

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

Kimberly R. Sweidy,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	3:21-cv-08013-SPL
v.	)	
	)	Phoenix, Arizona
Spring Ridge Academy, et al.,	)	June 4, 2024
	)	1:00 p.m.
Defendants.	)	
	)	

BEFORE: THE HONORABLE STEVEN P. LOGAN, JUDGE
REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
JURY TRIAL DAY 5 - (Afternoon Session)

Official Court Reporter:
Teri Veres, RMR, CRR
Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. Courthouse, Suite 312
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Proceedings Reported by Stenographic Court Reporter
Transcript Prepared by Computer-Aided Transcription

A P P E A R A N C E S

* * *

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ALSO PRESENT: Noel Reddy, paralegal
Suzanne Courtney, client representative

1	<i>I N D E X</i>				
2					
3	<u>PLAINTIFF WITNESS:</u>	<u>DIRECT</u>	<u>CROSS</u>	<u>REDIRECT</u>	<u>RECROSS</u>
4	<u>JUSTIN ZYCH</u>				
5	By Ms. Allard	4			
6	By Mr. Smith		16		
7	<u>TROY WILLIAMS</u>				
8	By Ms. Allard	18			
9	By Mr. Grasso		33		
10	<u>MOLLY ADKINS</u>				
11	By Ms. Allard	49		94	
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13	<u>MAISY MOREHEAD</u>				
14	By Ms. Allard	101			
15	By Mr. Grasso		126		
16	<u>EMMA KERRIGAN</u>				
17	By Ms. Allard	129			
18					
19	Discussion at sidebar....95, 99				
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COURTROOM DEPUTY: All rise for the jury.
(Jury in at 1:00 p.m.)

THE COURT: Good afternoon, everyone. Please take your seats. Court will come to order. All parties present when the Court last closed are present again. Next witness.

COURTROOM DEPUTY: You can just stand right -- right there is good and I'll swear you in.

COURTROOM DEPUTY: Thank you.

You can have a seat on the witness stand.

THE COURT: Mr. Zych, when you take the stand, just adjust the microphone and speak directly into it, please.

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: Thanks for coming in this afternoon.

THE WITNESS: Certainly.

THE COURT: Ms. Allard, go ahead, please.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MS. ALLARD:

Q. Can you please state and spell your name for the record.

A. First name Justin, J-u-s-t-i-n. Last name Zych, Z-y-c-h.

1 Q. Were you working as the principal of Spring Ridge Academy
2 when Kimberly Sweidy enrolled her daughter?

3 A. Yes, I was.

4 Q. What was your training and experience that qualified you
5 to be principal at that time?

6 A. Was a certified K-12 principal as a result of earning a
7 Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern
8 Arizona University with 12-plus years of classroom instruction
9 functioning as a K-12 instructor as well as a --

10 Q. Are you a licensed therapist?

11 A. I am not.

12 Q. Did you conduct therapy at Spring Ridge Academy?

13 A. I did not.

14 Q. Do you currently conduct therapy?

15 A. I do.

16 Q. And what training and experience do you have that
17 qualified you to conduct therapy?

18 A. Spending over two decades working with families and young
19 people in crisis.

20 Q. Are you licensed as a therapist in Arizona?

21 A. I am not a licensed therapist.

22 Q. Were you working in the front office the day that
23 Kimberly Sweidy came to Spring Ridge Academy with the Sheriff
24 to remove her daughter?

25 A. I was.

1 Q. Can you describe Kimberly Sweidy's demeanor when you saw
2 her?

3 A. Yeah, there's a -- there's a -- there's a lobby. There's
4 a space there when you enter the school to receive visitors.
5 There's a secretary's desk. It's the -- it's the main entry.
6 Kimberly came in with two law enforcers and was actually very
7 quiet and requested that she see her daughter.

8 Q. At any time did you observe her combative or threatening?

9 A. Not at that time, no.

10 Q. Did you ever observe that in her behavior?

11 A. Can you be more specific?

12 Q. On the day that she picked up her daughter did you ever
13 observe her confront anyone or engage in any combative or
14 threatening behavior?

15 A. Not to my knowledge, no.

16 Q. Were teachers keeping grade book -- grade books on-line
17 in BestNotes, the system used at Spring Ridge Academy?

18 A. BestNotes was a software program that functioned as
19 a database system that was not featured as an on-line
20 platform.

21 Q. Would parents be able to access their children's grade
22 book from home while they were enrolled in a class?

23 A. No, ma'am.

24 Q. Why not?

25 A. That's not how the system was set up.

1 Q. How was it set up?

2 A. The BestNotes software would generate reports to share
3 with both students and parents with regularity and frequency.

4 Q. Well, I mean, in some schools -- I don't know if you have
5 children. Do you have any children that have an on-line grade
6 book?

7 A. I do not.

8 Q. So it's your testimony that there is no way for a parent
9 to see how their child is doing in a particular class based on
10 BestNotes?

11 A. That is correct, not virtually. There was no on-line
12 feature to make it transparent for parents in realtime how a
13 student was doing day-to-day in the classroom.

14 Q. Do you recall receiving an e-mail request to preserve
15 academic records at Spring Ridge Academy from Kimberly Sweidy?

16 A. I recall receiving an e-mail that stated from the get-go
17 that there was legal representation involved and there was
18 instruction, and at that time I forwarded correspondence to my
19 supervisors.

20 Q. And who were they?

21 A. At that time it would have been Suzie Courtney.

22 Q. Did you ever see any homework or school work completed by
23 Rearden Sweidy Stata when she was enrolled at Spring Ridge
24 Academy?

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. And what did you see?

2 A. I would have seen some of her written work for English
3 language arts. I would have seen some of her social studies
4 work and economics. That's all I recall at this time.

5 Q. Did you do anything to preserve that work as a record at
6 the school?

7 A. For example?

8 Q. Put it in a file cabinet.

9 A. No, ma'am. The work created, generated, completed by
10 students belonged to the student.

11 Q. Was it returned to the student at the end of the
12 reporting period?

13 A. That is correct, for all students.

14 Q. Do you recall that Rearden's economics teacher quit or
15 was no longer at the school in the middle of her term for
16 economics?

17 A. I do recall that there was a global pandemic. COVID-19
18 arrived on the scene, which required all of us to make
19 significant adjustments knowing that we were in different
20 territory. That impacted my social studies teacher, who was a
21 little bit older and said, "Justin, I can't do it anymore for
22 fear of contracting the infection. Sorry, but I have to
23 resign."

24 Q. Did you inform the students or the parents of those
25 students that they would no longer be receiving any

1 instruction in their economics class or any social studies
2 class that that individual taught?

3 A. Certainly.

4 Q. Did you inform Mr. Sweidy?

5 A. I do not recall. I don't think I did specifically inform
6 any specific parent. That would have gone out via HR and
7 upper leadership management.

8 Q. So isn't it true that Ms. Sweidy Stata did not complete
9 any work for economics, but she obtained a final grade from
10 you for that class?

11 A. That is false.

12 Q. Did she obtain a final grade in that class?

13 A. She did.

14 Q. And do you recall how she was able to obtain a grade in a
15 class where there was no teacher?

16 A. I do. The student, Rearden in this case, was able to
17 complete the course work that social studies teacher did
18 provide while she was still there; and then I personally,
19 given the circumstances, COVID-19 in particular, I provided
20 some project materials for Rearden to complete the course work
21 in economics.

22 Q. Isn't it true that you asked her to define GDP, and based
23 on her answer you gave her a grade in the class and that was
24 the only metric by which she was assessed?

25 A. That is incorrect.

1 Q. What did you assess her with?

2 A. There was a project-based approach to her demonstrating
3 enough knowledge in macro economics that I felt as principal
4 she deserved credit to complete the semester in economics
5 given where we were in a COVID-19 environment.

6 Q. What was the project?

7 A. She had to study what "GDP" meant on a global scale, how
8 it affected individual nations and how that translated to
9 individual economic well-being, including herself.

10 Q. And was this something that you saw and received from her
11 in writing?

12 A. Yes, there was a -- there was an artifact that she shared
13 with me. We met and she delivered her project.

14 Q. Do you recall being asked questions regarding her
15 incomplete grades that showed on multiple progress reports?

16 A. Are you asking if I saw the incompletes?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. I would have -- yes. Given that I managed the record
19 keeping and academics, I would have seen that, yes.

20 Q. And on most occasions she was given credit with what you
21 testified was quote/unquote "supplemental work" at the end of
22 her term, correct?

23 A. In specifics regarding which subject area?

24 Q. Well, I can ask you about her grade in literature.

25 A. Are you -- I'm not sure I understand the question.

1 Q. Do you recall that she earned a C in two quarters, three
2 and four, and ended up with an A in the class?

3 A. I would have to see the record.

4 Q. Do you recall your deposition testimony that this looks
5 like supplemental course work?

6 A. Again, I would have to see the record or the exhibit that
7 features the letter grades.

8 Q. Do you have any independent recollection of her work in
9 literature?

10 A. I recall that by the time Rearden was completing her
11 course work in English language arts she was doing so
12 remotely. She was at that time living with her father, and as
13 a result of there being some academic integrity at Spring
14 Ridge Academy we asked that she complete course work in
15 English language arts and fine arts in order to meet the
16 requisite credit earnings to receive a diploma.

17 So in that time Rearden, while living with her father,
18 would have had to write some analytical essays and share them
19 with her English teacher via e-mail.

20 Q. So if Spring Ridge Academy was -- requested all
21 communications in this matter by way of e-mail, then you would
22 think that her work would have been produced in those
23 communications because they were e-mailed?

24 A. I don't understand your question.

25 Q. Well, you just testified that the school work is returned

1 to the student hard copy when they're enrolled at Spring Ridge
2 Academy. You don't keep records of it.

3 Is that my understanding of your testimony?

4 A. That's correct.

5 Q. But if Rearden was in California doing supplemental work
6 in English to get a grade in the class, she would have
7 e-mailed that work?

8 A. She would have e-mailed the work electronically to the
9 English instructor, that's correct.

10 Q. So if, in fact, that actually occurred, there would have
11 been an e-mail record of that work?

12 A. I think that would be accurate.

13 Q. And Spring Ridge Academy would have preserved it?

14 A. It may certainly be in the English teacher's e-mail inbox.

15 Q. And who was the English teacher?

16 A. Mr. Clay Smith.

17 Q. And was Mr. Smith working at Spring Ridge Academy when
18 you received e-mail requests for records from Kimberly Sweidy?

19 A. That is correct.

20 Q. Did you ever ask him for any records?

21 A. No, ma'am.

22 Q. Is he related to Erin Smith?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. How are they related?

25 A. They are married.

1 Q. Do you recall a student by the name of Molly Dickin?

2 A. I do.

3 Q. Do you recall a teacher by the name of Dr. Ted?

4 A. Dr. Ted Whitworth, yes.

5 Q. Do you recall the students ever reporting that instead
6 of holding class, he played the television show *House* for
7 class?

8 A. I do not.

9 Q. Do you ever recall walking into a -- the classroom of
10 Dr. Ted and seeing him close to Molly Dickin with his hand
11 under her skirt?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Did students wear skirts at Spring Ridge Academy?

14 A. At one time skirts were part of the dress code.

15 Q. Were they part of the dress code when Molly Dickin
16 attended?

17 A. I believe so, but I actually don't recall.

18 Q. At any time were you advised by your employers to refuse
19 to respond to e-mail inquiries from Ms. Sweidy regarding her
20 child's schedule?

21 A. Yes, ma'am.

22 Q. And did you change her child's schedule without informing
23 her?

24 A. I don't recall. I'd have to see the documents, the
25 records.

1 Q. Do you recall taking her out of calculus and putting her
2 in Algebra 2?

3 A. I recall there being the need for Rearden to complete a
4 semester of Algebra 2 because a semester credit was not
5 featured on the Henry M. Gunn High School transcript I
6 received upon Rearden's enrollment.

7 Q. Do you recall giving a grade to Rearden for Algebra 1
8 even though she did not take Algebra 1 at Spring Ridge
9 Academy?

10 A. I recall I do this for all students. Typically, Algebra
11 1 is a math course that's taken in eighth grade for some
12 students; and if the student demonstrates mastery in Algebra
13 1, when they show up as a much older student in high school I
14 will honor credit for Algebra 1 when they're demonstrating
15 skills at an Algebra 2 level.

16 Q. But you did more than honor credit. You actually gave
17 her a grade. Do you recall doing that?

18 A. I -- that sounds accurate as well based on her
19 demonstrating competency in the subject area.

20 Q. And other than the fact another school gave her credit
21 for the class, what did you do to assess her mastery to be
22 able to give her a grade?

23 A. I don't recall the credit being featured in her record
24 showing that she had already earned credit in Algebra 1.

25 Q. I think you said that you will give a student credit

1 for taking Algebra 1 in eighth grade.

2 Is that your testimony?

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. So if you -- and that you will assign a grade -- a Spring
5 Ridge Academy grade to that performance, correct?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And that -- you do that based on an assessment?

8 A. That is correct.

9 Q. What assessment?

10 A. Would have been a formative assessment that's completed
11 in the math class.

12 Q. And a letter grade is assigned based on the assessment?

13 A. Yes, ma'am, based on the evaluation.

14 Q. Did you keep any records of that assessment?

15 A. I don't have the actual formative assessment to determine
16 the evaluation, I do not.

17 Q. Is that done on a computer or hard copy?

18 A. Would have been completed in the classroom and then the
19 evaluation featured in BestNotes.

20 Q. Would the test be on a computer or on a piece of paper?

21 A. Would have been on a piece of paper.

22 MS. ALLARD: No further questions.

23 THE COURT: Is there any cross-examination?

24 MR. SMITH: Yes, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: Come on up.

1 CROSS-EXAMINATION

2 BY MR. SMITH:

3 Q. Mr. Zych, you were asked some questions a moment ago
4 about incompletes; and I'm wondering do you remember when it
5 was those incompletes appeared on Ms. Stata's transcript?

6 A. I think at that time an incomplete would suggest that
7 Rearden in this case had not generated enough course work to
8 be evaluated and so she received an incomplete.

9 At the same time, if I remember accurately, it may have
10 coincided with the time she was withdrawn to then live with
11 her father.

12 Q. And was there also a time when she was withdrawn -- that
13 you're aware of, withdrawn from the school by her mother for a
14 period of time before she was returned?

15 A. That is correct.

16 Q. And so during that time would she have been continuing to
17 attend to her courses while -- before she was back at Spring
18 Ridge Academy?

19 A. In the time -- recalling the period prior to her return,
20 I don't remember the specifics as to what course work she had
21 a chance to maintain connection to prior to her return.

22 Q. So if we get to the end of the term -- when would a term
23 end? When was the term in the spring of 2020? When would
24 that have ended?

25 A. Working in a quarterly system, in spring there would have

1 been -- quarter three would have ended in March. Quarter four
2 would have ended in June.

3 Q. So if we're having a quarter that's ending in March and
4 it's got incompletes or no grades for certain courses, are
5 those grades indicative of her missing work that needed to be
6 turned in?

7 A. That very well could be the case, yes.

8 Q. Would that account for a subsequent report card showing
9 actual grades in those previously incomplete and no grade?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 MR. SMITH: That's all I have, thank you.

12 THE COURT: Is there redirect?

13 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Subject to recall?

15 MS. ALLARD: Yes, Your Honor.

16 THE COURT: Sir, your testimony's completed now; but
17 it appears that they may call you back at a later time.

18 Please be careful walking down the stairs behind you
19 and have a wonderful afternoon.

20 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

21 THE COURT: Next witness, please.

22 MS. ALLARD: Molly Dickin.

23 THE COURT: No, no, no, no, no.

24 THE WITNESS: Sorry.

25 MS. ALLARD: Your Honor, I'm going to change the

1 witness --

2 THE COURT: Can you speak into a microphone, please.

3 MS. ALLARD: The witness has to attend to something
4 right now so I would like to call Troy Williams instead at
5 this time.

6 COURTROOM DEPUTY: You can step forward and I'll
7 swear you in. Do you want to just stop right at the lectern
8 and I'll swear you in. Raise your right hand.

9 *(Witness is sworn.)*

10 COURTROOM DEPUTY: Thank you. You can have a seat
11 on the witness stand.

12 THE COURT: Mr. Williams, when you get adjusted
13 there, please pull down the microphone. Speak directly into
14 it. Counsel, when you're ready, the witness is ready.

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION

16 BY MS. ALLARD:

17 Q. Can you please state and spell your name for the record.

18 A. It's Troy Devon Williams. So T-r-o-y, D-e-v-o-n,
19 W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s.

20 Q. Mr. Williams, did you enroll your daughter at Spring
21 Ridge Academy?

22 A. I did.

23 Q. How is it you were directed to Spring Ridge Academy?

24 A. We were directed there through some educational
25 consultants. I believe that they're called Hall Educational

1 Consultants.

2 Q. What time period did your daughter attend Spring Ridge
3 Academy?

4 A. She was there from the end of October of 2017 through the
5 end of December of 2018.

6 Q. Did you tour Spring Ridge Academy prior to enrollment?

7 A. We did. I -- I was skeptical and was highly encouraged
8 by the -- the educational consultants to go and view it
9 myself, and so in the middle of October of 2017 I went there.

10 I met with Leslie, I believe, who was the Clinical
11 Director and I toured. I spent probably an hour and a half
12 there touring and talking with Leslie.

13 Q. What about the program as it was conveyed to you led you
14 to enroll your daughter?

15 A. There were several phrases that just kept getting
16 repeated. One was that it was clinically sophisticated,
17 multifaceted therapy, clinically sophisticated and
18 evidence-based therapy and I was -- I really was led to
19 believe that everything in the program had this therapeutic
20 nature to it from the schooling, the classroom, to group
21 therapy, to individual therapy, that it was kind of an
22 advanced way of treatment and in a very compassionate
23 environment.

24 And one thing -- so I work in the healthcare industry and
25 I have -- I work with a lot of physicians, and so prior to

1 this I spoke with several of my physician friends, including a
2 forensic psychiatrist about these types of programs, and we
3 were on the East Coast so I was out of Philadelphia at the
4 time.

5 And to a T they would say, well, these -- you know,
6 "These aren't proven methods. Why don't you do more, you
7 know, outpatient therapy at home," and -- but when I got to
8 Spring Ridge everybody kept saying, "Well, this is more
9 advanced. The East Coast is kind of more backwards. You
10 know, they're not up with the times."

