Attachment A:
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# What the professionals have said about the Seed, Straight, Inc. and other Sembler-based programs

*"So we were very concerned about a program which we looked at as being something of a private jail, utilizing techniques of torture and punishment which even a convicted criminal wouldn't be subject to…and I use their terminology—restraint techniques, it would be our terminology that it was child abuse and torture—directed by Miller Newton."*

--David Levin, formerly assistant state attorney for Sarasota, Florida – commenting on Straight, Inc.-Sarasota which closed facing numerous possible criminal indictments. One allegation was making kids clean toilets with their bare hands.

*"The violations that we found when we investigated were overwhelmingly of violations of civil rights and safety and health and people being held against their will, sleep deprivation, restraint, seclusion, things like that."*

*--Bob Dickson, Commissioner of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse; speaking on CBS' West 57th Street, 1-21-89 and explaining why the state of Texas revoked the license for KIDS of El Paso, a Straight, Inc. descendent program*

*"Please contact this office in the event that you discover Mr. Miller Newton is opening a facility in Florida."*

--Letter concerning Straight, Inc.-descendant program Kids of North Jersey, from the New Jersey Department of Human Resources

*"Straight officials have generously allowed me to witness some of their group sessions firsthand…I believe that Straight's treatment can be fairly compared with brainwashing in prisoner-of-war camps as documented by Brown*. Thus, procedures that would be reprehensible in any context outside of a prisoner-of-war camp are considered acceptable treatment in the case of drug addiction."*

--Dr. Bruce K. Alexander of Simon Fraser University in Peaceful Measures: Canada's Way Out of the War on Drugs, p. 75; *[Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing by J.A.C. Brown]

*"Several children attempted suicide while staying with host families, but the attempts were not reported and the children were not treated…some teen-age clients were forced to reveal their sexual fantasies during group sessions. Others were subjected to 'spit therapy,' where children would spit on each other to reduce their egos."*

--Jacqueline M. Ennis, former head of licensing for Virginia's Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; speaking about Straight, Inc. [St. Petersburg Times, 7-31-91]

*"Until such time as I am convinced in my own mind that yours is a competent program, I as a judge will not be entering orders of placement into your program. I don't think I legitimately could."*

*"Everything I see smacks of child abuse."*

--Palm Beach County Circuit Judge Michael Gersten speaking to Barbara Griffith, Executive Director of Growing Together, a Straight, Inc. descendent program in Lake Worth, Florida [The Palm Beach Post, 3-9-90, p. 8a]

*"…kids trying to hurt themselves, slashing their wrists because they found out the program was so hard to cope with, and those sorts of things, along with the fact that children who are at the program have no contact with their parents where they can tell their parents, - Gee! Something's going wrong here."*

Bette McClure of Massachusetts' Office for Children in a report by Stoughton TV Checkpoint News Center 9, c. July 1991; a week after OFC's decision not to renew Straight, Inc.-Boston's license because of findings of "abuse, strip searches, and a dangerous environment for the kids at Straight."

*"Documentation on file indicates that there have been incidents where children have been subjected to unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature, including…interference with daily living functions such as eating, sleeping or toileting, or withholding of medication."*

--Letter dated June 27, 1990 from Fred Dumont, Santa Ana, California District Manager for the Department of Social Services to Straight, Inc. Nation Headquarters explaining why state authorities ordered the program closed in California

*"It has been determined that Straight, Inc. has consistently failed to abide by the requirements of law…"* [Among the violations cited were: the unsupervised dispensing of medications; treating clients who did not meet Straight, Inc.'s criteria of being chemically dependent or being in danger of becoming chemically dependent; forcing clients to sleep in beds with other clients; failing to care for injured clients; and restraining clients with nylon rope. It was noted that at least one [host home] family failed to provide proper bathroom facilities for the clients of Straight, Inc. giving them only a container to urinate in during the night]

--From a letter to Straight, Inc.-Dallas, TX, dated August 8, 1991 from the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse notifying Straight, Inc. of the Commission's intent to revoke Straights license. Straight, Inc.-Dallas voluntarily closed on October 31, 1991 citing "economic reasons"

*"Straight is not a health care organization. It is a business posing as a health care organization and as a result hundreds of kids have been hurt. All of the business operations consist of fraud, double and triple billing of health insurance companies at he same time and they bill government grants while telling parents they re not the recipients of any kinds of government money*."

