THEY HAVE NO CRIME....
I HAVE NO SON !!!!
THE FIRST TWO YEARS

My story really begins on Sept. 3, 1982; we had attended a Valley High school football game to watch our older son play. Johnny asked if he could buy some popcorn, as he walked down the bleachers toward the concession stand, a policeman approached him. They visited briefly, my husband then went down and asked Johnny to stand near the playing field, so we could see him from where we were sitting. Johnny obeyed and stood by the railing, the policeman had followed him and continued their conversation.

A few moments later, I looked down and Johnny was no longer by the railing. Again, my husband went down to locate him, he discovered him under the bleachers in the darkness talking to the policeman once again. John brought Johnny up to sit with us. A short time later the game was over and on the way out of the stadium, Johnny pointed to the policeman and said... “He was really nice, maybe I should think about being a policeman when I grow up.” We went home. I thought at the time this was very unusual behavior on the part of the policeman and as we left the stadium, I turned around and memorized his face. This incident became very important in the days to come.

The following day, Saturday, September 4, 1982, Johnny went to a movie in the afternoon with his friend Mark. That evening, my daughter and her boyfriend came from college, our older son was also home, I fixed a nice dinner. It was so nice to have all of them home at the same time. We
had what I call “the last supper.” I remember how much fun the kids had that night, joking with each other, laughing, and enjoying being together. About nine thirty p.m., Johnny jumped up saying “I am going to bed, I have to do the paper route in the morning before we go to the lake”. Before saying good night to everyone, he asked “Can I do my paper route alone tomorrow morning”? His Dad said, “I guess it would be okay.”. I immediately said “No, your Dad will go with you like always, it is so dark at six a.m. and I don’t want you out on the street alone.” Johnny said “good night”, gave everyone a hug and went upstairs to bed. A few moments later, Johnny was back in the kitchen standing next to me as I was cleaning up after dinner. He gave me another hug and said “Mom, I will always love you… you are the best “! He then went to the stairs, turned looked at me, smiled, and then disappeared up the stairs. This was to be the last time I would see my son for over fourteen years. (5,293) days.

Early on September 5, 1982, our phone rang, I looked at the clock and it was one thirty a.m. My husband took the call saying, “Yes, alright, yes, alright, okay” and then hung up. I asked him who it was and he replied, “It was a wrong number.” I remember thinking it was very odd; we had been receiving calls like this every Sunday morning at the same time... for the past four weeks. Never before had my husband spoken to anyone until this call but he always said they were just “hang up calls.”

A few hours later, our phone started ringing again, the neighbors were saying they did not receive their Sunday paper and wanted to know if Johnny was running late. I got up to check if Johnny had overslept, he was not in his room, I went downstairs and noticed Johnny’s wagon was also gone. My husband said “he is probably running late. I will go help him. Why don’t you start breakfast, then we can leave for the lake when we are finished.” It was a beautiful Labor Day weekend and we had plans to go boating at the lake. I began to fix breakfast and suddenly, I felt something was very wrong. I walked to the refrigerator and put all of the things back, which I had taken out for breakfast and sat at the kitchen table.

John, Johnny’s father burst through the door yelling “JOHNNY IS GONE... HIS WAGON IS SITTING TWO BLOCKS AWAY FULL OF NEWSPAPER, CALL THE POLICE SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO HIM “. By then the phone was ringing off the hook, everyone wanted their newspapers, I told the neighbors something had happened to Johnny, the papers would be delivered as soon as possible but we had an emergency. One man said, “We just want our paper”. I immediately called the West Des Moines Police Dept. While a neighbor helped my husband deliver the papers. We waited 45 minutes for the police to arrive (we live 10 blocks from the police station)! I telephoned our daughter at college and our other son at his job, asking each of them to come home immediately. I knew it was serious and I wanted my family all together.
I then telephoned Johnny’s, District Manager at the Des Moines Register to ask for the names of the other boys, picking up newspapers at the corner paper drop. She came right to the house after hearing what had happened. I made phone calls to the other news carriers, they each told me a man was seen talking to Johnny, he was driving a blue car and stopped him for directions, as he walked away towards the corner to pick up his bundles of papers. Johnny continued to walk with our little dog, Gretchen towards the corner and did not at any time go over to the car. The driver then made a U-turn in the street and followed Johnny back to the corner, where the other children were also folding newspapers. Soon an attorney, John Rossi arrived to pick up newspapers for his children, he also talked to the driver of the blue car.

Mike Seskis, a paper carrier, 16 yrs old at the time told me, “Johnny said quietly this guy is weird, something is wrong with him, I am scared and am going home.” Johnny started to walk away; suddenly the driver of the blue car started the engine, backed up and drove away from the scene. The attorney had left while Mike remained on the corner. Mike reported “just before the driver pulled away ... he flicked the dome light on and off in his car 3 times.” Just then, Mike saw a man come out from between two houses and follow Johnny down the street, around the corner and out of sight. He watched until he saw Johnny turn the corner out of sight. The second man followed Johnny around the corner, he also said “I heard your dog growl, but nothing else seemed wrong at the time’ and continued folding his papers.

At that moment, the two Bosen brothers were approaching the area, also pulling their wagon on the way to pick up their newspapers. They reported seeing Johnny sitting on his wagon slumped over, but the boys were in a hurry and went on. Seconds later, all of the witness’s heard the slamming of a car door, screeching of tires and the car leave the area at a high rate of speed, running the stop sign and traveling North on 42nd street towards the Interstate. Another neighbor, P.J. Smith also heard the car door slam, looked out his bedroom window as the car pulled away. All that was left on the sidewalk was Johnny’s wagon still full of newspapers... Johnny was gone.

The police finally arrived to make out a missing persons report. I had collected all this information from witness’s before they arrived. I answered all the entire questions; the police officer then looked at me and said, “Has your son ever run away before?” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing, after sharing all of the information from the witness’s.... how could he even ask such a question. I replied “my son has never run away.... not in the past and not now”! The officer acted unconcerned as if this was normal, just another runaway in his mind. He left the house and we heard nothing from the police department for the next eight hours.
While waiting for the police to contact us again, I telephoned friends and relatives all over Des Moines area to let them know what happened, giving them the description of the car, asking for help in a search. We started searching the immediate neighborhood and then expanded the search. Large groups of people were beginning to form, helping us search parks, near the rivers, any secluded area, which might be a crime scene. I stayed near the phone handling all the calls, which were coming in and telephoning police departments in other areas. I soon discovered no one outside our area knew Johnny was missing. The West Des Moines Police had not sent out any report to other areas. Approximately three thirty p.m., two detectives returned to the house and requested a picture of Johnny, asked a few questions and left.

I called the parents of the witnesses again, they told me two policemen came to their home, listened to the report but had not brought a clip board or a piece of paper to write anything down. These parents were very upset with the police, they knew nothing was being done to help us locate Johnny and reported it to me.

Soon the word began to spread that a child in West Des Moines was missing and reporters appeared on the front porch wanting pictures and a story. We handed out photos of Johnny, telling them we would appreciate it if they would publicize his picture and ask for any information possible. The police meanwhile were not doing anything... They were using their legal right at that time to not take any action on the case for 72 hours. It would be two years before a law was passed in Iowa to force the police to act immediately when a child is missing for whatever reason. Johnny was clearly kidnapped and we could not get any type of police investigative action for 72 hours. We had to get friends, relatives and neighbors to form search parties to look for Johnny.

The police chief Orval Cooney instructed us not to talk to the media but to sit in our house and not to even participate on searches. We of course did not listen to him, continued to search throughout the entire night all wooded areas, along country roads, ditches, any place a crime might have taken place. We feared the worst and kept our eyes trained to look for a body. The evening news carried Johnny's pictures and our phone was ringing constantly. It was complete bedlam at the house. We were in shock that the police were treating this so lightly and we could not get any kind of help for Johnny.

As darkness fell, it started to rain, our relatives soon began arriving during the long night to help in any way they possibly could and to show support. Most of them lived several hours from Des Moines. We simply could not believe something like this could happen two blocks from our home. Johnny had never gone on the paper route alone, his father always went with him, until that one morning. Why! Johnny's older brother had gotten up early to go to work and knocked on Johnny's door to be sure he was up. Johnny had always come in to wake his Dad to do the route together. We do not know to this day why he went by himself. It all happened so quickly, our son was gone, we knew he had been kidnapped from the reports of the five witnesses and
here we are alone, the police would not help. What were we going to do?

The phone rang again, it was a representative of the Des Moines Register, Johnny’s employer… they wanted us to find a replacement for him to deliver the papers. There was very little consideration from the Des Moines Register. At this point, I lost my temper and called the editor James Gannon, reported to him what had happened to our son and how the circulation department of the paper had treated us. I then told him exactly what he could do with their typewriters, press and paper. The lack of response by the police and Des Moines Register was about more than I could take. Mr. Gannon apparently made some calls and called back shortly to tell me that the newspaper was going to offer a reward of $5,000 for information.

No one slept the first night, as all of the relatives gathered to show support, I said “we are going to leave the porch light on… one of my children isn’t home yet.” The porch light was to remain on for eleven years. The next day, more than 1,000 people arrived at the police department volunteering to search for Johnny on foot. A call was placed to Governor Robert Ray to ask for use of the National Guard helicopters for an aerial search. His response was “you have to prove it is life and death, then there would be a fee of $750 per hour to use the helicopters…. And a fee to be paid to the pilots”. It was simple… we did not have the money.

As the people searched throughout the day, the police were not helpful in any way in organizing the search or directing it. It was a “do it yourself project”. One search team after another would return to the house to give us a report. The report was the same at each search site… the police chief would arrive use a loud speaker and say to the crowd “Go home folks, the kid is probably just a damn runaway.” I was stunned and couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Why was this man behaving this way, was he drunk or just stupid? My little boy was gone; he had done nothing to anyone. Johnny was only twelve years old.

