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14

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FY2  
'This is the program  
for the Holocaust Museum  
It's interesting to note  
Walt Logan's name on it  
He's the judge that signed  
all that stuff.

E  
Schick  
g  
rry  
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*Mensch, Walker, Harrington, MacIntosh and Runyon*

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JAMES C. RUNYON

5263 CENTRAL AVENUE  
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA 33710  
(813) 321-0754

August 14, 1992

IN REPLY:

William T. Witt, Esquire  
P.O. Box 20768  
St. Petersburg, FL 33742

RE: Bradbury v. Straight  
My File: 7032

Dear Mr. Witt:

This letter confirms I now have authority to agree to the proposal you made during our motion argument before Judge Bryson, where you proposed that if we are not to use any materials from Mr. Bradbury's client or employee file, then you would withdraw your production request for them.

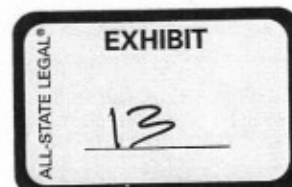
Please prepare a stipulation, if you feel it necessary, and I will execute it on behalf of Straight. I apologize for the time it has taken to respond to your suggestion, but summer vacations made my meeting difficult.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Very truly yours,

  
Brian C. Harrington

cc: Christopher Ferguson, Esquire





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### Betty S. Sembler

Betty S. Sembler has dedicated the past three decades to fighting the war on drugs. In 1976, she was one of ten founding members of Straight, Inc., a nonprofit drug treatment program that successfully treated more than 12,000 young people with drug addiction in eight cities nationally from Dallas to Boston.

Mrs. Sembler then turned her sights to establishing a national drug policy to reinforce the four critical fronts to combat drug abuse: education, treatment, interdiction and law enforcement. She has helped form public policy in the United States' campaign against drugs through her participation in the White House Conference for a Drug Free America, as a member of the Governor's Drug Policy Task Force in Florida, and as a board member of DARE Florida (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), a national organization that provides drug resistance education for elementary and middle school students. Mrs. Sembler also serves on the board of DARE International as vice-chairperson.

Mrs. Sembler has continued her campaign against liberal drug policies and legalization of mind-altering substances on an international basis. She accompanied her husband, Mel, on his mission to Australia as United States Ambassador and presently resides in Rome while her husband serves as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Italy.

Mrs. Sembler is the founder and president of Save Our Society From Drugs (S.O.S.) and the Drug Free America Foundation, Inc. Both organizations work to educate people about attempts to legalize as "medicine" unsafe, ineffective and unapproved drugs such as marijuana, heroin, PCP and crack as well as to reduce illegal drug use, drug addiction and drug-related illnesses and death.

Mrs. Sembler serves on the boards of the Republican Jewish Coalition, Operation PAR (Pinellas County, FL), Florida Holocaust Museum, Florida Governor's Mansion Foundation, Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Training Advisory Board, the Jewish Policy Center and St. Petersburg's Menorah Manor.

### Mel Sembler, U.S. Ambassador to Italy

Ambassador Mel Sembler was appointed by President George W. Bush as Ambassador to Italy and on November 16, 2001, was sworn in by Vice President Cheney at a White House ceremony.

Ambassador Sembler, the former United States Ambassador to Australia and Nauru, was most recently the Chairman of the Board of The Sembler

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### Did You Know

In 1999, the top 10 people listed attributes were...

EXHIBIT

Company, one of the nation's leading shopping center developers. He is nationally recognized as an activist in the anti-drug campaign and as a staunch, long-time supporter of the Republican Party and its candidates.

As a developer, Sembler is recognized for building The Sembler Company into one of the country's most recognized shopping center development firms. In 1986-1987, Sembler served as the international leader and spokesman for the shopping center industry as President of the 40,000-member International Council of Shopping Centers, a position that capped 25 years of active service to this worldwide trade association.

Sembler's work as a civic and political activist is equally noteworthy. A supporter of George H.W. Bush since 1979, Sembler played a leadership role in raising funds for the Bush for President campaign. He was Finance Co-Chairman of The American Bicentennial Presidential Inaugural, raising the dollars needed for the nation's 41st inauguration of the President of the United States.

In February 1989, President George H.W. Bush appointed Sembler United States Ambassador to Australia and Nauru. As the President's personal representative, he actively promoted United States' interests abroad during his three and one-half years' service. At the recommendation of the Governor-General of Australia and with the approval of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Sembler was named an Honorary Officer in the Order of Australia at an investiture ceremony in October 2000. The Order of Australia is an Australian society of honor for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens and is rarely given to foreigners.

Although best known as a leading shopping center developer, Sembler is also renowned for his activism in the anti-drug movement. In 1976, Sembler and his wife Betty founded STRAIGHT, an adolescent drug treatment program. During its 17 years of existence, STRAIGHT successfully graduated more than 12,000 young people nationwide from its remarkable program.

