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No More Nightmares at Tranquility Bay?

By John Gorenfeld, AlterNet. Posted January 23, 2006.

Largely unregulated, the teen rehab industry has scarred thousands of kids for life. Now one lone congressmember is pushing to stop the abuse.

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From the Czech Republic to Costa Rica and Mexico, cops have seized American overseers for caging or mistreating American teens at harsh "boot camps" run under foreign flags to escape U.S. law.

But here at home, the companies that ship teenagers to remote reform schools can freely go about their business in many states. You can dial 1-800-355-TEEN to reach the sales staff of Teen Help, LLC, who can arrange for your child to be spirited away. They might put you in touch with "escorts," guys who can pull up to your driveway in a van and transport even the most defiant child to the airport. The next destination is up to you: a "tough love" school here in the 50 states, like Majestic Ranch in Utah or Spring Creek Lodge Academy in Montana?

Or perhaps Tranquility Bay, a barbed-wire discipline facility in Jamaica, where some of the approximately 250 teens can find themselves confined against their will and marched around by guards. Only the devil stands in the way of your consumer choice.

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The devil, that is, and a lone congressman, Rep. George Miller, D-Calif.

Just ask Ken Kay. He's the president of the tightly knit group of Utah men who run these outposts with their families, under the umbrella company World-Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASPS), whose leaders, critics say, try to hide their role in running the schools by running them under different names. Ken's son Jay, a college dropout who ran a mini-mart in San Diego, now oversees Tranquility Bay, where he had admitted to the media that he squirted pepper spray on his charges in the past.

As a teen at Tranquility Bay, you can't call home and are escorted between rooms by Jamaican "chaperones." Talk out of turn and your punishment might be that a trio of guards wrestles you to the ground. "They start twisting and pulling your limbs, grinding your ankles," a student told the British newspaper *The Guardian*. Not knowing when you'll go home, you might take cold showers and watch "emotional growth" videos. The promise is that you will return a respectful, happy teen. But many WWASPS alumni who've banded together at online survivor websites like Tranquility Bay Fight and Fornits say their lives haven't been saved, they've been devastated.

Several WWASPS schools have been shut down after abuse claims. Tranquility Bay's counterpart, High Impact, a WWASP affiliate in Mexico, closed in 2002 after dark stories emerged. Teens said they were kept in dog cages. Two parents, Chris Goodwin and Stephanie Hecker, told the *Rocky Mountain News* their children were made to lie in their underwear for three nights with fire ants roaming over them and were threatened with a cattle prod if they scratched.

In December, Rep. Miller asked Congress's nonpartisan General Accounting Office (GAO) to launch a fact-finding probe into similar schools, claiming the $1.2 billion teen rehabilitation clinic industry is shrouded in secrecy. Miller's office is awaiting word from the GAO on the investigation request. After a call to the GAO, AlterNet was told no decision had been made yet as to whether to launch the study, which would look into whether the industry was receiving special tax treatment or using fraudulent marketing techniques. Asked why he requested the probe, Rep. Miller explained, "Far too little is known about the so-called 'behavior modification' industry, even as it has surged in size since the 1990s, and that is why I have asked the GAO to review it... There is no excuse for allowing children to be placed in unlicensed programs where their physical or emotional health is jeopardized."

But company president Kay told AlterNet he questioned the congressman's motives. "I think that he must just want to be powerful, or seen as, 'oh, the guy that saved all these children from abuse,'" says Kay. "My fear is that he has a vendetta."

The WWASPS schools rake in about $80 million a year. Claiming to enlist about 1,250 students (the official number has dropped from 2,500 in 2003), the company schools are part of a wider industry, estimated to hold 10,000 teenagers, that is rarely covered by the news media.

Miller, senior Democrat on the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, is pushing for a bill, H.R. 1738, to increase state licensing of the teen control trade and hold Americans who run foreign discipline schools accountable to U.S. laws. Company president Kay, however, suggested Miller may also have a partisan, anti-Republican motive against WWASPS.

It's true that WWASPS is generous to the GOP. The schools and "teen transport" company are run by a web of cell-like corporate entities that deny their interconnectedness -- but share family members, billing addresses and other obvious signs of affiliation. At the top is founder Bob Lichfield, who lives in Utah on a posh ranch, his lifestyle and political presence fueled by tuition payments. According to the *Salt Lake City Tribune* Bob Lichfield and his family and business associates have given given over $1 million to GOP politics at the local and national level.

The lobbying seems to have paid off. Seeing as how the National Mental Health Association has categorically condemned juvenile boot camps as counterproductive "bullying," the goal would appear to be keeping oversight out of the hands of mental health experts. Like some timber companies and others, a number of "troubled teen" companies have promoted the idea that they should be their own watchdogs. While the rules are tightening this year in Utah, a frontier is opening in Montana. As Michelle Chen reported in the *NewStandard*, a pro-WWASPS plan is winning out in the state over a tougher one, coinciding with WWASPS school Spring Creek Lodge Academy's $50,000 lobbying push to water down the rules. Instead of the state Department of Health, the new plan lets industry insiders watch over schools such as Spring Creek and others. And there will be exemptions for "faith-based" schools.

So far, WWASPS hasn't chosen the God loophole, but its officials attach such religious zeal to teen control that the "faith-based" label would fit the company snugly. "Do I believe that God is finding a way for teens to get help? I do," Lichfield once told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Do I believe that Satan is interested in thwarting it? I do." Asked in December about his boss's remarks, Kay waxed philosophical: "If you have a spiritual side, I think you can truly believe that there may be some adversarial part of our nature and makeup that gets involved." Then there are other adversaries, some of whom Kay has called "wackos" -- a steady parade of unhappy mothers and teens, as well as the pesky foreign cops who have arrested camp leaders at Kay's schools for "human rights violations."