Our Police Chief, Orval Cooney had a reputation as the town drunk, only a few months before the kidnapping; he had beaten a man in a local bar while intoxicated. It was quite a news item for a while, but Mayor George Mills allowed the man to keep his job. There had been a full-scale investigation of the West Des Moines Police Department after twenty of his own officers filed reports of negligence, among other charges. It was evident that we were working with a police department incapable or unwilling to handle a crime of this magnitude.

After hearing these reports from the search teams, I made another trip to the police station. Orval Cooney and Gene Meyer, Dept. of Criminal Investigation were sitting in the chief’s office, when I arrived at the station. I confronted the Chief about his remarks to the search teams, Gene Meyer interrupted by saying “We do not consider Johnny to be in danger, until you (his parents) prove his life is in danger.” I asked them if they had begun any type of investigation on the vehicle, as one witness had given a partial license plate number, the name of the county and state on the plate. Both the Chief and
Meyer reported they were not going to make a decision to do a motor vehicle license search for at least another day. The Chief then said, “We have never had a case like this, we aren’t sure what to do.” I replied “I don’t fault you for this, but please call other police departments for assistance.” The chief told me he would not do that because they wanted to handle it themselves!

Again, I couldn’t believe what I was hearing…. My son’s life was at stake and the Police Chief had an ego problem. I returned home, frustrated, angry and made the decision to call the media. I scheduled the first of what was to be hundreds of television interviews. It was Sept. 7th and the police continued to wait another day to begin an investigation. I later learned from three Sheriff’s departments in neighboring counties... they had sent men to assist in the search for Johnny, and were told by the Chief “go home, we do not want your help.” He was refusing any type of help for our son…. What is wrong with his man? Is he a lunatic or just stupid or was he protecting someone?

During the first TV interview, I made a “plea for my son’s life, to beg his kidnappers to contact us and we would meet their demands, we wanted our son and loved him very much”. I also included a special message to Johnny to remember he is loved and try to stay strong until we find you. Following the news showing the interview, every nut in the city began calling our home and driving by our house. Although there were some people, who were very sympathetic, others were cruel and said, “your son is dead and begin laughing, then hang up the phone”. Some called to criticize me for not crying on television.

The most unbelievable expressions of humanity began to surface. Due to the interviews, we began to receive leads and would call the police to report them. Each time, the police would say “it is probably nothing.” It was evident by their lack of professionalism that they were not investigating this case. I had no choice but to become my own investigator, checking out all these calls one by one. Many of them were a dead end but everything had to be checked, just in case it might yield a clue. The ground searches continued for one more day… people then had to go back to their jobs, the long holiday weekend was over. Our relatives had to also return to their own lives. The reality began to sink in “Johnny was gone and no one but his family was going to do anything about it.”

A few other business’s contributed to a reward fund which had been started to find Johnny, which had been started by the Des Moines Register, we added $40,000, the equity in our home, to the $20,000 already being offered. We stipulated our portion of the reward was “for the safe return of Johnny”.

I knew it was necessary to create a missing persons poster to send them out. But I didn’t know how to begin this project. I assumed the police departments assisted parents with this... they informed me that wasn’t
their job. There were no Missing Children’s organizations to turn to at this time. Many were created following Johnny’s kidnapping. The FBI was nowhere in sight... why were they not involved? Kidnapping is a Federal Crime.... if you are wealthy enough, apparently we weren’t!

My heart was heavy, I felt, I was going to completely fall apart but knew if I did, there would be no one to help Johnny, certainly not the local law enforcement. Our family had never experienced a violent crime, nor had any problems with the police in our lives. This was all new to us, it seemed there was nowhere to turn.

The media did continue each day to call us, doing interviews with updates, new pleas to the kidnappers and reports on the growing reward fund. The media became more instrumental in our case than the police department. At least they were helping us to circulate Johnny’s picture locally and to other areas of the state.

I made another trip to the police department to plead with the police chief, while I was at the station, I overheard an officer say “Why does that stupid family leave the porch light on for a kid that will never come home”. The officer saw me standing there.... Why such cruel remarks? But this was just the beginning as I was about to discover.

By Sept. 8th, the police now wanted to ask questions. They asked if we had threatening phone calls, anything unusual happen in the week prior to Johnny’s kidnapping. I reported to them the phone calls in the middle of the night prior to the kidnapping and about the policeman at the football game on 9/3/82... I was told neither was important. This concerned me, as the man at the football game resembled the description from witness’s of the driver of the blue car, kidnapping Johnny. However, the police chief would not pursue the matter and told me to forget it.

During this most tragic time of our lives, suddenly we were forced to be investigators, fund raisers, do interviews on television, and continue to keep our jobs and our sanity. How are we going to do it? I had no training in these things.

The Police Chief kept telling me that the FBI would not be entering the case. I decided to call the local FBI office and request an agent to come to my home. They sent Special Agents Ed Mall and David Oxler. When they arrived they sat down at the table and told me they would not be entering the case because, in their words “WE HAVE NO CRIME.” I responded, “I have no son, he was kidnapped, you have all the information from the witness’s, kidnapping is a Federal Crime.” The agents informed me the Police Chief, Orval Cooney had briefed them telling them there was no need for them to enter the case... That he could handle the situation. I could not believe what was happening. It seemed the world had gone completely nuts. A little boy was kidnapped off the street and the FBI would not enter the case. I grew up watching the FBI Story with Effram Ziembalist
Jr. and really believed that they entered kidnap cases and set up a command post in the homes of the families. NOT TRUE.... It is nothing like TV... not one thing in this case would I consider to be a real investigation.

It seemed all hope was gone, then someone called and suggested about Child Find in New York, I called them and arranged to have all the material sent for registration for Johnny. I sent the check for the initial fee and in the following months, continued to receive requests for more money, we had finally over the months sent several hundred dollars. Each time, Child Find would tell us that it was for printing and distribution costs on our son’s case. And that just as soon as Johnny’s picture was placed in their national book it would be distributed all over the country. Unfortunately, they overestimated their ability to help or their budget, because it was over eighteen months before my son’s picture finally was printed in their book and distributed....it to dentist’s offices and doctors offices etc. There was no way Johnny would be in a dentist’s office to have his teeth cleaned and be recognized. It was a complete waste of our money and our time. At that time their organization was set up to help victims of “parental kidnapping.”

I was scheduled to be at a school board meeting to discuss the kidnapping. At that time, we took turns covering the telephone at home. The police instructed us to tape record phone calls and let them know where we were at all times. I reported to them, I was attending the meeting. The police then telephoned John at home, saying they wanted to see him at the police station right away to go over material on car license plates. They sent the Police Chief and Gene Meyer to the house to cover the phone while John was gone. I happened to come home early and discovered both of these men searching our home without a search warrant....I asked them to leave my home. I never received an apology for their conduct or deception.

The following day... I made a trip to the police department....The Police Chief said “you people are so straight, we couldn’t find anything wrong or illegal about you when we looked through your house.” He sounded positively disappointed. I then told him that the case needed more concentrated investigation, he replied “They were actually going to put the case on the back burner because it was becoming very quiet and nothing was happening....the phones just aren’t ringing.”

It was only three weeks after the kidnapping at that point. I took care of that immediately, upon returning home, I called a number of friends and asked each of them if they would call four friends, asking each to call the Police Chief and demand to know what was being done in the Gosch kidnapping case. Soon the police were flooded with calls and they could not put the case on any back burner.... It had suddenly come “alive” once again.
The week of September 24th, a small article appeared in the Des Moines Register, an attempted abduction of two young children in a small town just outside of Des Moines. The man arrested was from Omaha, Neb. and was connected to a pornography ring. I took the newspaper clipping to the Police Chief, Orval Cooney, asking him to investigate and call the Police Chief in Omaha, Robert Wadman. Our Police Chief refused saying, “I don’t have a feel for this so I am not going to do anything.” I then went to the FBI office and was told once again “they did not intend to enter the case, because the Police Chief told them he didn’t need their help.” In desperation, I called a press conference and raised “holy hell” releasing the information that neither the police nor the FBI would investigate my son’s kidnapping.

Within four days of my press conference, I received my first of many death threats. A male voice on the phone said “Stop making waves or you will die.” What I did not realize at the time was that I was knocking on the back door of what became the Franklin Credit Union Investigation conducted by the Nebraska Legislature. John DeCamp, a long-time Nebraska State senator detailed it in a book, The Franklin Cover-Up on “child abuse, Satanism and murder, which went far beyond the confines of Nebraska. Police Chief Wadman from Nebraska was implicated. It is no wonder our police chief would not investigate this matter. I was so close to discovering what happened to my son within three weeks after he was taken, they had to find some way to stop me… The death threat and the refusal of authorities to investigate severely limited me in trying to find my child.

The West Des Moines Police Chief was considered an authority in Johnny’s case and was being invited to speak at a number of civic organization meetings. It was reported to me that the Orval Cooney began spreading a story that Johnny was not our child but adopted and ran away to find his parents. I had to produce his birth certificate, publish it in the newspaper to prove Johnny was my son. This is ludicrous behavior for professional law enforcement official was hurting our chances of having public support to locate our son. I could not understand why he would behave in this manner when a child’s life was at stake. Looking back on it today, it is perfectly clear why the Police Chief did not pursue an active investigation to find Johnny. You will ready why in later chapters of this book.

It became clear that we would receive more help from a private detective than the police. I began collecting names of investigators to be interviewed. I had also contacted a number of national TV shows - 60 Minutes, 20/20, Mike Douglas, Phil Donahue, Nightline programs to tell them what was happening here. They were very nice but told me to submit the story in writing with clippings. This was their policy but it takes longer and I didn’t know who to send material to …at each of the program.