--Janet Kennedy, Ph.D. Pharmacy, MS, Hospital Administration, of Austin, Texas after a private, three-year investigation of Straight, Inc. [Channel 12, Eye of Tampa Bay Show, 1992]

*"They run really close to performing psychic murder."*
*"…a concentration camp for throwaway kids."*

--Marge Robertson, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Chapter of the ACLU, speaking to the Cincinnati Post about Straight, Inc.

*"Straight conducts a program that practices psychological coercion and physical assault against children under the guise of drug and alcohol treatment. I believe there is reason to fear for the physical and mental safety of any child sent to the program."*

--Dr. Richard Ofshe, author and thought control specialist at the University of California, Berkeley

*"Actually I was quite familiar with Straight having investigated it extensively and having devoted an entire chapter of one of my books to the abuses of Straight. In my view -- and that of many other experts -- Straight was a symbol of the destructive ignorance that lay at the heart of our entire approach to drug treatment and control."*

*"Straight represents one of the worst excesses created by the drug war environment, where an 'anything goes' kind of intolerance toward drug users prevails. It is a cult – plain and simple – of people who seize on parent's frustrations with their youngsters and then subject the kids to torture and brainwashing to make them obedient and drug-free."*

*"As a proud American, I find Melvin Sembler, our ambassador to Italy, and his wife, Betty, to be profound embarrassments. It is important that their advice on the drug war and especially on drug treatment be ignored. Indeed, it might be best if Italians listened to what this powerful couple had to say about drugs - and then followed policies in precisely the opposite direction."*

--Dr. Arnold Trebach, attorney, author, professor emeritus of criminal justice at American University, and founder of the Drug Policy Foundation

*"It was almost unbelievable that the director of the program, a man with supposedly strong credentials, would allow and condone the use of violence. We find the institution highly questionable and someone should look into it. We think there's something radically wrong."*

--Secaucus, New Jersey Municipal Judge Emil DeBaglivo referring to Miller Newton (Straight, Inc.'s former National Clinical Director) upon convicting three of Newton's counselors for beating a client at Kid's of North Jersey, a Straight, Inc.- descendent program.

*"According to sworn testimony, Straight often left restrained group members sitting in their own urine, feces or vomit until suitable concessions were extracted."*

--Dr. Barry Beyerstein, a leading Canadian researcher on opiates and brain functioning

*"Straight is a fascist dictatorship…They've got all the strong points and bad points of totalitarian groups."*

--Dr. Stanton Peele, world-renowned addiction specialist

*“In some instances they were locked in rooms by themselves and denied food for days. They also reported that they were made to sit in chairs without speaking while listening to others berate them for hours. I recently interviewed a child that would be diagnosed as an emotionally unstable personality with paranoid overtones. The use of the above noted practices with this kind of child could easily result in a precipitation of major mental disturbance. Fortunately this child was able to run from the Seed before very much damage had been done to her psychologically. She did manifest some confusion and paranoid ideation, which she felt, was a result of the manner in which she was treated by the Seed personnel. I have interviewed children who made suicide attempts following their running from the Seed. Overwhelming feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and despair were in evidence.”*

--Jeffery J. Elenewski, Ph.D., clinical psychologist, The Children’s Psychiatric Center, Dade County, Florida in a letter to Mr. Alex Miller, Youth Coordinator, Florida State Drug Abuse Program, Miami; The aforementioned letter was included in the 1974 U.S. Senate report on Straight, Inc.’s predecessor, The Seed

*"The state does not sanction this in any way, shape or form. The state does not sanction the restraint of kids by other kids, the lack of privacy or the lack of visitation. Kids in detention center have more rights than kids coming into this program. People in jail do."*

-- Rik Pavlescak, HRS district director of substance abuse services, commenting on Growing Together, a Straight, Inc. descendent program founded by former Straight, Inc. training director, Dr. George Ross [Sun-Sentinel, 3-9-1990]

*"It amazes me that despite the pattern of complaints and abuse allegations, Straight chapters can simply change their names and continue to operate."*

*“It's really shocking that the Semblers are still lauded and honored after all that's come out about their organization.”*

--Rick Ross, cult expert, intervention specialist, and self-described Republican