

\*I/V Wendt, Karen Transcript Det. M. Poling

On November 13, 2009 I conducted a telephonic interview with Karen Wendt. The interview was recorded and the following is a transcription of the conversation. Please refer to the dss.file placed into evidence for complete details.

Det. Poling: Detective Poling.

Karen: Hello, this is Karen Wendt.

Det. Poling: Hey, did you verify all my information?

Karen: Well, I called this number so I did the best that I could.

Det. Poling: I could, oh gosh, I wish I could prove it another way.

Karen: Oh, no, that's fine.

Det. Poling: Okay.

Karen: I am googling you right now anyway so how about that?

Det. Poling: That's cool. I have no problem with that. I think I have one in there on a sex offense I worked. Did you see someone who got couple of life sentences that would be me?

Karen: You can go get him dude, go get him.

Det. Poling: Sex offender's, you bet.

Karen: Absolutely. So how can I help you sir?

Det. Poling: Well, what I am doing and again I would like to say is I am just gathering facts and what has happened so that the county attorney here can determine if there is criminal action in what Mr. Ray had done or if not? You already know that there is a civil issue and that does, that's separate than what I do. Of course, ours is criminal and we have to prove reckless and all those kinds of things. So what I would like to do is I would like to ask you questions just based on your knowledge of what maybe you have observed or hadn't observed and I look at this that you were a participant in 2008 at the Angel Valley Retreat. And I probably shouldn't say this, I had your name anyhow but a friend of yours sent me an email. And again, we would make contact on all our 2008 participants but just to let you know the person's name maybe that would help you out.

Karen: Okay.

Det. Poling: It's Paula Rigling. Are you mad?

Karen: Okay, no. I don't know why she would do that, she is my neighbor but that's okay.

Det. Poling: Well, she said your best friend is a follower and that you might have information so at that, it just piqued my concern but anyway I didn't want to get her in trouble. She was concerned with what happened there and actually she didn't even give your name. I don't think your name is on here. I figured it out from the 2008 list that I have. She says a friend attended it and I have figured it out that it was you so I hope you don't mind that because I think it was a Dream Team member that helped me out a lot too.

Karen: I wasn't the Dream Team member. I was the participant.

Det. Poling: And I didn't say Dream Team here. And as you said I have like 20 of these in front of me so I am getting names kind of mixed up a little bit. I know who you are and I know Paula cause I have the sheet in front of me. But anyhow that's how I was going through the old e-mails and then I picked that up and I looked at the 2008 list and we are calling people in that list also. Just so you know where I'm coming from.

Karen: Okay.

Det. Poling: But anyway again it just just to find out facts in reference to the events and if you don't mind, are you, did you just go to the 2008 Spiritual Warrior. Did you attend different functions that he had presented?

Karen: I have attended all of these functions.

Det. Poling: Oh, okay. Are you part of the World Wealth Society?

Karen: Yes, sir.

Det. Poling: Currently?

Karen: Yes, sir.

Det. Poling: Okay. Well you haven't dropped out and you are still following him and that's fine and that's what I am

Karen: That word following kind of

Det. Poling: Bad word?

Karen: Well, to me, you know I mean I

Det. Poling: Not in the cult sense.

Karen: Well, I learn from all different kinds of aspects of people you know and so I don't follow, in my opinion I don't follow people. I (Inaudible) from what I want to learn and what I want to do and I found the people that can teach me the way that I can hear.

Det. Poling: I understand and I apologize for using that.

Karen: No, that's fine.

Det. Poling: The following, I just meant that the group of people that attend his functions and it's generic not that your sheep or something like that, that's not what I meant.

Karen: Okay.

Det. Poling: I hope you didn't take it like that too.

Karen: No, not at all.

Det. Poling: And he does, he has good things, he teaches people.

Karen: I think so

Det. Poling: Again I agree with some of that stuff and what he is trying to accomplish and he does good so I am not here to judge him at all. But what I was wondering is during the Spiritual Warrior 2008, did you know what to expect prior to going into the sweat lodge? Have you ever been to these sweat lodges before?

Karen: No sir.

Det. Poling: Okay. Did he explain to you what happens inside of a sweat lodge?

Karen: To my best recollection I mean, yeah I think so I mean it was like over a year ago and yeah I mean he told us they were going to go in there and what was going to happen and yes, I think so.

Det. Poling: Okay.