I made the decision to tell the police we were hiring a private detective. When I told Police Chief Cooney, he became outraged. He began yelling and threatening me. He shouted: “You have no right to bring in an outsider!” I replied, “You cannot tell me what I can or cannot do to find my son. I will hire
a private detective...If you have a problem with that ... stick it up your ass!” I walked out of the police station and returned home. I made arrangements to travel to Omaha Nebraska the following day to interview a private detective.

At four p.m., the same day our doorbell rang. There stood the Police Captain, Bob Rushing, with his hat in his hand, saying the Police Chief now wanted us to take a polygraph test. He told me: “They would try make an effort to keep it out of the press, so as not to embarrass us.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing! My son is gone. They handled the case negligently from the beginning and now just after I announced hiring a private investigator.... they were demanding a polygraph test. That conversation ended by my asking the Captain to stay, while I called the media and arranged a press conference to announce; We were being harassed by the police, simply because we had planned to hire a private detective. He could not stand the heat and left before the press arrived. I did the interview and received many calls of support from people in the community.

The following day, I traveled to Omaha, Nebraska to interview and hire Dennis Whalen a private investigator. He was recommended to me because he had solved a case of a missing child in Carter Lake, Iowa. He located Todd Bequette who had been kidnapped, held for two years by a man who repeatedly sexually abused him. In order to pay the retainer fee, I used all the cash value in my life insurance policies and money in savings for the children’s education. We made all the arrangements with Dennis to come to Des Moines and begin work within a few days.

I returned home that evening, the phone rang. It was Good Morning America asking us to be on their show October 11, 1982. I accepted and made plans to travel to New York. This was to be the first of over 50 network appearances through the years. It was wonderful to have this opportunity to show our son’s picture on Good Morning America to millions of people. I lived in hope that there would be one solid lead, which would give us the answer. It would help us solve the case and find Johnny.

On October 9th, the night before I was to leave for New York, I received a phone call from a man asking for $10,000 ransom. I notified the West Des Moines, who again said “it is probably nothing”. This call was not investigated by any law enforcement.

The following morning, I left for New York and the Good Morning America program. We arrived in the city, as I rode in the taxi, I kept looking out the window thinking Johnny could have been taken to a large city such as New York. The hotel accommodations were very nice but I kept wondering why they allowed all of the horses along Central Park to “poop” all over the place. This was the first trip to New York and I was somewhat surprised by the “aroma”. It is called the “city that never sleeps”, I felt fortunate to have this opportunity. That evening, I did find a little time to unwind, as it had been non-stop stress from the moment Johnny was kidnapped, I was operating on very little sleep. I went down stairs in the hotel and had dinner just observing all the people who were no doubt living a “normal life”.... something, which
was taken from me. I no longer had anything that resembled a normal life.

The following morning, I got up, got ready to go to the studio, there was no way I could even think about eating food. As I was waiting in the lobby for the limo to arrive, a woman sailed in from the dining room, introducing herself as Kristin Cole Brown from Child Find in New York. She was to appear on the program with me. I kept my distance from her as I could remember all of the checks I had written to Child Find and my son’s picture had still not appeared in their book. I knew that Child Find primarily worked on “parental kidnappings” not “stranger” so perhaps that is why they were not effective in Johnny’s case. However they continued to ask for money until I shut off the spigot.

Kristin was just too bubbly for the occasion, she chirped in the limo about how her make up would look on TV that day. I remember thinking at the time, my son is gone, I am turning inside out here and this woman is concerned about her eyeliner. However, when we got to the studio and we were called into the make up room, they had to do an “overhaul on Kristin and the make up artist said to me “your make up is beautiful Mrs. Gosch, what products do you use? We don’t have to add a thing … you are ready to go on the air. “ I hadn’t done anything special… just got ready for the day as though I were going to work.

Finally, I was escorted to the studio and introduced to David Hartman. He is a very tall man, extended his hand to shake mine and made me feel welcome immediately. We were seated on stage; the soundmen were installing microphones on us. David continued in a very kind sensitive manner to ask more details about Johnny, the case and asked to see the photo I brought with me. He took it in his hands shaking his head, looked back up at me and said, “I am so sorry this happened to your son.” The show began, I was able to give the entire description of the kidnapping, show Johnny’s picture and answering questions that David Hartman asked concerning the case.

Kristin Cole Brown was then brought on stage with us and she gave information to the public about Child Find and all they do for parents of missing children. I did not get another opportunity to set the record straight about the difference between parental and stranger kidnappings….and that this organization primarily worked on parental. They may have changed their format by now.

As I walked out of the studio, I decided to not take the limo back to the hotel. Instead I walked and about twenty people came up to me, who had seen the program. They were so kind, telling me they were praying for my son. It was surprising to me in a city that large that people would take the time to share their kind comments with me.

When I returned home from New York, the local media reported on the Good Morning America appearance…they gave it good exposure. A number of people called saying they were happy we had the opportunity to show Johnny’s picture on national TV and hoped it would bring results. The down side of this (and there seems to always be a down side to everything) some in
the city called to say, “You looked too good on the show, your make up, your outfit ... how can you be suffering?” Two friends who owned beauty shops also called to tell me the topic of discussion in the shops for a few days was “How Noreen Gosch looked on TV ... she looked too good ... she can’t be suffering ... she is in this for just the publicity”.

Those that gossiped and criticized me did not understand that I would always present my “best foot forward”, in case my son would see the show. I wanted him to see a positive reinforcement, to hear that his mother was working very hard to find him and would not give up. On a network show you are only given a few precious minutes to tell your story. I wasn’t going to waste it by sitting there crying and being unable to speak, nor would I go in looking like I just crawled out of bed.

On October 13, 1982, I spent the day with the private detective. My husband left for a business trip, my mother, older son and private detective were all talking over details of the case. Shortly before, midnight the same man, who had called two days earlier with a ransom demand, called again and “told me to drive to a phone booth at the corner of Hickman Road and Merle Hay Road, that I would find the ransom demand there. He told me, I only had a short time to comply with the demand or I would not see my son again.” My private detective told me to grab a pair of gloves to handle the note and off we went. I didn’t know if there would actually be a note or if it was a hoax but I had to check. When I arrived at the phone booth, I got out of the car, slid my gloved hand across the top of the booth and sure enough there was a note. I ran back to the car, got in and we could see the note was addressed to Mrs. Gosch. I drove home and called the FBI after reading the instructions.

I first called the West Des Moines Police; they of course said it was nothing. I then called FBI demanding an agent come to my home, reporting we had received a ransom demand. Agent David Oxler, at first refused to come to the house, saying “it is probably nothing!” I explained what the note contained and he finally agreed to come to the house. When he arrived, he took one look at the note and said, “this does not pertain to Johnny and we are not going to do anything”. How could he say that... the note was addressed to me and they talked about Johnny in the note? I couldn’t believe or accept what he was saying, THE FBI REFUSING TO ACT ON A RANSOM DEMAND.

I couldn’t think of anything else to do so I grabbed a piece of paper and “asked Agent Oxler to sign it, date it and state that he was refusing to act on this ransom demand and we would all sign as witness’s, my mother, Dennis Whalen (private detective), my older son and myself”. Then if my son were killed due to his refusal to act, I would file charges against the FBI for negligence.

Agent Oxler then said “if you put it that way, we will check it out but you will have to drive your own car to the area, we will not put one of our agents in to drive it.” It was a very bad section of town, there had been a gang murder there just ten days prior. And now the FBI would not send anyone with me for protection nor allow our private detective to go along. The private
detective told Agent Oxler "he was going with me regardless!"

Just then the phone rang ... I turned on the tape recorder and answered the call. It was the police chief, Orval Cooney, asking for Agent Oxler. I handed him the phone, after they finished talking he walked back to the table and sat down. I noticed the tape recorder was still running, I had forgotten to shut it off. So I reached over and turned it off. Agent Oxler got up and threatened to arrest me for tape-recording their conversation. I told, "it was not intentional and I had been instructed by the police record every incoming call." He wouldn't listen, grabbed me, shoving me into a wall, taking the tape recording out of the machine and put it in his pocket. To this day, we have never recovered it, I am sure it contained off color remarks about me that they did not want me to hear.

At 1:45 a.m. the FBI called and told me to proceed over to the address in the ransom note and make the money drop. The result of the ransom demand was a disaster the police & FBI waited so long to get into formation. Just before I left the house, the man called back to tell me time was up... we had waited too long! Nevertheless, I followed instructions drove to the location, dropped the bag on the corner but the man never surfaced to pick it up. Dennis Whalen and I returned home to wait the rest of the night. The despair that followed this episode was unbelievable. I had always believed that the FBI would handle these cases that they would respond to a ransom demand. I was so disappointed with every aspect of this case and how it was being handled. The true victim here was Johnny and no one was doing their job.

The only conclusion, I can arrive at for survival in this time and place, is the fact that from the beginning; as I was plagued with people placing obstacles before me. I literally had to fight to go over, around or through them for Johnny's life. I had never been through anything like this in my life... having to fight for everything. There was no time for "pity parties" or falling apart even though I felt so badly. Johnny was the victim and I kept that focus. My heart actually hurt; there was actual pain in my chest, which never went away, day or night. The pain remained with me for four years, three months and twenty-six days.

Years later, I began working with the Polk County Victims Association, giving talks for their support group meetings. I learned that all of the other victims, who had lost a loved one to violent crime, also shared the same physical pain in their heart area that I had experienced. The counselors at the Association explained to me that it is very common for victim survivors to have the pain in the heart region, lasting from the onset of the crime up to ten years. They were very interested in the actual time my pain was present before waking up one morning to discover it had vanished. I looked it up in my daily journal and I had recorded the day, I woke up without my pain. Which was four years, three months and twenty-six days after Johnny was kidnapped.