The company has spent the last decade trailblazing an unregulated frontier. Like manufacturers, they've outsourced to foreign countries which have different laws and standards. A predecessor like STRAIGHT, Inc., from 1976 to 1993 the foremost teenage drug rehab outfit in America, was driven out of business by liability and sued for false imprisonment and manhandling of children. But as industry watchers have discovered, the early 1990s saw new business models emerging for "tough love." WWASPS' approach has been a goldmine. By splintering its business empire into fragments -- including Teen Help, Adolescent Services, Inc., and Teen Escort (the teen retrieval arm) -- it has received much more leeway to conceal accountability and money trails, its critics argue. Draw a map of the network, Utah state prosecutor Craig Barlowe told the *New York Times* in 2003, and you'll see "a lateral arabesque with no hub except for these connections in Utah." Barlowe was pursuing a child abuse charge against the director of a WWASP-affiliated school at the time.

On the consumer end, parents are offered thousands of dollars in sales incentives for finding new kids or promoting WWASP schools, the *New York Times* has reported. The schools' hunger for pupils has created a proliferation of promotional websites -- like FamilyFirstAid.org -- beckoning mom and dad to ship the kid to the "friendly tourist Island [sic]" of Tranquility Bay, the "prime forest land" of WWASPS' Spring Creek Lodge and other pleasurable-sounding destinations. (As author Maia Szalavitz documents in her upcoming book, *Help at Any Cost*, at WWASPS program Paradise Cove in Samoa, which is now shuttered, kids caught scabies, and guards confined bad kids to a 3 feet by 3 feet plywood chamber that teens referred to as "The Box.")

School of hard knocks

Two Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters, Lou Kilzer of the *Rocky Mountain News* and Tim Weiner of the *New York Times* have written exposes of the kennel cages, bug infestations, unqualified staff and confinement to punishment rooms that have been passed off under the Harry Potter-esque language of "boarding school." Rep. Miller's spokesman Tom Kiley said that substandard education is just one of the areas of concern that the GAO needs to help resolve about WWASPS and the wider industry. This August, one facility with the prestigious name "Academy at Ivy Ridge" in New York had to refund more than $1 million after pretending to offer legitimate high school diplomas.

WWASPS eludes the attention and regulation it might receive if its institutions were presented as health care facilities instead of schools. There is little to show for them as high-water marks in American education, however; when not being bombarded with Tony Robbins motivational tapes, kids learn by rote and fill out multiple-choice tests. While a promotional website claims that "more than 80 percent of the

graduates of these programs go on to attend some of the best universities and professional schools in the country," Kay didn't respond to a request for an example of a student at an Ivy League or other top school. Referring to WWASPS-affiliated institutions, Maia Szalavitz said admissions officers are unlikely to be impressed by the education, which not only stresses conformity over critical thinking but can include long stays in solitary confinement.

Over two years ago, Rep. Miller was turned down by then-Attorney General John Ashcroft when he asked him to investigate possible crimes revealed in the *New York Times* reports. "Congressman Miller sees this as a top priority," says Miller's spokesman Kiley. "The promise is that your child is going to be treated with respect, and that these are the people meant to help them. In fact, the opposite is happening."

The money linking WWASPS and Republicans, says Kiley, "definitely sends up red flags," but he wouldn't go so far as to claim a web of connections. Miller's proposed End Institutional Abuse Against Children Act, would give states $50 million to help license schools, establish new criminal and civil penalties for leaders of abusive programs and let the government regulate overseas camps that are presently beyond the arm of the law. Right now, the State Department warns that it "has no authority to regulate these entities."

Company president Kay, however, told AlterNet that local authorities already do a "great job" regulating the schools.

Under Montana's new plan, that board, dominated by industry insiders, will be responsible for making sure companies avoid some of what has befallen WWASPS's 450-teen Spring Creek Lodge Academy campus in Thompson Falls, Mont., in the last three years. Such as the time that Karlye Anne Newman from Denver, days shy of 17, hanged herself in a bunkhouse there in 2004. Or making sure the firm doesn't again allow a man like former employee Keith Wood, 31, in the proximity of troubled youth. Wood last February went to nearby Plains and shot a romantic rival seven times with a Glock pistol before turning the weapon on himself.

According to a 2004 report in the *Missoula Independent* that re-opened Karlye's forgotten death, the kids are forbidden to speak of her suicide -- or spread tales of Jamaica, a distant island that looms over them as a fate worse than Montana. "That's a Cat-4," a student said when the paper asked about the dead girl. "We can't talk about Karlye." A card around the student's neck helpfully informed the reporter that a Cat-4 meant losing rank in the program, meaning staying longer at the camp and costing dad thousands more in tuition. Tuition at the lodge runs at about $40,680 a year, a typical figure for these schools.

Abuse, says Kay, doesn't happen anymore often than in the public school system. "That doesn't mean we're gonna shut down the public schools," he said.

Unless, of course, if your middle school principal kept girls in multi-day "stress positions" similar to the kind approved by Donald Rumsfeld for use on Muslim prisoners. As Maia Szalavitz relates in "Help At Any Cost," that was the case at a WWASPS school for girls in Mexico. It was called Sunset Beach and was shut down after being raided by local police in 1996. Authorities seized and later released overseers Glenda and Steve Roach. A company official blamed "the local legal system" for the ensuing closure of the school.

