

DECLARATION UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY
PURSUANT TO 28 USCA 1746

I, _____ [NAME OF DECLARANT] Christopher Lee Carlton _____,

declare and state as follows:

1. [NAME OF PROGRAM]. Straight, Inc. .
2. [LOCATION OF PROGRAM] Sarasota, FL - Cattleman Road
3. [PERIOD OF INTERNMENT MM/YY TO MM/YY] Sept 81 - May 83
4. [DECLARATIVE STATEMENT]

I was put into Straight Incorporated in 1981, 20 days before I turned 16. One of my big crimes before Straight goes like this. My best friend from church and I were arrested for dropping fluorescent light tubes from the top of the Palmetto. FL water tower in the middle of the night. (small town anyone?) I had also smoked pot for the first time the summer before my 15th birthday and by now could probably manage to get a ¼ ounce with my best friend once a month or so if I was lucky.

I'm sure the main reason for my incarceration wasn't drugs, but that I had completely quit taking orders from my parents. Not going to church, not coming home, coming home late, yelling like I had learned it from the pro's. This was all true.

I also had once grabbed a large kitchen knife to shield myself from my older brother during a bad argument on Christmas Day. The knife did no good, he knocked me unconscious moments later. He was 18 and a body builder at the time, me 14 and an artist. I woke up tied in electrical cords and rope on my living room floor. My uncle and cousin were there. Everyone was standing over me re-acting to me struggling crazily. Saying, "He's on drugs!", "He's crazy." I hadn't yet tried pot at this point, so they were actually wrong. I wasn't on drugs.

For the record my brother went on to later in life abuse both his wife and his son. I'm sorry that they had to endure that. Mark had been controlling me with induced pain and violence from birth. He could control me with a glance. I hated my parents for not protecting me from him. Mark is no longer alive. He was struck by lightning years ago. I remember standing next to his casket with my hand on his chest, crying. It was the first time I had ever been in the same room with him and not been terrified.

I hated my home life and spent most of my time at my best friends house even eating most meals there. His Mother also attended our church and my parents and her were friends.

My parents thought I had problems long before Straight. I was being psyche & IQ tested and sent to counselors since I was 9 or so Mom says now. For the record I had also been a successful Boy Scout, published my own School newspaper at the age of 7 and built my own electric guitar from scratch using old stereo components when I was 9. I did have problems, big problems. I could not accept the things I was being told to believe about the world.

When you enter the program you begin 1st phase. You are called a new-comer. You have no rights and have to gain permission for each physical move you make, under the guise that you may be trying to escape. This means you even have to ask to move across the bedroom to get a pencil. Bathroom trips also have to be approved and you are watched while doing your business. Remember that the person enforcing this stuff is another kid or two, not some trained clinician. The parents do not normally intervene, even in their own homes.

It's 24/7 without a break. You're not allowed any entertainment, not even reading. No reading road signs on the way to the building. No reading the cereal box at breakfast. No music, no TV, no nothing. You are alone for sure. You have no contact with anyone on the outside including your parents. Every privilege will now have to be earned. For me it was terrifying having no one to help/console me during the most frightening experience of my life.

You're either with the program or not, these crazy sounding rules are self-enforcing really. Any infraction is considered to be rebellion, never just a mistake. So the minute you decide to go along, whether faking or not, you have to accept these rules completely and place them on yourself in total, for fear of not progressing and never having freedom again. Punishment is normally only for those resisting in some way. All those who conform are left alone and treated with total respect. It's a brilliant system and it works.

As a dear friend said: *"It is just horrific, because this has come out of people researching and coming up with theories of how to control people, using other kids coz they know peer pressure will work better than using adult authority figures. It is sick. I just see Facist Nazi's when I read this...it is their tactics."*

You can just imagine how the former "click" associations played out once inside the program. You could easily tell what click people were in before the program most of us probably brought it up early when it was our turn to talk. It was one way to not feel alone. Of course it also gave staff the opportunity to place former "hippies" new-comers with former "jock" old-comers, you know, in order to "help us process our true feelings." How great it must have been to finally get the revenge your click so deserves by having complete control over your worst high school enemy. I was on the receiving end of that one too.

Each day, you wake up, get ready for group and eat a breakfast of some sort. The first rap session started at 9AM each day and the last one ended at 9PM, except on Sunday when we started at 1PM. A rap session was a long group discussion led by staff. All the sessions had the same format Past-Present-Future but with different subjects each time. The group sat in two sections with the girls on one half of the room and us on the other.

Sometimes the girls and us were separated for sessions to allow for more intimacy. Raps were it, all day every day, except for meals and daily 90 minute exercise. 1 or 2 staff in the room to 120-300 kids depending on the time of day.