The following day, the story was all over the media in Des Moines, television, radio, and newspaper that there was a ransom demand. During the interviews I shared with the public that the FBI refused to help on that night. The usual public uproar took place, which amounted to dozens of phone calls
to our home once again. The phone rang every fifteen minutes day and night. Some people were praying for me and others wanted to criticize. The law enforcement then began to harass our private detectives, refusing to work with them.

The police forced our investigators to come in to the department, saying they would not accept their P.I. licenses because they were from the state of Nebraska. This caused us a delay. Our investigators had to find a P.I. in the state of Iowa who would issue them a license under his agency. This was also another outlay of money, which we could ill afford. The detectives were able to finally begin working. The first morning they were doing a “stake out” of the kidnap scene to determine times, lighting, and distance of the cars from the witnesses. The West Des Moines police drove up and once again forced our detectives to come into the station to explain what they were doing on the street corner at 5:56 a.m. This was a continued type of harassment by the West Des Moines police. They were not willing to investigate the kidnapping but it seemed they were not about to let us do it either.

THE BIG “DO IT YOURSELF” PROJECT

I continued with our massive flyer program and to finance all of this and private detectives, it was suggested that we sell “WORLDS FINEST CANDY BARS”, with Johnny’s name on the candy wrapper. Many children’s groups have used this kind of fundraiser at some time to raise money. In the history of this company it was reported to me that The Johnny Gosch Foundation sold more candy bars than any other group in the United States. Over a three year period, we sold 400,000 candy bars, which we received fifty cents profit per bar. That did raise $200,000 to help pay for private investigators and the additional expenses, which accompany a kidnapping and search for a missing child.

I chose November 12, 1982, Johnny’s 13th birthday, to have our first meeting of the Johnny Gosch Foundation. Twenty volunteers came, some were old friends, but many new acquaintances that were dedicated to helping us find Johnny and change the system for the positive. We elected a board of directors, Bill Hornbostel, an attorney to file for incorporation/ non-profit tax-exempt status and Bob Duitch volunteered his services as an accountant to handle all money incoming and outgoing. We kept all of this as a separate entity. John and I had absolutely nothing to do with the finances other than to work with all the volunteers at the fundraisers. The board of directors managed the Foundation.

Word began to spread throughout the country via the media ... JOHNNY GOSCH’S PARENTS ARE SELLING CHOCOLATE TO RAISE MONEY TO FIND THEIR CHILD. For a time it became quite a human-interest story, but for a very touching reason. A reporter for the Washington Post wrote a very compelling story about a set of parents “selling chocolate to save their
son.” We had candy bars in 80 stores; weekly volunteers from the organization would pick up the money and replenish the candy supply. Candy bars were being sold in other parts of Iowa, as Illinois and Minnesota. Many people realized that we were average working people, who could not withstand the expense of an ongoing private investigation alone. I borrowed all the money I could from my life insurance cash value, our families helped as much as they could. Our resources could only go so far but it was imperative, we had to keep the private investigation going otherwise we would never know what happened to Johnny.

I made a decision to go public with our case for several reasons:

1) To find Johnny
2) Educate parents throughout the country.
3) Bring positive change in legislation forcing police to treat “stranger” kidnap cases with priority.
4) To give other parents hope – to convey the idea of “not giving up on your missing child”.
5) To help other parents cope with the tragic loss of their child.

When it was first suggested that we sell candy bars and now Johnny Gosch bumper stickers…. I was upset to think that in this country of wealth and waste a parent would have to do this in order to recover their kidnapped child. KIDNAPPING IS AGAINST THE LAW. BUT WHERE WAS THE LAW? IT IS A FEDERAL CRIME!

It is difficult to convey sometimes to others how desperate a parent feels when they do not receive the assistance from law enforcement. In our community, it was as though people found this to be unpleasant and preferred not to talk about it. A West Des Moines City Councilman told me “I was embarrassing the city on national TV!” I was treated as “modern day leper” for some time. No one thought it could happen to them, that the Johnny Gosch case was an isolated incident. Readers Digest reported in an article that there are as many as 100,000 children kidnapped in the United States each year. What makes people in this area think it couldn’t happen to them?

Due to all the publicity, I received the biggest break of the entire case; Ken Wooden called our home after reading articles about Johnny and wanted to visit with me. He had been at Iowa State University doing a week of being a “guest professor”. He suggested Perkins Restaurant near the airport. When I arrived Mr. Wooden and Professor Colson of Iowa State University were waiting at a table. We sat down to talk, when suddenly Mr. Wooden asked me “Do you really want your son back or is this all an act?” I was so stunned, I just stood up and said, “I do not have time to talk with you” and prepared to leave. He quickly said Professor Colson “I like her…. She has spunk.”

He asked me to sit back down and explained that he had worked for ABC and CBS as an investigative reporter. He done a great deal of research on
pedophiles, how they molest and kill children. He also wrote the "Children of Jonestown" the story of Guyana and the massacre that took place. He had been following the progress of the case through the media as well as many others in the country. He told me "IT WAS TIME TO ENTER THE NATIONAL ARENA!" He said "Johnny is probably no longer in the state of Iowa." He also said he wanted to see how strong and determined I was....

He asked me to go forward with an awareness program, telling the truth of what is happening to our children and to fight for better legislation on both a state and federal level. He said he would help me every step of the way, share information with our private detective and me to make an impact in this country. He reported to us the grim statistics of other families destroyed by this tragedy and crime. The divorces and the suicides which so common among the parents. He had asked me to speak for so many of the children, whose parents could not do it.

The day I met Ken Wooden was one of the best days I had experienced since the kidnapping. A man from outside of Iowa, who actually cared enough about our son to really give me some "hands on advice."

He said, "it might get rough, the public and press will doubt you, laugh at you and try to discredit you, because the truth you will bring out will be difficult to accept." Then he looked at me and said "are you willing to fight for your son?" I agreed to do whatever was necessary in order to find my son. I had no idea of the roller coaster ride that was ahead of me. All Ken warned me about and then some was about to begin. I have never had to fight so hard for anything in my life up to this point.

It was through Ken, I learned about the organized aspect of these kidnappings and how children were used. Organizations such as NAMBLA.....North American Man Boy Love Association, The Rene Guyeon Society and others. The first targets sex with little boys, the second sex with little girls. Both their motto's seem be "sex before eight or it is too late." It was very difficult for a time, to cope with this new information. It made me feel ill knowing someone has taken my son to be used in the same way. But when I would weaken, I would look at Johnny's picture and remind myself "HE IS THE VICTIM, THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO CRUMBLE."

Ken took time to teach me how to write a press release, which would be, noticed when it was sent to a radio or television station or program. He did not forget about Johnny after he left Des Moines, he continued to work very closely with me. Both in an effort to find Johnny but to also achieve progress in this country. He had been a turning point in this case and in my life.

Ken sent me the names of every producer to contact on the entire big network TV shows. I began the long process of letter writing and sending packages of materials to these producers, in hopes of being selected for the shows. Within six months, I began receiving invitations to appear on the talk shows, magazine shows and special productions.

One day, as I neared the elevator in the building where I worked, a man approached, shook hands with me and said "Hello, I am Terry Branstad
and I am running for Governor”. I replied, “Hi, I am Noreen Gosch, my son was kidnapped and I need to talk to you.” With that I hopped on the elevator with him and his press secretary/ campaign manager. I told him, I needed help and had ideas for legislation. He said to his press secretary... “make a note for me to get in touch with Noreen after the election.” Terry Branstad was elected Governor of Iowa and he didn’t forget what he said in the elevator that day. Soon after the election was over and he got settled in office, I was able to schedule an appointment with him to discuss legislation changes concerning not only Johnny’s case but also abused children needed for the state of Iowa.

The next big event that shaped our investigation on a national level was being chosen for an HBO Documentary Movie called “Missing.” Dave Bell Associates was the filming company hired to do the project. The filming was to take place during Thanksgiving week in November of 1982. The producer Terry Meurer Dunn, the film crew, and soundmen... the entire entourage came to West Des Moines. This was a documentary film and we were to play ourselves. They did use local people to reenact the kidnapping of Johnny. Our interview lasted five straight hours, it was exhausting... They showed how hard we worked to raise money to find him and also the never-ending faith we displayed that someday we would see Johnny again.

They filmed all types of day-to-day activities. The producers and crew planned to stay with us through the “first Thanksgiving without Johnny,” showing how we as a family coped.

The producer wanted to film me shopping for the Thanksgiving turkey at the local HyVee grocery store. They chose the busiest time of the day, with many customers in the store. So much controversy, speculation and publicity had taken place, that I felt as though I were on public display. I grabbed for a 24-pound turkey, hoisted it up to the cart, it slipped out of my hands and bounced along the floor, drawing even more attention to the scene. At that point, there was nothing to do but have a good “laugh”.... something I probably needed.....comic relief. The film crew, producers and I stood in the aisle at the busy grocery store laughing till tears ran down our cheeks. I am sure the other customers thought we had lost our minds.

They recreated the crime scene, interviewed many people in the Des Moines area, including the Police Chief Orval Cooney. Cooney stated in his interview “the Gosch’s are damn stupid people”. The producer Terry Dunn was so stunned the police chief would utter such a crude comment, that she gave us the “sound bite” on a tape to prove his remark. I couldn’t understand why a public official, one who was supposed to be looking for my son would say such a hurtful remark about us.

The HBO film “Missing” aired for the first time in June 1983. Many people having missing children began to contact The Johnny Gosch Foundation for help after seeing the film. They wanted to know how to begin a search on their own cases. By going public with our case, it was the beginning of an increased awareness for families. Many who will search indefinitely for their children and probably, will never have an answer. It began a movement in this
country, which was heard from coast to coast. An awareness of the danger to children falling prey to pedophiles, either in a sexual abuse situation within their community or being kidnapped from their hometowns all across the country.

Today you cannot pick up a paper anywhere in the country without seeing an article of someone sexually abusing a child. Seldom do you see an article about kidnapped children. Yet it continues to go on between stranger and parental kidnappings numbers over a half a million per year. An added situation today is the throw away children which add another half a million to the number.

