



Story Suggestions
Dateline NBC
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

May 4, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

In February of this year my husband and I placed our son who was beginning to make some bad choices and starting to do poorly in school in a “therapeutic” boarding school in North Carolina, Harbor Oaks. This decision was not made lightly and I did a lot of research, thinking I had weeded through the bad boot camp like schools. I chose this school on the recommendation of a self proclaimed parent watch dog group called PURE. I even went so far as to make an unannounced trip to the school to check it out. I have come to the conclusion that Pat Jones, the director, is without a doubt the most talented con-artist I have ever had the misfortune to meet.

I was promised that my son would receive individual counseling a minimum of 2-3 hours weekly along with group therapy twice daily and anger management. Academically, I was told the school had a 1-5 ratio of teachers to students and his course selection would be individualized to include graphic art studies. The accommodations for the students were very sparse but I was told the students were there only to sleep because they were constantly going on outings and participating in sports. As the weeks went by it became apparent that none of the things I was promised happened. In six weeks my son had two “counseling” sessions with someone who later admitted that they had never even taken a high school psychology course let alone had any real credentials. There was one teacher for 34 boys who basically babysat while the students did school work with packets from an online education program (A.C.E.). The last straw for me was when I found out that two new employees in charge of the boys were ex-convicts (one still on parole) and the food they were being served had expiration dates

over a year old. The day that we went to remove my son he was punched in the face by an employee after starting a fight with another student. This school is a warehouse for troubled boys and these people are preying on the desperation of parents. Harbor Oaks is a pressure cooker because it is filled with boys with anger issues who are given no direction and basically are hanging around this pit with nothing to do but watch TV. I have given you a brief synopsis of the inadequacies and neglect, otherwise this letter would get too lengthy. Since I have removed my son I have spoken with other parents who have had similar experiences and would be willing to participate in any action to save other families from the heartache this school has inflicted. I have also spoken to an ex-employee who was hired as a “counselor” with no credentials for \$10.00/hour. She left her position because she could no longer stand for the treatment of the boys.

I know that there have been exposes on Boot Camp schools, but this school, along with many others I have come across, claims to be a “therapeutic” caring atmosphere and not punitive. Please help me to save other families from this nightmare we have had to endure.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.