

MAN CHARGES FALSE IMPRISONMENT - El Pasoan, 18, says he was held against his will at rehab center

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EL PASO -- A man contends that he was tricked into joining a rehabilitation center and then held there against his will for two months before his lawyer obtained his release.

Jackie Baker, 18, said he was allowed to leave KIDS of El Paso County Inc. last Friday only because police investigating claims of false imprisonment obtained search warrants. Before that, Baker said, staff members at the center would not let his attorney, Bill Ellis, or police officers visit him.

Michael McCormack, director of KIDS, said he would not comment on any participant in the program. He also declined to talk about the program.

KIDS is a program that uses peer pressure to get teen-agers off drugs. The theory is also used to treat anorexia, bulimia and other compulsive behavior.

Baker said McCormack tricked him into signing himself in to the program by telling him that a 17-year-old girl with whom Baker had sex three years ago was going to press statutory rape charges against him.

McCormack "told me I could either sign into the program or he would call the police," Baker said.

Baker said staff members assured him that he could walk out of the program after 14 days if he was not happy.

The Rev. Montague Hope, Baker's stepfather, said he and Baker's mother, Suzette Hope, took Baker to the center because he "had serious emotional problems and drug habits."

Hope, associated with All Saints Episcopal Church in El Paso, would not elaborate on his stepson's problems.

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