Our organization had become very active in fund raising and awareness programs. I was asked to be a speaker at many schools. I developed a comprehensive program with films to be shown to parents and children, called "IN DEFENSE OF CHILDREN". Ken Wooden assisted with information and statistics, I could share in my talks. During my programs, I gave parents the profile of a pedophile enabling them to see more clearly those who might be abusing children in their communities. In many communities, following one of my programs there would be arrests of pedophiles, which had been operating in secrecy for many years. This program was very necessary and also enabled us to qualify for the non-profit classification as we were providing a very needed service with in our state for all children.

Our detectives advised us to find a good composite artist to do a sketch of the kidnapper. I called the Des Moines Art Center; they were very kind and recommended a fine young artist. He worked with each of the witness’s separately, then all together to create and refine the composite picture of the suspect. This is another area, which Police failed to complete in the investigation. As soon as the composite drawing was finished, I again called another press conference to release the picture. As soon as our sketch was released, the police then did a composite drawing also and it resembled a “MR. POTATOHEAD!” Even the witnesses said it did not look like the driver of the car, the suspect. We added this picture to our missing persons posters, which have numbered into the millions sent out with across the country.

I decided to make an appeal to the Des Moines Register editor … James Gannon, only to make someone aware of things the police were not doing in the investigation. I had made repeated efforts to gain cooperation between the police and our detectives from the beginning of the case. They simply would not.

The result of my letter pleading for help was another disaster. Mr. Gannon published it on the front page of the paper and allowed the police to dissect it in print and make crude remarks. The letter was never intended to be used for publicity … only as a plea for help for my little boy. It was another blow to our family, the impact left me shell shocked, unable to sleep, severe loss of weight because I simply could not eat under all of the stress.

I was afraid to open up the newspaper each morning, because I didn’t know who would be attacking us next. Nor could I understand “why!” I kept
asking this question daily how could they do this and why ... what was their motives? Why would Gannon, the editor of the Des Moines Register encourage and assist in the attacks against parents to find their child. Today, we know many important people in business and in government are themselves pedophiles or for one reason or another are sympathetic to those who are. Pedophiles can be in any walk of life, male or female teachers, coaches, scout leaders, politicians and police at all levels.

I felt a deep commitment to establish new legislation regarding the “period of time” in which the police wait in a missing person case. Most often they wait 72 hours as they did in Johnny’s case. This is valuable precious time in the missing person’s life. I gathered all of my materials on legislation for my appointment with Governor Terry Branstad. I worked with an attorney, telling him of the ideas I had for a bill, he helped me write it in the proper language. When I presented all of my ideas and suggestions, I was so pleased to discover Governor Branstad, a kind man who listened. He had an open mind and said, “He would read it over and do what he could to help.” We did meet again later with a revised edition of the bill after the Governor and his legislative staff had an opportunity to look it over. It was decided that a bill would be drafted..... it was to be called THE JOHNNY GOSCH BILL.

At first, no one wanted to sponsor the bill... they all felt it would be too upsetting to law enforcement, but I continued to talk to both Senators and Representatives, eventually Vic Stueland, from my hometown, who knew me from the time I was a baby, sponsored the bill in the House. A short time later the Senate sponsored the bill.

I was then informed by well meaning people, that if I really wanted the bill to be passed, I would have to wine and dine the legislators. Just as the lobbyists do. I refused to do it that way; I had a full time job, a part time job and the search for my son... I didn’t have time or money to wine and dine legislator. I did another press release to this effect. This launched the most hectic schedule for the next full year, as the Johnny Gosch Bill did not make it out of committee the first year and we would have to begin all over again on the following session of 1983/ 1984.

Speaking engagement invitations were coming every part of the state of Iowa and other states. I was booked every night of the week and weekends. My program, “In Defense Of Children” gives a very in depth presentation, on prevention but also the Profile of a Pedophile and how they operate in a community. Not only for the kidnapped child but the many who are molested and the cases never resolved. I worked closely with our private detective and Ken Wooden in gathering material for this project.

Each morning, I would go to work, as soon as I got off work, I would be on the road to present another program. I was blessed to have volunteers in the Johnny Gosch Foundation, who took turns traveling with me and handling the literature table. I had a number of brochures and information for the parents to take home to educate their children on safety. We had huge operating costs the first few years, due to the amount of printing for all our literature
and legislation material. So we always carried a supply of Worlds Finest Candy Bars to sell at the programs to help defray the cost of printing.

Then came a devastating blow in April 1983. Another boy from West Des Moines was reported kidnapped. Immediately the FBI were called in.... very different than Johnny’s case, when they stated “THEY HAD NO CRIME”. It was the son of a very wealthy man in West Des Moines, a very prominent family. Listening to the news reports was like reliving Johnny’s kidnapping all over again. The FBI solved the case in 36 hours. They did pay a call to our home at eight a.m. the following day. As they entered our home, Special Agent Herb Hawkins, in charge of a five state region, stated “WE REALLY HAD TO MOVE FAST ON THAT CASE, THERE WAS A HUMAN LIFE AT STAKE.” I couldn’t take it anymore and said to Hawkins... “WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER OUR SON.... DOGFOOD?”

Herb Hawkins was sitting in Johnny’s chair at the table drinking coffee and replied, “Mrs. Gosch, there is something you don’t understand... the other boy kidnapped.... their family is more prominent, their son was worth more money, we had to act fast”. Again, I couldn’t believe what had just been said to me. In essence “the rich and influential... the FBI will work to find, but sorry you are out of luck.”

I completely lost my temper, after many months of this type of treatment, they finally told me the truth....”JOHNNY DIDN’T MATTER BECAUSE WE WERE NOT RICH AND PROMINENT IN THIS COMMUNITY”.

I honestly do not remember throwing my cup of coffee across the table and just missing the head of Special Agent Hawkins by half an inch. The FBI quickly left our home very quickly after the flying coffee cup. I realized, I needed a new plan; I had to do something different ... because nothing was working. At that moment, I didn’t think I would ever be all right again. I decided after that blow... to pack a bag and leave town for several days. I did not tell anyone where I was going and traveled several hundred miles away, checked into a hotel to rest, I needed it so badly.

The police called the house to talk to me and couldn’t reach me. They then called my husband saying, “They would put out an alert because there were concerned something had happened to me and I might be missing.” My husband told them, “You can’t put out an alert, she isn’t missing, she is over 21 and it hasn’t been 72 hours yet.” Essentially their 72-hour rule was being reversed on them.

During the time away from Des Moines, I did rest but more importantly all alone in that hotel... I HIT BOTTOM AND GUESS WHAT....I SURVIVED. I had never felt such despair...I wasn’t sure what to do next. That FBI Agent actually did me a favor, even though it was cruel on his part to say such a thing. He had given me the “tools” to create national interest in Johnny’s case.

The night I returned home from my short “rest”, the phone rang; it was Ken Wooden. He had heard about the coffee cup incident in Washington D.C., while at a dinner meeting with William Webster, Director of the FBI. Mr. Webster
said, “Some crazy lady in Des Moines Iowa, threw a cup of hot coffee at one of my agents.” Ken Wooden asked Mr. Webster “what was the woman’s name?” Webster replied “that newspaper boy’s mother, that Gosch woman”. Ken replied to Webster “If Noreen Gosch threw a cup of coffee at your Agent, he must have done something horrendous... because she has displayed tremendous courage and control throughout this entire nightmare.” In his call to me, shortly after his dinner with Webster, Ken said to me “The next time you throw a cup of coffee at an FBI agent... I don’t want to hear that you missed”.

Ken suggested I send all of this information once again to all of the talk show contacts and he would do what he could on the situation. I began receiving invitations to CBS Morning Show, Hour Magazine, Phil Donahue, ABC Morning and Nightly News, and many more. The story about the coffee cup became public with my appearance on Donahue. I related the entire story on national TV. In a newspaper article, Agent Hawkins first denied it, and then said, “Mrs. Gosch is mistaken”, then finally “admitted he had said every word”. He no longer is in this part of the United States. He was moved to another area and has nothing more to do with our case.

Within six months of the kidnapping, a young man identifying himself as Paul Bishop contacted me by phone. He told me an international kidnapping/pornography ring had taken my son. I asked, “How do you know that to be true, can you prove it!” He replied, “I work for a government agency which is investigating pedophile organizations. And there are indicators in your case that suggests your son was taken by such an organization. We feel he is being used for pornography and prostitution.” All clues were pointing to the kidnapping being organized and not that of a “lone criminal”. I found it difficult to believe and accept that my son could have been targeted by such an organization. It was only in later years, I was to learn the possible reason Johnny was selected.

Again it was brought to my attention that Orval Cooney; police chief was continuing his tirades against our family. He was constantly making derogatory remarks about Johnny, our family and me. In desperation, I telephoned several members of the West Des Moines City Council, on a Friday afternoon. I told each of them I was filing a 20 million dollar lawsuit against the city on Monday morning, naming the Police Chief as being negligent in my son’s case.

Stunned, the city council called an emergency unpublished meeting on Sunday evening, in the basement of the police department. The following morning, it was announced the police chief would retire, as he was too ill to continue in the job, he went out on medical leave, it was the only way he could keep his pension. Finally, he was no longer making negligent decisions on Johnny’s case. I never intended to file the lawsuit but I wanted them to think so. Approximately three months after he left office, Orval Cooney was arrested for shoplifting at a Target Store; he took videotape and some molly plug screws for hanging plants from the ceiling.

We had the State director of DCI (State Police) Gerald Shanahan followed for two months by detectives and then a little list was presented to his
superiors as to his activities during this time. A short time later, he tendered his resignation. During the first 18 months on our case, several people were removed from their positions, which gave fresh people to the case. This eased the frustration level of having to deal with the people, who treated my son’s case with such little regard. We hoped the new people in these positions would have more of an open mind.