But across the world in the Czech Republic, two years later, authorities reached similar conclusions after finding that the WWASPS-affiliated Morava Academy was holding kids in windowless rooms and forcing them to remain on their stomachs for days. Czech cops arrested and released the overseers on bail for illegal imprisonment and torture, the British Guardian reported.

The accused were the Roaches, the same people arrested in Mexico. At press time AlterNet could not locate the Roaches for comment or determine the outcome of their case, though industry watchdog group International Survivors Action Committee has claimed to have located them in the Bahamas living under new names. Czech press reports paint a cloudy picture as to their whereabouts, with Glenda leaving the

country before trial on a health waiver, and Steven "at large" to avoid criminal investigation, according to Radio Prague and other sources.

But somehow, according to WWASPS officials' statements to the press, it was the teens' fault for being "master manipulators" who'd tricked the European officials into thinking there was abuse. In 2003, a dramatic teen uprising in Costa Rica at the company's Dundee Ranch school brought WWASPS to the attention of *Times* national security reporter Tim Weiner. The uprising began after a visit by Costa Rican officials, who told students they had more rights under local law than WWASPS allowed them. "They told us you have the right to speak, you have the right to speak to your parents, you have the right to leave if you feel you've been mistreated," 17-year-old Hugh Maxwell told the *Times*. "Kids heard that and they started running for the door. There was elation, cheering and clapping and chaos. People were crying."

Six people told the *Times* that staff beat the children to stop them from leaving. As order collapsed, Costa Ricans seized control and hauled off the founder's brother, Narvin Lichfield, in handcuffs for holding kids against their will, releasing him a day later. In a statement, the company complained that the Latin American prosecutor, with his "Rambo-like tactics," had told kids they could "do whatever they wanted, without consequences." According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Narvin Lichfield was charged in Costa Rica with "aggravated privation of liberty, coercion and international crimes." A Costa Rican judge ordered him to stay in the country for six months, but ultimately Lichfield did not stand trial.

An evil world without consequences, populated by lying teens, is what WWASPS's officials and pro-company parents often say they're up against, a nearly metaphysical threat. Participating families must attend motivational seminars on the struggle. Ex-participant Karen Lile, a piano seller in Northern California, has written an essay alleging that she suffered "distress and emotional shock" from a Teen Help "discovery seminar" she attended at a Holiday Inn which, she wrote, encouraged her to keep her child in the program. Witnesses at similar events describe the atmosphere as rising to the fever pitch of religious revival road shows, with adults wailing and beating on chairs.

So how are mom and dad talked into keeping their kids at a foreign detention center? The pamphlets for one Teen Help-affiliated school show kids playing basketball and wandering amid natural wonders, rediscovering lost innocence. As long as parents ignore the small letters warning, "Not all Photos [sic] taken at the facility," they can tell themselves they are buying a snooty private education.

And they are told it's this or death on the streets. "If your child needed a kidney transplant to save their life, you would come up with the money," Kay said. "If the value of your child's life isn't worth the cost of a new car " And they're warned not to believe teens who may spin tall tales of abuse. After a high school basketball player named Paul Richards was sent to Paradise Cove in Samoa, Szalavitz recounts in her book, his parents received a newsletter, "WHUTZ UP in Paradise Cove," offering a lesson in how to avoid being "manipulated" by letters from the front.

The lesson presents a sample letter reading, in part: "It is not the camp you promised ... The [program staff] are mean and beat me when I do something they don't like."

Parents are encouraged to write back with dispassionate jargon: "Work your program."

The young basketballer later told Szalavitz that "working" his own $2,000-a-month "program" meant letting groups of shaved-headed teens belittle him for refusing to "see the light" and be grateful. "They just circle you up, and they all start yelling at you at the same time and say how shitty a person you were," he said. "'You're worthless, you're pathetic, you're a piece of shit, you're a compulsive liar and nobody likes you,' just basically stuff 'til they broke down your self-esteem."

Was a shipment to the Jamaica security complex appropriate for a teenage girl who'd been sleeping around? Kay, asked the question, stressed that being flown to a school like Tranquility Bay is "a child's right." Teens "should expect that their parents have the right to step in on their behalf and make some decisions for

them," he said. Some kids have entered WWASPS-affiliated schools for no infraction more serious than fighting with a stepmother. No court order is required.

Szalavitz says there's no evidence for the legitimacy of the "treatment" at most of the schools, which operate in a regulatory climate without consequences. As there is no research into long-term effects, she'd like to see studies done on whether any WWASPS alumni have been left with post-traumatic stress disorder. Some parents have described their kids' WWASPS transformations with language more "Dawn of the Dead" than "Dead Poets Society." Alex Ziperovich, 16, emerged from Spring Creek Lodge "35 pounds lighter, acting like a zombie," his mother, a Seattle attorney, told the *New York Times*.

Where's the outcry?

Why haven't stories like the ones by Weiner and Kilzer, Pulitzer winners both, caused a public outcry and swift government reaction? Do press accounts give WWASPS too much equal time? "It's a ridiculous way of covering things. We don't cover any other kind of health care that way," Szalavitz says, suggesting the press wouldn't be so charitable to non-doctors who claimed to have a new method for extracting tumors. Most news features take the he-said-she-said approach familiar to us from recent reporting on Intelligent Design: "WWASPS isn't for everyone ..." But, says Szalavitz, "This is not a story of 'some people go to this church, some people go to that church.'" Szalavitz added, "We're selling what they stamped out of psychiatric institutions 100 years ago."