11 And so when you couple that with this clinical
12 sophistication and evidence-based approaches, it just -- it
13 just seemed like I'd come across something that was -- that
14 was just more advanced for my daughter.

15 Q. Were you told before you enrolled your daughter what the
16 workshops were about and what their content was?

17 A. No, no, we were told that there were workshops and we
18 were told that as parents we would be participating in some of
19 the workshops or doing workshops that were highly similar to
20 what our daughter was going through and there would be a time
21 when our family would be asked to attend as well, but we were
22 not told about any of the contents of the workshops.

23 Q. Is there anything troubling that occurred in any workshop
24 that you attended?

25 A. Every workshop that we attended. So in all we attended

1 three workshops. The first one was called Parent Challenge,
2 and I think that it correlated in the curriculum to one called
3 Teen Challenge but at this workshop -- it was a couple-day
4 workshop and it was unlike anything I attended before because
5 we were divided into groups with other parents, and we were
6 being asked to really divulge kind of personal traumas or
7 intimate secrets in front of everybody; and if we wouldn't
8 open up like that we were supposedly, you know, holding --
9 holding everybody back. We weren't being vulnerable, and at
10 the time I was worried that somehow my daughter's progress
11 would be slowed or threatened by my -- any type of push back I
12 would give in the workshop. So that was the first workshop.

13 I remember just feeling kind of humiliated and the -- you
14 know, what was this for the parents. Any time I'd push back,
15 incidentally -- this is from the first workshop. Any time I'd
16 push back I'd be told that I'm -- I should be looking into
17 myself in terms of why I'm asking these types of questions.
18 Something's wrong with me if I can't just get with the
19 program, something's wrong.

20 The next workshop was even worse. It was called Action,
21 and at this workshop we were given assignments to basically --
22 in different ways to humiliate ourselves in front of the other
23 -- other parents and we were essentially rewarded for doing
24 so. If we didn't do so, we were kind of shamed for not doing
25 so, and so I remember my assignment.

1 I had to dress up like -- like an 80s rock 'n roll person
2 and try to put on some show in front of the other parents. I
3 remember that there was a woman there who didn't want to do
4 her assignment, and she was kind of afraid and crying and it
5 just -- it just felt like she was shamed for not
6 participating.

7 So everybody needed to participate. If I would push back
8 or if I would not participate then, again, I'm told that I'm
9 holding back the progress of my daughter. I don't know how
10 that was connected, but the strangest thing about that second
11 workshop that really drove home the -- I don't know another
12 word to describe it, but it was kind of a -- I'd say the
13 closest thing I'd ever come to kind of a cult-like environment
14 is for a reward for completing the -- the personal humiliation
15 or public humiliation the parents -- the other parents
16 gathered around and they -- they held me, like collectively
17 held me off the ground like a baby, like I'm swaddled kind of
18 like in their arms and they rocked me, like slowly rock me
19 like you would rock a baby while music was playing; and I
20 remember thinking, "I need to get the hell out of here. This
21 is -- something's weird with this," but everybody was doing it
22 and it was, like, the reward for what I had endured, being
23 rocked to music.

24 The other thing, at the conclusion of that -- at this
25 point this was -- you know, it's like your eyes are just,

1 like, deer in the headlights. What is going on?

2 At the conclusion of that -- and I apologize for the long
3 answer -- we were led into a room with blindfolds and -- and
4 kind of somebody, I don't know who it was, grabbed our arms
5 and kind of led us to sit in a chair; and then still with the
6 blindfolds on somebody started rubbing lotion on our hands and
7 on our feet, kind of on the arms, and it was -- again, not
8 told what was happening, not told why this was being done, but
9 being told that this was part of the proven therapeutic method
10 and our daughters were gonna be receiving similar rewards.

11 This was the reward for completing the workshop, but I'd
12 never felt so kind of out of control, like I had no idea what
13 was going on or why it was going on, ever, in any experience.

14 And, again, I can't -- I don't have the words to -- to
15 describe what that's like other than -- you know what it
16 reminded me of? Shortly after I was listening to a podcast
17 about escaping NXIVM where people participated in things and
18 in hindsight they looked back and said, "Why would, you know,
19 any sane person participate in that? Why did they not just
20 run away?" and I realize that was kind of a similar thing.

21 I knew it was strange, but I'm looking around and
22 everybody looks like they're just eating it up; and I'm being
23 told that if I don't complete it, it somehow harms the
24 progress of my daughter? So you just do it.

25 Q. Were there parents at these workshops that were staffing

1 the workshops or acting in some sort of leadership role?

2 A. Yes, so that was -- I think that was all part of the
3 system because inevitably, you know, parents that -- parents
4 will ask questions, "Why are we doing this? Something doesn't
5 feel right."

6 There were parents that were volunteers. I guess they
7 had sent their daughters to Spring Ridge prior and decided
8 they want to come back, I guess, and help but they were --
9 they were volunteers.

10 I don't believe they were being paid, but any time I
11 would show -- I would start to discuss openly that -- you
12 know, "This doesn't feel right and if our daughters are going
13 through this, maybe this isn't like a proven therapeutic
14 method," and quickly one of those parents would swoop in and,
15 "Oh, you need to get with the program, Troy."

16 In fact, I remember -- I remember a specific conversation
17 at that second workshop, the parent workshop, where the
18 therapist that had been assigned to our daughter -- who was
19 also the therapist that my wife and I would meet with our
20 daughter. So the three of us would meet with the therapist --
21 had heard me saying, "This is kind of strange. I don't know
22 if I believe this."

23 The therapist specifically told my wife in front of me,
24 "You need to get Troy with the program. You know, you need to
25 both be on the same page or it's going to harm the progress.

1 It's going to harm the progress of your daughter and she'll
2 see right through that, that you're not on the same page and
3 then all the progress she's made is going to be gone," and I
4 still wasn't there.

5 Next thing you know, one of the -- the other parents came
6 over that was a volunteer and was saying, "Well, you know, I
7 had a similar situation and, you know, I had to separate from
8 my husband for a little while until he got with the program,
9 you know."

10 So it was like, wait a second. So if I -- if I don't
11 willingly just kind of keep going, this is going to now drive
12 a wedge between my wife and I? And people are saying she
13 needs to get me in line; and if not, this other parent's
14 giving the example where she had to separate to get her
15 husband in line, and I have two other smaller daughters at
16 home.

17 So I'm thinking to save my daughter who's at Spring Ridge
18 I now have to go through a separation and create that trauma
19 for my two little daughters at home? So it became clear that
20 there was no way to get out. You went through it. The only
21 way out was to finish.

22 Q. Did you make efforts or ever articulate to anyone in
23 particular at Spring Ridge Academy that you wanted to remove
24 your daughter?

25 A. Absolutely.

1 Q. And what was the context of that? What happened?

2 A. Well, the context -- there was several different time
3 periods, but the one that was most significant, I should say,
4 occurred in the middle of December of 2017. So she had only
5 been there maybe two months, just short of two months; and,
6 you know, we got a call from the emergency room at Yavapai
7 Medical Center.

8 I believe that's the local hospital in Prescott, and my
9 daughter had been taken there, I believe, via ambulance and
10 was in pretty bad condition. So we flew out there immediately
11 and the doctors at -- we flew out there and the doctors at
12 Yavapai were preparing to transfer her to Honor Health because
13 Yavapai said that they couldn't handle the severity of what
14 was going on, and so we went with her in the ambulance to
15 Honor Health; and the doctors there were saying it looks a lot
16 like Stevens-Johnson syndrome and ultimately -- I don't know
17 if it was ultimately diagnosed as that, but what
18 Stevens-Johnson syndrome is -- and she had all of the
19 symptoms -- is the body starts rejecting some -- one of the
20 psychotropic medications by swelling and mucous membranes
21 sloughing.

22 So if you can imagine any -- all mucous membranes in your
23 body, in her nose, in her mouth, in her throat, in her private
24 areas sloughing. So mucous membranes swelling and coming off,
25 and Honor Health thought that they couldn't handle it either

1 because that needed treatment that was similar to what a burn
2 victim would have where you don't have the infection
3 protection.

4 She had fever. I mean, she was obviously in excruciating
5 pain. We were transferred again to Phoenix Children's
6 Hospital, and they went through extensive testing and
7 treatment and several days later we were released; but the
8 hard part about that experience is that it didn't just crop up
9 overnight. Like, she had -- her symptoms had started several
10 days prior and she would tell the doctors -- these hospitals
11 would say, "Well, why weren't you here earlier?" and she would
12 tell the doctors, "I was trying to be. I kept being told to
13 drink more water, and I kept being told that I'm faking it or
14 I'm -- I'm pushing back. I'm trying to get out so I'm faking
15 it," and ultimately she told a therapist with us there
16 afterwards that she'd basically -- her roommate had to beg for
17 her to be able to go to the hospital in order for them to
18 ultimately call -- call an ambulance.

19 Q. Did you allow --

20 A. So she came close to -- I mean, that's probably the
21 closest she's ever come to dying, I think, in terms of her
22 medical situation. And so afterwards I -- I approached the
23 school. I approached Leslie, "Like how is this even
24 possible?" Like, there's 60 or 70 girls at the school and
25 there -- a lot of them are on medication. A lot of them have

1 other, you know, challenges. How is it not that there's
2 medical support there?

3 And I was told, "Well, there's a nurse," a nurse
4 that's -- you know, a nurse that's available, I don't know,
5 maximum 40 hours a week but there's 168 hours in the day -- or
6 a week that -- you know, so how much time -- nights and
7 weekends, evenings and weekends no coverage?

8 So -- and they said, "Well, they're always on call, but
9 the staff probably doesn't know to call," and so -- so she was
10 suffering for days before somebody finally had to make a big
11 enough scene to get them to call actual ambulance. So it was
12 horrible.

13 Q. What did Leslie say to you that led you to allow your
14 daughter to remain enrolled at Spring Ridge Academy?

15 A. She said, "This has never happened. This never happens.
16 We have good medical coverage. I can't believe that this
17 happened. This should have never happened. It will never
18 happen again."

19 And I wasn't satisfied with that and so I said, "I just
20 don't believe that -- the math doesn't work. One, you know,
21 nurse can't cover 60 to 70 girls seven days a week, 24 hours a
22 day. That's just not possible. I can't even believe that
23 you're allowed to operate like that," and then -- then the
24 fear kind of mongering came out where she's like, "Well, you
25 can't pull Lauren now. You'll do devastating damage to her."

1 She's made progress. She's going to relapse to some of her
2 psychological challenges before. There will be huge damage
3 you'll do to her, and I promise this won't happen again."

4 Q. And what was she -- what was your daughter receiving as
5 therapy when she was at Spring Ridge Academy?

6 A. Well, there's a big difference between the sophisticated,
7 multifaceted, therapeutic approach evidence-based versus what
8 actually happened.

9 So she had, I think, one meeting a week with a therapist.
10 I don't even know if she's a psychologist, with a therapist
11 named Cindy, and what I thought was group therapy turned out
12 not to be licensed psychologist. I think she would do that
13 once or twice a week.

14 We paid separately for her to visit with a psychiatrist
15 that wasn't on staff, but I think that was probably once a
16 month, perhaps. So it was ironic -- in hindsight, once things
17 started to become clear, what's ironic is she was getting more
18 therapy, more treatment at home when she was meeting with an
19 actual licensed psychologist every week and a psychiatrist
20 every week.

21 She was getting more treatment at home than this, you
22 know, \$9,000-a-month sophisticated, advanced, evidence-based
23 therapeutic school.

24 Q. Did your family ever received therapy from Brandon
25 Courtney?

1 A. I don't know if you could call it therapy. We received
2 instruction.

3 Q. What instruction did you receive and how did you respond?

4 A. So one of the messages that we were regularly told was
5 that the family dynamic is one of the causes of Lauren's
6 psychological challenges or illness, the family dynamics, and
7 so we were encouraged -- well, told that we need to attend a
8 family -- multi-day family workshop with all of our kids in
9 order to -- with Lauren in order to help advance Lauren's
10 progress, and at this point -- this was towards the end of her
11 stay and at this point I knew the only way out was to finish,
12 and so we took everyone out of school and -- I have four
13 daughters.

14 So six of us showed up and, again, they talk about a
15 family therapy workshop. I'm thinking licensed psychologists,
16 evidence-based approaches; but our family and another family
17 were assigned to work with Brandon and, to my knowledge, he
18 doesn't have a degree in therapy; but it was very
19 uncomfortable, particularly for my daughters who felt like he
20 was kind of talking down to them and almost making them feel
21 guilty for some of the struggles that Lauren has had, and we
22 sat there for two days kind of going through this approach
23 where he would ask each of them questions, ask us to act
24 things out as a family to try to get to the root cause of why
25 Lauren has struggled in the family.

1 So they all came away -- they begged us after the first
2 day don't make them go back, the daughters that weren't at
3 Spring Ridge, the daughters who had come in for this. "Don't
4 make us go back." But, again, if you don't complete it, it's
5 gonna hinder Lauren's progress.

6 So we sat there for two days getting instruction, and
7 they felt like getting talked down to by Brandon, getting made
8 to feel like, you know, their dynamic in the family was
9 hindering Lauren. So that was our family therapy.

10 Q. Was your daughter -- did you learn about a particular
11 experience they had when you had your daughter in therapy
12 after Spring Ridge Academy that upset her?

13 A. Yes, so after -- after Lauren completed Spring Ridge and
14 she was still -- she was attending -- she was going to therapy
15 back in our hometown, and this was in Pennsylvania; and the
16 therapist would have us attend with her probably every other
17 week, and some of the traumas that she sustained at Spring
18 Ridge started coming up with us there and the therapist -- and
19 this is -- this was important from the therapist's perspective
20 for us to understand how we played a role in her sustaining
21 those traumas at Spring Ridge.

22 But one of the traumas that she was having nightmares
23 about and still to this day in therapy discusses these
24 nightmares is there was a program that, I guess, they called
25 Commitment where she was -- in order to graduate -- and,

1 again, at this point you do anything you have to do, say
2 anything you have to say, do anything you have to do to finish
3 because that's the only way out.

4 So she was paired up with another girl and they each had
5 to carry this bag, and it's a five-pound bag. I don't recall
6 if it's rice or if it's sand, but they each had to carry this
7 and my daughter is little. She's petite. She was probably
8 90-some pounds and she -- it was hurting her to carry this
9 everywhere, but if she didn't complete this program both her
10 and her partner would fail the Commitment.

11 So that's kind of the mental manipulation. If you don't
12 finish this even though it's hurting you, you're letting this
13 other person down and maybe you don't graduate.

14 That culminated with -- that program, the Commitment
15 program, culminated with her getting blindfolded, driven at
16 night in a van to -- on a gravel road -- gravel or dirt road
17 out into the desert being dropped off where she didn't know at
18 night and being asked to find her way down the road to where
19 the rest of the people would be waiting, and I'd say that is
20 the one -- out of all the experiences, and there are many,
21 that is the one experience that comes up repeatedly in
22 therapy.

23 She has nightmares over that. She wakes up with night
24 terrors over that. She was scared to death because at night
25 in a desert in Arizona, are there animals? Are there, like,

1 scary men or people out there? And she had to walk this road
2 in order to complete that program so that she could graduate.

3 I couldn't -- I have no idea to the life of me to this
4 day how can that be labeled therapy.

5 MS. ALLARD: No further questions.

6 THE COURT: Is there any cross-examination?

7 MR. GRASSO: Yes, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Come on up.

9 MR. GRASSO: Thank you.

10 THE COURT: You're welcome,

11 MR. GRASSO: Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

12 CROSS-EXAMINATION

13 BY MR. GRASSO:

14 Q. Good afternoon, sir. My name is Bob Grasso. We've not
15 met or spoken before, correct?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. The information that I have concerning you, sir, comes
18 from a declaration or a written statement that Ms. Sweidy gave
19 me that you signed in February of 2023.

20 Are you familiar with that statement?

21 A. Yes, I believe it's an affidavit.

22 Q. It's called a declaration.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. The document is on letterhead from Ms. Allard and
25 Ms. Sweidy and it says it's docusigned by you?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. From looking at it, it appears that this is something
3 that counsel prepared and then was sent to you for your
4 signature; is that correct?

5 A. That is not correct.

6 Q. Tell me what's correct.

7 A. I wrote that document. I sent that to counsel and they
8 sent it -- they put it on that format with the numbers on the
9 side, and I signed it.

10 Q. And there was a separate e-mail or some sort of
11 communication that you sent to them so that they could prepare
12 this document and file it in court; is that correct?

13 A. Yes. I authored the document probably in Word or
14 something like that.

15 Q. So the document starts off by talking about how you hired
16 an educational consultant and paid \$6500 to that educational
17 consultant; is that correct?

18 A. That is correct.

19 Q. And let's make sure we're clear on the time frames here.
20 So your daughter attended Spring Ridge from October of
21 2017 through December of 2018; is that correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Did your daughter or your family ever return to Spring
24 Ridge after the graduation in December of 2018?

25 A. No.

1 Q. So you would have no firsthand experience of anything
2 that happened after your daughter left, correct?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. You're aware that Ms. Sweidy's daughter attended years
5 after your daughter had left, correct?

6 MS. ALLARD: Objection, argumentative.

7 THE COURT: I'm sorry? Is there an objection or
8 something?

9 MS. ALLARD: Your Honor, argumentative.

10 THE COURT: That's overruled. You may respond.

11 Mr. Williams, I need you to move closer to the
12 microphone. Thank you.

13 Mr. Grasso, what was the question?

14 BY MR. GRASSO:

15 Q. You're aware that Ms. Sweidy's daughter attended Spring
16 Ridge years after your daughter left, correct?

17 A. Yes, I've heard that her daughter attended. I don't know
18 her daughter or her name.

19 Q. Okay, yeah. So there's no connection between -- you
20 don't know her daughter. Your daughter doesn't know her
21 daughter?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. And from the time frames that we have, your daughter
24 attended years before, correct?

25 A. I don't even know the time frame that her daughter

1 attended.

2 Q. Okay. So when you were talking about these workshops
3 that you found troubling, when in the program -- if she
4 started in October of 2017, when did the workshops start?

5 A. I believe the first workshop was called Action -- no, the
6 first workshop was called Parent Challenge, which coincided
7 with a workshop called Teen Challenge, and that happened in
8 the first quarter of 2018. So sometime in probably February
9 or early March of 2018. That was the first one.

