

STRAIGHT, INC.

JAMES E. HARTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(A NON PROFIT CORPORATION)

POST OFFICE BOX 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743
Phone: (813)541-6666

May 11, 1978

Mr. James E. Holley
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Specialist
Health & Rehabilitative Services
Clearwater, Florida

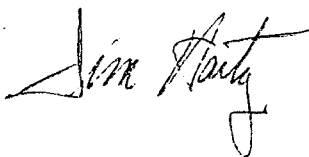
Dear Mr. Holley:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the letter by Mrs. & Mr. Shuman. Attached please find our response. I respectfully request that you forward a copy to the appropriate person in the Governor's office. Also, please advise me in writing as to who in the Governor's office you forwarded it. We have forwarded a copy to James Russell.

If you deem necessary, we are very willing to discuss these facts face to face with the Shumans in your or anyone else's presence.

Again, thank you for getting this to me promptly.

Sincerely,



James E. Hartz
Executive Director
STRAIGHT, INC.

JEH:mga

Att.

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: James Holley
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Specialist
Department of Health & Rehabilitative Services

FROM: James E. Hartz
Executive Director
STRAIGHT, INC.

SUBJECT: Letter of Kathryn W. Shuman dated 4/7/78

I appreciate your providing me with an opportunity to respond to the above mentioned letter. The following is our response.

Derrick Shuman did indeed graduate on June 27, 1977. In December he was involved in a motorcycle accident. Mrs. Shuman states "He was criticized at the Graduate Raps as to his feelings about the accident, and was told he was selfish and so on." At the Graduate Rap held on 12/31/77, Derrick informed the graduates that he had informed his parents to sue the woman who hit him on his motorcycle so that he could get a car, stereo and T.V. Derrick felt that he deserved these things. He also stated that his parents were not 100% for suing and that his parents were asking outside advice as to what to do, and that he wanted to sue for the above reasons. The adult advisor to the graduate group also pointed out that if he wanted to sue to put money away for college or the like, that would make much more sense, but his current motivation was criticized. Another graduate came to Derrick's defense saying the group should not discuss this because it was personal and the group discussion ceased and the group did not discuss the accident again.

Prior to the accident, the graduate organization had been trying to deal with Derrick on his attitude toward his family and other people. He had talked about getting a motorcycle for Christmas and was cautioned as to the wisdom of this move because some members thought he was not demonstrating sufficient maturity to handle the motorcycle.

On 1/3/78 the adult advisor to the graduate organization, Mrs. Marcella Kingston, received a telephone call from Mrs. Shuman requesting that the graduates not talk about the accident any more. Mrs. Kingston attempted to inform Mrs. Shuman that the accident was a minor incident to the group and they were concerned more with Derrick's very poor attitude and his appearance. Mrs. Shuman did not comprehend this and repeated her request that the accident not be discussed. Mrs. Kingston, trying to reflect her feelings, said something similar to "Then you are okay with Derrick's bad attitude to you, his parents?" Again, Mrs. Shuman

Again, Mrs. Shuman misunderstood what was meant.

On 1/21/78, which was a Saturday, Derrick admitted to another graduate that he had gotten high on the medicine prescribed by the doctor following the accident. Between 12/23, the date of the accident, and January 21, Derrick had gotten high. Derrick said that he had taken the pills as they were prescribed but then he wanted to see what it was like to get high. This statement was made after the graduate had confronted Derrick concerning his terrible attitude and poor personal appearance. Other graduates did, indeed, tell Derrick that they thought he was still weak in relation to taking drugs and that they would have a difficult time placing trust in him for the following reasons:

1. his personal appearance
2. his rotten attitude at home
3. his rotten attitude at Straight for not following the rules of the program.
4. his not being able to maintain eye contact when talking to people, which is something we stress at the program.

The graduate group, at this time, told Derrick what positive steps he could take to keep from continuing his downward trend. They told him to 1) pick stronger friends, and they gave specific examples, 2) come into the large group to tighten himself up, 3) let his parents be the parents and stop trying to run the show at home.