Oddly enough, WWASPS president Ken Kay himself has raised unsettling questions about the programs Rep. Miller is waging his battle to regulate. During a period in 2002 when he'd split with WWASPS, he told the *Rocky Mountain News*' Kilzer: "These people are basically a bunch of untrained people who work for this organization. So they don't have any credentials of any kind. We could be leading these kids to long-term problems that we don't have a clue about because we're not going about it in the proper way ... How in the hell can you call yourself a behavior-modification program -- and that's one of the ways it's marketed -- when nobody has the expertise to determine, is this good, is this bad?"

Kay has since rejoined WWASPS as president. Asked in an email interview in December whether his concerns had since been calmed since 2002, Kay said he was quoted out of context. "Nobody [calmed] my worries for children," he wrote back. "There are trained authorities that deal with abuse. All necessary systems are in place ..."

John Gorenfeld is a freelance writer in San Francisco. He has a blog at gorenfeld.net.

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Get these "schools" shut down
Posted by: IfTheyMoveKillEm on Jan 23, 2006 1:06 AM [Report this comment]
It's sad and astonishing that parents will fork over $40K per year for tuition to help their kids, but the people who they trust their kids to turn out to be sadistic, immoral monsters. I know 3 people that went to "school" in lockdown facilities like the ones described here. 1 of them eventually killed herself, 1 came back to town 2 years later as a complete nutcase and social outcast, and the 3rd one memorized their little school mantras until they released her. She's screwed up now too. The whole thing is evil and it's no surprise the GOP gets cash from these scum. Great article.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Get these "schools" shut down Posted by: The Southpaw

» RE: Get these "schools" shut down Posted by: Lizka

Criminal charges warranted
Posted by: iposhares on Jan 23, 2006 3:29 AM [Report this comment]
The parents and operators of these facilities should be charged criminally with every available charge possible so as to bankrupt them and make examples of people with long prison sentences and asset forfeiture.
It should also be against the law to commit anyone to any such facility without a court order and it should be unlawful to commit anyone to any facility beyond the reach of US law.
It is all ready illegal transport any kid in interstate or foreign commerce for this purpose involuntarily if one can prove torture,involuntary servitude, or sexual exploitation is taking place however the laws should be changed regarding these facilities to make any such involuntary non-judicial confinement to such outside the US or within where not regulated a federal crime punishable by long imprisonment and total asset forfeiture for the operators/facilitators.

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» RE: Criminal charges warranted Posted by: mim

bbetsy
Posted by: bbetsy on Jan 23, 2006 4:25 AM [Report this comment]
We have many internet sites of surviving teens and their parents about life at these "Teen Boot Camps". Go to http://www.parentadvocates.org and click "Teen Boot Camps" under F for Fraud, and you will see that these camps must be closed.

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» RE: bbetsy Posted by: tomco

a future for vouchers?
Posted by: menckenman on Jan 23, 2006 4:31 AM [Report this comment]
sounds like the repug education plan under NCLB.

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» RE: a future for vouchers? Posted by: mazel

The Parents Ought to Be Prosecuted for Child Abuse.
Posted by: douglashoyt on Jan 23, 2006 6:20 AM [Report this comment]
What a country.

Rich parents who don't have the time or love to help their children grow up send them off to be abused.

This is George W. Bush's America.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: The Parents Ought to Be Prosecuted for Child Abuse. **Posted by: Ty**

SEND ME YOUR CHILDREN
Posted by: AlienSlave on Jan 23, 2006 6:46 AM [Report this comment]
I don't have much but what I have I'll use to raise any child of any age!
Alienslave

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

So, our acceptance of torture started long before Gitmo!
Posted by: fool-on-the-hill on Jan 23, 2006 7:16 AM [Report this comment]
I have been wondering for several years how in hell the United States of America has turned into a country that causually accepts torture as an acceptable tactic. Now I feel like I used to be living in some kind of bubble. Did the country I love EVER exist?

No wonder we, as a nation, don't seem to give a damn about human rights abuses in detention facilities run by our government. The neo-cons who are responsible for the excesses of our foreign policy have already been PAYING thugs to torture their own children!

This self-styled new "ruling class" that has emerged to imitate the old "robber barons" is the greatest threat to the United States -- and the world -- that has ever faced us! I'm beginning to think the only solution IS REVOLUTION!

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: So, our acceptance of torture started long before Gitmo! **Posted by: Lizka**

The new "race" card
Posted by: bookwoman on Jan 23, 2006 7:19 AM [Report this comment]
Here we go again. Everytime someone attacks a business or person who is connected to the Republicans, either in some great or tenuous way, the response is "oh, they are just partisan or Anti-Repubican". Its an ongoing mantra. Rove did it last week and now this man, Kay, is hiding behind this nonsense. Wouldn't you think the Republican Party would be embarassed at being claimed by all these bad guys.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: The new "race" card **Posted by: mim**

Lockdown Camps and Privacy Invasions
Posted by: afrothetics on Jan 23, 2006 7:25 AM [Report this comment]
This scandal shows why the administration's claim that they want Internet search data is just another lie. The official reason is that they are search for pedophiles. Another lie. When will Americans learn. If these people are breathing, they are lying. The hot button language is already known: national security, sexual deviance, gay marriage, abortion, black crime, pornography, *ad nauseum*. The porn is what the Bush administration is doing to the American people.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Welfare worker
Posted by: peacenik on Jan 23, 2006 8:26 AM [Report this comment]