Karen: I am going to just sit here and kind of recall back and

Det. Poling: Did you see anyone after when you left the lodge? Do you recall what round you left in if you did leave it during a round?

Karen: I left once during the middle - I do not remember which round and then I went back in and then I stayed for the duration of it.

Det. Poling: Okay. Did you, on your way out at the end of it, did you observe anyone getting sick or ill?

Karen: No, I never personally saw anybody getting sick or ill. I mean we were kind of laying around and drinking water but you know I'm just kind of in my own new world.

Det. Poling: Do you remember a Dream Team member by the name of Barb or Barbara Waters?

Karen: She was a participant.

Det. Poling: Okay. Was she injured at all that you know of?

Karen: I don't know that she was injured. I don't know, I mean we just heard of stories afterward. I never saw Barb. So, did I see her getting sick or anything no, I know that, I never saw Barbara. I mean I just heard stories afterwards so I don't think.

Det. Poling: And that's fine.

Karen: Yeah, I never saw her.

Det. Poling: And I don't want you to assume because someone says I was just wondering if you had to see that and the reason why I asked that question is I talked to Barb and she told me that in 2008, she didn't say she got sick. But she said she was probably out of the group the one that had the worst reaction and that she was better within the hour or two.

Karen: And I can only I know that you know we were in a sweat lodge and we were awake, we were in own our little world and then we sat there and drank water. I mean I can only remember me, you know when I was like did I talk to anybody afterwards I don't even really because you are in your own little world, I mean you are in own, in your own little thinking and feeling and then you go and take a shower and then you go to dinner and so you know I think I even ate by myself that night.

Det. Poling: Okay. And in 2008, I believe that the Vision Quest occurred prior to the sweat.

Karen: Yes.

Det. Poling: Okay. During your Vision Quest, were you able to drink or eat anything during those times?

Karen: No, Mmm mmm.

Det. Poling: And did anyone come around and bring water or check on you during that time?

Karen: No, they didn't bring water. I mean there were people that kind of walked I mean I don't know if they were our people or anything. It was a very, very pleasant experience for me. So I mean I saw some people walking around I don't know that anyone was

checking on me. You know it wasn't far from the place in the lodging, just across the creek. I could hear everything that people were saying and stuff. I mean I had a very, very pleasant experience.

Det. Poling: Okay. And that's good.

Karen: Yeah. Because I am not a camper or anything so me being outside overnight was like you know, but it was really one of the most pleasant things I've ever done which surprised me.

Det. Poling: That's good.

Karen: Yeah, I really thought, that's great. You know camping's not bad.

Det. Poling: And again like I said, James, he does, he did good for people and whatever his teachings are you know people have overcome things and I am not again, I am not (Inaudible)

Karen: I understand that

Det. Poling: The thing I am concerned about is for one if they fast and they don't drink water for 36 hours, what is told and is there any follow-up after the Vision Quest on hydrating.

Karen: Well in the very first thing and I (Inaudible) what he did for us, he told us that to drink lots of water he gained some salt and so you are going to need your water in the end. And he told us you know what was going to be going on. I think he told us that we were going to be fasting. I don't think I knew, I don't know if I knew about a sweat lodge at that time or not but he said drink lots of water, take your salt, you are going to need your water. Drink lots of water and all throughout the time he told us to drink water. So but I am a big water drinker anyway, I am a huge water drinker, so I did. I mean I was really I had water with me all the time.

Det. Poling: So, going into it, did you feel you were hydrated?

Karen: Well, I personally did. But like I said I mean I drink a minimum of two to four liters a day anyway so I mean I drink lots of water.

Det. Poling: And that's what I ask people because if they hadn't hydrated and they felt they have got sick in it that would be a contributing factor to maybe why they got sick. So if you hydrated and you felt hydrated and you apparently went through the ordeal but you didn't get sick, you didn't vomit or anything like that.

Karen: I never vomited, I never did anything. I was, kind of, I don't know how to describe it. I mean you're lightheaded and those kinds of things, you know, you feel a little messed up type thing. But I have never gotten sick, I never threw up but I left. You

know there was one time where I said, I am out of here, I am done and I left. A lot of our people left. So I can't speak for this last time but I know we left.

Det. Poling: Okay. And that's good.

Karen: Yeah.

Det. Poling: No problem there. Have you ever attended a sweat before this? I may have asked that question.

Karen: Yeah, no, I have never been.