10 Q. Okay, and just to back up one more step. So before you
11 enrolled your daughter we've heard some testimony. You would
12 have signed an Enrollment Agreement, correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. You would have gotten a Parent Manual, correct?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. You would have gotten a copy of a brochure, correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So you got a list of parent references. You got all that
19 material before you enrolled your daughter, correct?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Did you review all that material?

22 A. I reviewed it as much as any parent reviewed. I read the
23 brochure inside and out multiple times --

24 Q. Sir, my question was just did you read it?

25 THE DEFENDANT: Whoa. Stop, stop, stop, stop.

1 MR. GRASSO: Apologize.

2 THE COURT: Mr. Grasso, you can't ask the question,
3 have him respond, and then you start talking over him.

4 MR. GRASSO: I apologize, Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: And then it's turning into some kind of
6 speed response thing where I need you to just let him answer,
7 take a breath, and then ask your question. All right?

8 MR. GRASSO: Yes, Your Honor, sorry.

9 THE WITNESS: I received all of the materials that
10 you've discussed, and I reviewed all of the materials that
11 you've -- that you've noted. I spent more time reviewing the
12 brochure. I spent more time reviewing the documents that
13 were, I'd say, more accessible. The contract was pretty
14 extensive. The Parent Manual was very extensive. I did
15 review it, but I'm sure I didn't review it in the level of
16 detail that I reviewed the other materials.

17 BY MR. GRASSO:

18 Q. Okay. And when would you say in the program did you
19 first -- after your daughter started in October of 2017, when
20 did you start feeling kind of this disturbing feeling that you
21 were talking to the -- was it the first workshop?

22 A. No, the first part that was disturbing was when we were
23 -- during the first month we were not allowed to have
24 conversations with our daughter. That part was disturbing.

25 Was that written in the manual? Yes, it was. I had no

1 idea that it meant that we literally would have no
2 communication with our daughter without the -- somebody
3 supervising that conversation on the phone so...

4 Q. Is it -- is it fair to say that early on in the program
5 you had concerns about the program?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Did you then follow up with the educational
8 consultant that you paid \$6500 to about why did you recommend
9 this school?

10 A. No, the educational consultant was clear that they were
11 in and out. Their job was to get us in a school and they had
12 no more obligation.

13 Q. Okay. And so you said you had some resources, some
14 people you work with, a forensic psychiatrist, a psychologist,
15 who before you enrolled in the school told you to maybe -- the
16 way I understood it, kind of pause what you were doing; is
17 that correct?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Some of my questions are "yes" or "no" because we have a
20 lot to get through, and I'm trying to get through this.

21 So did you contact those people, "yes" or "no"?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So right out of the shoot, you had enough concerns you
24 contacted those people. Why didn't you make the decision at
25 that point just to take your daughter out of the school?

1 A. This is an interesting question. I -- I started really
2 wanting to take my daughter out of the school early on, and it
3 seems like once you're in you're, like, in where it was --
4 it's hard to get out.

5 Everything in the system is geared towards keeping you
6 there. So any time I would voice concern I would be told that
7 I am damaging my daughter's progress.

8 I was also told, incidentally, that because my daughter
9 had tried to harm herself before going there that she might be
10 dead before she's eighteen. I cannot -- I would be personally
11 responsible for harming my daughter if I stopped the progress.

12 And, counsel, you asked the question. So if I could just
13 finish this. I know you're getting ready to ask another.

14 The -- at one point when I was -- when I'd already
15 expressed to the -- to Cindy, the therapist, that I was ready
16 to pull her out and the therapist told my wife in front of me,
17 "You need to get Troy on board or he is going to hurt her
18 progress," when that wasn't working the next thing you know we
19 get a call from one of those volunteer parents who told my
20 wife -- I said this before -- "I had to separate with my
21 husband until he got on board."

22 So it's kind of like one of those things where you can't
23 get out. You have to go through or you're in trouble.

24 Q. Did your wife share the concerns that you had?

25 A. She shared some of the concerns but she was -- she was

1 torn because she was probably more easily influenced, I'd say,
2 by the therapist and by the other volunteer parents than I
3 was. Plus, she didn't have the same access to those doctors
4 from my -- from my profession.

5 Q. And it sounds like from what you've told us, the doctors
6 from your profession were on your side. They had concerns,
7 correct?

8 A. I wouldn't say it's a side. They -- it wasn't a side at
9 that point. It was just they had concerns that this was not
10 evidence-based proven methods for treating anxiety and
11 depression.

12 Q. Did you trust these advisors Back East, the people you
13 were talking to that expressed those issues?

14 A. I did. I trusted the advisors.

15 Q. How long had you known them or worked with them, years?

16 A. It depended on the advisor. Some, one or two years.
17 Others, probably five or six.

18 Q. Okay. So it sounds like you had concerns. All of your
19 advisors had concerns. These are people you've known for
20 multiple years. Your wife had some concerns, and
21 notwithstanding your concerns, your wife's concerns and the
22 consultants' concerns, you decided to accept some statements
23 from parents, volunteers you had just met, maybe on one
24 occasion, and people at Spring Ridge you had known for a
25 matter of weeks and that's why you're telling the jury that

1 you decided not to take your daughter out of the school; is
2 that correct?

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. Thank you.

5 A. The --

6 Q. Thank you, sir.

7 So after that -- you talked about this incident where
8 your daughter was ill in December of 2017. That would be a
9 couple of months in the program, correct?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. And I think, if I recall your testimony correctly, that
12 that really scared you. You thought this was a significant
13 health risk, correct?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. So that was yet another opportunity. Did you contact any
16 physicians or advisors or make any other informed decision
17 about why not -- go to your wife and say, "Look, she's not
18 getting proper medical care. There's only a nurse on
19 schedule. There isn't a doctor. Let's get her out right
20 now." Did that happen?

21 A. I did not speak with the other advisors about that
22 medical condition, but I just have to say everything in this
23 system is focused on making you afraid, making me afraid of
24 pulling my daughter out.

25 I would be responsible for her losing progress. I'd be

1 responsible for her going downhill emotionally with anxiety,
2 and I might be responsible for her taking her life. So
3 everything was focused on, "If you take" -- "If you pull her
4 out, you're gonna be doing massive damage to her."

5 That was constantly the message.

6 Q. But again, Mr. Williams, those messages were coming from
7 people that you knew a matter of weeks; and you had a forensic
8 psychiatrist, somebody who went to medical school, and some
9 other folks, apparently, in your profession that are advising
10 you that, according to you, that it's not evidence based, that
11 this isn't good.

12 Why wouldn't you fear what they were telling you more
13 than hearing it from people you barely knew?

14 A. It was an absolute mistake. In hindsight, I can look
15 back and I should have listened to those advisors and pulled
16 her. At the time they had my daughter and they told me that
17 -- and everything that they were saying, including the parents
18 was, "You will be responsible for damaging your daughter if
19 you pulled her prematurely."

20 It was a mistake, absolutely.

21 Q. The therapist, Cindy Fogel, did you and your family
22 continue any therapy with her after she left Spring Ridge?

23 A. We tried to talk with her after we left Spring Ridge, and
24 we had communication with her for a few months after Spring
25 Ridge.

1 Q. I just want to be clear. So after your daughter spent 14
2 months at Spring Ridge, graduated and completed both the
3 therapeutic and the academic program, notwithstanding the
4 feelings that you've talked to the jury about, you decided to
5 continue the therapy with the therapist at Spring Ridge, Cindy
6 Fogel, is that correct, for months?

7 A. I didn't decide -- my daughter -- my daughter had
8 divulged to Cindy some very personal, traumatic things
9 regarding molestation; and she felt like she needed to keep
10 talking to Cindy after she finished Spring Ridge that lasted
11 for a few more months.

12 Q. But the answer to my question was "yes," she -- you
13 continued on with a therapist from Spring Ridge months after
14 the graduation notwithstanding all the negative feelings you
15 had about Spring Ridge; is that correct?

16 A. I wouldn't say we continued on. We allowed our daughter
17 to continue to talk with Cindy for about three months after
18 until she felt that she could move to a legitimate therapist.

19 Q. Okay. Did you ever file any sort of lawsuit against
20 Spring Ridge Academy?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Did you file any reports with the State of Arizona?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Did you file any reports with the police about Spring
25 Ridge Academy?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Did you file any sort of complaint against the
3 educational consultant that you paid \$6500 to that you say
4 directed you to Spring Ridge?

5 A. No, I did not.

6 Q. Did you make any reports about that educational
7 consultant to either the State of Arizona or the authorities
8 back in your home state?

9 A. No, I did not.

10 Q. In your affidavit you say that your daughter after she
11 left Spring Ridge eventually found herself -- you sent her to
12 an interior design college located in France; is that correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. That was back in 2013, correct?

15 A. No.

16 Q. I'm sorry, 2023?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Did your daughter graduate from that interior design
19 school in France?

20 A. She's still a student there.

21 Q. When did she start at the interior design school in
22 France?

23 A. I think August of 2023.

24 Q. And she's still there today?

25 A. No, August of 2022.

1 Q. And she's still there today?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And I take it that she's doing well in that interior
4 design program?

5 A. Yes, she is.

6 Q. When did you first meet Ms. Sweidy?

7 A. I first met Ms. Sweidy today -- or you mean physically
8 meet?

9 Q. No, I -- you're right, I'll clarify that.

10 When did you first have contact with Ms. Sweidy?

11 A. I believe two years ago. I don't remember the exact
12 date.

13 THE COURT: Is it Sweed-ee or Swade-ee?

14 MR. GRASSO: I am sorry, Sweidy.

15 MS. SWEIDY: Thank you for the courtesy, Your Honor,
16 Swade-ee; and my daughter's name is Rene Rearden Sweidy Stata,
17 and she goes by Ms. Sweidy Stata, not Ms. Stata.

18 Thank you, your Honor. Much appreciated.

19 THE COURT: Go ahead.

20 BY MR. GRASSO:

21 Q. When did you first meet Ms. Sweidy?

22 A. Today.

23 Q. When did you first have contact with Ms. Sweidy?

24 A. I believe it was in 2022. I don't remember the exact
25 date. What is -- the date of the statement is about a year

1 old at this point, correct?

2 Q. What were the circumstances behind your connection to
3 Ms. Sweidy?

4 A. To tell you the truth, I can't remember exactly how we
5 got connected. I think my daughter saw that there was a
6 potential lawsuit being filed and wanted to investigate
7 further what was going on, and so I reached out.

8 Q. After you provided Ms. Sweidy with your declaration, what
9 you referred to as an affidavit, did Ms. Sweidy provide you
10 with copies of any of the evidence that Spring Ridge Academy
11 has produced in this case to support its defense?

12 A. No.

13 Q. It sounds like you have some very strong negative
14 feelings about Spring Ridge; is that fair?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. With regard to the topics you discussed today, are you
17 aware of any independent corroborating evidence for what
18 you've told the jury?

19 A. What do you mean "independent corroborating evidence"?

20 Q. Evidence that either confirms or supports what you're
21 saying by some independent means.

22 A. How would you have independent means of what my
23 experience was with Spring Ridge?

24 Q. I'm just asking if you have that evidence?

25 A. No, just my experience.

1 Q. Oh, and just real quickly. The Commitment exercise you
2 talked about, your daughter carrying -- I think it was a
3 five-pound bag of sand?

4 A. I don't know if it was sand or rice.

5 Q. Okay. But your -- your testimony is that the problem
6 with that is that was too much weight for your daughter to
7 carry?

8 A. Not exactly. There was -- she was having physical pain
9 from carrying that, but the trauma wasn't from carrying that.
10 The trauma was from being left in the desert at night by
11 herself. That was the trauma.

12 Q. Were you aware of the fact that she wasn't by herself,
13 that there were adults supervising her? There was glow
14 sticks, and it was a controlled workshop?

15 You're not aware of that?

16 A. If --

17 Q. I'm just asking if you're aware of it?

18 A. I don't think she was aware if there were other people
19 there because what she tells her therapist when we're there is
20 that she was alone. She felt alone.

21 Now, maybe it was controlled. Maybe there were people
22 hiding in the bushes around there to make sure nothing would
23 go wrong, but that wasn't her -- I think her experience was
24 she was alone and that keeps -- that's her reoccurring
25 nightmare.

1 Q. But she's still doing good at that interior design school
2 in France?

3 A. Academically she does well. She still has therapy. She
4 still has nightmares. She still is on medication.

5 Q. Thank you, sir.

6 MR. GRASSO: No further questions, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: Is there any direct?

8 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor, thank you.

9 THE COURT: Subject to recall?

10 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor.

11 MR. SMITH: The defense?

12 MR. SMITH: No, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: Mr. Williams, thank you so much for
14 coming in this afternoon. Have a wonderful rest of your day.
15 Be careful walking down the stairs there.

16 THE WITNESS: Okay, thank you.

17 THE COURT: You're very welcome.

18 What part of Pennsylvania?

19 THE WITNESS: West Chester, just out of
20 Philadelphia.

21 THE COURT: My mother-in-law lives there. My wife
22 is from Philadelphia.

23 THE WITNESS: I went to school in Philadelphia.

24 THE COURT: Very good.

25 MS. ALLARD: Call Molly Dickin.

1 COURTROOM DEPUTY: You can come on up.

2 You can stand right there. Raise your right hand.

3 *(Witness is sworn.)*

4 COURTROOM DEPUTY: You can have a seat on the
5 witness stand.

6 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

7 THE COURT: Ma'am, when you take your seat, I need
8 you to speak directly into the microphone, please.

9 THE WITNESS: Okay.

10 THE COURT: Go ahead, counsel.

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 BY MS. ALLARD:

13 Q. Can you please state and spell your name.

14 A. Molly Adkins, M-o-l-l-y. Last name Adkins, A-d-k-i-n-s.

15 Q. Do you have a maiden name?

16 A. Yes, Dickin, D-i-c-k-i-n.

17 Q. And did you attend Spring Ridge Academy?

18 A. I did.

19 Q. From when?

20 A. From August of 2014 to July of 2015.

21 Q. How did you end up there?

22 A. I was sent there due to an educational consultant named
23 Kris Karge, who my parents were working with who picked the
24 place out.

25 Q. And that's Kris with a "K"? K-r-i-s, K-a-r-g-e? Is that

1 how that name is spelled?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. And do you recall how it is you arrived at Spring Ridge
4 Academy?

5 A. Yes, I had been sent to a Wilderness program before that,
6 and I arrived to Spring Ridge Academy with my mother, Sandra
7 Dickin. She drove me there.

8 Q. And where are you from?

9 A. I'm from Vermont.

10 Q. Is that where you were raised?

11 A. Yes, it is.

12 Q. Did you have any diagnosis such that you were being
13 administered medication at Spring Ridge Academy?

14 A. Um, I had not been diagnosed with anything. I was
15 started on multiple medications, and that was prior to me
16 meeting with a psychiatrist.

17 When I met with the actual psychiatrist finally after
18 months of asking, she informed me that she had given me those
19 medications and given me a bipolar diagnosis based on what she
20 had heard about me from my therapy sessions.

21 Q. So you're talking about a psychiatrist you met when you
22 were in Arizona at Spring Ridge Academy?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Not one from home in Vermont?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. So was that the first time you ever received a diagnosis
2 from a psychiatrist?

3 A. Yes. I was experiencing cluster systems of PTSD while I
4 was in the Wilderness, but that was the first time, yeah.

5 Q. And you were medicated when you were at Spring Ridge
6 Academy?

7 A. Yes, I was.

8 Q. And how was the medication administered to you?

9 A. It was administered orally via a staff member, and I had
10 to prove that I wasn't cheeking my meds.

11 Q. And what's your current occupation?

12 A. I'm a mental health technician and the primary unit
13 secretary in an adult inpatient psychiatry setting in the
14 hospital.

15 THE COURT: What's cheeking her meds?

16 THE WITNESS: Can I show? It's just kind of like
17 opening your mouth at every, like, angle and your lips and
18 making sure that you couldn't be hiding, like, any pills up
19 there. You had to prove that you had swallowed them.

20 BY MS. ALLARD:

21 Q. Did you have a -- who was your quote/unquote therapist at
22 Spring Ridge Academy?

23 A. During the entire time I was at Spring Ridge Academy I
24 believed that my therapist was Cindy Fogel. She told me that
25 she was my therapist. She also told my parents she was my

1 therapist. Kate and Jeannie also told my parents that was my
2 therapist, and I later found out that she was actually
3 practicing under a person named Leslie Filsinger, who I never
4 met or had any contact with.

5 Q. Did you participate in any workshops at Spring Ridge
6 Academy?

7 A. Yes, I did.

8 Q. And can you describe what it was like going through this,
9 for example, Teen Challenge?

10 A. Yes. I went through Challenge about a month after I
11 arrived at Spring Ridge Academy. It was the workshop that you
12 went through after you'd made it through Phase 1 and were
13 becoming a Phase 2.

14 During that experience I did -- we were in a dark room
15 for three days and there all through the day. I did have to
16 talk a lot about all of my past traumas during that time.
17 There was an exercise where we had to beat up a chair with
18 towels that had been tied, and we had to do it relentlessly
19 for a very extended period of time.

20 During that exercise I was singled out because I wasn't
21 crying, and all of the other students had to circle around me;
22 and all of my traumas that had been informed by my therapist
23 were brought up in front of everybody, and I was harassed
24 about them because I wouldn't cry.

25 Q. Who did that?

1 A. Jeannie Courtney.

2 Q. What specifically -- what specific incident did she bring
3 to the attention of everyone in the room?

4 A. Well, she wanted me to get angry at my parents. So it
5 was brought up that -- like my dad used to hit me sometimes
6 when I was younger. So that was brought up during that.
7 I had also been raped and beaten up, and that was discussed in
8 detail as well.

9 Q. Who did that? Who discussed it?

10 A. Jeannie.

11 Q. And what happened next?

12 A. Um, they all circled around me, all the girls had to and
13 had to, like, yell things to encourage me to do it; and I had
14 to do it by myself independently, continue beating the chair
15 relentlessly until I showed enough emotion of the emotion they
16 were looking for.

17 Q. And did you show emotion?

18 A. Eventually I showed a little, but I didn't fully break
19 and I got in trouble for that.

20 Q. Did your parents know that you had been raped?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And how did they find out?