It could be that the lack of outcry is because the parents of these teens are ashamed of what they have done to their children and won't risk the public exposure. Of course, in doing nothing to stop this, they double their shame.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Welcome to the Bush family!
Posted by: magistre on Jan 23, 2006 8:32 AM [Report this comment]
Since these teens (at least) cross state lines doesn't that put it under federal jurisdiction? Oh, I know, Mr. Bush, we cant question these schools because they're "training" these teens to "fight terrorism"...or some such fascist nonsense.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

NOW WHAT?
Posted by: jrmart66 on Jan 23, 2006 8:36 AM [Report this comment]
OK, i had never heard of this. never seen any reports on cable or network news, nothing in the major papers. WHY NOT?
AND NOW, WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

SUGGESTIONS PLEASE? WHAT ABOUT THE ACLU? LETS ALL GET ON THE STUMP AND STOP THIS CRAP.

And lets not just blame the republicans, (read nazi's). i am sure there must be some Rs witha concience.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: NOW WHAT? **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: NOW WHAT? **Posted by: mim**

» RE: NOW WHAT? **Posted by: mim**

I Hate Bullying And Abuse
Posted by: ZPaul on Jan 23, 2006 9:19 AM [Report this comment]
The account of this vicious, money-hungry organization reminds me of the merciless tactics used by a number of cults/religious groups to "enlighten" their victims. This is one more terrible symptom of the sick, corrupt society we have become.
How about writing your congressman, for starters?

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

This is why marijuana remains illegal
Posted by: sausage on Jan 23, 2006 9:54 AM [Report this comment]
More than the law enforcement lobby, the drug treatment/rehabilitation lobby frames the drug legalization/decriminalization debate.

Why legalize marijuana when there is so much money to be made in the rehad industry? It's almost all private sector or church controlled.

Catch the kid smoking pot, bundle him or her off to rehad camp, have him or her receive worse treatment than he or she might in prison and pay big bucks for the privilege.

Ain't American free market capitalism great?!

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

BRAT CAMP
Posted by: AlienSlave on Jan 23, 2006 10:08 AM [Report this comment]
Did anyone see the fall series BRAT CAMP on TV? Holy Mother of all that is sick with this treatment of children. And to put that shit on TV and call it acceptable.
AlienSlave

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: Ayla87**

» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: Ayla87**

» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: mim**

» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: Ayla87**

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» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: BRAT CAMP **Posted by: Ayla87**

EVIL & IMMORAL - BUT PROFITABLE
Posted by: fiskhus on Jan 23, 2006 10:15 AM [Report this comment]
I believe that it is important to stop this criminal Fundamentalist and Republican "Child Rehab" network from committing further abuse of children.

It will be difficult because to stop these folks, especially because of 2 considerations:

1. The so-called "fundamentalists" or "evangelicals" who pursue the worst in all things human apparently "believe", as an article of "faith", that abuse and bullying are appropriate ways to show love to a child. Leaving aside their failure to follow the tenets of the Christian faith they pretend to espouse, their insistence on violence in society is damaging to our national character.

and

2. Republicans (especially the current administration) believe that fear and obedience are the only acceptable responses from children. While this creates a rigidly (almost militant) fascist voting bloc to be exploited in the future, it undermines our national security by creating a future population of illiterates who will not be able to detect the hypocrisy and deceit issuing from authority, and, therefore, unable and unwilling to challenge authority when necessary.

We must act to shut down these Republican immoralists who would destroy our country and our future generations for personal profit.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: VIL & IMMORAL - BUT PROFITABLE **Posted by: Lizka**

Here's what we should do
Posted by: Stealthdragoon on Jan 23, 2006 10:19 AM [Report this comment]
Here's my ideas for a solution to the problem of sending kids to a torture camp.

Any parent who sends any teen to these schools to be tortured should
a. Have their reporductive rights, cut and terminated
b. Have their parental rights terminated
c. Automatic ten year prison sentence in a super max prison
d. Have a lifetime ban on kids

Theirs should also be a law baning such places and facilities from operating and reciving any funds what so ever. Any facility that is still operating should be shut down and people operating should be brought up on charges of false imprisonment, child abuse, possibly muder charges and should be given LIFE in prison.

What these parents are doing amounts to sending them to a death sentance and being tortured. These parents should be charged with child abuse, Child endangerment and should be charged with murder as well.

I will tell you this, i have friends who are in prison and they tell me that child abusers do not last that long in prison because once they find out what you did to a kid, they will do the same to you. Inmates in prison consider crimes agains women and kids to be so dispicable that they will do what ever it takes to get to you and punish you for what you did to the kids. I have heard such tales of people going to prison and getting beaten up and stabbed all because they found out that someone did somethe to a woman or a child.

