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To <AKeller@floridatrend.com>

cc Amy Hammett/D07/DCF@DCF, "Sue Hedberg"  
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bcc

Subject RE: Can we talk?

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Please tell me a little about your background:

1) How did you get involved in international adoptions? I HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THIS FIELD FOR ABOUT 10 YEARS. I HAVE A BACKGROUND IN INTERNATIONAL WORK SO IT WAS A NATURAL LEAD INTO THIS WORK.

2) How many adoptions has CCI facilitated since you've been director of the agency? AROUND 1000

3) Can you provide a breakdown of how many in each country for each year? NO, I WONT' PROVIDE THAT, BUT WE HAVE COMPLETED ADOPTIONS IN THESE COUNTRIES: HAITI, UKRAINE, TAIWAN, CAMBODIA, CHINA, KAZAKHSTAN, VIETNAM, ETHIOPIA, GUATEMALA, GUINEA.

4) How would you describe your reputation as an international adoption provider? Do you feel most of your clients are generally pleased or displeased with the services you provide? ABSOLUTELY. WE HAVE HUNDREDS OF LETTERS AND EMAILS FROM FAMILIES TELLING US HOW HAPPY THEY ARE WITH CCI, WITH THEIR ADOPTION AND WITH THEIR CHILDREN. IT'S ONLY THE FEW UNHAPPY FAMILIES WHO HAVE TAKEN THEIR GRIPS TO THE INTERNET THAT CREATES A FALSE IMPRESSION. I WILL COPY AND PASTE SOME EXERPTS OF THESE EMAILS IN A SEPARATE EMAIL

As you are aware, the DCF has received a number of complaints over the past several years regarding CCI. They have conducted 4 investigations of CCI.

5) Why do you believe that your agency has had such a large number of complaints? 4 COMPLAINTS OF OVER 1000 ADOPTIONS IS NOT A LOT. EACH OF THESE INVESTIGATIONS HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED AS UNFOUNDED.

6) Do you believe that any of the complaints were warranted or unwarranted? If so, why? SEE DCF'S CONCLUSIONS

7) Would you care to address any of these specific allegations contained in various complaints:

\* That clients were forced to undergo psychological evaluations when they asked questions or raised concerns about how long their adoption cases were taking. IN OUR CONTRACT, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL TESTING AS DEEMED APPROPRIATE. WE HAVE ONLY REQUESTED THIS ON A FEW FAMILIES... HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT REFLECTED PUBLICALLY, HAS IT? WE SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR TAKING THESE MEASURES WHEN PEOPLE BEGIN TO ACT UNUSUALLY. NEVER HAS THIS BEEN RELATED TO THEIR RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT HOW LONG THEIR ADOPTION CASES WERE TAKING, BUT OTHER BEHAVIORS. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS FIRST, TO THE CHILDREN AND WE NEED TO TAKE ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY. OF COURSE, SINCE THE FAMILIES WERE INNAPPROPRIATE, THEY OF COURSE WOULD SAY THAT THIS WAS RELATED TO THEIR ASKING QUESTIONS, BUT IT MOST DEFINITELY WAS NOT! IS THIS A REGULAR COMPLAINT? I THINK NOT!

\* That CCI failed to adequately communicate regarding delays in their cases and when clients did ask questions, they were threatened with the loss of "child referrals" NEVER HAS THAT EVER HAPPENED. ALL

RELEVANT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO FAMILIES IN A TIMELY MANNER. . ONE FAMILY CALLED ME 17 TIMES IN ONE DAY ASKING FOR UPDATES... THE UPDATES ARE GIVEN THERE BUT THEY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN WHAT A FAMILY WANTED TO HEAR. WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE PROCESS IN COUNTRY AND CAN ONLY REPORT WHERE A CASE IS. AS PART OF THE HOMESTUDY PROCESS AND ADOPTION TRAINING, FAMILIES ARE INFORMED THAT THERE CAN BE DELAYS AND UNEXPECTED OCCURANCES IN THEIR PROCESS AND THAT THERE MAY NOT BE A LOT OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION DURING THE ADOPTION PROCESS. HOWEVER THE PROCESS IS VERY EMOTIONAL AND CCI UNDERSTANDS THAT FAMILIES NEED AS MUCH INFORMATION AS WE CAN GIVE THEM WHICH IS WHY WE WORK DILIGENTLY TO KEEP ABREAST OF EACH AND EVERY CASE.