Sembler served as Finance Chairman for the Republican National Committee from 1997 to 2000. He also served as Florida's National Committeeman to the Republican National Committee after his election in 1994 until 2000. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador to Italy, Sembler was the Honorary Chairman of the Republican Jewish Coalition and Chairman of the Drug Free America Foundation, and served on the boards of the International Council of Shopping Centers, the Florida Governor's Mansion Foundation, and the Florida Holocaust Museum, and was a resident member of the Florida Council of 100, a business advisory group to the Governor of Florida. He continues to serve on the boards of the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation and the American Australian Education Leadership Foundation.

Born in 1930 in St. Joseph, Missouri, Sembler is a 1952 graduate of Northwestern University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree. He and his wife Betty have three sons, Steve, Brent, and Greg, and are the proud grandparents of eleven grandchildren.

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After the Netherlands leg  
use for adults, the usage  
year olds nearly tripled fr  
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TO: Lowell Clary D  
Acting Inspector General (OSIG)

DATE: May 19, 1993

FROM: *FM* Fred M. Gravius *hlc*  
Inspector Specialist (OSIG)

SUBJECT: Child Abuse/Neglect by Straight, Inc.

OSIG Case Number 92-0242

BACKGROUND:

In December of 1992, Mr. Richard Bradbury filed a complaint with the Inspector General's Office (OSIG) against Straight, Inc., (Straight). In that complaint, Mr. Bradbury alleged that the Straight program is both physically and psychologically damaging to the children that are enrolled in the program. He further stated that in the past, Straight has violated numerous sections of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC) and Florida Statutes. Further, that HRS did not respond properly to a Straight licensing issue.

To support his allegations, Mr. Bradbury supplied the Inspector General's Office with numerous files reflecting violations of the FAC and copies of alleged child abuse/neglect incident reports, some of which were confirmed, unfounded, or without classification.

On April 13, 1993, Straight of St. Petersburg closed and moved its base of operation to Atlanta, Georgia. Thus, the Straight organization no longer exists in the state of Florida. Straight is a national drug rehabilitation program that had two facilities in Florida; one in St. Petersburg, which closed before this report was completed, and one in Orlando, which closed prior to the onset of this investigation. The Straight program is centered around confrontation, peer pressure, strict discipline, and high self discipline. This type of facility is licensed by HRS based on the authority of FAC 10E-16.

The abuse and neglect incidents brought to light by the complainant were properly investigated at the time of occurrence, and will not be addressed in this report. The focus of this investigation is to determine: (1) if there was a pattern of abuse or neglect by Straight; and (2) to determine if proper corrective/protective action was taken by HRS to prevent or stop improper action by Straight, with respect to the licensing issue.



DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION:

According to Ray T. Berry, program supervisor of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health, District 7 Program Office (ADM), there were occasions when HRS received phone calls from state senators inquiring about the Straight program and letting it be known that they strongly supported the program, thus exercising a certain influence concerning Straight matters.

Further, during an August 22, 1989, follow-up site visit to the St. Petersburg Straight facility, the HRS licensing team was prepared to recommend that the Straight license not be issued because of lack of compliance on issues that surfaced during an earlier site inspection. While at the facility the team received a phone call informing them that no matter what they found Straight would receive their license. The person who received the phone call was Sue Heavner, however, she stated that she did not remember who made the call or exactly what they said.

Additionally, according to Harry Moffitt, senior human services program specialist with the headquarters ADM office, he was in a meeting with Dr. Ivor Groves, former assistant secretary, ADM, when a phone call was received by Dr. Groves. That phone call was made by Mike Becker, District 5 administrator, and Martha Linderman, District 5 ADM. Mr. Moffitt stated that the phone call was concerning Straight licensing issues. During that phone call Mr. Moffitt recalled that Dr. Groves told Mr. Becker and Ms. Linderman to make it work.

In yet another meeting with Dr. Groves, Mr. Moffitt and Linda Lewis, former deputy assistant secretary, Headquarters ADM, were discussing the concerns they had relating to Straight's practices. Ms. Lewis brought up the fact that other states had closed Straight because of the very same issues raised by Florida's HRS. That is, withholding medication, excessive use of force, withholding food, sleep deprivation, etc.

According to Mr. Moffitt it was at this point that Dr. Groves told Ms. Lewis "if you do anything other than what I tell you to do on this issue, I will fire you on the spot." Dr. Groves then turned and told Mr. Moffitt "the same goes for you." According to Mr. Moffitt, a short time later in the same meeting Dr. Groves stated that "there was a lot of pressure to get this thing resolved." Mr. Moffitt said that the statement about a lot of pressure to get this thing resolved was relating to the pressure from Ambassador Mel Sembler, one of the founders of Straight. According to Ms. Lewis, she remembers informing Dr. Groves of the problems with Straight. However, she did not remember him telling her that he would fire her.