23 A. They found out because I was at a place called NFI,
24 Northeast Family Institute, and we were doing a therapeutic
25 exercise where we had to write down things that we wished had

1 never happened to us, but we were told nobody would see them.

2 So I wrote about how I had been beaten up and raped in my
3 high school locker room and about how my dad had hit me, and
4 they ended up reporting it.

5 Q. And did a detective ever talk to you?

6 A. Yes, only after I was at Spring Ridge Academy. I had one
7 phone call with a detective, but I was not actually allowed to
8 speak for myself.

9 Cindy Fogel, who I had thought was my therapist at the
10 time, was someone who guided that entire conversation. She
11 jumped in when I tried to speak for myself, and I was told
12 that I would never be able to meet with detectives again
13 because I went off script about my experience.

14 Q. Who told you that?

15 A. Cindy Fogel.

16 Q. Did she explain why she didn't want you to talk to the
17 detective?

18 A. I think that -- I mean, continuously there were multiple
19 times where, like, things from the past despite being --
20 having them, like, be used against us in, like, a public
21 setting there. There was also a lot of rejection of any ties
22 to things outside of Spring Ridge Academy.

23 Q. So she told you not to talk to a detective?

24 A. Yes, she told me I was not allowed to.

25 Q. Did you ever try to talk with your mom at Spring Ridge

1 Academy when you were first enrolled?

2 A. Yes, I did.

3 Q. And did you have any negative experiences trying to
4 communicate with her?

5 A. Yes, I did. All of our phone calls at Spring Ridge
6 Academy were supervised by staff members, and I was having a
7 phone call with my mother and I shared with her things that
8 were going on and the -- like things that were actually
9 happening there, and the phone call got ended.

10 The phone got taken from me and slammed down, and then I
11 got pulled outside by Kate Deily who told me she would make it
12 so that I never spoke to my parents again.

13 Q. Who slammed the phone down?

14 A. Kate, Kate Deily.

15 Q. And other than slamming the phone down and taking you
16 outside, did she do anything else?

17 A. Yes, she brought me to the house.

18 Q. What's the house?

19 A. It's the building -- they have a number of things in it.
20 My therapy sessions were there, and that's also where, like,
21 Jeannie's office was.

22 Q. Did you meet with Jeannie?

23 A. Yes, I did.

24 Q. And what happened?

25 A. Jeannie and Kate both told me they would make it so I

1 never saw my parents again, and then I was on a blackout
2 communication. So for the next month I wasn't allowed to
3 speak with my parents at all. This included phone calls and
4 letters. All of that was restricted.

5 Q. And from your understanding based on what you were
6 telling your mom, what were they upset about?

7 A. They were upset that I had told them what was really
8 going on there and that I had spoken negatively about Spring
9 Ridge Academy, because we weren't allowed to do that.

10 Q. And do you remember what it was you were telling your
11 mom?

12 A. I was talking to her about some of the, like, attack
13 therapy situations and, like, how my traumas were being used
14 in front of other people.

15 Q. Can you describe the attack therapy that you went
16 through?

17 A. Yes. I experienced this several times where I was
18 personally in the middle of it. I also witnessed several
19 other students experience it as well.

20 I had several that were focused on taking accountability for
21 having gotten myself raped.

22 When I was in the middle of the circle of girls -- this
23 happened in various group sizes as well. It happened with our
24 individual caseload, which means every other student that was
25 assigned to the same therapist. It also happened in our

1 combined caseload, which is two caseloads of students assigned
2 to the same two therapists who had one overarching Community
3 Life Director, and then we also had school-wide attack therapy
4 called feedback circles.

5 Q. Were you subject to an attack in all of those circles
6 that you described?

7 A. I was.

8 Q. Can you tell me what happened at the school-wide one?

9 A. Yes, I had to walk through my entire situation where I
10 had been beaten up and raped in my high school locker room,
11 and every step of the way I had to take accountability for my
12 actions.

13 So, for example, when we first got -- when he first
14 pushed me into the locker room, he locked the door
15 immediately; and so then I had to take accountability for
16 letting the rapist lock the door, and then it went on for
17 every step of that altercation.

18 Q. Did you have to do this in front of all the teachers and
19 staff?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And how long did this go on?

22 A. Um, it would last for a while. I was in the middle of
23 these several different times and everybody had to go around
24 and tell you, like, what you should be accountable for or give
25 you a constructive feedback about the situation.

1 Q. How did that make you feel?

2 A. Overwhelmed, powerless, humiliated.

3 Q. And how many different times did you have to go through a
4 circle like this?

5 A. Probably around fifteen times.

6 Q. Did you feel that you were targeted?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you know why?

9 A. The first two months that I was there I would say I
10 worked the program in the sense that I was too afraid to,
11 like, speak up against anything and was too afraid of
12 punishment; and after I had been there for a couple months I
13 guess I kind of gave up on that and started speaking out when
14 I was uncomfortable with something or when I noticed abuse,
15 and they definitely came down a lot harder on me after that.

16 Q. And were your parents on campus ever?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And did you ever get a chance to tell them about these
19 attacks?

20 A. They attended one.

21 Q. Which one did they witness?

22 A. They attended a school-wide one that a number of staff
23 members and teachers were at and all of the students were at.
24 I was not in the middle of the circle. I was watching it with
25 them.

1 Q. Somebody else was being attacked?

2 A. Uh-huh.

3 Q. Is that a "yes"?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And do you remember what for?

6 A. I remember somebody -- it had something to do with, like,
7 a sexual assault of their -- of their parent -- or by their
8 parent.

9 Q. And they were being asked to --

10 A. Take accountability in a similar way that I was.

11 Q. For being molested by their parent?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Were you ever called names in one of these circles?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. What kind of names?

16 A. I -- do you want me to say it or spell it, sorry?

17 Q. Whatever you're more comfortable doing.

18 A. Oh, I got called a whore and a slut for some of my past
19 history, and I also got called a cunt.

20 THE WITNESS: Is this water?

21 THE COURT: Yes.

22 THE WITNESS: Can I have some water?

23 Thank you. Oh, yes, thank you.

24 THE COURT: Yes, just take your time.

25 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

1 BY MS. ALLARD:

2 Q. Did you ever witness interaction between Brandon Courtney
3 and your dad at one of the workshops?

4 A. Yes, I did.

5 Q. What did you see happen?

6 A. Brandon shoved my dad.

7 Q. Do you know -- were you a witness to their conversation
8 that led up to that?

9 A. Yes, we were walking in and it was time to start -- thank
10 you. It was like coming back from, like, a break during one
11 of the family trainings; and we were walking back in and my
12 dad was, like, a couple seconds after the clock hit the time,
13 and he shoved my dad because of it.

14 Q. What are the rules about the clock and the time that you
15 heard when you attended a workshop? What did they tell you?

16 A. I didn't know what time it was, like, during the
17 workshops or anything.

18 Q. Okay. Were you told you have to come and go on breaks at
19 a certain time?

20 A. We didn't get a lot of the breaks during the individual
21 ones. This was during the family training. So we had had,
22 like, a morning break.

23 Q. What kind of punishments did you experience when you were
24 at Spring Ridge Academy?

25 A. One that I experienced a few times was called intro where

1 I was put on something called introspection, and that's where
2 you're not allowed to use your voice at all for whatever
3 period of time they decided on.

4 So I was put on intro for one week and I wasn't allowed
5 to use my voice, and that included in any setting and then I
6 was in my -- in one of my academic classes and I had a
7 question about the homework that I wanted clarification on.
8 So I asked my teacher, and he reported me for breaking my
9 intro and it got extended by another week that I wasn't
10 allowed to use my voice at all.

11 Q. What teacher was that?

12 A. That was Mr. Stubbe.

13 Q. Ken Stubbe?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Did you have any illness when you were at Spring Ridge
16 Academy?

17 A. Yes, gastroparesis.

18 Q. What kind of symptoms did you have?

19 A. Throwing up daily, constant nausea, weight loss, stomach
20 pain, inability to properly digest food, so difficulty eating.

21 Q. Did they ever help you acquire a doctor's appointment for
22 that?

23 A. They did not, and I had had this diagnosis prior to
24 attending Spring Ridge Academy and made it known and I did
25 seek medical care.

1 Q. Did you ever have any other type of restrictions placed
2 upon you at Spring Ridge Academy?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. What kind?

5 A. There were so many restrictions. Um...

6 Q. Any that stand out in your mind right now?

7 A. Um, I mean, I wasn't allowed to, like, go anywhere or
8 leave my room without asking. I got in trouble. So there was
9 a stretch of time where, like, I wasn't allowed to have
10 private showers and had to be watched in the shower by a staff
11 member.

12 Q. Who had to watch you or do you know?

13 A. It was multiple staff members. Whoever was, like,
14 assigned to my dorm.

15 Q. How about what you ate?

16 A. Yes, everything that I ate was restricted. I didn't
17 choose any of that for myself. There was one time where I
18 took an extra apple because I was hungry, and I got in quite a
19 bit of trouble for that. So I didn't do that again.

20 Q. Who restricted your food intake and how did they do that?

21 A. They had -- they decided the portion sizes. So they just
22 gave us whatever food it was that we were going to eat. It
23 was a little challenging because there are certain foods that
24 I, like, can't digest or keep down; and I did get in trouble a
25 few times for, like, throwing up my dinner.

1 THE COURT: Ladies and Gentlemen, at this point
2 there's something I need to talk to the lawyers about. So I'm
3 going to send you off on your afternoon recess early.

4 All rise for the jury. Court's in recess until
5 2:45.

6 (Jury out at 2:26 p.m.)

7 THE COURT: Everyone please take your seats.

8 I'm just curious, Ms. Allard, is there a -- is there
9 a criminal component to this because after listening to half
10 of the witnesses and now listening to this witness I'm curious
11 if the FBI, the executive branch, the US Attorney's Office or
12 the AG's Office has been consulted in any way because there's
13 a number of things that are coming out on the record right now
14 that once this record is gathered, there's so much testimony
15 that's already under oath and sworn and some of the things
16 that are developing -- I won't go into what criminal potential
17 charges are here, but there's some different issues where I
18 need to make sure that people have been read their rights if
19 they're being called back to the stand because there appears
20 to be several different state and/or federal charges.

21 MS. ALLARD: Absolutely, Your Honor. I could -- I'm
22 a former prosecutor. I can give you the list; and, in fact, I
23 e-mailed counsel and said I needed to know whether these
24 witnesses were taking the stand. I anticipated having to use
25 their depositions, and I needed to know if they were counseled

1 on their Fifth Amendment privilege. That is in writing in
2 e-mail. Whatever they did with that information as counsel of
3 record is their business.

4 THE COURT: Okay. I just wanted to make sure that
5 everyone is aware because there's stuff coming out right now
6 that if proven to be true, these are significant state and/or
7 federal criminal charges that net a lot of time in state
8 and/or federal prison.

9 So as long as -- Mr. Grasso, is that your
10 recollection as well, that plaintiff's counsel brought some
11 issues to your attention that potentially could cause your
12 clients some form of criminal liability? And, sir, I don't
13 need you to answer the question right now; but just give it
14 some thought, you and Mr. Smith.

15 I'm not saying either way what the issue may have
16 been, but I sat at that table for twelve years as a federal
17 prosecutor and I -- before taking this job on twelve years
18 ago, I only did criminal work; and I just have some concerns,
19 I'll just say that, but if you don't -- if you don't have the
20 same concerns, I understand that; but there's four lawyers
21 here, and I've heard a lot. I'm hearing more now. I have
22 some concerns.

23 Whatever you need to do for your respective clients
24 to make sure they're shielded in terms of the future, do it;
25 but I just wanted to make sure that there's a record, and it

1 appears from what Ms. Allard has said that she's already
2 placed all of you on notice as it relates to an e-mail or
3 something.

4 Ms. Sweidy.

5 MS. SWEIDY: Yes, Your Honor. I'm approaching it
6 from a different angle. When this all started, I tried to
7 report to licensing, the Attorney General. I went through all
8 of the official channels and they want to use their -- the
9 failure of these people to acknowledge me, respond to me and
10 follow up as some kind of evidence that their clients aren't
11 guilty. So one of the reasons we're sitting here today is
12 because I could not get anyone's attention, and I'm not the
13 only one.

14 Every one of the kids from the TTI, parents and
15 people that over years and years have tried to get the
16 Government to do something about this have been shut down. So
17 the reason you find us here today is because I couldn't turn
18 my back and I couldn't walk away; and all the money I've
19 spent, half a million dollars to date, was the best money I've
20 ever spent in my life and the thousands of hours of research.

21 I have attempted to get those people's attention,
22 Your Honor, with just these facts; and, frankly, they won't
23 even bother to respond to me.

24 THE COURT: Okay, let me -- let me stop you right
25 there, and I'm certainly not making comments on potential

1 outcomes in any way. The reason I wanted to talk to all the
2 parties was just to make sure very smart lawyers, four of you,
3 have had an opportunity to discuss these issues just to make
4 sure because everything is on the record.

5 I think there was a component of this that came up.
6 Last week at some point I had some questions about rights
7 being read. It sounds to me like all of that stuff has been
8 discussed. So we will just take it from there. I just had
9 some concerns.

10 Again, my comments have nothing to do with merits of
11 anything that may be criminal in nature. As the person in
12 control of this litigation, which is a civil matter, I'm just
13 making sure the parties know that there are several criminal
14 potential matters for an Attorney General's Office or the
15 executive branch of government, but it appears that everyone's
16 thought about all of that. So everyone have a wonderful
17 break.

18 Ma'am, be careful walking down the steps right here,
19 okay?

20 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

21 COURTROOM DEPUTY: All rise.

22 (Recess taken at 2:31 p.m.)

23 COURTROOM DEPUTY: All rise.

24 (Jury in at 2:47 p.m.)

25 COURTROOM DEPUTY: All rise. Court is now in

1 session.

2 (Back on the record at 2:50 p.m.)

3 THE COURT: Good afternoon again everyone. Please
4 take your seats. Court will come to order. The jury is
5 present. Please continue with your direct examination.

6 BY MS. ALLARD:

7 Q. Did you ever discuss with Jeannie Courtney or Kate Diely
8 that you wanted to leave Spring Ridge Academy before you
9 turned eighteen?

10 A. Yes, I did.

11 Q. What did you tell them?

12 A. I expressed that I wanted to leave. I expressed that I
13 intended to leave when I turned eighteen and was told that I
14 would not be allowed to leave. I was told that SRA had
15 guardianship over me and that my parents had signed it away to
16 them even though I was eighteen.

17 Q. Did Jeannie Courtney tell you that?

18 A. Yes, Jeannie Courtney and Kate Deily.

19 Q. And did you learn that that wasn't true?

20 A. Yes, I did.

21 Q. How?

22 A. I learned that on a home visit. I finally made it to
23 Phase 3 and was able to take a trip home, and while I was home
24 I learned that from my parents.

25 Q. What did you tell your parents?

1 A. That was the trip that I pulled myself from the program
2 on. I had intended to do it sooner after my eighteenth
3 birthday, but SRA withheld my academic diploma. Despite
4 having completed all of my academic requirements, they were
5 withholding it stating that I wouldn't receive it until I
6 graduated the rest of the program.

7 However, on my home visit I contacted my previous school
8 and was able to get my diploma through them, which is how I
9 was able to pull myself and still graduate high school.

10 Q. So at some point in time you went home. Do you recall
11 why you went home?

12 A. Yes, I -- I went home two different times. That was the
13 second time I went home, the first time that I had earned a
14 visit. The time before that I had an unexpected visit home
15 because my grampa was dying and I needed to say goodbye to
16 him.

17 Q. And so you went to a funeral?

18 A. Yes, I did. I flew into Boston and saw him right before
19 he died and then went back to Vermont, which is where my
20 family's from, and we had his funeral.

21 Q. Were you eighteen?

22 A. I was eighteen.

23 Q. Did you go back to Spring Ridge Academy?

24 A. I did.

25 Q. Why?

1 A. I had told my parents that I would be pulling myself from
2 the program. They contacted SRA saying that I told them I
3 wasn't going back, and I ended up having to have a
4 several-hour phone call with Cindy Fogel where she told me
5 that I would be disrespecting my dead grampa if I didn't go
6 back to SRA because it was his dying wish to see me go back
7 and I would be letting him down, so I did.

8 Q. What happened after you returned to SRA?

9 A. I got in trouble after I returned to SRA for having
10 wanted to pull myself from the program.

11 Q. What did -- what happened?

12 A. I got put on intro. I also got dropped a phase. Getting
13 dropped a phase is where they decide that they want to revoke
14 your privileges.

15 So there are four phases. Each come with different
16 things that you're allowed to have access to or do, and if you
17 get dropped you get, like, all of those, like, less privileges
18 or, like, have a lot more restrictions.

19 Q. Did you ever try to run away?

20 A. I did.

21 Q. When was that?

22 A. I ran away in January of 2015.

23 Q. Was this before or after you turned eighteen?

24 A. Or February, I think, sorry. It was after I turned
25 eighteen.

1 Q. Was it after you came back from your grandfather's
2 funeral?

3 A. No.

4 Q. It was before?

5 A. I ran before that.

6 Q. So what happened?

7 A. When I ran away?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. I ran away with two other students. We had been in the
10 APR, the all purpose room, after study hall had finished and
11 we were supposed to be going back to the dorms. We ran away
12 and climbed over the barbwire fence that was around the back
13 of SRA.

14 Q. And were you caught?

15 A. Yes, after about fourteen and a half hours.

16 Q. Who caught you?

17 A. The Sheriff.

18 Q. Did you go with the Sheriff?

19 A. Yes, I was told that I had to. I did tell the Sheriff
20 what was going on. I also did say that I was eighteen, and I
21 was still made to go back.

22 Q. What did the Sheriff say to you?

23 A. He didn't acknowledge any of the abuse allegations that
24 we had made and brought us back to SRA without any further
25 questions or anything.

1 Q. Did he give you any reason why he was gonna take you back
2 to SRA when you were eighteen?

3 A. No.

4 Q. When you -- was there a time during your enrollment where
5 information regarding a student passing away was the subject
6 of a --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. So how did the school find -- how did you find out
9 about this and what happened?

10 A. It was actually a student that I didn't personally know.
11 I know it was a -- it was a student that had left pretty
12 shortly before I got there. So most of the girls that I was
13 at SRA with knew her.