We received an invitation to speak at the “10th National Conference of Juvenile Justice Judges & District Attorney’s Assoc.,” in Hilton Head, North Carolina, sharing the podium with Ken Wooden. Due to the collective talent and contacts in our audience this resulted in much more publicity all over the country. It gave me the opportunity to work on Federal legislation, which was the Missing Children’s Act of 1983. The audience of judges and district attorneys numbered to three hundred. It was an excellent opportunity to become more visible concerning Johnny’s case and also convey what we were trying to accomplish in Iowa and on the national level. It was also the first time I was introduced to John Walsh, father of Adam Walsh kidnapped and murdered in Florida in 1981. John was working on federal legislation and he mentioned that our “paths would cross again to work together.”

In December 1983, Ken Wooden invited me to testify before the Justice Department at Sam Houston University in Houston Texas. Parents of missing children gathered and were asked to tell their story on video camera, naming names and sharing what went wrong in their cases. I met John Walsh for the second time, he came to share his story about his son Adam, who was murdered a year before my son was kidnapped. While I was there I met many people from all over the country, all carrying the same burden pain. It seemed apparent that in every case, the police reacted very slowly or not at all. The families were left with the frustration of not knowing what happened to their child.

All of the video taped testimonies were taken to Washington D.C. and a few months later the Justice Department appropriated the first ten million dollars to start the Center for Missing and Exploited Children. I was invited to the White House for the dedication of the new Center for Missing Children. It was a huge success to have this Center created; it meant that parents had for the first time a place for help, support and guidance when their child was taken. The Center was designed to act as a liaison between law enforcement and the families, to help create and distribute missing persons posters, and an 800 number for calls on sightings of missing children...1-800-843-5678. They had people to handle the caseloads and keep in communication with the families. This was important so parents did not feel so isolated and alone in their tragedy, as we had before the creation of the Center.

The Johnny Gosch Foundation was constantly growing and the speaking engagements were continuing. Over a period of six years, I presented seven hundred programs, all over the country.

A very special young couple came to meet with us; he was the editor of
the Ankeny Press Citizen in a neighboring town. They joined our organization and he began to write a series of articles on Johnny’s case, telling the true story. Ron and Luann Sampson, played a very large role in shaping this entire investigation.

The Des Moines Register was ignoring any kind of helpful publicity (no one could understand why…. (Johnny worked for them), so we worked with other forms of the press, in and outside our state. I received a phone call in the spring of 1983, a woman saying, she worked at the Des Moines Register in the newsroom…. She reported, “Shortly after the kidnapping, the editor at that time, came into the newsroom and announced …all articles written about the Gosch boy WILL be slanted against the family and for the police.” She would not give me her name… she was afraid of losing her job. I now knew what was happening but didn’t understand “why”!

Ron’s articles really began to shake people up and finally for the first time, they were made aware of how our family had been treated. We had an avenue of communication on our case, which was fair. We spent many hours together formulating this project; later Ron became the President of the Johnny Gosch Foundation. I felt such gratitude for all of the people who helped us, prior to and following this series of articles. It made me more determined than ever to continue to work towards a safer environment for all children

As I traveled, giving speeches throughout Iowa, I collected legislative contacts in every community. I circulated a clipboard to my audiences asking everyone of voting age to sign their name, if they were interested in being a “legislative contact”. I explained a “legislative contact”, would be called if we had a bill being held hostage, if we needed them to call their legislator to put pressure on them to vote for a certain bill for children. We would also ask them to call as many people as possible for them to do the same. Many times bills are held “hostage” in a committee. Logic would seem to dictate that any bill concerning the welfare of children should be a top priority instead of being used as a “pawn” in a political catfight. In all, I collected nearly a thousand names, with the help of Teresa Burriola, a volunteer in the Johnny Gosch Foundation, who worked for a lobbyist, the names were sorted and placed in folders according to their counties/districts with the names of their Representative and Senator.

Word reached Governor Branstad office about my legislative contact project. On a number of occasions the Governor called and asked me to activate our massive telephone tree, we could generate over 500 calls to legislators within an hour and did so many times. Putting pressure on the Senator or Representative, deliberately holding a bill hostage.

My work with Governor Branstad proved to be very rewarding; he is a fair and honest person. We created many positive legislative changes in the state of Iowa, which have been copied in other states. Finally in the second year 1984, the Johnny Gosch Bill passed into law. It felt like such a victory. It had made all of the late nights, driving, speaking and work worthwhile. At the
signing ceremony on July 1, 1984, the Governor said to me quietly “I had an extra pen done for Johnny, if he is found, I want him to have it. None of this would have happened if it hadn’t been for the tragedy of his kidnapping and all of your work”.

Those words meant a great deal to me, the Governor had gone out of his way many times on a personal level to assist me with kindness. It is refreshing after all of the other difficulties and obstacles. The police now have to begin an investigation immediately when a child is missing. IT IS THE LAW. Needless to say a few policemen in the state did not care for the idea but a surprising number appreciate having it in black and white on paper.

Despite the victory of the Johnny Gosch Law being passed, there were several disgruntled lobbyists and legislators who said to me… “You got your bill passed but now who will provide the money to enforce it… we are on the finance committee and we are not going to allocate dollars for this…” I reported these comments from the lobbyists and legislators to the Governor’s office and said it was necessary for this law to be enforced the next time a child was taken. Little did I know that only a month from that day, another paperboy would be kidnapped from Des Moines?

THE SECOND KIDNAPPING

I received a phone call from Sam Soda, local private investigator. He claimed to have valuable information for me and wanted to meet as soon as possible. We arranged to meet at his office the evening June 13, 1984. This was another of the tons of calls from people trying to help, I had no idea if his information was something I could use or not. Many of the leads turned out to be nothing. But I accepted the meeting with him.

I brought a tape recorder along and placed it on the table. Sam raised no objection to being taped. During this meeting, he disclosed information about a “second kidnapping in Des Moines”. He claimed this came from his informant. The kidnapping was to occur on the second weekend in August, on the South Side of Des Moines and that it would be another paperboy. I thought it strange that he would be telling me this and not the police. When I questioned him on this point, he claimed that I should be the one to take the information to the Des Moines Police, as it would be their jurisdiction. I thanked him for the information and left. I thought that if this information were on the level… it would be a chance to prevent another kidnapping. I believed him but still questioned why he told me and not the police.

I went the very next day to the Des Moines Police Dept., asking if I could play the tape of the meeting with Mr. Soda for them. The uniformed officer at the front desk would not allow me to talk to a Detective, he insisted, “If they felt my information was of importance they would call me”. Repeatedly, I told him that I had a tape recording and in a couple of months, there would be another paperboy kidnapped. They treated me as though I had lost my mind and didn’t want to be bothered with me. I was shocked, my son was kidnapped and they were rejecting information to prevent another crime.
When I left the Police Dept., I contacted WHO, WOI & KCCI TV station program managers. I did speak to each of them and relayed the information, telling them I also had a tape recording of this conversation. I was shocked to find out that even though they listened to me, no one wanted to listen to the tape.

I was very uneasy about the whole situation and felt that Mr. Soda had given me important information. Someone needed to take it seriously. I contacted Frank Santiago, Des Moines Register reporter, who had been assigned to Johnny’s story since the beginning. He was the only one who really listened to the information. He asked if I had been to the police. I told him “yes and to the TV stations”. He showed concern and then thanked me for the information. But the Des Moines Register did not do any type of article on this new information. A couple months, later after Eugene Martin was kidnapped, I went back to the Des Moines Police Department and asked if they were “ready to talk to me about the contents of the Sam Soda tape.” I was told “no, they had too much to do with the new kidnapping to investigate and for me not to talk to the press or the Martin family about the contents of the tape”. One officer also said “We can get a gag order placed on you if necessary!”

DEEP THROAT

Just as in the movie “All the President’s Men”, Des Moines also had its “Deep Throat”. It became increasingly important to have certain information released in the press at precise times. I knew that if I approached them…. the information would not be taken seriously or have the impact as if it came from an anonymous informant who was accurate. I asked a friend and volunteer with the Johnny Gosch Foundation, Jim Mascaro of Des Moines, if he would do this for me. He agreed it was the only to do it. We knew the clock was ticking closer to the date in August, which was predicted for the next kidnapping of a Des Moines Register paperboy.

When I had information to be released, I would call him; he would go to a pay phone, placing a call to the “newspaper reporter”, giving him the information, with the facts for him to verify everything. Within a couple hours, I would receive a phone call from “the reporter” saying “that his anonymous informant had just given him new information and that every word of it was true because he was able to confirm it.” There would then be a story, which followed in the newspaper.

At these times, it was imperative that information be released strategically to obtain a desired effect from the “guilty parties” involved locally in the case. It was then and then only, I would know if I was on the right path of investigation. To some people it might seem or sound a bit “calculating” but I was up against many powerful people. When your child is taken and you are forced to do your own investigation, you do what you have to do.

& Evening News, and 48 Hours, where I was able to share my story about my son and alert the public to the ever-present and growing danger of child kidnapping. I received a call from Karen Burnes, a producer with ABC’s 20/20 in July of 1984, asking to present Johnny’s story.

This was the beginning of a long relationship with not only Karen Burnes but also ABC’s 20/20. The show depicted the effort I had to make to cope with the loss of my son, which required me to become a public speaker, fundraiser, detective and “thorn in the side of police, FBI and political bureaucrats.” It seemed the only way to get anything done on Johnny’s case was to shout long and loud on any forum I could find… from the stage of a church or school, newspaper, magazines to a radio or TV studio. Plans were made with Karen Burnes to film Johnny’s Story with 20/20, on the second weekend in August.