Also on 1/21/78, the same day Derrick admitted to getting high, the parents were located at another parents' house and asked to come into the program that very night for a discussion with Mrs. Peterman. This they did. Derrick was very reluctant to having his parents come as he did not think it was any of their business. The discussion continued until after midnight between Mrs. Petermann, the parents and Derrick. During the conversation Derrick constantly repeated comments such as "I don't want to be straight. I like getting high and I'm going to get high." The parents were undecided as to how to respond to this attitude Derrick was displaying. It is our opinion that Mr. Shuman thought Derrick was very serious, while Mrs. Shuman asked the father to stop yelling at the boy and said that she did not over-protect Derrick as some people thought she did.

Before the meeting with Mr & Mrs Shuman on February 4, 1978, Derrick came into the program, on his own, and told Mrs. Petermann that he had gotten high for the second time at school with a pull-off. He had gotten high on marijuana. Derrick came in on February 1, the same day he had gotten high the second time.

Either that afternoon or first thing Thursday morning, I received a call at the program from Mrs. Shuman. She was on the verge of tears, extremely emotional, and questioned me as to what we could do for Derrick as Derrick had followed through on his threat and had gotten high, and had made no attempt to conceal this fact. To the best of my recollection, I tried to do four things during this conversation. 1. I tried to help her calm down. 2. I tried to

James Holley
Re: Kathryn W. Shuman letter

page 3

help her realize that Derrick did this, not her. 3. I told her that the graduates would deal with this situation on Saturday, and 4. I believe I offered to talk with her and her husband during the Friday night open meeting if she wished.

On Wednesday, February 1, 1978, Derrick was told at the program that his relationship with pull-offs was bringing him down and that the pull-offs were amusing themselves with the fact that Derrick did drugs with them. Derrick admitted this fact. Mrs. Petermann told Derrick that he fell right into their game and Derrick said she was correct.

On Saturday, February 4, 1978, the parents were invited to the Saturday evening graduate rap where the graduates would discuss what should be done about Derrick. To this date, parents were not invited to the graduate group, however, the was done as a courtesy to the Shumans and in an attempt to have the Shumans informed as to what was going on.

As Derrick was the first graduate to be considered for a graduate refresher and full reinstatement to the graduate organization, a system for dealing with these situations had to be developed before the February 4 session. The graduates themselves evolved the system, which would be revised as needed, with assistance from myself and Mrs. Petermann and the adult advisor to the graduate group. As up to that time there had been no policy, the graduates understood that the policy might have to be modified.

One such revision which occurred during the course of the thirty day refresher period was that as a courtesy to the parents they would be informed as to the graduates feelings prior to the end of the thirty day period. On the Tuesday of the last week of Derrick's thirty day graduate refresher, Mr & Mrs Shuman were at the Straight facility, probably to attend a Parent Effectiveness Training course. At this time Mrs. Petermann informed the parents that Derrick was relating in small group and that he might be doing well enough to get off the thirty day refresher.

However, on the following Thursday in the large group (not the graduate organization) Derrick stood up and said things to the following effect: 1. "I don't need the group." 2. The only reason he was in the big group and on the month refresher was so he could have certain friends who were graduates. His comments were detrimental to kids who were on the program for only a short time and he showed total disrespect for staff. This incident occurred after the parents were informed that Derrick might be doing okay and before the graduates were to vote on Derrick that Saturday night. Because of this outburst and because of additional advice to the graduate organization by another graduate that Derrick had commented "I can't wait to get out of this _____ place and do what I want to do.", Derrick did not get off of his refresher. For these two reasons, Derrick knew full well that the staff would not recommend and the graduates would not approve his getting off his refresher. We have also learned that during the final week Derrick called certain graduates asking them to vote in a positive way to release him from his refresher. One graduate informed us that he hung up on Derrick's ear.