For those 12 hours plus at the building each day, you have to sit up in perfect posture, meaning - facing and watching the person speaking, both feet flat on the floor in front of you and your back not touching your chair in any way. Sounds nice huh? Them looking out for our posture like that. The problem is when the enforcement of such posture is left to the fellow teens sitting around you. Did you get a chance to see Lord of The Flies?

Here's how it works. The worst 1st phasers are sat on 'front row' closest to staff. So what you want if you're trying to have a bit of fun is to sit right behind them on the 2nd row. This way as soon as they slouch down and their back touches the chair you get to drive your knuckles into their back!!! This makes them jump forward off the back of the chair. Very entertaining for a teenager who hasn't been allowed to even read a cereal box for entertainment for months now. Screwing with the other inmates!!! Yay!

After a few times, if you're lucky, they will stand up, pissed off. Then you and everyone nearby get to tackle them and force them to the ground. If they keep resisting you get to drag them to the back of the group, stretch them out and sit on them until they clam down. At first they sit just 5 people on you. 1 on each leg and arm and 1 on your torso. This often is enough and in a couple of hours your back up front and sitting up straight.

Being sat on by 5 people was no problem at all for most of us rebels. I could still get something free and start swinging. Then they went to 7 people and it wasn't long before I was a standard 9. That's 9 people sitting on me to shut me up. 2 on each leg, 2 on my torso, 1 on each arm and 1 on my head. They would turn my head to the side and then someone would sit on the side of my head. This would normally shut me up but it would be hours before I would calm down enough to be released. I had times when I would spend several days in a row on the floor with people on top of me.

I am probably most ashamed to admit firstly that the program works, at least I know it did for me. It really did. I bought it all to the letter. I resisted at first. Not to much physically, but I was open about my opinion of what they wanted. Of course then I figured that I would fake it and get out. This I guess works for a few folks, It didn't for me, I assure you. I didn't progress an inch until they broke me. BS got me no where.

Not only was I tackled and sat on, but I also tackled and sat on others while in straight. This is the hardest thing to think about for me. How they got me to do things I would not normally do,? To that extreme? When I first made 3rd phase, my first new-comer tried to escape by jumping from our moving car on Cattleman road not to far from the building. I didn't hesitate and jumped out right behind him, tackled him and drug him back to our car. We drove on to the building, went into group and neither of us were even checked over for injuries by anyone.

While I was on 4th phase and making the best school results of my life, I slept each night

with a 21 year old man tied under my bed. He was mentally challenged and known to be violent so this was an extra safety precaution that I had taken, beyond the normal caged window and door-key pinned in my underwear stuff. It also helped us all sleep more since he would often mis-behave during the night to punish us for his captivity. I'd love to know why someone with his obvious issues even ended up in a rehab. He didn't stay long.

My first escape wasn't until my 14th month in the program, long after I had earned the privilege to come and go unsupervised. After earning my way up to 4th phase and living back at home for a while, going to school again for months. After leaping from moving cars and tying R.J. under my bed, after I was broken, after I conformed, then I was started over. This means sent back to the beginning of the program like a new-comer, stripped of everything and taken away from home. That was the last time I ever lived at home as a minor.

A former director of Sarasota Straight had left the program and went to work at the Life program. (a competitor) He had contacted my folks about switching me over and he confirmed some of the bad Straight rumors that my folks had heard were indeed true. He told them that the Life program was the good of Straight, without the bad. My folks had spoke to another Mother who had switched both her boys to Life recently. Their mother had become a dear friend of my folks 'in the program' on the parents side.

Mom and Dad at this point were having a wonderful new relationship with me, their brand-new, perfect, Straight program son. I was making straight A's and 1's in school for the first time ever. I had a bedroom full of program kids every night and I was on my way. 7th phase was just 3 more steps and then graduation. WooHoo! I could probably even get a job working in the program some day.

Out of their new found respect for my feelings, they sat me down to ask me about switching to the Life program, to see what I wanted. One evening at our kitchen table in a house full of program ears, we talked about it. I don't remember much more about the conversation than finding out where a few of my program friends had gone, Life. I do know that there wasn't any decision made and I didn't think I was leaving Straight at that point in any way. I probably resisted, if I had to guess, I was pretty Pro-Straight at that point.

The next day when I got to the program after school. They called on me right away, I thought they wanted me to bring the rap out of the confrontation portion and into the positive part at the end where you get to say how well you are doing now and how much you love straight. I leapt to my feat and began my bit. A bad thing happened then. A 5th phasers hand went up. This feeling is like no other.