Paul Bishop, CIA Asset made another short trip to Des Moines, July 31, 1984. It was at this time, he reported the name of the man who was the “spotter”… Sam Soda in Johnny’s kidnapping. Paul explained that a spotter is the person who secures a photo of a victim prior to a kidnapping. Years later in 1991, I learned from Private Investigator Roy Stephens, that Paul Bonacci, (who participated in Johnny’s kidnapping) positively identified a photo of Sam Soda as the man, who brought photos of Johnny to the kidnappers, who stayed in a motel room in West Des Moines, on September 4, 1982, the night before the kidnapping.

When Paul spoke his name, I said, “Paul, you need to listen to this tape.” I played recording of my meeting with Sam Soda. He listened… I then told him of my attempts to share the information with the police department and media. Paul was not shocked at what he heard on the tape and paid a visit to Sam Soda, questioning him concerning the source of the information on a second kidnapping. Sam was not too cooperative, became annoyed with Bishop, asking him to leave his office. There is indication today that these two individuals knew each other prior to this time.

Before Paul left Des Moines, he created a very intricate map of the Johnny’s crime scene, indicating time sequence of each aspect of the kidnapping. Paul dated and initialed the map using GPB (George Paul Bishop).

After Paul flew back to Washington, I began to hear from Sam Soda on a regular basis. He wanted to be the investigator for Johnny’s case. He asked for a bank account to be set up for him to draw upon for a salary. I explained to him, we already had a private investigator and could not afford another. He continued to attempt to be involved in any way he could on the case.

I think this suggests how intricate are the manipulations of those involved in the kidnapping and exploitation of children like Johnny. Eventually, I had reports from not only Paul Bishop but also Paul Bonacci (See Bonacci chapter) implicating Sam. What better way for them to keep track of my progress in this case than to plant someone in our very midst? To this very day no police agency has ever conducted a thorough investigation of Sam Soda’s alleged participation in Johnny’s case.

During this time, I had also been working with Senator Grassley from
Iowa, he had been particularly helpful in facilitating with the FBI. Many times Paul Bishop would call me from Senator Grassley’s office, when finished speaking with me, he would hand the phone to one of Grassley’s aides who I was familiar with… That convinced me Paul was an accepted visitor on the hill in Washington. A short time later, I received my invitation to testify in Washington D.C. before Senator Arlan Specter’s Hearing on Organized Crime and its Relationship to Kidnapping. Senator Grassley’s office made all of my arrangements.

I was instructed by Senator Grassley’s office to Federal Express a copy of my testimony and to carry a copy on the plane when I flew to Washington D.C. In testifying before Congress or State Legislature, you are required to prepare a written presentation of your testimony. Paul Bishop met the plane and escorted me to the hotel. I checked in and then he took me on a tour of Washington, followed by showing me some of the blighted places in D.C. Where children as young as ten years old, hang out on the streets late at night. Today those blighted areas include places like the White House Mall at night. Even Congressmen are not safe on the steps of the Capitol.

Later that evening, Paul and I spent time going over every word of my testimony. I wanted to be sure that when I presented my information the following morning that it was clear to the committee, “an Organized Pedophile Group” took my son. Again and again, I have met with denial on the part of individuals and organizations that any such groups could exist in this country. For my protection, two men, dressed in suits were posted outside of my hotel room door all night. A major disturbance occurred downstairs in the lobby during the night, the police were called and arrested the man causing the problem. I have no idea if it was related to me.

The following morning, Paul Bishop, accompanied by two men arrived at the hotel to drive me to the Capitol for the Hearing. The bodyguards accompanied us always a few steps behind us. They were dressed well but business causal rather than suits. Paul looked very polished wearing a dark brown suit. As I entered the room, I noted there were reporters everywhere from ABC, NBC, CBS television, radio, newspaper and magazine. I recognized Special Agent Kenneth Lanning, a member of the Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI Training Division at Quantico, VA, I walked towards him, saying, “Hello, I am Noreen Gosch” , extending my hand to shake his…. he pulled back and said, “We know who you are”. With that statement there was a definite chill in the air. It was as though the FBI resented me being asked to testify.

Paul sat beside me at the table, the two bodyguards blended into the background, as I testified to my knowledge of the slave auctions in the U.S. During my testimony, Senator Specter asked a number of questions about my son’s kidnapping and the investigation. I explained the FBI refused to enter the case, because they wanted me to prove my son’s life was in danger. The lack of response from the local authorities created the need for private investigators.

At this hearing were books made available by the FBI showing chil-
dren in a mail order type catalog, and offering them for sale. How much more
needed to be proven about the existence of organizations national and interna-
tional that were buying and selling children. This book was spiral bound about
seventy five to a hundred black and white pages, with six or seven children's
pictures on a page. Below each child's picture was offered details about the
child, hair and eye color, weight etc. The question that must be asked is that
with this information in the hands of the FBI and the Senate, clearly indicating
that an organization capable of not only photographing children around the
U.S. but offering them for sale and kidnapping to order, why is this still un-
known to the majority of Americans. I have made repeated attempts to obtain
copies of this catalog, which would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt the
existence of an organization or organizations that do buy and sell children.

Councilwoman of the City Council of Philadelphia, Joan Specter stated
"I found it rather shocking to hear there was a book "How to Have Sex With
Kids", and I decided to verify the fact that it was indeed obtained at the book
store. I called the bookstore and asked if they had a pamphlet of how to have
sex with kids. They said, "let me check", they returned to the phone and said,
"we did have the pamphlet and are out of it but we can reorder it." I said thank
you and hung up. And then the pamphlet was delivered to my office. I looked
at the pamphlet and saw that it was a How To Do It Pamphlet. It described
how to find children, how to go to playgrounds, how to get baby sitting jobs,
and then it described how a man who is over 200 pounds can have sex with a
child.

It seemed to me that if you have a pamphlet available in a bookstore,
which was not a pornographic bookstore, and someone goes in and buys that
pamphlet, there is a sense that there is nothing wrong with having sex with
kids. Because, after all, here is the book in a regular book store available to
anyone who comes in. This is taken from the minutes August 8, 1984, (the
same hearing where I testified) of the Organized Crime Hearings and it's Rela-
tionship to Missing Children

Senator Specter asked Paul Bishop of his relationship to the case, to me
and did he know this to be true. Paul indicated he was an investigator and that
every word of my testimony was accurate. Paul remained by my side during
the hearing; answering questions asked by Senator Specter, these were the
only words he spoke. This struck me as very unusual but then I had never
been in this arena before to observe how a CIA man would conduct himself. At
no time did Paul ever identify himself as CIA during the hearing or afterward
during the interviews with the Washington Press. He withdrew from the view
of the cameras. All attempts on my part to obtain photos from the hearing
were unsuccessful.

Following the hearing, I requested from one of the staff members a
copy of Mr. Lannings testimony and the pedophile material that was displayed
on the table, including the catalog. She asked "Mrs. Gosch would like a copy
of the material presented by Mr. Lanning" and an FBI Agent told her "This is
the property of the FBI and it was acquired from a pedophiles lair, it cannot be
given to anyone”.

It was appalling to me to me that with all this material in the hands of the FBI, presented by Ken Lanning to Senator Specters committee and examined by the National media, that there is ever any question today in the year 2000, about the existence of national and international kidnap organizations. Today children are a commodity used in TV commercials and magazine ads in a sexually provocatively manner. Is it any wonder that children are no longer safe in our schools because the pedophiles have managed to become their teachers, coaches, and become mentors to young children.

My own private investigator attended a slave auction with naked children paraded on a stage. Paul Bonnaci, who assisted in kidnapping my son claims to have attended many auctions. Everyone from psychiatrists to policemen report talking to people who have attended or been a participant in such auctions. If there is any doubt that Slavery is alive and well in America in the year 2000, there should not be. I examined the same FBI evidence in August 8, 1984, that Senators and the entire news media present examined.

Is there a plot to conceal this from the America public? FBI and countless witnesses such as myself have repeatedly presented ample proof before the U. S. Congress. Yet the average America thinks you are crazy if you declare Slavery exists and is a well-guarded U.S. Government secret. I have a book in my possession, which identifies various members of the U.S. Congress as compromised by having had sex with children, or owning slaves themselves. Paul Bonnaci who participated in the kidnapping of Johnny also stated, he was repeatedly sent to Washington D.C. to have sex with Massachusetts Representative Barney Frank. The Washington Times published a front page story stating a child prostitution ring was being run out of his D.C. apartment.

It has now been sixteen years since Senator Arlen Specter has been given these materials. To my knowledge, no major report was given to Congress about the growing and influential pedophiles operating throughout the United States. What happened to the new media who immediately surrounded me following the hearing anxious for more details about Johnny? They had the same access to that catalog that I did. Why hasn’t it become a major national story? I testified that slave auctions were being held in the U.S. The catalog clearly confirmed my testimony.

My schedule was so tight, I flew immediately back to Des Moines to meet with the crew from ABC 20/ 20. The following day, Karen Burnes and the film crew from 20/ 20 arrived in town. It was a beautiful Saturday and the second weekend in August. They filmed locations around Des Moines and West Des Moines, including the site where Johnny was kidnapped. Later when we arrived back at our home. I decided to share the information regarding a second kidnapping, supposed to occur the following day. I played the Sam Soda tape recording for Karen and shared how I had been to the Des Moines Police Dept., telling her of the reaction I received.

I had hoped they would at least patrol the paper drop areas on the South Side of Des Moines. I also told Karen, I had given the information to the
News Directors at the local TV stations. She showed great interest in the information.

After we finished filming for the day, the crew went to the airport and flew back to New York. Karen remained in Des Moines and stayed at the Marriott hotel. The next morning began with the shock of the phone ringing very early. It was a reporter at the local ABC TV station, telling me “the second kidnapping had just taken place”. He kept saying, “It happened just as you said it would Mrs. Gosch”.