Det. Poling: The reason I asked that question is I was going to compare his sweat to a previous sweat that you might have been on because there are different types and what I am being told is that his are may be a little more intense which, that's fine too.

Karen: No, I have never been to, that was my first one.

Det. Poling: Okay. How about going into it? Did you feel safe going into the sweat lodge especially not having been in one before?

Karen: Yes.

Det. Poling: Did anyone explain any of the dangers to you prior to going in? And when I referred to that I am referring to maybe did anyone tell you might go unconscious and if you did go unconscious what to do?

Karen: No, I don't remember that.

Det. Poling: Okay. Was there any nurse or doctor that if someone was having a problem they were told this is what you do in case of emergency?

Karen: I have no idea. I don't know that.

Det. Poling: Okay. Were you told anything?

Karen: I was a little nervous and so what I heard and what I remember hearing I don't have any idea.

Det. Poling: That's fine. Did you recall anything about leaving the lodge in between rounds? Were you told feel free to leave to round in between or wait until the round is over to exit?

Karen: Well, yeah, he did tell us to wait till the round was over to exit but he did tell all of us, you can leave at anytime but he always pushes you to push yourself past your limits. I mean I guess that's not the right way of putting it but you know if it's like

checking with yourself and even and maybe because I, that's what I work on in my life is listening to myself, you know trusting myself, listening to myself. And so I never felt that there was, I never felt that I was not able to leave, ever.

Det. Poling: So you would have felt comfortable leaving in the middle of the rounds is what I am hearing? And I am not putting words, I am just saying.

Karen: Actually, I think one lady left (Inaudible) and I have no idea of this lady's name. But I think she left the when they were lowering the thing and she crawled out and went out but I don't remember her name or anything.

Det. Poling: Would that be towards the middle or the end of the sweat?

Karen: I think it was towards the end and I don't, you know what, you have understand we are kind of like

Det. Poling: And I know, you're in a different uhm

Karen: You are in an alternate state kind of. I hate saying it like that but you are. I mean it's like I am trying to remember facts and I don't really I can't recall them plus it was a little over year ago. It was not a bad experience for me and it was hot. I did leave, I didn't feel guilty about leaving. I went back in and at that time I you know I laid down, which I do remember one time he had said don't sit up during it. But the first, before I left I was sitting up and I was like okay, okay I gotta get out and I left and I went back in and I laid down but uhm,

Det. Poling: Overall it sounds like you had a good experience.

Karen: I did I mean I am really and I am really trying to remember facts which they all blur into together but (Inaudible) a bad experience.

Det. Poling: And that's okay.

Karen: I mean I hate that so many of my friends who were hurt this time or got sick, I mean I know some of the people but it really wasn't a bad experience. Actually on the Vision Quest that's probably one of the most restful and peaceful things that I have done. I understand why people go camping now. And I know it's it sounds corny but you know I am a city girl, I don't do that kind of stuff. And I found that very, I found it was great for me.

Det. Poling: Were you in the company of a friend or family members in the sweat?

Karen: No, not much. I mean my friends from James Ray were in there. I mean I didn't even go with anybody, is that what you are asking.

Det. Poling: I was wondering, did you have a friend that might have been out of it for quite a long period of time and the reason why I ask this is sometimes I don't know if this makes sense but what I am thinking here is 36 hours if someone is out for 36 hours it's almost like comatose state and then I think death can occur in that. And if some people are out for a lengthy period of time, I think they are close to, they could be close to death but they come back. Their bodies can, it can reverse the effect I don't know if that makes sense to you.

Karen: To be on the Vision Quest part?

Det. Poling: No, I mean during a sweat lodge and this is my own opinion, not my own opinion but from what I understand about heat and deprivation of oxygen and things like that your body goes into hyperthermia and that is when your body gets to a temperature and things start happening, that's when illusion start going on. You're dehydrated, and the lack of oxygen your body starts to shut down. And I believe that effect is reversible if you are able to get help to where your body gets cooled down and things are reversed. The problem is when they don't get reversed what can happen is death can occur. So people that are out of it for a lengthy period of time and what I have seen is that people have damage later on in life because when brain and this is just my own opinion again and not a statement of facts but when the brain loses brain-cells sometimes they are not coming back so there might be some long term effects I don't know, I am not a doctor. But if someone is out of it, I was wondering if you had any friends that might have been out of it for a lengthy period of time.