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That's exactly how native Indian Americans get treated up here in the praires
Posted by: SDres11 on Jan 23, 2006 10:23 AM [Report this comment]
First, we never get an education about these people as they're purposely left out of the history book. Then, the racial hatred begins. Sure, it's not as pronounced as it was before but it's just like our neighboring state of Montana where the same kind of torture hell that's been described in the article continues unabated. Too bad we have fewer courageous liberals to step in.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: That's exactly how native Indian Americans get treated up here in the praires **Posted by: liberalibrarian**

broken spirit
Posted by: 2rivers on Jan 23, 2006 10:36 AM [Report this comment]
i understand these teen-camps to have one purpose and one alone: to break the spirit of the child. once broken, it can be manipulated and controled to do things no healthy/whole human would do.
peace

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There was a discussion regarding this on Kuro5hin...
Posted by: jinseatown on Jan 23, 2006 11:45 AM [Report this comment]
This discussion from a few years ago on Tranquility Bay also includes links to the orginal guardian articles from a June article in 2003. I couldn't believe it when I heard it.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Cannon
Posted by: Cannon on Jan 23, 2006 12:36 PM [Report this comment]
So happens, I'm making a narrative film this spring about a camp like these and the teens' experiences therein. Would love to hear back from any survivors from these places: cannon@eightballflms.com

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Cannon Posted by: kid_prototype

» RE: Cannon Posted by: rice8180

When the US was shown to be doing such things
Posted by: aida1200 on Jan 23, 2006 1:48 PM [Report this comment]
to prisoners of war, there was a public outcry that led to the passing of a bi-partisan bill outlawing such atrocities. When parents or guardians are found to have done such things to their children, the resulting scandal usually leads to the enactment of tougher child-protective laws--and to prison time for the perpetrators. What does it take to put an end to such treatment of large numbers of kids by those to whom they've been entrusted? As for the claim that many of these young people go on to attend top-ranked colleges and universities, how about launching a search for them? It wouldn't be hard for any documentary or print article on the subject to include a request for any "alumni" of these hell-holes who are now enrolled in or have graduated from a top institution of higher learning simply to come forth. Should we hold our breath while we wait?

By the way, it's been over twenty years since Stephen King and Peter Straub described such a school in *The Talisman*--and they're **horror** writers.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: When the US was shown to be doing such things Posted by: mim

Becky Gawboy
Posted by: bgawboy on Jan 23, 2006 4:34 PM [Report this comment]
It is amazing to me that the general public actually believes that the system protects kids in this country. I live in Minnesota, a very progressive state, with a very progressive history and even here children are abused and negelcted by the system as often as they are protected. I am not at all surprised that these horrific things are promoted and these creeps are actually convincing parents that their children will benefit from these strategies. Parents have already abdicated their authority to tv and video games - it is not much of a stretch to turn them over to those who would "fix" their broken teens.
As a foster and adoptive parent to over 70 children, all victims of abuse and neglect, we have discoverd a path to healing our kids that works. Extreme nutrition (no junk food, lots of fresh fruit and vegies, homebaked bread and home cooked meals), lots of fresh air and exercise (a 3 mile hike is a breeze for our kids), no tv or video games (but a houseful of good books), constant supervision (and consistent support for all their sports, music, and other activities), the loving guidance of alcohol and drug free parents, and a spiritual life that isn't relegated to Sunday mornings (in our case non Christian, traditional American

Indian). We are full time parents, but our own healthy, loving relationship is essential to our success (that and a sense of humor!). Our discipline is based on natural consequences and is administered without anger. Our rules are clear and consistent and provide a safety net for kids who have never known consistency. What could possibly motivate anyone to use torture and deprivation to help troubled teens? Clearly the motivation for these idiots is not assiting teens to become better citizens, but rather chalking up profits for themselves. We believe that what you put into the circle of life comes back to you. It is only that belief that keeps me sane.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Very Few but very clear rules **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: Becky Gawboy **Posted by: mim**

Worthy of a horror writer
Posted by: mim on Jan 23, 2006 6:51 PM [Report this comment]
Sheesh! After I read the two-part article in the Guardian, I felt that I'd read a horror story, one that I couldn't shake by telling myself, "It's only a story."

2rivers, you're right on the money. And good for you, AlienSlave. What were the charges that they brought you up on?

I bet there won't be any more reporters doing exposes of Tranquility Bay. (And what a lovely name for such a hell-hole!)

So let's see:
If I kill another person with my own hands (other than in self-defense), I'm guilty of murder.
If I pay someone else to kill another person, I'm guilty of murder.
If I imprison and torture my child, I'm guilty of child abuse.
If I pay someone else to imprison and torture my child--

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Felony Charges..... **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: Felony Charges..... **Posted by: mim**

» RE: Felony Charges..... **Posted by: AlienSlave**

Harley
Posted by: Harley on Jan 23, 2006 7:02 PM [Report this comment]
http://www.buzzflash.com/premiums/05/10/pre05148.html

Above is a link and review of Julia Scheeres'
best selling memoir of her and her brother's
time spent in a similar environment.
She survived, An excellent book for young
adult readers. It's called "JESUS LAND"
Surprised no one mentioned it here...

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resouces for those who want to fight this industry and help youth
Posted by: kid_prototype on Jan 23, 2006 7:22 PM [Report this comment]
hi, my name's sarah and i've been involved w/ confronting thse institutions for a while, my boyfriend was in a behavoir modification program called the family foundation school for 2 yrs. We do a project called the Misled Youth Network (misled-youth.org) that addresses these issues and others, and on our forums people are talking about making a documentary and taking other forms of action. Below are some sites that can serve as resouces for those interested in learning more.

feel free to email me at misledyouthinfo@yahoo.com, and many thanks to John Gonrefeld who wrote this article

theicarusproject.net is an online community forum by and for people living with bipolar disorder and other forms of madness. Over a thousand users communicate with each other about all aspects of what it means to have a different way of thinking

teenliberty.org was created by Alexia Parks, the author of American Gulag: Secret POW Camps for Kids. It contains a number of articles, letters, and links relating to behavior modification programs.

freechild.org this is a great resource with the tagline "connecting young people and social change".

nospank.net focuses on the issue of child abuse in general, but it also has a vast library of articles and documents relating to behavior modification programs.