\* That CCI in its contracts with clients would forbid them from contacting any foreign entities with regard to their adoptions. YES, OUR CONTRACT DOES NOT ALLOW FAMILIES TO BE IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH IN COUNTRY CONTACTS. THOSE ARE OUR CONTACTS AND WHEN FAMILIES TRY TO DIRECTLY COMMUNICATE WITH IN COUNTRY SOURCES, THERE CAN BE MIS INFORMATION, AND OFTEN MISUNDERSTANDING DUE TO LANGUAGE BARRIERS. OUR INCOUNTRY CONTACTS HAVE CHOSEN TO WORK WITH AGENCIES SO THERE IS ONE CONTACT FOR THE CASES, AND SO THAT THEY ARE NOT NEEDING TO ANSWER HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES DIRECTLY. THAT IS THE APPROPRIATE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND IS HOW ALL AGENCIES WORK. FAMILIES CANNOT CONTACT THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN CHINA FOR INFORMATION, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THEIR CASES, NOR EACH OF THE OTHER ENTITIES IN EACH COUNTRY

8) Has CCI changed any of its practices to address concerns expressed by various former clients in those complaints? WE MAKE CHANGES AS RECOMMENDED BY DCF IN ANY INVESTIGATION PER THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING DCF INVESTIGATION 2 - 2008

1) In the DCF investigation report of the matter, you are quoted as saying that you believe the mother of the two children who were allegedly kidnapped was lying about her children having been abducted.

Can you explain why you believe she is lying? I HAVE NEVER SPOKEN WITH THAT MOTHER BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT SHE WENT THROUGH THE NORMAL ADOPTION PROCESS... MEDICAL TESTING ON HERSELF, A DNA TEST WITH THE CHILD IN HER LAP IN A PRIVATE ROOM WITH THE LAB TECH, A FAMILY COURT INTERVIEW WITH A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER AND THAT CASE WAS PREAPPROVED FOR A VISA BY THE US EMBASSY AFTER THEIR NORMAL REVIEW OF A CASE. TO SAY MANY MONTHS LATER THAT A CHILD WAS STOLEN IS HIGHLY UNUSUAL AS SHE WOULD HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL PEOPLE AT HER MEDICAL EVAL, AT THE DNA TEST AND AT THE FAMILY COURT INTERVIEW. TO LATER COME BACK AND SAY HER CHILD WAS STOLEN DOES NOT SEEM CORRECT.. WHY WOULD SHE NOT HAVE SAID SO AT ANY OF THE PREVIOUS OPPORTUNITIES? LAWYERS, FACILITATORS AND ORPHANAGE DIRECTORS ARE NOT ALLOWED INTO THOSE PRIVATE MEETINGS SO ANY MOTHER HAS A CHANCE TO SAY WHAT SHE WOULD LIKE WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER PARTY.. MOTHERS ARE ALLOWED TO CHANGE THEIR MIND UNTIL THE FINAL SIGNING AND ALL AGENCIES HAVE HAD CASES WHERE BIRTHMOTHERS CHANGE THEIR MIND BEFORE THE FINAL SIGNING.

2) You also said that you believe the judge in her case felt pressured

to rule in the Guatemalan mother's favor and that UNICEF might have been

involved in creating the story and helping her get her children back.

Can you explain why you believe this to be true? NOT UNICEF BUT THERE WERE GROUPS SOLICITING BIRTHMOTHERS TO MAKE SUCH STATEMENTS

3) How did you become involved with Marvin Bran? Does anything you know

about Mr. Bran lead you to believe he is involved in or may have been

involved in child trafficking? I HAVE NO INFORMATION ABOUT ALLEGED INVOLVMENT IN CHILD TRAFFICKING.

4) Have you been asked to testify in the upcoming trial of Coni Bran?

Have any Guatemalan authorities investigating or prosecuting this case spoken with you? Have any U.S. authorities questioned you regarding this

case? NO, I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT AN UPCOMING TRIAL. I HAVE NEVER BEEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THIS CASE BY ANY GUATEMALAN AUTHORITIES. AS ADOPTION AGENCIES, WE ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE RELINQUISHMENT OF THE CHILDREN, THAT IS DONE BY ATTORNEYS.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING DCF Investigation Number 4