I asked the reporter, how he knew what I had reported, as I only talked with his manager. He replied “they spread it around the news room…everyone thought you were nuts!” He informed me the police were calling it a kidnapping immediately and the FBI were bringing in twenty-two agents from Quantico, VA to assist in the investigation and search. The young boy kidnapped was Eugene Martin, a newspaper carrier, preparing to deliver his papers on the South Side of Des Moines.

In Johnny’s case, the FBI refused to enter the case, the reason they verbally gave me in my home was that “they had no crime and it was my responsibility to prove my son’s life was in danger”. Why now with Eugene Martin’s kidnapping under identical circumstances was the FBI coming forward with a bevy of FBI agents. Could it be that somewhere during the months of Johnny’s kidnapping ……the law enforcement here learned something?

Based on this phone call alone, I called Karen at the hotel and told her the “second kidnapping had just happened”, exactly as Sam Soda had told me on June 13, 1984. She immediately swung into action contacting her network and arranging for a film crew to come back to Des Moines, when the crew arrived, they went directly to the Des Moines police department.

The police department was in a state of confusion; Karen placed, put, shoved a microphone in the police chief’s face and demanded the answers to the following questions. Are you bringing in FBI Agents for this case? They didn’t for Johnny Gosch! Are you going to use canine search teams? They didn’t for Johnny Gosch! Will you do an aerial search? They wouldn’t for Johnny Gosch! The Police Chief had no comment about the Johnny Gosch case and stated the department would do everything in their power to solve the Martin kidnapping. The police went all out using FBI, SWAT Teams, Canine Searches, and Aerial searches but like Johnny, Eugene Martin was probably quickly taken out of the immediate search area. This case appeared to be a duplicate of Johnny’s kidnapping.

After the Martin kidnapping, I expected the Des Moines Police Dept, to contact me and want to discuss the information I received from Sam Soda. Despite the fact that my information proved to be valid, the police never asked to listen to the tape. Sam Soda knew another boy was going to be kidnapped.
Shouldn't the police have asked how did Sam Soda know? Who did Sam Soda know? Did Sam Soda also have the information that would have solved or prevented this crime?

Instead... I was warned not to talk about it to the press and certainly not the Martin family. I could not believe what I was hearing. But it certainly can be explained; they had the opportunity to prevent the second kidnapping, due to the advanced information. Instead of listening to the information, I tried to give them; I was treated like a “nut” and dismissed. If the newspaper drop points had been patrolled, Eugene Martin might not have been taken. If the local media would have created pressure about the tape, police might have been forced to take action. But neither the police nor the media wanted to listen to the tape recording. Where the kidnapping of children is concerned it is difficult to arouse the social conscious.

Suddenly an apathetic law enforcement body.... And The Des Moines Register, who now had TWO KIDNAPPED PAPERBOYS, began to act. We continued to pay for our own investigation. Money was donated to reward funds. The newspaper printed thousands of missing person's flyers to distribute all over the United States. We printed and paid for distribution of our son's posters. The change of attitude was amazing.

Jim Gannon, the same newspaper editor, who smugly ignored our case except to do damaging articles and instruct the staff to slant articles against us... wrote an article “MAD AS HELL THAT TWO CARRIERS WERE KIDNAPPED”.

President Ronald Reagan telephoned Jim Gannon to tell him what a good job the Des Moines Register was doing publicizing these kidnappings. I questioned why did it take two children kidnapped to shake the social conscience of this newspaper editor? How tragic and sad for the children.

We were still selling candy bars to pay for all of our flyers, watching this same newspaper rollover and do it for another family was very painful. I am glad that all of our work had brought this kind of awareness and progress but at the same time, my heart ached for my son. Going through the first few days of the second kidnapping was like reliving Johnny’s. Every bit of the pain was still there and had not lessened.

I thought my life was busy before but after the second kidnapping the speaking engagements and public appearances mushroomed. People felt threatened... would their child be next?

A few days later, NBC Today Show contacted me, asking if I could get in touch with the Martins, as they had been unsuccessful. It seems the FBI (was this the Effram Zimbalist Jr. from the FBI TV Show, I had been waiting for) had more or less set up a command post in the Martin home and calls were being screened. The Today show wanted to interview both the Martins and us the following day. I called the Martin home, an FBI Agent answered the phone, I posed as a relative and asked to speak with either of the Martins. He handed the phone to Don, Eugene’s father. At that time, I identified myself, told Mr. Martin “They want us on the Today Show ... tomorrow!” We then made the
plans to do the Today show from the local WHO-TV studio in Des Moines, the NBC affiliate. When I met them at the TV studio, the Martins told me “The FBI told us not to talk to you!”

In a total reversal Sam Soda, began to contact the Des Moines Police telling them that Paul Bishop (my CIA contact) had been in Des Moines a short time before the Martin kidnapping and was somehow involved. Sam must have bent the ear of some influential people because shortly afterward a Federal Grand Jury Hearing was scheduled; Paul Bishop was subpoenaed to testify.

He returned one more time to Des Moines. Following the hearing, Paul took a taxi to my home. He had been questioned about Eugene Martin, what he was doing in Des Moines, who he talked to in Des Moines for over six hours. While he was sharing the details of the hearing; the phone rang a number of times. It was Sam Soda each time wanting to know if Paul Bishop was there. He became very agitated, when I told him Paul was not there. He claimed, he needed to talk with Paul and could not find him. We felt it best for Paul to change his travel plans, I made arrangements with friends for Paul to stay the night at their home. He flew back to Washington D.C. a couple of days later, under different name. I received two more phone calls from Paul in the following week that was to be the last time I saw or spoke with Paul. The phone number to call Paul at Langley Air Force Base was no longer working.

Shortly after that visit, Paul Bishop or Robert LaVeck vanished without a trace. What happened to Paul Bishop, we have never been able to discover. Paul used to call me “Mom.” He was a young person in his twenties and I sometimes wonder, had he been used in some manner by the very element that took my son? Was he sent here to share with me the threads of truth, which would unfold later? It was years before the CIA was revealed as a part of this problem of missing children in our country and the world.

A reporter asked me to describe in a few words one thing something positive about this experience, if there was such a thing. I said, “I have had the opportunity and privilege to meet so many fine people… together we have made a difference in this country. People, I would not have met otherwise and it is sad that it had to be at the expense of a child’s life. I feel that all of what I have accomplished has been done in Johnny’s name, so that his kidnapping did not happen without any progress in our country. I just hope that some how or way he is able to know we did everything possible to save him. If I had not fought hard to save him, I would not be able to now look at myself in the mirror or at his picture.”

The first sound of the words still echo in my mind from the Police and FBI... “Mrs. Gosch, we have no crime...” My reply has always been “But I have no Son... Kidnapping is a Federal Crime!”

Johnny is not the only case in this country but we certainly worked against the odds to overcome and go on. If anything this was the biggest “do it yourself project had ever encountered.” Most parents do not realize that much of the search for their child will be up to them. If they drop the ball so to speak... there goes their child’s case.
KIDNAPPED
JOHN DAVID GOSCH


John David Gosch was last seen on Sunday, September 5, 1982 at approximately 6:00 A.M. He was believed to have been kidnapped when starting his paper route at 42nd and Marquette Lane in West Des Moines, Iowa.

John was believed to have been wearing a white sweat shirt with the words HUMS ACADEMY on the back of it along with black warm up pants and blue rubber thongs. Missing also with John is his yellow paperbag and wire cutters.

REWARD

A $90,000.00 REWARD has been offered for the safe return of John David Gosch in addition to a $10,000.00 REWARD for information leading to his whereabouts.

Anyone having information to John's whereabouts, please call: LOCAL FBI OFFICE or INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH AGENCY, INC., (515) 745-1111 or John's parents JOHN and NOREEN GOSCH at (515) 225-7256.
Type of car in Gosch case

Below: One of the many “candy bar” fund raisers ...

Search for Johnny Gosch continues
This poster was sent anonymously to me and a number of others in Des Moines ... Shortly after Eugene Martin was kidnapped...1984
HAVE YOU SEEN EITHER OF THESE YOUNG MEN?

Both of these young men disappeared while delivering the Des Moines Sunday Register. John Gosch has been missing since Sept. 5, 1982. Eugene Martin disappeared on Aug. 12, 1984. If you have information contacting either boy, call the Des Moines, Iowa, Police Department Hotline COLLECT 515-246-9988.

John Gosch was 12 years old when he disappeared on Sept. 5, 1982, while delivering newspapers in West Des Moines, Iowa. He was described as 5 feet, 7 inches tall, weighing 140 pounds, with blue eyes and light brown hair.

Eugene Martin of Des Moines, IA, is 13 years old and disappeared on Aug. 12, 1984. He is 5 feet tall, 105 pounds, thin, with dark brown hair, brown eyes, and a dark complexion. He was wearing blue jeans, a gray t-shirt with white stripes and red sleeves, and blue Tux tennis shoes with white diagonal stripes.

$94,000 REWARD

$25,000 offered by The Des Moines Register for information leading to the recovery of either of these missing persons.
(Additional reward money being offered by businesses, friends and relatives.)
Ken Wooden researched and wrote this guide as an outgrowth of his work as an investigative reporter for ABC News 20/20 and as the founder of the National Coalition for Children's Justice and the National Child Victim Computerized Network. The information is based on interviews with convicted child molesters and murderers—the experts.

Ken Wooden has authored three books which center on the injustices suffered by children. *Weeping in the Playtime of Others*, a best-seller, served as the basis for three "Sixty Minutes" segments. *The Children of Jonestown* is the culmination of his investigative work for NBC News and the Chicago Sun-Times; it garnered a Pulitzer Prize nomination. His third book, soon to be published, *Prey: Missing and Murdered Children*, is the result of five years of investigative work.

Wooden's articles and books have prompted Congressional inquiries and legislation dealing with interstate commerce of children, the child pornography industry, foster care reform, and, most currently, the problem of missing and murdered children.