My conversation with the folks about the other program had made it to the Straight staff's attention and this 5th phasers job was to expose the story to the group (about 300) so that they would tear me apart. They did, I couldn't say anything right, not a chance. The one thing you couldn't ever be in straight was innocent, impossible. I went down in flames

and I was started-over on the spot. Back to 1st phase. That was the last of the original me that ever existed, I ended there.

Time to run! Escape! A few nights later my old-comer had left some change on the bedroom floor, about 32¢. I watched it all evening, planning how I would wait 'til they were all asleep and use a coin as a screwdriver to remove the screws holding the expanded metal cage attached to the window and jump from the 3rd floor that night. I did, in my underwear. We weren't allowed any access to any clothes at night as a deterrent to escape. I actually found laundry on the lines just outside the window and I was off like a flash.

I ran for a while and stopped finally at a convenience store hungry about 3AM. I was starving of course, starving is part of being on 1st phase unless you are really doing good and/or you have a sweetheart old-comer. I also heard that some of the parents would not allow starving the kids in their home and would make their old-comer kids feed even the bad 1st phasers.

After a while of watching me search the aisles and counting my 32¢ occasionally inquiring as to the cost of different small items, the clerk said something like, "why don't you grab a few hotdogs on me?" (Thank you wherever you are!) I wandered outside and started in on my hotdogs. As I was eating, the parking lot was filling up with the 3rd shift of the Winn Dixie distribution center getting off work. One of them offered me a hit on a joint that they were passing around. There I was, high again, just days after being Straight's super kid.

Three days later I went home to my parents and begged them to take me back to Straight??? The auto-suggestions had kicked in, Remember I said, the program works. I was sure that I would die if I stayed outside the program. I was scared to death, really. They took me right in. A few days went by before I realized what had happened. There I was, on front row in group thinking, How did I get back here?

I then knew for the first time that they had brainwashed me. How did I come back to this horrible place and of my own will? I decided I would get out again and this time not come back. 5 months later, somehow I had earned a little trust, a mistake was made and I escaped again from the building in the middle of the day! WooHoo! I ran until I reached a friends house that I had found while out on my previous 3 days of freedom.

After I escaped the 2nd time I got serious about my drug use. It became my identity. I was free and I was using drugs. I had learned a lot and had almost no fears now. I added a few drugs to my list and found myself in jail again by 18. Luckily for me I had avoided crack, heroine and some of the other "harder stuff." While in jail I decided to go straight again so I could save up some money. I had been homeless about half of this last bit, since Straight.

I got out of jail and I stayed completely sober for more than 16 years. I decided to stop using and I did. No drugs or alcohol at all. My best friend helped, he was straight now

too. His mother had put him in Straight too, on my folks advice. She then pulled him from the program on 3rd phase about the same time as my start-over. He never used again that I know of.

At the time he and I were both working part-time as roadies for HAVOC. Our friends band. He did sound and I did lights and also handled all our interactions with normal folks. I had skills and I could make anyone think anything I wanted about me. I could certainly look like a middle class square any time I wanted and this was handy for renting venues and such. I was around drugs all the time, it didn't bother me in the least. My identity was one of the strange straight roadies that work for Havoc. We would always mingle and entertain ourselves with our intoxicated friends.

I started all my personal relationships by giving warnings about myself and my psyche. I would say how I have a much deeper understanding of the inner workings of the emotional mind than normal because of being formerly brainwashed and having to get myself out of it in a program designed to teach you about yourself. I would not tolerate anyone in my life unless they agreed to accept this extra side of me and to deal with it whenever necessary. Nothing like a know-it-all, huh?

I would use the program techniques and other things I had figured out to point out levels of detail in life that most people probably don't/shouldn't deal with. Needless to say, I was a mess. I used anyone who would listen as a therapist and could subject them to a verbal "Moral Inventory" of myself without warning. Nothing could interrupt this process once I got started either. What's more important than truth? I would think. "No you can't leave the room." "I can't go to work now, I have to share this."

Another part of the deal if you wanted to be my friend, is no films with torture or captivity in them. No exceptions. Watching anyone being controlled by another makes my feel sick to my stomach, lots of anger, rage. Even watching a child be scolded most of the time is too much for me. Interestingly though, I never connected this with Straight until recently???

After the band slowed down, I moved in with my parents again. Within just a few months, I found a local country girl and moved in with her and her 3 kids, I married her and became an instant dad at 23. We were lucky to have a free house from her family or we would have starved on my sometimes 6, sometimes 15 thousand a year. A true local business gentleman found me, hired me, mentored me and finally I was nearly lower middle class. Thank you Bob! Hannah was born in May of 1990 and I was a real Dad.