James Holley

Re: Kathryn W. Shuman letter

page 4

There was no personal conversation between Mrs. Petermann and Derrick that Thursday evening during large group or after the group. Mrs. Petermann did confront Derrick in front of the whole group concerning his very inappropriate behavior and attitude. This is documented by our Staff Observation Book. On this Thursday evening there was no conversation about other graduates as the time was spent trying to get Derrick to look at his deteriorating relationship with his own parents. In fact, Mrs. Petermann informed Derrick, again, in front of the group that this attitude would not be acceptable for getting off the refresher. I repeat, there were no questions about other graduates and what they were doing. We did allude to the fact that this poor attitude of his could possibly bring other graduates down, and he might be responsible. That was the extent of the mention of other graduates. Again, these comments were made in front of 200 witnesses. The events took place on Thursday, February 2.

On February 3, just prior to Open Meeting, Mr. Shuman came to me on a one to one basis and expressed great concern and frustration for his wife's handling of his son and himself. Mr. Shuman proceeded to give me specific examples of how Mrs. Shuman's behavior at home demonstrated to Mr. Shuman that she had not learned a great deal from the two Parent Effectiveness Training courses they had attended, parent raps, or from private sessions with the family. Mr. Shuman discussed a specific situation that happened in relation to a washing machine and how upset Mr. Shuman was with Mrs. Shuman's response to his attempts to fix it. He said something to the following: "I feel I have learned a lot here and have changed but my wife is the same as the day we brought Derrick into the program." He then asked me to conduct a private session to try to get through to his wife concerning her problem. I immediately asked Mrs. Shuman into my office and a discussion ensued between Mr & Mrs Shuman and myself. Unfortunately, I can not prove the truth of the above statement by a third party witness, but I solemnly swear that the encounter with Mr. Shuman occurred. I talked with Mr & Mrs Shuman and as careingly as possible directly confronted Mrs. Shuman in the presense of Mr. Shuman with what I felt were the major difficulties, namely attempting to get Mrs. Shuman to get some insight into her overprotectiveness and constant defense of Derrick. Later in this session Mrs. Petermann did join the discussion. At this time, we both informed Mr & Mrs Shuman that because of Derrick's behavior the previous evening in front of the whole group there was no way he could be put off the refresher. They were also informed that we wished to continue the refresher for another month because the graduates sincerely wanted to put their hands out to Derrick and wanted to offer him the opportunity to square himself away. To repeat, during this session I confronted Mrs. Shuman with the following: 1. Her determination to fight Derrick's battles for him, 2. Her definite overprotectiveness of Derrick and the possible behavioral consequences to him of her actions. Mrs. Shuman initially resented my statements but did listen to them. Mr. Shuman was very supportive of what I was saying. In fact, it was at his request that I was talking with the mother. Therefore, Mr & Mrs Shuman were informed that Friday night of our decision regarding Derrick, but the reasons for this were quite different from the ones postulated by Mrs. Shuman's letter. At the end of our conversation, Mrs Shuman and I embraced and I reassured her that I was talking to her this way because I cared and we parted with fairly good feelings. Mr. Shuman thanked me for my time and expressed hope that Derrick would change.

Mr. James Holley
Re: Kathryn W. Shuman letter

page 5

The next day, Saturday, February 4, Derrick did come into the program although he arrived quite late. The program has specific rules for late arrival of which Derrick and his parents were well aware. When he arrived late on Saturday he was told by staff that he would have to make up the day, which indeed is the rule for everyone on the program. Derrick's response was "Well, as long as I have to make up a day, I don't have to stay today." and he left the building. This fact may be documented by contacting the home that he then went to because the parent of that home found him sitting in her garage. A call was made from the home in Seminole to the parents who picked Derrick up and returned him to the program. The reason that the parents were not informed by us is because during the first month refresher Derrick repeatedly left the building to go to lunch. What actually occurred was, he would tell staff that he was going to the bathroom and then leave the building unauthorized for lunch and then return. Therefore, staff thought on this occasion he was simply pulling the same stunt that he had before and no one thought it necessary to call anybody. When the parents returned to the program with Derrick there was a conference. Derrick was reformed of his performance in large group the previous Thursday and was asked if he felt he should be reinstated to the graduate organization. His response was to the effect that he did not need this place. At this time, Mr. Shuman was actively requesting that Derrick stay and make the right decision. Mrs. Shuman was obviously upset but controlling her anxiety well. Mrs. Shuman again stated that she did not over protect Derrick. Mr. Shuman then stated "We have been here long enough and Derrick, I want your answer." Derrick said he was not staying and then no one could make him. Prior to the family leaving, Mrs. Petermann said the following; "Derrick, think about what you are giving up and all the friends you will lose " (The graduates would disassociate themselves from Derrick) "by this decision."

