

Nebraska pedophile trial ends in coverup

by Alan R. Ogden

The barbarous conviction in Omaha June 21 of child sexual abuse victim Alisha Owen for perjury in her statements about her abusers, and the sentencing earlier in the week of Franklin Credit Union chief Larry King, a key figure in the child abuse ring, to 15 years for embezzlement, mark a new stage in efforts by the FBI and local prosecutors to complete the circle of a coverup. The persecution of Owen conveys the message that it is impossible to stop organized child exploitation. The King conviction was designed to divert attention away from a larger criminal network. Through plea bargaining, King was maneuvered through his embezzlement trial without any mention being made of the allegations that he ran a child prostitution ring from Omaha to Washington, D.C. Then, although King expected a short sentence, he was "sent up the river," to provide a cover for others.

Take Harold Andersen, former *Omaha World Herald* publisher, for example. Andersen has been accused more than once of being a pedophile. In testimony presented to a committee of the Nebraska Senate in 1990, young Paul Bonacci, who had come forward with the story of his treatment at the hands of the child abuse ring, termed Andersen "one of the sickest men I have ever been abused by," and described sadistic burnings which he said Andersen performed on groups of boys.

A fraudulent conviction

Owen, now 23, who had also named Andersen and other prominent Omahans as abusers, was convicted of eight counts of perjury after a four-week trial. Her sentencing is scheduled for July 8, and she faces up to \$200,000 in fines and 160 years in prison. Andersen, in a statement published in the *World Herald*, gloatingly termed this persecution of a young lady, who even the prosecution admits is an abuse victim, a "splendid example" of our system of justice. Andersen calls testimony about abuse of children "wreckage created by liars and vicious rumor-mongers."

Owen and Bonacci were indicted for perjury by a grand jury when they refused to recant their testimony before the Senate committee investigating criminal involvement by figures in the failed Franklin Credit Union. Lashing out at the committee chairman, Sen. Loran Schmit, Andersen termed the committee "out of control."

Not everyone agrees with Andersen, however. A whole array of child care workers, ministers, psychologists, and

specialists in combatting organized exploitation of children have stated that they believe Owen's testimony and similar, overlapping testimony by many other Nebraska children. Some of these specialists have campaigned for the launching of a new, reinvigorated Franklin investigation. Dr. Judianne Densen-Gerber of New York, an expert on satanic abuse who interviewed Bonacci twice, has stated that he is a reliable eyewitness to crimes including satanic abuse and murder, and is a valuable resource in efforts to combat cults and child kidnapers.

Dr. Densen-Gerber denounced the jailing of Bonacci and Owen, pointing out that never before had child abuse victims been charged for telling their story. Nebraska investigators have said for years that the FBI covers for the pedophile ring, which involves wealthy and politically powerful people and has political ties stretching all the way to the nation's capital.

Discovery by the defense stopped cold

Miss Owen was convicted on June 21, the day of the summer solstice, which satanists consider a high holiday. Incredibly, on the same day, state prosecutor Gerald Moran, who tried the cases against both Owen and Bonacci, announced that he was dropping the perjury case against Bonacci, and that federal perjury charges against Owen were also dropped. He explained this turnaround as "in the interests of justice," and pushed the line that all the evidence accumulated in the two-year Franklin Committee investigation was discredited by Owen's conviction.

"The truth is out," Moran said. "It is evident that allegations of sexual misconduct were a lie from start to finish."

In fact, the truth is not out. By dropping the charges against Bonacci, Moran rendered moot all the pending motions for orders for depositions which Bonacci's attorney John DeCamp had been filing for six months. On Moran's cue, the judge in Bonacci's case continually stalled on every motion DeCamp filed to subpoena witnesses and compel testimony. Terming Alisha Owen a "heroine," DeCamp said, "We should be jumping for joy that they've dropped the charges in Paul's case, except that we know they are doing it to make sure that the truth, with nothing held back, never comes out." An appearance in court by Bonacci was feared by the pedophiles. DeCamp received a death threat—the latest of many—which said, "Now that Alisha is finished, you had better get out of Nebraska, or you and your family will be in the cemetery."

Commenting on the Owen conviction, Omaha attorney Marc Delman, known for representing pornographers, gushed to reporters, "The system really works." Delman and other lawyers linked to the coverup are said to be preparing new lawsuits: against the company hired by the Senate to investigate abuse allegations, against prison officials who protected Owen from physical attack in jail, and others. The message conveyed to children still victimized is clear: "Don't talk, or you'll end up like Alisha."