Karen: I don't, I don't think so. I know my roommates and I were fine. I don't believe we had any of that at ours, I really don't.

Det. Poling: Okay and it may not. Your heat may not have been as intense as, definitely not as intense as 2009.

Karen: And so I can't speak to that one either, I don't know how many rocks we put on (Inaudible)

Det. Poling: I am not (Inaudible) I'm just looking for their precautions, what was done, was anything, if people were sick in 2008 did they change anything to make 2009 a more pleasant experience and

Karen: Right.

Det. Poling: If someone got sick in 2008 and they needed medical attention did they provide medical stuff in 2009? Those were the things I am trying to figure out and to find out if there is safety place so that it would be more enjoyable. For instance, when people are passing out and need an attention do they get the proper attention they need?

Karen: Right.



Det. Poling: That's all I am looking for. Okay, are you?

Karen: And I am not going to, you know I don't feel guilty but it's like I am not aware of any of that because I was in my own, I was doing my own thing which is kind of what I went there for was to get quiet being by myself or in myself I guess you know because I am always really busy and doing this and that and workaholic type of thing and so that's kind of what I went there for was solitude and reflection and that's what I got out of it.

Det. Poling: Okay, that's fine.

Karen: We do a lot of things in silence a lot of times and sometimes when I go to James Ray events or whatever you know it's like I like that quietness.

Det. Poling: Can I ask you a weird question.

Karen: Sure.

Det. Poling: Did you cut your hair?

Karen: Of course I did.

Det. Poling: Okay. I just, I didn't understand I guess that's getting rid of, I don't know I guess that is you get rid of, you were able to move on I guess, I don't know what that means.

Karen: I know I can tell you what it did for me if you want.

Det. Poling: That would work.

Karen: I thought it would be a very easy thing because I have a short hair and it was not I mean I am really, really, really dependent, realized how much I depended on my hair and my clothes and everything as a part of me. I had no idea. I had no idea (inaudible) me by complete shock. So when I shaved my head what that did was, I mean this really took me by complete shock and it helped me really focus on me and I never I mean I have short hair what is my hair going to do for my appearance, right. Or the way that I feel that I look about myself and man it was powerful, it was powerful.

Det. Poling: It's a powerful thing you know your appearance is there, you know.

Karen: You know there is, there is a thing that goes around and often we did it last year where they asked people to shave their head in support of cancer. And so many people have now stated especially here, is like everybody should shave their hair once in their life really because it gets you and what it did for me and I understood what they were saying in this and what they did was to raise money for cancer and stuff is it really helps you reflect on the inside. If I want to look pretty, the pretty had to come from inside me

and not my hair and not my clothes or anything like that. You know and I mean it was a great experience for me and I think everybody should experience it at least once and I have short hair, you might go, oh you have short hair, it's no big deal for you, like you have no idea.

Det. Poling: Oh yes.

Karen: Yeah, it had a huge impact on me and because I have quite short curly hair I could do whatever well. When I shaved it and you know I hadn't shaved gray hair and I was like whoa. So it really helped me look inside me and then I remember from back and since (Inaudible) I am single but I never had so many people asking me out.

Det. Poling: That's cool.

Karen: Because it had to come from me, inside me. I had, it was genuine. It was really all me and I took that as a great experience.

Det. Poling: Well, that's cool.

Karen: And I really thought it was a good experience.

Det. Poling: Good. Is there anything that you would change that would make a safer environment that you can think of if you could change it?

Karen: You mean after this sweat lodge?

Det. Poling: Yeah, yeah. What would you change?

Karen: I don't, you know it's so hard for me because I don't know what happened there. I mean I am hearing so many things I am like I can't, there are so many hateful things going around now that it's just really, it really a shame. But you have to learn from everything that's happening. So I don't know I mean I guess have somebody there. I don't know why, I have heard that people, especially from people on the Internet, I am trying not to look.

Det. Poling: I wouldn't even pay attention to that stuff.

Karen: We were afraid to leave; I mean we were free to leave anytime, anytime. I mean I left so I mean I can't say to make it more available for people to leave because we were free to leave anytime.

Det. Poling: Right.

Karen: We were never told we couldn't leave.

Det. Poling: And it's okay.

Karen: I didn't have any problem.

Det. Poling: Do you know? It's okay.