During this conversation, Derrick was asked if he knew anything about two people leaving their home. Because of his smart aleck attitude and his past performances and past associations, his denial was not taken seriously.

As the family was leaving, Mrs. Petermann made the following statement to Mr and Mrs Shuman. That they, the parents, were welcome at Straight at any time, however, "I want it to be clear that you, Derrick, are not to even sit in the car in the parking lot if your parents return." This is in stark contrast to Mrs. Shuman's letter.

To further point out the ridiculousness of the last paragraph of Mrs. Shuman's letter, I would like to quote entirely from a comment in our Staff Observation Book dated 3/5/78. "Derrick is out for one month. If after one month he cares to reinstate himself, then that is up to the graduates. He is already spreading rumors that he was kicked out for good, which is not true. He did not do good on the first month and was to come back for the second month. He refused to, so he is out and away for one month. Reconsideration will be about 4/4/78 if he comes back." Signed Helen R. Petermann. This does not seem to me to lend any credibility to Mrs. Shuman's statement and this comment is available for any authorized individual to read in the Staff Observation Book.

James Holley
Re: Kathryn W. Shuman letter

page 6

I would like to complete my response with the following comments:

I was only minimally surprised by this letter and only by that fact that it took so long for her to do. We have dealt with the Shumans for over a year. I know the family quite well. I know Derrick well and can only hope that the boy does do well. If indeed, his grades are okay and he is not doing drugs, we are all pleased. However, we do take exception to the innuendos suggested and are prepared to varify our facts by written, dated comments in a private log kept by the adult advisor to the graduate organization; written signed comments regarding the situation in our Staff Observation books; and by our personal recollections of the events as they occurred.

JEH:mga

cc: State Attorney James Russell
Governors Office
Lani Deauville, H.R.S.

QMC - FBI 5/20
We reviewed the
Almanac letter to
HRS to report that
CPT as we reported
to their location
is confidentially in human
resources and personnel
some a 2016
see you would ML

STATE OF FLORIDA



DEPARTMENT OF

Health & Rehabilitative Services

District Five

P.O. BOX 5046, CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33518

Reubin O'D Askew, Governor

May 15, 1978

Mr. & Mrs. George Shuman
1142 - 17th Street North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713


Dear Mr. & Mrs. Shuman:

As I indicated to you in my letter of April 27, 1978, I referred your letter to the HRS Drug Program Licensing Board for their information and possible action. The Board met today to discuss their findings.

Based on the information presented in your letter, the HRS Drug Licensing Board could find no Drug Licensing Regulations which have been violated by Project Straight's treatment of you and your son, Derrick. If, since you are dissatisfied with the treatment program at Project Straight, you decide you might be interested in an alternative program, you might consider Par Alternatives. This is a program designed for young adults and offers treatment and encouragement towards alternatives to drug use. For further information, you could contact Kay Pridgen Smith, Director, at 345-4160 or 345-4950.

I hope this information has been helpful to you. If there is anything further which I can do to assist you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Lani Deauville
Client Relations Coordinator

LD/ja

cc: ✓ Office of the Governor - #4-0079
Office of the Secretary
James E. Hartz, Straight, Inc.
HRS Drug Licensing Board

Shuman, George