My 1st marriage ended in 2001 as far as the living arrangements go. It had ended years before, in most other areas. She was always encouraging me to go off where-ever I needed to, please, and get myself together. This even though I was the sole provider to our 4 children, not sleeping around or anything and completely sober. Wasn't she lucky? I would think to myself then. Meanwhile I ballooned up to 363 pounds and I could silence my children with a glance. Weren't they lucky? It's no wonder they haven't spoken to me since I left. I was a real prize. I was very successful now as far as western

standards go. My middle-class parents/siblings actually wanted me around and acted tolerant of me. It was great. I nearly died that way.

In 2002 I started a new journey. I found the new-age self-improvement game and I was thrilled. I began to work on myself. A lot of it was crap, but there were nuggets to be found among the rubble. I made some great progress and began a new era in life, again.

A lot has changed for me recently. I've been working (under the table) about 25-30 hours a week since March. In the past few months I started having "frozen moments". They would be just a minute or two at first but then became longer and eventually lasted for hours. Not being able to move, frozen in fear. Like someone quietly hiding in a closet hoping not to be found by a burglar.

I called my family (Mom, Sis & Bro-N-Law) and told them I was having trouble and asked, if they didn't hear from me for a while, please check on me. I was scared that I might be losing it and may reach a point of no return soon. Then...

I was watching a documentary online a little more than a week ago. It was "High: The True Tale of American Marijuana", about American drug history. I was not prepared for the section of the film about Straight though. I had previously thought that Straight was only 2 locations in Florida and had closed years ago. Boy was I wrong. Straight had been a huge corporation with like 12 locations and was still going in new and different versions. I was shocked. I was one of over 50,000 x-straight kids. George Bush Sr. had even done TV ads for Straight while our Vice-President. Straight hadn't closed, instead they became Drug Free America Foundation. Advisors to the government on teens and drugs. ANGER - RAGE - ANGER - FURY - BURNING

What I am trying to avoid telling you is the horror I have felt every moment since I saw that footage. I sleep now in short spurts, waking over and over, only to remember and then wishing I was back asleep. My old 5:30AM wake up has become... finally getting out of bed in frustration around 3AM. I have not been able to work, I have not even left my camper unless I had to since then. I've been working on writing this since then also. It helps.

I'm trying to believe now, that it wasn't my fault. That the methods that they used to break me were tried and tested to be proven. They have been used by the militaries and governments of most cultures, on adults for a long time. Logically, I know I have nothing to be ashamed about. Still, I feel that I am less than you. My mind tells me that the other kids didn't break. They were all faking and I was the only one weak and stupid enough to be broken. You wanna' talk about feeling powerless?

Now wherever I go, I am thinking about my shame. I'm not ashamed of my drug use, my sexual history or my finances although many people would be. I am ashamed to have been broken. I am afraid because I don't remember when I quit resisting. I don't remember the exact moment they broke me. How did they do it? Why did I stop fighting for myself and holding on? My breaking point must be easily accessible to others. How

do I shield this fatal weakness? I don't feel safe.

Really though, I don't remember anything about my life prior to Straight that isn't a belief I formed about myself while I was in Straight. I don't remember how I saw myself or the world before Straight. It's like I was erased. This is a terrible feeling, the loss of identity. The anger with this is limitless. Several former Straight kids have gotten arrested for stalking/harassing the program's founders and I know why. Revenge is now my first and last thought daily.

It seems my life prior to a week ago was just fiction. It's like I was still just a Straight escapee and had been running still, my entire life. However even though I am experiencing these horrible feelings and memories again so vividly and constantly now, this seems real and before didn't. How could living with all this, having never dealt with it, been real? I prefer this realness painful or not.

I feel I have a chance to live for real now. Since I've had this shift. I don't feel driven to worry about where I am headed now. I don't even care about probably losing my job. I'm glad to be feeling real and I'm not going to run from it in any way. I've already went to the local free clinic and requested counseling. Recovery from Straight is my only priority now.

I'm staring myself over now, at 45. I feel like a scared teen runaway, 15 years old. Why am I having to do all this on my own? But I've got a fresh slate in my own score book for the first time I can remember. I want more than anything for my family members to react to this story the way you have. I'd like some empathy, some regret, some acceptance. I'd like them once to consider that maybe, just maybe, I wasn't the Devil personified.

Christopher Lee Carlton
Oct 30th, 2010

I give HEAL permission to use this statement. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on October 31st _____, 2010.

Christopher Lee Carlton - ←electronic signature

[Contact Information Private]