isaccorp.org ditto

fornits.com has a few web forums in which people discuss behavior modification programs

amazingforums.com/forum/B54 has a forum about BMP's

thestraights.com is devoted to exposing the abuse at a notorious program called Straight, Inc.

mindfreedom.org is an international website promoting the human rights of those living with mental illness.

tausa.org the website of Teen Advocates USA

prisonactivist.org is "the source for progressive and radical information on prisons and the criminal prosecution system."

school-survival.net this website is by and for kids who don't like school and are looking for alternatives. Also try www.rise.za.net

youthrights.org is the website of the National Youth Rights Assocaition, which has over 6000 young members. The websites has forums and more.

nyc.youthrights.org the page of the NYC chapter of NYRA

youthrights.net a network of youth rights resources that anyone can edit

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» Thanks! RE: resouces for those who want to fight this industry and help youth Posted by: truly scrumptious

Cafety
Posted by: crumbs on Jan 23, 2006 7:34 PM [Report this comment]
www.cafety.org

Community Alliance for the Fair and Ethical Treatment of Youth

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Tranquility Bay Mission Statement
Posted by: Armafied on Jan 23, 2006 10:59 PM [Report this comment]
The mission of Tranquility Bay is to challenge and motivate the student in a structured, individualized learning environment, which provides exposure to development of skills and attitudes necessary for academic and social success so they become mature, responsible and contributing members of society.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

I expect the children aren't allowed to call home for a reason.
Posted by: Samantha Vimes on Jan 23, 2006 7:58 PM [Report this comment]
Let's not accuse all parents who pay for this child abusers. They were conned by con artists. Most of them are probably not malicious, only gullible.

Some probably *do* have an inkling of what goes on and deserve criticism, but there are probably many more parents mourning their child's mistreatment.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: I expect the children aren't allowed to call home for a reason. Posted by: mim

» RE: I expect the children aren't allowed to call home for a reason. Posted by: mim

Lizka says...
Posted by: Lizka on Jan 24, 2006 12:56 AM [Report this comment]
Yes. The only thing which the above-signed with my knowledge of psychology would like to add in comment to all this: I think it is pretty apparent that the methods of many of these schools (particularly Tranquility Bay and all other who use the "levels" and "privileges" system)... is that it is based on the old, yes, bribery is actually a good name for it - psychologists' way for making kids comply, which is called the "privileges" or "tokens" system... the notion being that once kids have done enough of a particular desired action, they can then exchange it for some sort of treat - rather like rats pressing levers for food. It's all based on the psychological movement known as "behaviourism"... much of which is still pretty popular!

Only, of course, if you put the human in an environment where he/she is in fact pretty much deprived, then the treats don't have to be as good, do they.... starve them or sensorily deprive them, and even a scrap of food or being allowed "normal" movement instead of being locked 24/7... that would seem like a "reward"... which of course is what behaviourism is all based on. (But personally I think they have got it all wrong, even from the practical point of view; and they should know from research done on animal training that if you treat an animal meanly, it becomes very mean itself, and withdrawn, and in the end refuses to do anything but the bare minimum. You've got to keep the animals happy, if you want to manipulate them - that's a fact.)

I think that these schools do it their way, because they don't want to think of imaginative inducements for their "behavioural program", or spend money on better food or culinary treats.

But I think the British way of doing it worked better - they used to feed the kids cream cakes!! So I read in an article about child behaviour modification. Well, at least it was better intentioned.

Yes, "token economy", that's what this sort of game was called over here. I don't know if they do it any more, in any of these lockdown facilities for kids in Britain.

But anyway, it is all based on "manipulation"... rather than on asking the person whose life it is, how they would like to develop and grow.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Lizka continued
Posted by: Lizka on Jan 24, 2006 1:00 AM [Report this comment]
BUT.... every time someone mentions those evil Commies in the Orient as having started the brainwashing game... you can blame Western behaviourists and B. F. Skinner just as much!! So there! They both treat people as subjects to be done to.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Czechoslovakia is no longer a country.....
Posted by: zil on Jan 24, 2006 6:24 AM [Report this comment]
...it hasn't been since early 1993.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Dictatorial Freedom called Democracy
Posted by: crumbs on Jan 24, 2006 11:37 AM [Report this comment]
Gorenfeld asks:
Why haven't stories like the ones by Weiner and Kilzer, Pulitzer winners both, caused a public outcry and swift government reaction?

There certainly has been some outcry by the young people, myself included, who have been abused by facilitators at these programs, but it seems that in our culture- very utilitaritarian on the one hand- where force obedience end jsutify the means- even if that entails lasting and permenant damage to some/many, as well as out need to quite dissent and silence those who who are not blindly and uncritically obedient, over questioning authority and their (frequent) corruption...Indeed, America is in a sad sad state...Very sad...but this should not come as a shock as we ultimately have set the stage up for the few wealthy and powerful to call the shots. We all know what happens when we call a dictatorship democracy and slavery is called freedom... what we have now... :-(

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Dictatorial Freedom called Democracy Posted by: End Institutional Child Abuse

"Schools?" "Boot Camps?"
Posted by: yesman on Jan 24, 2006 7:57 PM [Report this comment]
Puhleeze. Let's at least call these hell-holes what they are: torture camps where kids can be "disappeared" if their bourgeois parents find it too inconvenient to raise them. It's no surprise that the Republicans are complicit in this evil--after all, they're more than happy to spend taxpayer money extravagantly to build prisons for our world-beating prison population, and they're all too happy to send suspected "terrorists"

(read: their political opponents) to secret foreign and domestic torture chambers under military rule. So, this is right up their alley.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: "Schools?" "Boot Camps?" **Posted by: aida1200**

» RE: "Schools?" "Boot Camps?" **Posted by: mim**

RedRobin
Posted by: RedRobin on Jan 24, 2006 8:05 PM [Report this comment]
One thing I did not see in the comments (I may have missed this) was the idea that these kids have been tried and found guilty by their parents, and have been sentenced to prison. These kids did not get any due process, simply because they are minors, and subject to their parents.
These so-called "schools" are an extreme example of the fact that children only have whatever rights their parents grant them.
The link to conservative Christianity is unfortunate and repulsive. Why do some so-called "Christians" commit such terrible things in the name of God?

