha and Robert had been removed from Webbs home. Tasha stayed with us for a short while and was then reunited with her sisters who were by that time living with biological relatives. It seemed the end to a long nightmare for the girls. But, nothing has been done.

Lisa has two babies. Tracy has one and is expecting her second. They see Tasha regularly. Lisa contacted me when each of the babies were born. About the time she had the first one, she called late at night and told me she was getting an apartment and was going to call Larry King and ask him to help her get furniture. I couldn't understand why she would want to contact him. I don't know if he helped her. Did she try to blackmail him? That's kind of the impression I got.

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Recently, I had a conversation with a young man who brought up the Larry King case. This young man is known to be gay and told me he knew several friends who had gotten involved with King. He told of them serving as "maids" at his home. He told of one who tried to sever his involvement and had to move out of the state to feel safe. He claimed that King bought memberships at Gold's Gym in Omaha for some of his boys so the would keep in shape. Supposedly, when they would go to the gym, the guy at the desk would call and report to King. The young men carried beepers and were at King's beck and call.

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Lisa and Tracy and the others had been raised to be refined. They did not talk "black". Much of what these kids knew and talked about, does not met the definition of "refined". There were many reasons I believed them, but how can we ever prove it. Good luck.