14 I remember being called into a school-wide meeting in the
15 all purpose room and being told that this girl had died and
16 that we were not allowed to grieve her because we couldn't
17 grieve non-working sisters and she had abandoned her
18 sisterhood.

19 Q. Who said this?

20 A. Jeannie.

21 Q. Jeannie Courtney?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. So Jeannie Courtney said this deceased SRA student had
24 abandoned her sisters. What did you understand to mean by the
25 use of the word "sisters"?

1 A. The word "sister" or "sisterhood" was commonly
2 implemented into the language at SRA and was used to refer to
3 the group of girls who were there; and we were told that this
4 girl had, like, abandoned the sisterhood because she had not
5 completed the program before she died.

6 Q. Do you have a real sister?

7 A. I do.

8 Q. Was she referred to in the program as a sister?

9 A. No, she was just referred to by her name.

10 Q. At some point -- what types of terminology had a unique
11 meaning at SRA? Can you give me some examples?

12 A. There was, like, "working" and "non-working" were like a
13 couple of them. So working, if you were somebody who was a
14 working person, you were somebody that was, like, a positive,
15 I guess, connection or resource or a person and had positive
16 qualities; and if you were, like, labeled as a non-working
17 person, it meant that you had, like, unproductive qualities
18 and were a negative person to have, like, any kind of
19 relationship with.

20 Q. How about "accountability," how was that word used?

21 A. Accountability was used in a different way than I had
22 ever seen it when I got to SRA. I had to take accountability
23 for traumatic things that had happened to me.

24 Q. And in the sense that you had to claim responsibility for
25 it?

1 A. Yes, I had to apologize and take ownership of it.

2 Q. How is it -- were you asked to apologize for being raped?

3 A. Yes, many times.

4 Q. And what exactly were you asked to say?

5 A. I had to take accountability or take ownership for any
6 potential thing I had done in the past that could have led to,
7 as they said it, getting myself raped.

8 So I had to take accountability for, like, every time I
9 had ever interacted with my rapist prior. I had to take
10 accountability for going to school that day because I got
11 raped at school. I had to take accountability for letting him
12 lock the door. I had to take accountability for him choking
13 me to the point where I had bruises all across my neck. I had
14 to take accountability for all of that.

15 Q. And who required you to do that? Names?

16 A. Jeannie Courtney, Kate Deily, Cindy Fogel and Angie
17 McFadden.

18 THE COURT: I'm sorry, the last two names I didn't
19 get.

20 THE WITNESS: Sorry. Cindy Fogel and Angie
21 McFadden. Angie McFadden was my -- the Community Life
22 Director I was assigned to, and Cindy Fogel was the person
23 that was working as my therapist under Leslie Filsinger.

24 THE COURT: And, Ms. Adkins, I know you're very
25 nervous. I just need you to slow down a little bit.

1 THE WITNESS: Okay, sorry. Thanks.

2 BY MS. ALLARD:

3 Q. Other than the chair beating exercise, can you describe
4 any other workshop exercises?

5 A. Yes, I had to, like, walk the plank. So I had to, like,
6 climb onto this, like, kind of structure thing that had, like,
7 a kind of plank as if it was a diving board or something on
8 top, and I had to say why I deserved to die.

9 And if I was caught it meant that I deserved another
10 chance; and if I wasn't it meant I was right, and so I had to
11 say why I thought I deserved to die.

12 Q. So this plank was a real board? It was a real plank?

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. Is that a "yes"?

15 A. Yes, sorry.

16 Q. And how was it positioned? What was holding it up?

17 A. On, like, a step thing.

18 Q. How high was it?

19 A. I don't remember exactly how high it was. Like, I don't
20 know, like, in feet; but high enough that I didn't feel great
21 trust falling off of it.

22 Q. Was it high enough you could walk under it?

23 A. Yeah, or like up to it at least.

24 Q. How did you get up on top of it?

25 A. Like you walked up a couple steps.

1 Q. And it was like a board?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And so you're standing on a board and you're in front of
4 your classmates; is that what was going on?

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. Is that a "yes"?

7 A. Yes, in front of the other people that were going through
8 the same training. So you would go through, like, the
9 trainings with people who are in the same phase as you. So it
10 wasn't an entire school thing, but several people were there,
11 anybody that was going through this workshop.

12 Q. Was this Action?

13 A. That was Change, I believe. I was -- I attended part of
14 Action. I was pulled out of Action when my grandpa was flown
15 to the hospital.

16 Q. And who was leading this --

17 A. Jeannie Courtney.

18 Q. So Jeannie Courtney told you to get up on a plank?

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. Is that "yes"?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And what else were you instructed to do?

23 A. Say why I deserved to die.

24 Q. And did you say why you deserved to die?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And then what happened?

2 A. I had to trust fall.

3 Q. What's a "trust fall"?

4 A. Like fall backwards and, like, hope that people would
5 catch me.

6 Q. Were you caught?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Were the lights on or off in the room?

9 A. Off.

10 Q. How did that make you feel?

11 A. Anxious, scared.

12 Q. Were you set to go to college when you were still
13 enrolled at Spring Ridge Academy?

14 A. Yes, I was.

15 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, do you mind if I pour a
16 little water.

17 THE COURT: Molly, can you help her out, please.

18 THE WITNESS: Thanks.

19 Yes, I was. I applied to college and I was accepted
20 into Champlain College, which was my top choice.

21 BY MS. ALLARD:

22 Q. You were accepted for when?

23 A. I was accepted into the criminal justice program for the
24 fall of 2015.

25 Q. And what month did you learn you were accepted?

1 A. I learned that I was accepted earlier in the spring and
2 had planned on attending that fall. I had been told by SRA
3 that I was gonna be graduating from the program in August, and
4 my parents had been told that, too; and then they ended up
5 telling my parents that I had to be deferred for a year and
6 that I wouldn't be allowed to attend college in the fall
7 because I needed to be present only at SRA.

8 Q. Who said that?

9 A. Jeannie and Kate.

10 Q. Jeannie Courtney and Kate Deily?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Told you that you couldn't go to college in the fall?

13 A. They told my parents that, yeah. So my parents actually
14 deferred based on that.

15 Q. And you testified earlier that you were able to go to
16 college using what transcript?

17 A. So I had previously gone to Colchester High School and I
18 -- that's where I had, like, been assaulted and I ended up
19 going back there. My dad took me to the school in June of
20 2015 to explain that SRA was withholding my academic diploma
21 despite completion and I was just, like, a couple credits away
22 anyway; and I had been to a Wilderness program so they were
23 able to supplement a couple of credits through my Wilderness
24 experience so I could go to college.

25 Q. Did you attempt to obtain a diploma through SRA?

1 A. Yes, I did. I requested it multiple times and it was
2 withheld from me.

3 Q. Who did you ask?

4 A. I asked Cindy, I asked Kate, and I asked Jeannie.

5 Q. And did they give you your diploma?

6 A. No, they never did.

7 Q. Did they explain why they did not?

8 A. Yes, I was told I wouldn't receive my diploma unless I
9 also completed the rest of the programs as well, the
10 therapeutic components, not just the academic.

11 Q. So what were you missing in terms of what they wanted you
12 to do therapeutic work?

13 A. So at that point when I finished my academic credits, I
14 was on Phase 3 out of 4 phases. So it was the expectation
15 that I continue and complete all of the remainder of the
16 trainings and continue to participate in all of the, like,
17 therapy and whatnot.

18 Q. Did you ever participate in a training called Commitment?

19 A. I did not.

20 Q. And that's because you left early?

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. And that's why you didn't get your diploma?

23 A. That's correct.

24 MS. ALLARD: No further questions.

25 THE COURT: Is there any cross-examination?

1 MR. GRASSO: Yes, Your Honor, thank you.

2 THE COURT: Come on up. You're welcome.

3 CROSS-EXAMINATION

4 BY MR. GRASSO:

5 Q. Good afternoon, ma'am.

6 A. Hi.

7 Q. My name is Bob Grasso. We have not met before or ever
8 spoken; is that correct?

9 A. That's correct.

10 Q. The information that I have, ma'am, concerning you comes
11 from a declaration that I received from Ms. Sweidy.

12 A. Uh-huh.

13 Q. Are you familiar with that declaration?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. It's dated February 12th of 2023. Does that sound right?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Are you familiar with the document?

18 A. Yes. Yes, I am.

19 Q. When did you last review it?

20 A. When did I last review it?

21 Q. (Nodding of the head.)

22 A. I don't know exactly how recently. I guess a couple
23 weeks ago or a week ago.

24 Q. What was the reason you were reviewing it, ma'am?

25 A. Because I had been so overwhelmed with all the SRA stuff

1 and had been having panic attacks from reliving my experiences
2 at SRA. So I'd taken a little, like, time away from it. So I
3 took a, like, glance at it; but I didn't read it thoroughly
4 because I'd been avoiding thinking about it the last little
5 bit.

6 Q. Is there a reason that you decided to review it? Did
7 Ms. Sweidy or Ms. Allard ask you to review it?

8 A. No. I learned that my declaration was available on-line,
9 and my declaration included information about a specific
10 teacher that I was anxious about getting out there and I
11 didn't know if, like, that was something that he had access
12 to.

13 Q. Just so I'm clear about the time frame. So you attended
14 Spring Ridge from August 2014 to July 2015; is that correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And how old are you now, I'm sorry?

17 A. I'm twenty-seven.

18 Q. And so what month and year were you born?

19 A. REDACTED BY OWNER.

20 MS. SWEIDY: Wait.

21 BY MR. GRASSO:

22 Q. So you were just -- you were about seventeen and a half
23 when you first enrolled; is that correct?

24 A. I was seventeen when I first enrolled and eighteen when I
25 left.

1 Q. And so you said you were born in January of '97?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And you started at Spring Ridge in August of 2014?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So you'd be seventeen and a half, true?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. So you were almost an adult when you first
8 enrolled?

9 A. Yes. I didn't enroll. My parents enrolled me. It
10 wasn't my choice.

11 Q. Do you know what issues or challenges you were having
12 that led your parents to enroll you in a therapeutic boarding
13 school?

14 A. Yes, I had been raped and beaten in my high school locker
15 room, and my parents did not know how to handle or treat that
16 kind of trauma; and it was recommended to them by Kris Karge,
17 who's an educational consultant, that I be send to Wilderness;
18 and then she also is the same educational consultant that
19 recommended I go to SRA.

20 Q. Okay. And then you turned eighteen in January of 2015?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. And you left in July of 2015. So the last six months in
23 the program you were over eighteen; is that correct?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Did you ever return to Spring Ridge Academy after you

1 left in July of 2015?

2 A. No.

3 Q. So you wouldn't have any firsthand experience about
4 anything that happened after you left; is that correct?

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. You were not there when Ms. Sweidy's daughter was at
7 Spring Ridge, which was mid December of 2019 through December
8 of 2020, correct?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. You'd be approximately five years earlier, correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Did your parents, to your knowledge, ever file any sort
13 of complaints against Spring Ridge Academy?

14 A. I know that my mom called out a lot of the stuff that was
15 happening there and contacted Kate over concerns for, like,
16 the safety and well-being there, but not legal complaints; but
17 she is very much in support of this.

18 Q. Okay. Do you know if your mom contacted any authorities
19 or any sort of legal action related to it?

20 A. No.

21 Q. How about you, ma'am, have you initiated any sort of
22 legal actions?

23 A. I have not. I have shared my experience in some videos
24 and whatnot, but no. I haven't taken any independent action
25 legally.

1 Q. On that topic, I'm glad you brought that up. You're very
2 active on social media; is that fair?

3 A. I was in the past. I'm not as active on it anymore. I
4 don't know what you define as "active," though. I do have
5 some social media accounts, like most people.

6 Q. You have a Facebook account?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And you have one, two, three, four, five Instagram
9 accounts?

10 A. Five Instagram accounts? I have my regular Instagram
11 account. I have one for my poetry. I used to have, like, a
12 different poetry and photography one but haven't, like, used
13 those in a long time.

14 Q. Let me see if this refreshes your recollection. Is there
15 an Instagram mollydickinphotography?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Then there's m.dickinpoetry?

18 A. Yes, I haven't used either of those in years. I used to
19 keep my art stuff separate. I'm not sure how that's -- yes.

20 Q. I'm sorry?

21 A. Sorry, go ahead.

22 Q. And then there's another one that's just mollydickin, and
23 then there's another one that says mollydickin_consultant, and
24 then there's one that says therealmollydickinadkins.

25 Are those all of yours?

1 A. Yes. I mean, the consultant one that I haven't gone back
2 on since 'cuz I was going to do a consulting thing years ago,
3 but I only utilize the Drunk Poet one and the molly --
4 realmollyadkins.

5 Q. And then on X, which I guess used to be Twitter; is that
6 correct?

7 A. I believe X was Twitter. I never -- I don't have
8 Twitter. I have --

9 Q. You have X?

10 A. No, I have a threads, I think.

11 Q. Is there something that's mollydickin and then
12 therealmolly?

13 A. I've made a couple different accounts, like, over the
14 years in the past for, like, various art projects and stuff.
15 So I'm a little confused. I don't know. I don't have access
16 to all the accounts anymore. Yeah, I don't --

17 Q. And you've made YouTube videos?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. And you're on TikTok therealmollydickin?

20 A. Yep.

21 Q. And LinkedIn?

22 A. Yep.

23 Q. Okay. So all of your social media accounts are all
24 public; is that correct?

25 A. Yes, I believe so.

1 Q. And you could have made them private, but they're public,
2 right?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you posted a writing -- I'm going to see if this
5 refreshes your recollection -- on September 25th of 2020.

6 So how old would you have been, about 23?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Called "On Art & Identity" by Molly Dickin. Do you
9 recall that?

10 A. Yes, it's a memoir-style creative writing piece that I
11 wrote.

12 Q. Yes. And what I want to do is talk to you about some of
13 it because it's talking a little bit about your observations
14 of yourself when you were younger and in high school.

15 A. It was a creative writing piece. I do a lot of creative
16 writing. I've actually published a book of poetry, which is
17 largely fictional, but certainly draws from real emotions
18 occasionally; but is absolutely a fabrication and not a
19 factual statement of my life experiences or the content of my
20 character.

21 Q. Okay. Well, let me just read you some of the passages
22 and tell me if it's something you recall.

23 (Reading) I've been the good girl gone bad, and a
24 lifetime later, a bad girl gone good. I was looking for
25 trouble. I needed a shot of adrenaline after long moments of

1 unfortunate peace. I was restless with a thirst for the
2 unknown. The people I met along the way were searching for
3 the same kind of insanity. We were lost and pushed each other
4 past a point of self discovery and into a beautifully chaotic
5 sea of nightmares.

6 You wrote that?

7 A. I wrote that.

8 Q. And you also then -- the next paragraph is (reading) I
9 would drive in fast cars with girls with loose rules, street
10 racing at 2:00 am --

11 A. I've never been street racing. Again, this is creative
12 writing.

13 Q. I'm just asking if you wrote it?

14 A. I wrote it.

15 Q. Okay. (Reading) -- because we learned at a young age
16 that money isn't everything, and her Porsche would make a
17 magnificent coffin. She needed something dangerous and the
18 scotch and the devilish secrets on my reckless lips were just
19 the beginning.

20 You wrote that?

21 A. I wrote that, again, as a fictional piece of creative
22 writing.

23 Q. And then the next paragraph is (reading) We would ride
24 around town in black limousines, our lips lined with Honey
25 Jack and a halo of whispers disappearing into the smoke of my

1 cigar.

2 A. Halo, but yes.

3 Q. Halo. I apologize, ma'am. So this piece that you wrote
4 about yourself at high school, is that reflective of how you
5 viewed yourself when you were in high school and at Spring
6 Ridge?

7 A. No. Like I've been stating, that was a fictional
8 creative writing piece. That was not about my real
9 experiences. I use writing as a creative expression, like
10 many people do. I have a degree in professional writing.
11 I've been published several times, and that is because I'm
12 good at creative writing. Creative, it's not me.

13 Q. Okay. So your declaration also discusses that you
14 attended a couple of schools or program before Spring Ridge
15 Academy; is that correct?

16 A. Not schools. Program, yes. I was in Second Nature Blue
17 Ridge in the Blue Mountains Range in Georgia, North Carolina.

18 Q. My apologies, ma'am. I didn't mean to misspeak. I'll
19 call it a program.

20 A. Thank you.

21 Q. So the first one would have been this Northwest Family
22 Institute in Vermont?

23 A. Northeast, yes.

24 Q. Okay. So go ahead and tell us about that. What were the
25 circumstances that led you attending that program?

1 A. I went to that program, actually, because I was having a
2 lot of issues going on in my family. My household was really
3 unstable at the time, and there was a lot going on, like, with
4 my parents and my parents wanted to pull me out of that a
5 little bit so I could have a little bit of therapy to kind of
6 understand what was happening in my household.

7 Q. How old were you when you went to that program, ma'am?

8 A. Seventeen. I got sent from there to Wilderness.

9 Q. Your declaration says you were gooned from there?

10 A. That's correct.

11 Q. What are you trying to communicate when you say you
12 were --

13 A. What I'm communicating --

14 THE COURT: Let me stop for a minute.

15 Ms. Adkins, I know you want to respond; but I really
16 need you to allow the lawyer, Mr. Grasso, to finish his
17 sentence. Okay?

18 THE WITNESS: Okay.

19 THE COURT: He's about halfway through and you start
20 talking. So just relax some, okay?

21 What's the question?

22 BY MR. GRASSO:

23 Q. The declaration talks about you being gooned from that
24 program. I was just asking what you meant to communicate when
25 you say you were "gooned" from the program?

1 A. What I mean is that my parents were advised by
2 educational consultant Kris Karge to hire transporters to take
3 me from bed in the middle of the night against my will, put me
4 in a car, threaten me, and drop me off blindfolded in the
5 middle of the woods. That's what the term "gooning" referred
6 to.

7 Q. That didn't have anything to do with Spring Ridge, right?

8 A. That was not to Spring Ridge. That was prior. It was
9 the same educational consultant used for both.

10 Q. Okay. And there was a program immediately after that but
11 before Spring Ridge?

12 A. That was the Wilderness program.

13 Q. The Second Nature Blue Ridge?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. So there were two programs before Spring Ridge?

16 A. Yes, one was for less than a week and -- yeah, then I was
17 in Wilderness.

18 Q. Okay. And did you -- had there ever been any claims
19 against these programs?

20 A. Um, I am not an expert. I don't have knowledge on all
21 the claims are that have been made in the world around the
22 troubled teen industry.