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: edRobin **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: edRobin **Posted by: mim**

» RE: edRobin **Posted by: AlienSlave**

Petition in support of Regulation
Posted by: crumbs on Jan 25, 2006 2:27 AM [Report this comment]
PLEASE SIGN

This petition is in support of Senator Millers END INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ACT

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Petition in support of Regulation **Posted by: aida1200**

» RE: Petition in support of Regulation **Posted by: crumbs**

12 steps vs Religious based
Posted by: crumbs on Jan 25, 2006 11:23 AM [Report this comment]
many of these facilities are not explicitly religiously based. Most apprear to be 12 step based, and their religious foundation is linked text debatable.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Great Site!
Posted by: End Institutional Child Abuse on Jan 26, 2006 8:42 AM [Report this comment]
Very mature site...I enjoy it so far.

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Great Site! **Posted by: End Institutional Child Abuse**

Jesus

Posted by: End Institutional Child Abuse on Jan 26, 2006 8:52 AM [Report this comment]

LOVE Jesusland!

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» RE: Jesus **Posted by: End Institutional Child Abuse**

NOT THAT BAD>>>!

Posted by: renee_crosby on Jan 26, 2006 11:03 AM [Report this comment]

so, i went to sprong creek lodge academy, somewhat similiar to tranquility bay. honestly, it saved my life by putting it on pause while i had the time to stop and think about the decisions that i have made and what decisions that i should be making in order to get what i want out of life.
i read some of the other comments on this site and i think that it is very disrespectful. its time to grow up kids, if you were sent to the program... get over it!
yes, i do agree that it was EXTREMELY difficult at first, but now that i am out (pulled NOT graduated) i have realized what good things have come from spring creek.
shit happens all over the world, and most of it you and i have no control over, but the decisions that our parents, gardians, whoever made for us to attend the program saved our lives. no matter what your story is, you will learn to respect yourself and others... as i have, by attenting the progrram
i have nothing bad to say about any program that halps trouble, confused, and hurt teens...

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

» shit happens so we should just ignore it? **Posted by: crumbs**

» RE: shit happens so we should just ignore it? **Posted by: renee_crosby**

» RE: NOT THAT BAD>>>! **Posted by: rice8180**

» RE: NOT THAT BAD>>>! **Posted by: renee_crosby**

» RE: NOT THAT BAD>>>! **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: addme if you want to tsp4600 **Posted by: AlienSlave**

» RE: NOT THAT BAD>>>! **Posted by: renee_crosby**

» RE: NOT THAT BAD>>>! **Posted by: renee_crosby**

» RE: NOT THAT BAD>>>! **Posted by: AlienSlave**

i was a student at tranquility bay

Posted by: rice8180 on Jan 26, 2006 3:44 PM [Report this comment]

i recenly just got back to the good ole usa after spending 3 months in tranquility bay in jamaica i went there in ocetober 2005 .during my stay i witnessed and felt the abuse and the midtreatings of the staff.while i was there i woke up every morning at 6 a.m. and took a cold shower outside i have been eaten up by bugs now that my face is a total wreck they put weight gainer in the milk the abuse all of us there. i went in to op and got "restrained" and left with a scar on my ankle this place is one of the worst places u

could ever send ur teens if u love ur kids do not send them to tranquility bay find other means of help. all in all i believe we sould "swat the wwasp"

matthew r {former tranquility bay student}

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

W-WASPS?? You gotta be kidding
Posted by: lostnacfgop on Jan 27, 2006 5:14 AM [Report this comment]
Coincidental Acronym? I think not!

[« Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment »]

Deaf Ears
Posted by: Royal Water on Jan 27, 2006 6:58 AM [Report this comment]
When I was on the phone over 10 times with the US Embassy in Jamaica the week before IVAN, a cat5 hurricane, came through there, the staff at the embassy was cooperative in the beginning, but as time went on and the hurricane drew nearer and nearer, it was evident that the kids were not going to be taken off the island regardless of the potential for catastrophy. Personally, I was very upset that kids would be forced to endure a cat5 hurricane and angry that the diplomatic staff there did not care one bit about the safety of the kids there at TB. Also, the parents of these kids should be ASHAMED of themselves. This is just one story. Ashcroft FUMBLED the ball. So did Colin Powell. The State Dept. knows all about what goes on in TB and they have done nothing to stop it. At least George Miller is DOING something about this. From the sound of things it looks like it is going to be an uphill battle all the way. Kids who are in these programs have no voice behind the 20' walls. Censorship of beatings, rapes, psychological abuse and the list goes on, keeps the mainstream media from expanding their reports. Networks are threatened with lawsuits and cave. So sad. Those of us on the outside must speak out about this ongoing nightmare.
linked text

RW

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» RE: Deaf Ears Posted by: AlienSlave

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