Karen: Well, I mean I think, I think yes, of course, people got hurt, there needs to be change. What need to be doing it? I guess have medical staff on there because people got hurt. We didn't have any of that at mine. I didn't have any problems from the Vision Quest so

Det. Poling: Well, this would be a good question then, did you, have you, is that the only sweat of James Rays you participated in was in 2008?

Karen: Yes.

Det. Poling: Okay. And again I asked that question because in 2005 there were other incidents. So I am trying to figure out if A) he toned it down from 2005 to 2008 and then 2009 he went back or what. So I have to get people that have been to all of them and

Karen: I've only been to that one. I wanted to go to one and help but my work didn't allow it so I have only been to one.

Det. Poling: Did you go to the one in Hawaii where you broke through the cinder block or the uh (Inaudible)

Karen: (Inaudible)

Det. Poling: Did you break through?

Karen: No sir, I didn't

Det. Poling: And did you break, did you break your wrist?

Karen: No, I didn't break my wrist.

Det. Poling: And you are okay that's good. Did anyone else get injured at that event?

Karen: Yeah, I think there were a few people who broke their arms.

Det. Poling: And was there medical, that's okay. I was going to ask you if there was medical staff there during that event.

Karen: I think there was but don't get me wrong, because like I said I felt like a very egocentric person. I'm there for me, you know?

Det. Poling: Absolutely. And that's okay.

Karen: (Inaudible) there for me, you know?

Det. Poling: And I am not calling you and I really am not here so that you can beg on James Ray, I want to hear both sides.

Karen: Yeah, I understand.

Det. Poling: That's good.

Karen: And I have had great experiences. Have I been challenged? Absolutely. I don't and this is one thing about me. I don't follow James Ray blindly and he and I have had talks about that but he tells us all the time don't follow me blindly, this is for you, go out and check your own stuff and do your own things. And that's what I had that's my, that's what I want to learn, it's to trust myself more and that's what I have been working on all these things. And I think I have gotten that, a lot of that I have made a progress in that because what I have learned not only from James but from some of the other people that I listen to and read their books and things and that's what I have done I have gotten stronger in myself.

Det. Poling: Which it sounds like a really good thing.

Karen: For me, it is.

Det. Poling: It would be for anyone.

Karen: For me it really is. I mean that's what I have thought when I work on. And that's the one thing that I would like about James too is that he exposes us to all different kinds of I hate calling them teachers but to me their teachers.

Det. Poling: Instructors or something?

Karen: Instructors, you know we read different books, or he would have a reading list, and he would read different books, it's a different, I attend different seminars. I want to be the best that I can be, not from what somebody tells me to be but what I feel inside me.

Det. Poling: That's a good thing. Okay and I do, I appreciate talking today and I know it's not fun especially talking to a cop or about things and you know no one wants bad things to happen, I understand that.

Karen: I mean I know yeah, absolutely, police and audits, that just makes a little thing go up your back.

Det. Poling: And I understand that. I would not want to be talked to by an officer either, you know it's not a comfortable thing so I understand.

Karen: Well, I can only tell you from what happened to me you know and

Det. Poling: Alright, and that's how I would want.

Karen: All I can do.

Det. Poling: That's all I want. I don't want what other people are saying to you and bringing in things into the equation. You know if there was something that you felt was dangerous and you really felt that then you would tell me, if not, then you don't, that's okay. It's all good.

Karen: I left my sweat lodge, I left. So I mean it was a good experience. It was, did it push me? Absolutely. I mean for me to camp so that was a great experience for me. So I had a very good experience. It was very powerful for me, it was very moving, I loved shaving my head, freaked me out. I said it was all very good.

Det. Poling: Good. That was good. No problems and I appreciate you talking today too. And if there is anything that you want to know feel free to ask me, I will tell you what I can and then if something comes up and you have my e-mail address now or

Karen: Yes, I have your e-mail.

Det. Poling: So feel free to ask a question it's okay, it's all good.

Karen: Well, I just want everybody to be, you know, however it ends up. You know I mean I don't believe that James ever means harm to anybody but I wasn't there so I can't say anything that happened. And I appreciate you understanding because I wasn't there and I am still getting contacted by media and stuff and I am like, I wasn't there people, I don't know anything. I wasn't there so thank you for sending me the e-mail.

Det. Poling: Not a problem. I appreciate your help today and you have a good weekend.

Karen: Thank you very much.

Det. Poling: You take your care, Karen.

Karen: Yeah. Bye-bye.

Det. Poling: Bye now.

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