23 That said, yes, these programs have also been involved in
24 the movement of Breaking Code Silence to speak out against the
25 abuse in these places.

1 Q. I apologize, ma'am. I meant to ask -- I was trying to
2 ask if whether you filed any sort of claims with them, those
3 organizations?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Including the thing about you being kidnapped in
6 the car and that sort of thing, that was the educational
7 consultant?

8 A. Yes, I did speak to the educational consultant but -- and
9 ask her about it and let her know about my experience, yes,
10 but I didn't fill it in on-line or submit it.

11 Q. And subsequent to Spring Ridge, it sounds like that you
12 went to college and were very successful?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Can you tell me again where you went to college, ma'am?

15 A. Yes, I went to Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont.

16 Q. And what was your major, ma'am?

17 A. I double majored in professional writing and criminal
18 justice and graduated early.

19 Q. Congratulations.

20 A. Thank you.

21 Q. You had a 4.0 GPA and you were on the President's List?

22 A. Yeah, I either had President or Dean's List every single
23 semester, yes.

24 Q. Subsequently, were you inducted into the National Society
25 of Leadership?

1 A. National Society of Leadership and Success, that's
2 correct.

3 Q. And so in recent times you've been doing well?

4 A. Yes. I mean, I've had some, like, health issues; but,
5 sure, yes, otherwise.

6 Q. I'm sorry to hear that. I'm not asking about that.

7 So when did you first connect with Ms. Sweidy?

8 A. I first connected with her after I had made videos on
9 YouTube about Breaking Code Silence and Surviving a Cult
10 Posing as a Therapeutic Boarding School.

11 Q. Did you contact Ms. Sweidy or did Ms. Sweidy contact you?

12 A. She contacted me.

13 Q. Do you remember approximately when that was, what month
14 and year?

15 A. Um, it was a couple years ago. I'm sorry, I don't know
16 exactly when it was.

17 Q. No need to apologize. How often have you spoken to her
18 since that time?

19 A. I don't know how many times that we've spoken.

20 Q. Can you provide me with an estimate?

21 A. I guess more times more recently. Before that it had
22 been a bit. We've had a number of phone calls or Zoom calls
23 over the period of time, but not like non-stop.

24 Q. From your time on social media, are you aware of death
25 threats that have been made against Spring Ridge, its

1 employees and students who were willing to share their
2 positive view of Spring Ridge?

3 A. How can you make death threats against a school?

4 Q. I'm just asking if you're aware of it?

5 A. No, I'm not aware of death threats.

6 Q. Would you agree that it would be bad to attempt to
7 silence people who believe that Spring Ridge had a positive
8 influence on their lives?

9 A. I don't believe in silencing anybody to speak on their
10 own experiences, but I'm not sure the relevance, but that's
11 okay. I've never tried to silence anybody ever on it. I
12 don't know what you're asking.

13 Q. And I wasn't suggesting you did.

14 A. Okay, yeah. I don't know exactly what you're asking.

15 Q. It sounds like you have some really strong negative
16 feelings about Spring Ridge; is that fair?

17 A. Yes, it was a very traumatic experience for me. So, yes,
18 I feel strongly about the worst time in my entire life.

19 Q. So with regard to the testimony on the topics that you've
20 given today, are you aware of any independent corroborating
21 evidence to what you've said?

22 A. Do you mind telling me what you mean by that, I'm sorry?
23 Corroborating like --

24 Q. Evidence that confirms or supports what you're saying by
25 some independent source.

1 A. Can I have a source that proves that I don't want to
2 silence people? I'm so sorry. I don't -- I don't know what
3 -- I don't know what you're asking.

4 THE COURT: It's a confusing question.

5 Just ask it again in a different form.

6 BY MR. GRASSO:

7 Q. Yeah, I just want to know if you're aware of any other
8 evidence that supports some of the things you're saying today
9 aside from what you're saying?

10 A. I mean, I know so many other students who went through
11 very similar experiences, yes, and they have shared those with
12 me and we also experienced them together. So, yes, I've
13 witnessed it for so many other people, if that's what you're
14 asking, them being subjected to the same things that I
15 unfortunately was.

16 Q. And is that part of some of the social media work that
17 you do?

18 A. I don't do work. It's not work. I'm not -- is what part
19 of the work? Do you mind asking a little more clearly just so
20 I know I can give a direct, clear answer?

21 Your questions are a little confusing.

22 MR. GRASSO: I'll withdraw the question.

23 I don't have anything else. Thank you, ma'am.

24 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

25 THE COURT: Is there any redirect?

1 MS. ALLARD: Yes, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Come on up.

3 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

4 BY MS. ALLARD:

5 Q. You were asked whether or not you had looked at your
6 declaration and that you --

7 THE COURT: Microphone, please. I can't hear.

8 MS. ALLARD: I'm sorry.

9 BY MS. ALLARD:

10 Q. You testified that you had concerns about statements you
11 made regarding a third person.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What statements were those?

14 A. I was concerned about retaliation from --

15 MR. GRASSO: Objection. Beyond the scope, Your
16 Honor.

17 THE COURT: What was the question again?

18 BY MS. ALLARD:

19 Q. The question was: You testified that -- in response to
20 counsel's question, that you looked at your declaration
21 several weeks ago because you had concerns about its contents
22 regarding a third party?

23 A. That's correct.

24 THE COURT: Wait, stop. The objection is overruled.

25 THE WITNESS: That's correct.

1 BY MS. ALLARD:

2 Q. What contents are you referring to?

3 A. Information regarding a teacher there named Dr. Ted.

4 Q. And what did Dr. Ted do that you reported in this
5 declaration?

6 A. Um, he -- during my time at SRA I became very close with
7 him. At the time I naively viewed him as, like, the one
8 source of safety or the one person there who actually cared
9 about me. So I let my guard down with him in that regard and
10 didn't understand at first his intentions.

11 We grew very close. He would talk to me frequently about
12 his marital problems. He would have me sit and take my exams
13 at his desk, and he would give me the answers while he would
14 play with my skirt.

15 Q. Did he touch your body?

16 THE COURT: Sidebar.

17 (The following discussion held at sidebar.)

18 THE COURT: Was this one of the motions in limine?

19 MS. SWEIDY: No.

20 THE COURT: Okay. Where are we going here?

21 MS. SWEIDY: They've known about this. It's in the
22 declaration. I've been trying to tell people all along. No
23 one wanted to listen to me.

24 THE COURT: Mr. Grasso.

25 MR. GRASSO: This is Robert Grasso, Your Honor.

1 I do believe that it's unfair and beyond the scope
2 because this was not brought up on direct. So now by her
3 bringing it up on redirect, a completely different topic, I
4 don't have the ability to cross-examine the witness about
5 completely different testimony.

6 THE COURT: Well, you -- you're the one that talked
7 about the affidavit, right?

8 MR. GRASSO: I just had her acknowledge she signed a
9 declaration. I did not go into any topics about a teacher
10 molesting her. If they intended to go on to a topic about a
11 teacher molesting her, then that would be the fair subject of
12 cross-examination.

13 THE COURT: Well, I'll tell you what, I'll give you
14 some limited questions after Ms. Allard finishes.

15 MR. GRASSO: Thank you, Your Honor.

16 THE COURT: All right.

17 MS. SWEIDY: Thank you, your Honor.

18 THE COURT: Thank you.

19 (End of discussion at sidebar.)

20 THE COURT: Please continue.

21 BY MS. ALLARD:

22 Q. Do you remember my last question?

23 A. Um, can you repeat it?

24 Q. You said he touched your skirt?

25 A. Yeah, under my skirt, yes.

1 Q. And did -- did you report this to anyone when you were at
2 SRA?

3 A. No. No.

4 Q. Was there ever a time that there were any other witnesses
5 to it other than you and Dr. Ted?

6 A. Yes, somebody else walked into the room while we were
7 positioned very closely and apologized for interrupting,
8 though I don't think, like, he could -- I don't know that he
9 could see what was going on, but we were very -- very much too
10 close to each other.

11 Q. And who was that?

12 A. Justin.

13 Q. What was his name?

14 A. Justin.

15 Q. What's his last name?

16 A. Zych.

17 Q. And this teacher, Dr. Ted, did you ever report what he
18 was doing to anybody in law enforcement?

19 A. No.

20 Q. And when's the first time you told anybody about this?

21 A. Um, the first time I told somebody about it was my
22 husband.

23 Q. Did he contact -- did Dr. Ted ever contact you after you
24 left the school?

25 A. Yes, he contacted me a lot over the course of several

1 years. He would frequently ask me to take trips with him, and
2 he would frequently ask me if he could book me to go away with
3 him. He told me very specifically what his intentions were in
4 the hotel. I never met him at a hotel, but he did
5 consistently ask that.

6 We initially connected over LinkedIn, actually, after
7 SRA. He sent me a message calling me by my nickname that he'd
8 given me when I was there, which was 13, because he said I
9 looked like a hot, young version of Olivia Wilde, and we --
10 I'm a writer so I was working on a piece at the time and he
11 told me he was writing a book and we, like, exchanged some of
12 our writing; and that's how we reconnected after SRA, and he
13 would continually ask me for pictures and tell me he regretted
14 not taking it further.

15 Q. Did he ever contact you on Instagram?

16 A. Yes.

17 MS. ALLARD: No further questions.

18 THE COURT: I'll provide limited recross,
19 Mr. Grasso, if you would like to utilize it.

20 MR. GRASSO: Nothing more from me, Your Honor, thank
21 you.

22 THE COURT: Subject to recall, plaintiffs?

23 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: Defense?

25 MR. GRASSO: No, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: Ms. Adkins, thank you so much for coming
2 in this afternoon.

3 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

4 THE COURT: Please be careful walking down the
5 stairs. As best you can, have a wonderful rest of your week,
6 okay?

7 THE WITNESS: Thank you, you too.

8 THE COURT: All right. Next witness, please.

9 MS. ALLARD: Your Honor, Maisy Morehead.

10 THE COURT: I'm sorry?

11 MS. ALLARD: Maisy Morehead.

12 THE COURT: Sidebar.

13 (The following discussion held at sidebar.)

14 THE COURT: I know this is very emotional for
15 everyone. Can you just make sure Ms. Sweidy knows she can't,
16 you know, go into the well and hug the witnesses? You know, I
17 know they're very young and what they've been through, but if
18 you could just talk to her about that.

19 MS. ALLARD: She's coming if you want to tell her
20 yourself, but I will.

21 THE COURT: Ms. Sweidy, I can't have you hugging the
22 witnesses.

23 MS. SWEIDY: I'm a mom. She's sobbing a ton about
24 her molest --

25 THE COURT: I understand.

1 MS. SWEIDY: -- and I'm responsible for her being in
2 pain.

3 THE COURT: Okay. What I'll allow you to do is if
4 you need to, when the witness is leaving the stand, I'll allow
5 you to leave the courtroom and you can meet them once they get
6 outdoors.

7 MS. SWEIDY: Can I please do this? This is really
8 horrible for a mother to have to do, but these were the
9 stories I was hearing when I was pulling my daughter.

10 THE COURT: The double doors, once you make it --
11 once they make it through the double doors, if you need to
12 comfort them you can because you have another lawyer.

13 MS. SWEIDY: I understand.

14 THE COURT: Okay.

15 MS. SWEIDY: And it is not my intention to be
16 disrespecting you. This is horrible for a mother to watch
17 someone else's child go up there and...

18 THE COURT: Okay. I understand that, but if you
19 could just do that, that would be helpful. Okay?

20 MS. SWEIDY: I will do exactly as you say.

21 Thank you, I'm sorry.

22 (End of discussion at sidebar.)

23 THE COURT: Next witness, please.

24 MS. ALLARD: Maisy Morehead.

25 COURTROOM DEPUTY: You can stand right here, I'll

1 swear you in. That's good. Raise your right hand.

2 (*Witness is sworn.*)

3 COURTROOM DEPUTY: Thank you. You can have a seat
4 on the witness stand.

5 THE COURT: Ms. Morehead, when you take the seat and
6 you get comfortable, I just need you to pull the microphone
7 close enough and speak directly into it so we can all hear
8 you. Okay?

9 THE WITNESS: Thank you, your Honor. Is that good?

10 THE COURT: That's perfect, thank you.

11 Counsel, whenever you're ready.

12 DIRECT EXAMINATION

13 BY MS. ALLARD:

14 Q. Can you please state and spell your name for the record.

15 A. Maisy Brooks Morehead. That's M-a-i-s-y, B-r-o-o-k-s,
16 M-o-r-e-h-e-a-d, formerly Mallory LaConte Morehead.

17 Q. When you attended -- did you attend Spring Ridge Academy?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And what name did you go by when you were there?

20 A. Mallory LaConte Morehead.

21 Q. How did you end up at Spring Ridge Academy?

22 A. I was originally unwillingly transported from my bed to a
23 facility called Pacific Quest in Hawaii. I was there for
24 three months, and afterwards they had arranged for me to go to
25 Spring Ridge Academy.

1 Q. So where are you from?

2 A. I'm from Connecticut.

3 Q. So you were in Connecticut and how old were you?

4 A. I was sixteen.

5 Q. So when you were sixteen, you ended up going away from
6 home. Can you tell me how that happened?

7 A. Yes. So my parents and I were having a very difficult
8 time getting along. I was not performing well academically.
9 My parents blamed my friends and, you know, my choices and I
10 was very frustrated with them because my mother -- she's a
11 yeller.

12 I would be at home and I would hear the garage door open
13 and, like, my heart would drop to my stomach and I would
14 think, "Oh, here comes the yelling." So we were at odds for
15 years and I was not getting my needs met, and I had bad
16 anxiety that was affecting my academic performance and my
17 parents were not understanding about that.

18 So one day after a particularly bad fight with my dad I
19 went to stay with a friend for a little bit. I just needed to
20 get away from the chaos that was home. I'm someone who really
21 values peace and sanctuary in my life, and my mother had
22 written a note to me and she was saying that she had regretted
23 the way that she treated me and the state of our relationship
24 and she really wanted to make things better; and she made a
25 bullet list after that of specific things that would change,

1 specific things that we fought about, things that weren't
2 gonna happen anymore or things that were gonna improve.

3 So I came home, and about a month later I had a big fight
4 with my mom. I don't remember what it was about, and I was
5 crying and contemplating suicide again; and I looked at the
6 letter and every single bulleted item on that list she had
7 given me the time before was a lie. Nothing had changed.

8 I was -- I would have rather been dead than live with my
9 parents anymore so I went back to my friend's house. They
10 were a really sweet Christian family. It was, you know, a
11 calm sanctuary where no one would fly off of the handle about
12 everything. I'm a very sensitive person.

13 And so I tried to transfer high schools and they told me
14 -- my guidance counselor told me that my parents had to be
15 there for orientation day one. So I wasn't planning on ever
16 going back to my parents' house. I was done trying to make
17 the relationship work because we had just been fighting for --
18 non-stop every day for five years pretty much and -- but I
19 went back so that I could stay in school because I was -- I
20 was failing high school where I was at, and I wanted to make a
21 change in my life.

22 I was trying to fix my problems, and at 3:00 in the
23 morning my parents came in with two strangers and they said --
24 my mother said, "You're going to Hawaii." She said it like I
25 had won a contest, and I was freaking out. I'm sure I was

1 belligerent and yelling at them, but eventually my parents
2 left the room and it was just me and the two complete
3 strangers; and they told me, "We can do this the easy way or
4 the hard way."

5 It was December at the time, and that was very relevant
6 because they said, "You can throw a fit and say you're not
7 gonna go and do whatever you want and that's fine. We will
8 sedate your ass and we'll stick you in the back of our car and
9 we'll drive you to Utah and you're gonna freeze your ass off
10 or you're gonna get on the plane with us and you're gonna go
11 to Hawaii."

12 And I did not want to hike through Utah for an extended
13 period of time in the snow so I did -- I willingly boarded the
14 plane willingly, as much as you can in that scenario. I was
15 at Pacific Quest for three months.

16 It was an extremely traumatic experience there, and my
17 therapist there was very combative with me. He told me that
18 therapy with me was like nine rounds with Mike Tyson, and he
19 would laugh at me when I would tell him about why I wasn't
20 getting along with my parents.

21 I mean, it was -- he had so clearly, you know, chosen a
22 side and it wasn't mine, and he had no interest in really
23 helping me see anything other than I was the problem. I was
24 the fuck-up. I was smoking pot in the woods or, you know,
25 failing high school and I was just -- I was just struggling to

1 want to live because I was -- it was an intense depression and
2 anxiety at that time and...

3 Q. At Pacific Quest this was in Hawaii?

4 A. Uh-huh, it was.

5 Q. Did they have any type of workshops --

6 THE COURT: Was the answer "yes"?

7 THE WITNESS: Yes.

8 BY MS. ALLARD:

9 Q. Did they have any workshops or activities similar to
10 Spring Ridge Academy?

11 A. There was something similar to the workshops. It was
12 called haole cayaye (phonetic). You would be, you know,
13 chosen one week. There are multiple -- for context, there are
14 multiple different camps at Pacific Quest. So when you get
15 the first one it's called it's called nalau (phonetic).
16 That's Hawaiian for, I think, newborn or new or something like
17 that; and at nalau you're not allowed to speak to other
18 students. You have to ring a bell every two seconds when
19 you're in the bathroom. You're watched at all times.

20 The way that the camps in Pacific Quest are set up is
21 there's this big -- they call it perch in a central usually
22 higher up location over the rest of the camp and different
23 what they called they call halais (phonetic), which were --
24 we'll call them person-sized chicken coops, little wooden
25 structures with a roof and three sides.

1 So, you know, they took my clothes. They took the hair
2 tie off of my wrist. They took everything -- every person,
3 place or thing I had ever seen in my life up until that point
4 was taken away from me as well as, you know, my ability to
5 speak to the other students.

6 I was mortified when I got there, but nalau was the worst
7 camp. You know, they continued to get better as the program
8 went on; and when you went to haole cayaye (phonetic), which
9 is its own camp and I don't know what that means in Hawaii --
10 in Hawaiian, forgive me, there were lots of exercises that
11 were, I would say, similar as to Spring Ridge training.