5) Have you or any CCI employee ever initiated contact with Ethiopian

parents/mothers and suggested they give their child/children up for adoption? ABSOLUTELY NOT. HOW WOULD I PERSONALLY KNOW ANY BIRTHMOTHERS? I DO NOT LIVE IN THAT COUNTRY NOR KNOW MOTHERS PRIOR TO THEIR ABANDONED THEIR CHILDRENE TO ORPHAN CENTERS. Did you solicit the mothers in this particular case to give

their children up for adoption? HOW COULD I EVER SOLICIT MOTHERS IN ETHIOPIA? THERE ARE 82 LANGUAGES SPOKEN THERE AND I SPEAK NONE OF THEM! ALL CHILDREN ARE RELINQUISHED TO ORPHAN CENTERS. ANYONE WHO SAYS OR BELIEVES OTHERWISE IS MISTAKEN. CHILDREN ARE NOT RELINQUISHED TO AGENCIES OR INDIVIDUALS BUT TO ORPHAN CENTERS OR TO THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. WE DO NOT LOOK FOR MOTHERS NOR ENCOURAGE MOTHERS TO BRING CHILDREN TO THE GOVERNMENT OR ORPHANAGES.

6) In the transcript of a videotape examined in the investigation, you

ask an Ethiopian woman who bakes bread for a living questions about her

child who appears to still be living under her care. At one point (according to page 2 of the transcript) you say: "There is a child we

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need at our house. You know?" I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT. I DO NOT KNOW ANYONE WHO BAKES BREAD AND NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT NEEDING A CHILD IN OUR HOUSE. YOU ARE VERY VERY MISTAKEN AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT! What did you mean by that remark? Do you

believe this woman had a clear understanding of adoption? I DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GETTING YOUR MATERIAL BUT THERE IS NO SUCH CONVERSATION!

7) In the other video, the young girl talks about why she is living in an orphanage. According to the translator, the child says she "came here to help her mother, to learn and to finish her school. Then after that she wants to help her mother." You then say "So she doesn't understand about adoption." "I think so. Yeah, I think so," the translator responds. You and the translator continue to discuss the child's understanding of her adoption. Did this child have a true understanding of what being adopted meant? WHAT TAPE ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT CHILD ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

8) Later in that same video you mention that you had met her mother and her mother left you with a good impression and was nicely dressed. That



said, and having met the mother, did she truly seem unable to take care

of her children? WHAT CHILD ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT MOTHER ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

9) It seems that many of the children placed up for adoption in Ethiopia are not orphans in the sense of having no parents, but rather

they have parents who are unable, or unwilling, to care for them. Can you talk at all about this distinction. Do you feel this makes any difference in the adoption process? Does this ever create any confusion

for the children, the biological parents, and the adoptive parents in the U.S.? ALL CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED INTERNATIONALLY MEET ONE OF 2 DEFINITIONS OF AN ORPHAN 1. NO KNOWN PARENTS 2. ONE SOLE OR SURVIVING PARENT. ALL ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN FALL UNDER THE #1 DEFINITION AS THE EMBASSY REQUIRES THAT ANSWER ON THE I 600 APPLICATION SINCE ALL CHILDREN WERE ABANDONED BY A CUSTODIAL RELATIVE TO AN ORPHAN CENTER OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL AND UNCONDITIONALLY RELINQUISHED/ABANDONED REGARDLESS OF ADOPTION OR NOT. CHILDREN WHO ARE IN ORPHAN CENTERS WHO HAVE APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION CAN BE ADOPTED IF THAT CENTER IS APPROVED TO PROVIDE ADOPTION SERVICES. WHEN I HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK WITH A CHILD, I SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR ASSESSING WHETHER A CHILD WANTS TO BE ADOPTED OR WHETHER A CHILD UNDERSTANDS ADOPTION. NOT ALL AGENCIES DO THIS. SINCE I PLACE A LARGE NUMBER OF OLDER CHILDREN, THIS IS SOMETHING THAT I TRY TO DO TO SEE IF A CHILD UNDERSTANDS WHAT MAY HAPPEN. I HAVE REFUSED TO PLACE CHILDREN IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE ADOPTED. THIS SHOULD BE COMMENDED, NOT CRITICIZED. SINCE YOU ARE NOT IDENTIFYING WHICH CHILD YOU ARE REFERRING TO, I CANNOT COMMENT ON A PARTICULAR CHILD. CHILDREN CAN BE PLACED IN ORPHAN CENTERS DUE TO THE LOST OF BOTH PARENTS OR ONE PARENT. MANY CHILDREN HAVE ONE LIVING PARENT WHO CANNOT CARE FOR THEM DUE TO THEIR OWN SICKNESS, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ETC. THIS IS ACCEPTABLE BY US LAW (I.E. ONE SOLE OR SURVIVING PARENT). EACH CASE IS DIFFERENT. ETHIOPIAN LAW, NOT US LAW, REQUIRES THAT THE RELATIVE WHO ABANDONED THE CHILD AT THE ORPHANAGE APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGE. IT IS THE JUDGE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ASCERTAIN THAT THAT PERSON UNDERSTANDS ADOPTION AND