Ms. Linderman stated that she was prepared to prevent Straight from renewing their license as a result of the August 22, 1989, licensing team's findings. She further stated that after

learning of the phone call received by the licensing team while at the Straight facility, she and Mr. Becker called Dr. Groves on the speaker phone. Ms. Linderman stated that both she and Mike expressed their concerns for the clients under the control of Straight. Ms. Linderman stated that she did not remember exactly what Dr. Groves said, but she does remember that he told them he wanted Straight to get their license. Mr. Becker stated that he did not remember the phone call referenced by Ms. Linderman and Mr. Moffitt. Mr. Becker further stated that he was never told to sign the Straight license.

The OSIG's investigator conducted a telephone interview with Dr. Groves and he stated that he never told anyone to sign a license for Straight; further, it was outside his authority to give such an order. He also stated it was the responsibility of whoever signed the license to make sure that everything was proper before the license was issued. Dr. Groves also denied telling anyone that he would fire them over this issue, or that he was told by Gregory Coler, former HRS Secretary, to license Straight.

Though it cannot be substantiated, the OSIG's investigation indicated that Mr. Coler was contacted several times by Mel Sembler concerning Straight issues. It appears that Mr. Coler then called Dr. Groves about Straight. OSIG's investigator called Mr. Coler several times in an attempt to obtain more information about this issue, however, the calls were never returned.

The OSIG's investigation further revealed that Straight clients were young, had drug, alcohol and/or behavioral problems, and they were sometimes very difficult to work with. As a result, there has been a propensity for abuse or excessive force to be used. There is more than enough documentation in the Florida Protective Services System (FPSS) to substantiate this statement.

Most of the physical abuses were centered around the use of restraints, but not limited to the restraints. Many instances of restraints being used were against clients while they were trying to leave the facility, or clients restraining other clients. Restraints were frequently used if a client did not sit in the chair in a prescribed manor. The clients were required to sit in their chairs for approximately 12 hours a day. During that time, they had to sit up straight in the chair, and at no time were they allowed to use the back of the chair for support. If a client used the back of the chair, then that client would be restrained.

A restraint is a technique used to immobilize an individual. This is accomplished by several individuals immobilizing the victim's limbs. If applied properly there is a minimum danger to the victim.

However, frequently the restraint technique was not applied properly and the victims' arms and legs were twisted or placed in unnatural positions causing injury to that limb.

Additionally, information surfaced indicating that Straight withheld medication from some clients and failed to provide follow-up medical treatment for other clients. Clients were knowingly placed in a dangerous situation by Straight staff and in one case injuries occurred that required emergency room treatment.

As a result of this type of history, HRS personnel became very concerned for the well being of the clients enrolled in the Straight program. As stated earlier in this report, the HRS licensing team was prepared to recommend that a license not be issued to Straight. However, there were two factors that lead to the licensing of Straight; first, was the outside pressure mentioned earlier in this report, and secondly, was the limited authority given to HRS by the FAC 10E-16. The FAC 10E-16 is very specific as to conditions that must be met before a license can be denied. The OSIG investigation revealed that while dealing with Straight, HRS acted within the parameters of the FAC 10E-16.

ALLEGATIONS: 1. Undetermined; 2. Substantiated;  
3. Unsubstantiated

1. The complainant alleged that the clients were psychologically damaged by the Straight program.
2. The complainant further alleged that Straight has violated numerous sections of the Florida Administrative Code and Florida Statutes.
3. Additionally, the complainant stated that HRS did not act properly when dealing with the Straight licensing issue.

FINDINGS:

1. To properly address the complainant's concern of psychological damage caused by Straight, an assessment should be made by qualified medical personnel.
2. The Inspector General's Office investigation revealed that there was a definite pattern of abuse or excessive force used against clients while at Straight facilities.
3. With respect to actions taken by HRS, it appears HRS acted within its authority given the limitations of the FAC 10E-16.
4. It cannot be unequivocally corroborated exactly what roll the outside pressure played in the licensing of Straight, however, HRS did act within its statutory authority.



CONCLUSIONS:

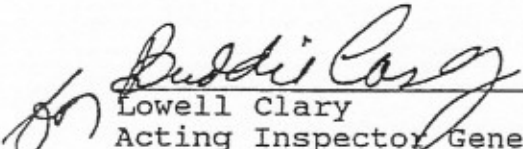
One of the founders of Straight was Ambassador Mel Sembler, and as a result of this, it appears that some members of HRS experienced some degree of pressure to grant Straight a license, when otherwise the license may not have been granted. However, it cannot be unequivocally corroborated that this outside influence actually altered the decision to issue the license.

One of the issues raised by Mr. Bradbury's complaint was the HRS licensing of Straight. While the HRS district administrators were never ordered to issue a license to Straight, there were indications that outside influence was involved with this licensing issue. It appears that pressure may have been generated by Ambassador Sembler and other state senators.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

If it is felt that more aggressive action should be taken by HRS in the future, then changes should be made to the FAC 10E-16 expanding HRS' authority.

COMMENTS:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lowell Clary  
Acting Inspector General

7-6-93  
Date

LC/fg