12 At one point I remember they had told us to get in a van
13 and they didn't tell us where we were going and they took us
14 to -- I think it was, like, Hawaiian Volcanoes National Park.
15 I don't remember the exact name, but they asked us to write a
16 eulogy for ourselves and I thought that that was very strange;
17 but I did my best, you know, being a living, breathing person
18 and writing a eulogy for myself.

19 I didn't really know what that meant, and the next day
20 they had me lie in a shallow grave while a staff member read
21 it to the other students who were in haole with me and that
22 reminded me a lot of the -- the lifeboat exercise later on
23 brought back very bad memory of when I was in Action.

24 Q. Can you describe the lifeboat exercise?

25 A. Sure. So it's like a guided meditation. You know, it's

1 in, I think, the second or third day of Action, probably the
2 third, and we were all lying in Shavasana, right. So that's
3 when you're on your back and you've got your palms facing up
4 and your eyes are closed and Jeannie walked us through -- the
5 gist of it was you're on a cruise ship. You have a fabulous
6 night partying with friends and loved ones, and then you drift
7 off to sleep and, boom, the boat is sinking and there's only
8 room for a few of you.

9 And you all have to get up in front of each other and
10 make the case that you should have space on the lifeboat, and
11 I needed to get through Action because I wanted to go to
12 Phase 4. They were very good at dangling the carrot in front
13 of you, so to speak.

14 So I was desperate for Phase 4 privileges because I
15 missed my friends, you know. I care about my friends a lot,
16 still do. I'm actually going on a vacation with those same
17 friends next week. They mean a lot to me, and so I did not
18 want to get up there and make my case to be on the lifeboat.

19 I was -- you know, if the time comes, I'm ready to die.
20 I hated the exercise, but I went along with it just like I
21 went along with all the other exercises in Spring Ridge
22 Academy -- or in Action and in Challenge because getting
23 through means getting out.

24 And then after that they had us -- the girls formed a
25 circle as they went around and you would face each of your --

1 each other person who was going through the training and you
2 would say when I am -- referring to whatever your name tag
3 was, which was decided on day one. Your name tag is something
4 bad about yourself. Mine was that I was a wasteful snowplow,
5 that I was pushing away at things wastefully in my life.

6 So I had to say to every student either, "When I am a
7 wasteful snowplow, you die or you live," and we got to tell
8 three people that they live while someone was on an easel in
9 the corner supposedly keeping track of how many you lives
10 everyone gets.

11 And I was pretty sure I was going to be asked to leave
12 during this exercise because no one voted for me, which was
13 really, really hurtful; but for context, when I went through
14 Action, they were actually going to cancel the training
15 because there was some big drama on campus and a bunch of
16 people had been dropped from Phase 3 and were not allowed to
17 go through Action, but the rest of us -- I think there were
18 six of us -- were really mad that we weren't going to get the
19 chance to go through Action.

20 So one of the girls who had already been through Action
21 had told Jeannie -- I was not there personally to witness it.
22 The story goes she said, "Jeannie, why don't you just let us
23 go through again so there's enough people for Action."

24 So they had all of the people who had already been
25 through before do it first and so they knew that it didn't

1 matter who lived or died. That's probably why no one voted
2 for me, but at the end of the exercise -- at the end of the
3 exercise Jeannie -- once those of us who were going through
4 for the first time were finished, because she had us go last,
5 she said, "Did you save a vote for yourself?" and I was like,
6 "Oh, damn it," of course not. I voted for my friends.

7 Who else -- I didn't know what else to do, you know. I
8 wasn't clever enough to think about that, and then at the end,
9 you know, they turn around the easel and I don't remember what
10 it was. There was some stupid drawing. No one was keeping
11 track of who lived and died. It was like a big ha-ha we
12 tricked you; and Jeannie was like, "Life's not a popularity
13 contest. You have to advocate for yourself," and I just felt
14 tricked and frustrated, but mostly relieved that I got through
15 because I was, again, very desperate to have a Phase 4 visit
16 and to see my home and to see my friends and to have contact
17 regularly with the people that I loved.

18 Phase 4 got a little flip phone, a cell phone that they
19 could call friends and family members with. Friends only on
20 the weekends but, like, that meant the world to me. I felt
21 really isolated when I was at Spring Ridge and I -- I would
22 have done anything.

23 Q. Did you ever have to participate in what they called a
24 feelings reduction?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Describe what that was.

2 A. I personally never did a feelings reduction, but I was
3 present for probably five or six of them over my time at
4 Spring Ridge. I was there for 15 months, and a feelings
5 reduction is when a therapist has identified that there is
6 someone in a student's past who they have great negative
7 feelings towards, but they're holding onto, right.

8 Thank you. And the way we set up the room for a feelings
9 reduction was the therapist -- whether or not they were
10 actually a therapist or if we just called them a therapist
11 because we were supposed to.

12 I did see Brandon Courtney perform a feelings reduction
13 and he's not, to my knowledge, a therapist; but the therapist
14 and the student would sit side by side and there were two rows
15 on either side and we were instructed to face our chairs away
16 from the aisle, from the middle because there was an empty
17 chair in the middle of the two rows, right?

18 And the therapist would tell us that there's gonna be a
19 lot of negative energy going in the middle of that aisle and
20 we don't want to absorb it. So you turn your shoulder into
21 it, and if someone who's sitting next to you is getting
22 emotional, you put your hand on their shoulder. Don't rub
23 your thumb in. Don't rub their shoulder. Don't touch them.
24 Just wait until your hand feels warm and then take it away,
25 and if you have any big emotions try not to have an outburst.

1 Try to just quietly leave the room.

2 So when it actually got started the lights were dimmed.
3 The student who was having their feelings reduction was asked
4 to close their eyes and the therapist would say -- for
5 example, let's say it was the student's mom. Usually it was a
6 parent or a boyfriend. I think every feelings reduction I was
7 at was a parent or a boyfriend.

8 Let's say, "I understand you have a lot of unresolved
9 feelings about your relationship with your mom. Well, I have
10 good news. Your mom is actually here. She wants to listen to
11 how you feel. Why don't we go ahead and let her in," and then
12 a designated student would get up and open the door for a
13 moment, close it back, walk over to the empty chair that was
14 directly in front of the therapist and the student and then,
15 you know, just jostle it a little. Make a little chair noise
16 like somebody sat down, and the therapist would then kind of
17 recite a -- usually there would be some light prompting and
18 the student could say whatever they wanted to their -- we'll
19 call them target, in this case a mom, about how they feel and
20 usually the therapist would have some notes and say, "Oh, what
21 about this event? What about that? How did that make you
22 feel?" and the student would just talk at an empty chair.

23 And after that went on for a while the student -- the
24 therapist would then instruct the student to repeat after me,
25 and the student said -- the therapist would say and then the

1 student would echo. "You shamed me. You had no" -- shoot,
2 what was it? "You shamed me. You had no right to shame me."

3 I don't remember it all, but the big one was "and I give
4 you back your shame," and the student would repeat, "I give
5 you back your shame. I give you back your shame. I give you
6 back your shame."

7 The first feelings reduction I was ever in was in
8 Brandon's caseload. Brandon was assigned in the therapist
9 role for me for my first five months at Spring Ridge.

10 Q. Can I ask you, are you talking about Brandon Courtney?

11 A. Yes, Brandon Courtney.

12 Q. So he gave you therapy?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And that went on for five months?

15 A. Five months.

16 Q. What was the routine for his therapy sessions with you?

17 A. May I finish what I was gonna start?

18 Q. Sure. Would you like to finish what you saw Brandon do?

19 A. Yeah, during the feelings reduction. My first feelings
20 reduction was run by Brandon, and he had that student repeat,
21 "I give you back your shame" for at least fifteen minutes. It
22 was really excessive. Like fifteen entire minutes is a really
23 long time to repeat the same sentence.

24 It was -- it felt like a colossal waste of time for
25 everyone in the room, and I couldn't tell you what it felt

1 like to be a student getting a feelings reduction; but for me,
2 you know, that was time that was supposed to be group therapy.
3 That was time that was wasted. It was frustrating.

4 Q. Were you learning about other people's private details?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. How often did that happen?

7 A. On a daily basis.

8 Q. And so, in general, you said you were assigned to Brandon
9 and so what was the content of those -- or format of his
10 therapy sessions with you?

11 A. So Brandon was my therapist for five months. We met once
12 a week for individual therapy and twice a week for group
13 therapy and those sessions have not -- don't resemble anything
14 else -- don't resemble any other therapy that I've ever
15 received outside of that, other than maybe at Pacific Quest,
16 which was a bad experience.

17 Someone once -- someone who was in Brandon's caseload
18 with me -- we spent a lot of time with our case load
19 members -- once made a joke to me that I thought was really
20 funny. She said Brandon doesn't know how to do therapy. He
21 knows three things. He knows the "Anatomy of Peace," which is
22 a book that all Spring Ridge students were required to read in
23 Phase 1. He knows the box metaphor, which I'll get into at
24 some point, and he knows personal anecdotes about him and his
25 family and nothing else; and I thought, wow, that's kind of

1 funny.

2 But I started paying attention a little more to see if it
3 was actually true, and I had Brandon for another three months
4 after that as my therapist; and in those three months I never
5 once experienced him do anything other than those three
6 things. He would talk about a book, he would talk about the
7 box metaphor or he would talk about his wife, children,
8 family, mother, you know, people that I knew.

9 Q. What kind of things did he say about his family?

10 A. It could get very, very personal and on one occasion he
11 really, really crossed a line; but a lot of it was just like
12 mundane parenting stories about, like, you know, potty
13 training and stuff but one day -- this was my third session
14 with Brandon. So I was brand new at Spring Ridge. I'd only
15 been there for three weeks.

16 One day I was in therapy with Brandon and he told me that
17 because my parents are my family, I have a duty to them and
18 every -- you know, that's what family means and to illustrate
19 that duty he told me that he -- for example, he would love to
20 cheat on his wife and he thinks about it all the time, and he
21 doesn't cheat on his wife because they're married and he's a
22 family man and, gosh, he would never do that; but that's like
23 me running away from home, you know. You just don't do that.

24 I was like, why are you telling me this? I know your
25 wife. I see your wife on an almost daily basis. I'm sixteen.

1 I'm disgusted. I don't want to know that you're horny, and we
2 argued back and forth for the rest of the therapy session,
3 which was about a half an hour, about how I didn't want to
4 know about his urges towards infidelity.

5 I was disgusted and that day I was -- I'd already kind of
6 suspected, but that day I was firmly like, "All right, I don't
7 have a therapist. I have a nepotism baby who will just say or
8 do anything that he thinks is relevant no matter how
9 inappropriate it was."

10 I was mortified, especially from a place that talks about
11 boundaries so often. I mean, Spring Ridge Academy loves
12 telling us what good boundaries and bad boundaries are. So to
13 see -- that was when I just lost total, total faith in him as
14 a therapist to me.

15 Q. Who was your Community Life Director?

16 A. So for my first month it was Debbie. I don't know her
17 last name. She was actually pretty sweet, even though she
18 could be a little tough lovey, but after that was Kara Nealon
19 for the rest of my stay.

20 Kara was a former Spring Ridge student who had come back
21 to work there, and she was the most prominent abuser of my
22 time in Spring Ridge.

23 Q. What did she do that you considered to be abusive?

24 A. Well, first of all, she was just mean. I mean, one of
25 the cruelest cattiest people that I've ever met, and I don't

1 think it was just to the students because I know a few
2 teachers who had felt that way about her, one who I spoke with
3 recently who said she was -- she stayed as far away from Kara
4 as possible, but Kara Nealon would give feedback, which was
5 what we called it, and it was just the most scathing slew of
6 abuses one can ever imagine.

7 Q. Do you know what -- did you ever experience something
8 they called a hot seat group?

9 A. Yes, the hot seat groups were Kara's favorite. They came
10 in many sizes in many locations, but since Kara was my CLD,
11 Community Life Director, we had CLD groups twice a week. So
12 Kara had held them very, very frequently.

13 Sometimes there were campus-wide hot seat groups where
14 one or more students would sit in the middle of the APR, which
15 was a room about -- probably about this size and all the other
16 students would sit along the outside and staff would say
17 whatever was going on with that student.

18 Usually it was kind of personal details, you know,
19 disagreements with family, drama on campus, something like
20 that; and they would just air it out for everyone, and then
21 once that was said and done we all had to go around and give
22 feedback, and I believe wholeheartedly that Spring Ridge
23 students were incentivized to be particularly scathing when
24 giving feedback because we were really patted on the back
25 about it.

1 It seemed to be like a -- like a signal that we were out
2 there in the community and doing good and in touch with other
3 students and knew what was happening, and a very common piece
4 of feedback was that -- I mean, some of the feedback could
5 just be really, really vague. You've got to keep in mind
6 these are mostly teenage girls giving feedback but --

7 Q. Can you give me examples of what statements a girl would
8 to make --

9 THE COURT: I need to stop you for a moment.
10 There's some kind of electronic sound. If you have your phone
11 in the "on" position, if you can look at it to make sure
12 there's no sound because we can't have the trial being
13 interrupted so much.

14 Ms. Allard, my apologies. Go ahead, please.

15 BY MS. ALLARD:

16 Q. Can you give a specific example of a statement a student
17 would make that would be feedback that you recall?

18 A. Um, so feedback could be really specific. "So, hey,
19 Jenny, I saw you take three honey packets at breakfast this
20 morning and we're not allowed to have two."

21 Or a feedback could be really vague, like "You're
22 negative. You're not there in the community," or, you know,
23 "You're too close with your own friends and you're not
24 socializing with enough people. You're not supporting lower
25 phases," or -- I mean, it could be truly anything.

1 Q. When you -- what type of punishments did your Community
2 Life Director give you?

3 A. Um, well, Kara was real creative about coming up with
4 assignments that would be challenging for students; and I'm
5 lucky that Kara, for the most part, I think, liked me and left
6 me alone in that regard, but she would put people on -- like I
7 had a roommate who was really, really clean and it seemed
8 almost a little bit compulsive, and she was put on the Messy
9 assignment where she was required to keep her bed unmade and
10 her clothes a mess on the floor, and it just irritated the
11 crap out of her.

12 I mean, it really bothered her not being able to have
13 control over her own possessions or the Ask For Help
14 assignment. If a student was perceived as being too
15 independent, they would be asked -- they would be put on the
16 Ask For Help assignment where they had to ask someone to brush
17 their teeth for them or carry their backpack for them or do
18 anything for them. I mean, I always thought it was just
19 teaching helplessness and I think it's good when teen-agers
20 are -- have some independence.

21 Q. You have an independent recollection of an assignment
22 where somebody else had to brush someone's teeth?

23 A. Yes. I have brushed someone's teeth. It was on the
24 Messy -- it was on the Ask For Help assignment.

25 Q. You had to brush somebody's teeth?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. What about -- what were the rules for Phase 1's that were
3 different as you advanced through the program?

4 A. So Phase 1's were not allowed to speak to each other,
5 which was very frustrating for me when I was a Phase 1 because
6 I had a roommate who had just arrived and was also a Phase 1.
7 I remember asking Brandon if he would give us permission to
8 speak.

9 I didn't think either of us posed any kind of risk to one
10 another or ourselves or anything along those lines, and I
11 think any reasonable person would have agreed with that. We
12 were not the plotting type. We were both rule followers I,
13 would say, and he said, "No, had have to move to Phase 2,"
14 which was not that easy for me because I had -- you had to
15 write three book reports to move to Phase 2, and I came in
16 March.

17 So I was already several months behind on school work
18 that I had to catch up on. I was also there for academic
19 anxiety so it was a very frustrating response. Other than
20 that, they were mostly pretty similar to Phase 2 rules. You
21 have to ask to, you know, leave a building or go somewhere.
22 You may not go in other students' rooms. You don't get to go
23 home. You get, I think, one phone -- in Phase 1 all of your
24 phone calls with your parents are supervised. On Phase 2
25 they're semi supervised, a little less so.

1 Q. So this Phase 1, you're not -- you're not allowed to
2 speak with your roommate?

3 A. If they're on Phase 1, yeah.

4 Q. So did -- was your roommate on Phase 1 or 2 or 3 when you
5 first got there, do you remember?

6 A. Well, I got there before her. I had been there for about
7 three weeks. Usually takes about a month to get to Phase 2,
8 and she got there and moved into my room and was automatically
9 on Phase 1 because you're on Phase 1 when you arrive. So we
10 were both on Phase 1.

11 Q. Could you talk to each other?

12 A. No.

13 Q. So you're sleeping in a room with somebody and you're
14 straight from Pacific Quest and you can't talk to your
15 roommate?

16 A. Yes, and it should be noted that -- sometimes you can
17 just tell with vibes if someone's going to be your friend, and
18 I knew that person and I were really going to click; and I
19 actually struggled socially a lot when I got to Spring Ridge.
20 I had no friends.

21 There was a girl who I would play cards with at lunch,
22 and we wouldn't even speak to each other. We would just play
23 card games because, you know, if you sit alone, some Phase 4
24 is going to come try and talk your ear off to try and get
25 brownie points to be out there in the community and I really,

1 really hated that because -- I don't know.

2 It's a tough pill to swallow when you first arrive at
3 Spring Ridge because a lot of students are so with the
4 program, and the program is so bizarre that it's a really,
5 really tough pill to swallow that, oh, these are my options
6 for friends.

7 They're like people who are super pissed off that they
8 just got here, but you're not allowed to talk to them; and
9 then people who are really just using you for -- to me it felt
10 like when Phase 3's and 4's would try to talk to me, it was to
11 get brownie points for, you know, being a good influence on a
12 Phase 1 and I hated that.

13 Q. Now, did you have to do a stretch dance at any of these
14 workshops?

15 A. Yes, an Action.

16 Q. Can you describe what that was?

17 A. Yes, so the stretches were -- everyone was assigned a
18 role by Jeannie based on I don't know exactly what. When I
19 staffed Action later, it was seemingly based on things that
20 she witnessed in the training primarily; but you have to dress
21 up a certain way, right?

22 So if you have a specific role, like some of the roles
23 were characters from the Wizard of Oz, you know, Dorothy, the
24 Lion, whatever. You had to dress up in a silly costume or,
25 for example, my role, I was Alicia Keys, whose music is not my

1 favorite, and so I had to dress up glam.

2 We were given, like, a choice of a bunch of dresses and
3 had to do makeup, and I was not comfortable wearing makeup at
4 all. I was kind of tomboy-ish. I was really not girly
5 whatsoever in my teen years. So it was -- I went along with
6 it 'cuz I wanted to get through Action.