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AGREES WITH THAT PLAN. IF THEY DO NOT AGREE, THE CASE DOES NOT PASS COURT. THAT HAPPENS OCCASSIONALLY AND SHOWS THAT THE PROCESS IS WORKING. ALSO, OFTEN TIMES CHILDREN ARE TOLD THAT THEY ARE THERE FOR A SPECIFIC REASON BUT THAT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN TRUE.. A RELATIVE MAY TELL THEM THAT TO HIDE THE TRUE FACT (THAT YOUR PARENTS HAVE DIED.. INSTEAD THEY MAY BE TOLD THAT THEY ARE THERE UNTIL THEIR MOTHER GETS WELL.. ETC) ALSO SOMETIMES CHILDREN DO NOT KNOW WHY THEY ARE THERE OR MAY THINK THEY KNOW WHY BUT IT MAY NOT BE REALITY.

HAGUE ISSUES:

10) Your agency applied for and was denied Hague accreditation by the Council on Accreditation. You have declined to tell your clients the reasons for the COA's denial. Why? WE HAVE NOT DECLINED TO SHARE THAT INFORMATION WITH CLIENT WHO HAVE ASKED. WE TELL EVERYTHING WE KNOW.

11) Is there anything more you would like to say regarding the Hague process?

12) Have you reapplied in 2010 for Hague accreditation? WE HAVE NOT REAPPLIED

MISS KELLER, WITH THE QUANTITY OF ADOPTIONS WE HAVE COMPLETED, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A FEW UNHAPPY FAMILIES. HAPPY FAMILIES GO ON THEIR WAY WITH THEIR NORMAL LIVES. WHEN A FEW UNHAPPY FAMILIES DOMINATE THE INTERNET



WITH STORIES, A CLEAR PICTURE IS NOT GIVEN. WE HAVE HUNDREDS OF HAPPY FAMILIES.. PROBABLY 98% OF OUR FAMILIES ARE HAPPY AND WE ARE HONORED TO SERVE THEM. EVERY ADOPTION AGENCY HAS UNHAPPY FAMILIES AND STORIES ABOUT A PARTICULAR SITUATION. THAT DOES NOT MAKE IT TRUE. WE ENJOY A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR LICENSING BOARD AND ARE WORKING HONESTLY AND ETHICALLY IN THE COUNTRIES WE SERVE. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOMEONE WHO IS NOT HAPPY WITH THEIR ADOPTION BUT THIS IS NOT REFLECTIVE OF THE MAJORITY OF OUR FAMILIES. THE INTERNET IS A ONE WAY STREET... WE CANNOT SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT CASES DUE TO CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES BUT PEOPLE CAN SAY ANYTHING ON THE INTERNET AND IT IS BELIEVED AS THE TRUTH! THIS IS A TIME WHEN INTER COUNTRY ADOPTIONS ARE BEING ATTACKED. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN THE PROCESS AND TO WORK IN A WAY THAT IS CORRECT AND RIGHT IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE WE WORK BUT NOT EVERYONE WILL UNDERSTAND THINGS 100% AND NOT EVERYONE WILL BE HAPPY. WE ALL NEED TO REMEMBER THAT CHILDRENS FUTURES ARE CHANGED FOREVER BASED ON ADOPTION. THIS IS A TIME TO PRESENT INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS IN A POSITIVE LIGHT AS THE FUTURE FOR ORPHANS WILL BE FOREVER AFFECTED. WE TRUST THAT YOU WILL BE ON THE SIDE OF THE ORPHAN AND THAT OUR AGENCY BE PRESENTED FAIRLY AS WE HAVE HAPPY FAMILIES FROM EVERY COUNTRY WE HAVE REPRESENTED. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SCROLL THROUGH THE PHOTOS ON OUR WELCOME HOME PAGES TO ENJOY THE PROOF OF OUR SUCCESS.

I FEEL THAT I HAVE ADDRESSED YOUR CONCERNS AND DO NOT WISH TO BE CONTACTED AGAIN REGARDING THIS MATTER. I AM BUSY SERVING OUR FAMILIES AND NEED TO SPEND MY TIME HELPING THEM! HAVE YOU CONSIDERED OPENING YOUR HOME TO A NEEDY ORPHAN?