7 There was a little bit of -- during the stretch all of
8 the people who were going through the training and not
9 actively doing a stretch are in a horseshoe, right, in chairs;
10 and if they believe that you are being authentic while you
11 dance to the music that's been chosen for you, they stand up;
12 and if they don't believe that you're authentic, then they
13 remain seated.

14 So during my stretch about -- I think it was five or six
15 girls who didn't really like me remained seated during my
16 entire stretch, and afterwards Jeannie didn't even really tell
17 me that I had, like, done a good job. Jeannie just yelled at
18 them. She was, like, "How can you not see that this is the
19 most, you know, authentic, feminine person. She is so truly
20 herself and has grown so much. How do you not see it?" and
21 she wanted them to apologize to me for not standing, and I
22 remember feeling very embarrassed because it's really
23 embarrassing -- it's just such an awkward situation to be in,
24 but I couldn't believe she was reprimanding people for not
25 believing one way or another on a subjective quality such as

1 authenticity.

2 Like it's not like it's red or blue. You know, you can't
3 look at something and instantly know that's an authentic
4 dance. I thought they were entitled to their opinions and I
5 was mortified, but I also witnessed someone else's stretch
6 where everyone was standing and Jeannie yelled at us because
7 we fell for her shit and she was clearly totally faking it.

8 So it was really, really frustrating. Jeannie was right
9 all the time in her mind, and anyone who didn't sit or stand
10 the way she wanted was an idiot.

11 Q. Did -- do you ever recall that there was a student that
12 was -- announced they were leaving the school, their parents
13 were going to take them out of the school?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And what was the reaction of the staff to that?

16 A. Well, I remember several occasions where that happened;
17 but one was really close to home because she was my roommate
18 at the time and she had become really -- she was a sweet
19 person; a really sweet, just outgoing, nice to talk to person.
20 We weren't, like, close, but she was a really pleasant
21 roommate; and she became very sullen and withdrawn one day,
22 and the next day we had a campus-wide meeting.

23 It wasn't that large because a lot of people were on
24 visits, which happened about monthly so that's kind of normal,
25 but Kara had been -- I want to say it was one of our Monday

1 campus-wide meetings -- no, Kara had called a special one and
2 she had that student announce in front of everyone else that
3 her parents had made the decision to bring her home early so
4 she could finish her high school degree locally because they
5 thought that it was best for their family and they thought
6 that she was ready to come home.

7 And Kara Nealon just dug her -- tore her a new one. I --
8 it was one of her -- the angriest I'd ever seen her. She was
9 like -- I'll give the student a fake name so I can imitate.
10 Let's say her name was Mary. She was like, "Mary, you have
11 been lying and manipulating and getting your way all your
12 life. You have your parents wrapped around your little
13 finger. How dare you. You're never gonna be okay if you
14 don't finish this program. Like what makes you think you're
15 just gonna go home and things are going to be all right with
16 your family? You're not even at Phase 4 yet."

17 Like, it was just public cruelty.

18 Q. Who was present?

19 A. Most of the campus and also Brandon Courtney. Every
20 student who was on campus at the time and Brandon Courtney
21 and, of course, several line staff members; and Brandon did,
22 also, tell her off but he was a little more level headed about
23 it.

24 Q. He criticized the student for leaving?

25 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. Is that a "yes"?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. What were you told -- were you told what specifically
4 would happen if you didn't complete the program?

5 A. Well, they liked to throw around pregnant or dead pretty
6 often, but mostly that we were never gonna be our complete and
7 whole authentic selves and live your truths and whatever other
8 Spring Ridge-isms they threw in there.

9 I mean, they made it clear if you don't complete this
10 program, you're never gonna be happy. You're never gonna be
11 okay. Your family's going to be a mess, and you're never
12 gonna get your mental health under control.

13 Q. Did you ever understand what the goals were for you?

14 A. Huh, what the goals were? Well, I think the main goal
15 was repairing the relationship with my parents. Outside of
16 that, no.

17 Q. Did your anxiety around school work improve after being
18 at Spring Ridge Academy?

19 A. Um, no.

20 Q. Did you -- what were your plans? How did you leave
21 there? What did you do next?

22 A. Um, well, I was -- I had had such a bad time in school
23 before getting sent away, and I had such a bad time at Spring
24 Ridge that I really associated school with just awful things.
25 So I wasn't ready to go to college.

1 I took a seasonal position in a national park. I was
2 just working as a fast food restaurant cook. It was actually
3 kind of a fun experience, but I met my ex there. We moved to
4 Texas a year later and started community college. I kinda
5 just did community college to make my parents happy, but I
6 graduated college last month actually.

7 Q. Did you ever do Commitment?

8 A. No -- well, I did the first night of Commitment, which
9 was really just a feedback group, and then it kinda fell
10 through the cracks and never met again.

11 Q. Do you know any particular reason why it fell through the
12 cracks?

13 A. No.

14 Q. And what year were you there when that occurred?

15 A. That was 2016.

16 MS. ALLARD: No further questions.

17 THE COURT: Is there any cross-examination?

18 MR. GRASSO: Briefly, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Come on up.

20 CROSS-EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. GRASSO:

22 Q. Good afternoon, ma'am. First, congratulations on your
23 recent graduation. Where did you graduate from?

24 A. UNT.

25 Q. And what was your degree in, ma'am?

1 A. Tech com.

2 Q. I'm sorry?

3 A. Technical communication.

4 Q. And I just want to be clear on your time frame at Spring
5 Ridge. You started there March 1st of 2015, and your
6 declaration says you graduated from the therapeutic program
7 and the academic program and left in good standing on May 20,
8 2016; is that correct?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And did you ever return to Spring Ridge after you left in
11 May of 2016?

12 A. No.

13 Q. So you wouldn't have any firsthand experience about
14 anything that happened after you left, correct?

15 A. No, but there's plenty of, you know, Spring Ridge groups
16 on-line. People talk. So I've heard a little bit here and
17 there.

18 Q. My question was: You don't have any firsthand
19 experience --

20 A. No.

21 Q. -- about what happened after you left, correct?

22 A. No.

23 Q. And you were not there when Ms. Sweidy's daughter was
24 there, basically in 2020?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Do you know Ms. Sweidy's daughter?

2 A. No.

3 MR. GRASSO: No further questions, your Honor.

4 THE COURT: Is there any redirect?

5 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: Subject to recall, plaintiffs?

7 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Defense?

9 MR. GRASSO: No, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Ms. Morehead, thank you very much for
11 coming in this afternoon. You're excused from this trial.
12 Please be careful with the steps behind you there.

13 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: You're very welcome.

15 And congratulations. That's University of North
16 Texas?

17 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

18 THE COURT: Very good.

19 Next witness, please.

20 MS. ALLARD: Emma Kerrigan.

21 COURTROOM DEPUTY: You can come up here. You can
22 stand right there. Raise your right hand.

23 *(Witness is sworn.)*

24 COURTROOM DEPUTY: Thank you.

25 You can have a seat on the witness stand.

1 THE COURT: Ms. Kerrigan, when you get adjusted
2 there in the seat, I need you to speak directly into the
3 microphone so we can all hear you.

4 THE WITNESS: Can I adjust it a little bit?

5 THE COURT: Yes, yes, you can.

6 THE WITNESS: All right, cool.

7 THE COURT: Ms. Allard, whenever you're ready.

8 MS. ALLARD: Thank you.

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 BY MS. ALLARD:

11 Q. Can you please state and spell your name.

12 A. Emma Kerrigan, E-m-m-a, K-e-r-r-i-g-a-n.

13 Q. Did you attend Spring Ridge Academy?

14 A. Yep.

15 Q. And what year did you attend?

16 A. October 20 -- nope, '13 to June 2015.

17 Q. And how did you end up there?

18 A. I -- after an educational consultant, Jodi Dobson, met
19 with my parents following my attendance at Trails Carolina.

20 Q. So at the time -- I mean, where are you living now?

21 A. I live in London.

22 Q. At the time that you were school age, you were in the
23 United States?

24 A. Yeah, I lived in New Jersey from eight to eighteen.

25 Q. And so when you were at Spring Ridge Academy, did you go

1 through their workshops?

2 A. Yep.

3 Q. Can you describe what you experienced?

4 A. In which one?

5 Q. Let's start with Teen Challenge. Do you recall Teen
6 Challenge?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. So what happened when you got there?

9 A. I mean, the biggest memory I've got is the hitting chairs
10 with wrapped-up towels exercise, being shouted at in a dark
11 room about, you know, releasing your trauma or rage or anger
12 against -- for me it was my parents. Yeah, in a dark room.

13 Q. How long had you been there before you were asked to
14 participate in this activity?

15 A. It wasn't long. I couldn't put an exact number to it,
16 though.

17 Q. All right. What about Action, did you participate in
18 that?

19 A. I did.

20 Q. Can you describe the activities in that workshop?

21 A. Yeah, so it was a multi-day process. The first -- the
22 first activity was coming up with a name tag for yourself,
23 which was meant to, I guess, summarize all of the -- I don't
24 know, a description of you that kind of encapsulated why you
25 were there, all the negative things about yourself, and wear

1 that instead of your name because we all had name tags. We
2 went into all these trainings.

3 Anyway, but in Action specifically this one you made for
4 yourself, replaced your actual name.

5 Q. And what was going into your thoughts when you're sitting
6 here in this group saying, "I've got to come up with a name
7 tag"?

8 A. The second -- I don't remember the first name tag because
9 I got asked to leave Action the first time. The second time
10 was what's the most negative thing I can say about myself. So
11 it looks like I've been introspective or can't be properly
12 reflective of anything. So it was about finding the most
13 negative thing I could realistically describe.

14 Q. Who asked you to leave Action?

15 A. Jeannie Courtney.

16 Q. So were you asked to leave and come back to the same
17 Action or did you have to start all over?

18 A. I start all over.

19 Q. So how long was it before you got to go to Action again?

20 A. A few months between them. They, obviously, weren't
21 hosted regularly and I couldn't -- I don't think that there
22 was a specific, you know, they were hosted every three, four
23 months. They just seemed ad hoc based on -- I don't know,
24 some arbitrary thing.

25 Q. So what happened when you were asked to leave? What

1 specifically were you asked to leave for?

2 A. It was the giver/taker exercise, which it just kind of
3 seemed like a de facto popularity contest at some point.

4 Q. How was it set up?

5 A. Two lines of girls. Both the staffers and the girls
6 actually doing the workshop. You'd stand in a chair and be
7 asked, "Do you think that you're a giver or a taker in this --
8 in Action so far?"

9 Then they'd take a vote by stepping forwards or
10 backwards, and then you got asked whether or not you were a
11 giver or taker in the community as a whole. There was no
12 description of what "giver" or "taker" was.

13 Q. So --

14 A. It was just based on whatever.

15 Q. Did Jeannie say why you were asked to leave?

16 A. I was told that I was a taker and that wasn't what they
17 wanted people who were going to be completing Action to be.
18 You had to be a giver.

19 Q. Were you told why you were perceived as a taker?

20 A. Nope.

21 Q. So when you knew you had to go back to do this program
22 again, what went into your head about what you were going to
23 say in front of Jeannie this second go-around?

24 A. Just kind of overwhelming dread because it wasn't up to
25 you. It was everything that you were doing outside of that

1 training beforehand to make sure that -- you know, that --
2 'cuz you're being judged by your, you know, fellow students
3 and, like, cohort and you just had to make sure that they
4 thought that you were giving with whatever nebulous definition
5 that everyone might have, and it was just overwhelming dread.

6 Q. So was it your belief it had to be negative?

7 A. I don't know. It was just critical of myself, way more
8 critical of myself than I think it should have been.

9 Q. So Jeannie wanted you or expressed to you or gave you the
10 impression she wanted you to be critical of yourself in front
11 of the group?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And did you pick a name tag that was critical of
14 yourself?

15 A. Yeah, I did.

16 Q. What was it?

17 A. It was something to the effect of, like, "never going to
18 be enough."

19 Q. Did you have to dance?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Can you describe what that was like?

22 A. Um, yeah. I mean, I got dressed up in a costume, told
23 that I was the -- you know, the wizard from the Wizard of Oz
24 because I had this big facade on and I was bubbly and
25 laughing, made jokes and didn't take things too seriously; and

1 that was just covering up something that was meant to be the
2 authentic me.

3 So I got to dance around to *The Wiz*, song from *The Wiz*,
4 and then I had to write -- read a speech I wrote about this
5 mask that I was covering up my authentic self with by joking
6 and laughing and, you know, not taking life too seriously; and
7 then I had to dance to a Christina Aguilera cover of
8 Reflection from *Mulan*.

9 Q. And this was all in Action?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. What kind of punishments were there imposed upon students
12 who were in -- living at SRA?

13 A. There was specific ones for specific students that they
14 seemed to make up, but generally things like S and S, which
15 was silence and separation, introspection. If they thought
16 that you were being too antisocial, then you could be on book
17 restriction or music restriction or mirror restriction or in
18 the case where some, you know, girls were suffering from
19 eating disorders then, you know, bathroom restriction; but
20 that kind of extended to rooms, not just individuals.

21 Q. So what kind of restriction would a child with an eating
22 disorder have?

23 A. Generic ones would be mirror restriction. So you cover
24 the entire mirror, you know, rooms you shared with four girls
25 with a massive piece of, like, butcher paper and you got to

1 pull it aside every now and then if you weren't on the mirror
2 restriction.

3 Q. And what kind of bathroom restrictions were there, if
4 any?

5 A. Just not allowed to use the toilet for an amount of time.
6 Can't remember how long.

7 Q. Were there times when students couldn't hold it?

8 A. Not to my memory.

9 Q. Were you ever asked to do an activity called Commitment?

10 A. Yep.

11 Q. What happened?

12 A. So everyone kind of knew about Commitment because all of
13 a sudden a bunch of the, you know, Phase 4's would have a bag
14 that they would bring back from one of their visits and they
15 would, you know, have this bag with them religiously like it
16 was, you know, the baby. They couldn't let go.

17 And when it was my time, you know, Phase 4 visit, told to
18 bring back the bag and I was really excited; and I got given,
19 basically, like a five-pound bag of playground sand to carry
20 around in this bag with me and I had to write down my values
21 on some wooden beads and then tie that to the bag and carry
22 this bag around with me for -- like everywhere I went.

23 So going to, you know, cross fit in the morning to, you
24 know, remembering it -- bring all your classes along with your
25 books and bring it to dinner and even having it, like, in or

1 next to your bed.

2 So it was with you all the time, and every evening the
3 girls who were, you know, part of this Change, you know,
4 activity would go and discuss values and how we lived, you
5 know -- committed ourselves to them and then journaled every
6 night and talk about that; and then at the end we got,
7 basically, blindfolded in a car park -- at the SRA car park in
8 the evening when it was kind of dark and driven for -- I don't
9 know how long, but long enough that it wasn't just going, you
10 know, to Mayer.

11 Q. Did you know where you were going?

12 A. Nope.

13 Q. So what happened when you got to wherever the car
14 stopped?

15 A. Kind of in the middle of the desert and it was,
16 obviously, dark and they took the girls out, like, one by one
17 and kind of just said -- I mean, like it was spaced out
18 between us, but they just said when I got out it was, you
19 know, cut the bag of sand and just walk -- follow this trail.
20 Walk and, you know, let the sand fall out while you're
21 walking.

22 Q. Did they take the blindfold off?

23 A. Yeah, yeah, they took the blindfold off; but, you know,
24 I'm not from the desert. I'm from, like, a lot of green grass
25 and trees; and the wildlife and affiliation of desert was a

1 bit -- you know, worrying about it because you hear -- you
2 know, cacti aren't my, you know, favorite thing to want to
3 fall into.

4 And so it was dark and rocky and you're carrying this bag
5 of sand and you don't know where the end of the path is. You
6 don't know what happens if you do fall over. You don't know
7 what happens -- you know, how long you're walking for. What
8 if you come across another girl? And I don't know how long I
9 walked for, but it was far longer than I thought it would be;
10 and then by the end of that the bag was empty and got given
11 some smores.

12 Q. And who was the staff -- what staff members were present?

13 A. For that one I remember Kimberly, the CLD. I don't
14 remember the others.

15 THE COURT: Ladies and Gentlemen, it's 4:30 right
16 now. We need to take our overnight recess. Again, please
17 don't talk about the case.

18 All rise for the jury. Court's in recess until
19 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

20 (Jury out at 4:30 p.m.)

21 Ms. Kerrigan, you can go ahead and step down. Just
22 be careful with your step, please.

23 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

24 THE COURT: You're welcome.

25 Is there anything we need to take up on the record,

1 plaintiffs?

2 MS. ALLARD: No, Your Honor.

3 MS. SWEIDY: Excuse me, one thing, You Honor.

4 THE COURT: You can just go ahead and cross.

5 MS. SWEIDY: I apologize. One thing, Your Honor.

6 I'm going to request that opposing counsel redact
7 the transcript removing Molly Adkins' date of birth that
8 Mr. Grasso questioned her about. That's one of the things
9 that needs to be redacted in the redaction form. I read the
10 rules of it after we spoke last time about redactions.

11 THE COURT: What redaction form? What are we
12 talking about?

13 MS. SWEIDY: On Pacer. You're supposed to redact
14 the -- to have someone's public information out there that he
15 asked her about, I don't know why he asked her her birthday,
16 but she did volunteer on the record; and certain things, such
17 as Social Security number, birthdays, and a list of things
18 that the Federal Government has decided they don't want out
19 there, we had to sign and check a box that says we did not do
20 that.

21 On occasion I've made a mistake accidentally, but he
22 asked Ms. Adkins there and I didn't know the proper way, but
23 it can't be out there. It's part of the redaction process.

24 THE COURT: Is there anything else from the defense?

25 MR. GRASSO: No, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: You all have a wonderful evening.

2 I'll see you tomorrow morning at 9:00.

3 *(Whereupon the proceedings adjourned at 4:31 p.m.)*

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION

I, TERI VERES, do hereby certify that I am duly appointed and qualified to act as Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court for the District of Arizona.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing pages constitute a full, true, and accurate transcript of all of that portion of the proceedings contained herein, had in the above-entitled cause on the date specified therein, and that said transcript was prepared under my direction and control.

DATED at Phoenix, Arizona, this 5th of June, 2024.

s/Teri Veres
TERI VERES, RMR, CRR