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Treatment Center Denies 'Brainwashing' Tactics No. 6 Indiana Defeats Irish

BYLINE: By Eve Zibart, **Washington Post** Staff Writer

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Officials of **Straight**, Inc., a **drug** rehabilitation operation sued recently by a former patient from Fairfax County, yesterday called allegations that they brainwash patients "reckless exaggeration," and went to court in an attempt to stop four current patients from being called as witnesses.

At a morning press conference at **Straight's** recently opened Springfield office, national directors of the Florida-based program belittled the suit by 20-year-old Fred Collins, calling up three former program participants who endorsed the program.

Collins' father, Fred Collins Jr., also attended the press conference and in a prepared statement said, "I have no sympathy with his claims against **Straight.**" **Straight** attorney Ronald Goldfarb also accused Collins' attorneys of conducting a "trial by press release."

"It's time this case moved from the courthouse steps and into the courtroom . . . according to the rules of evidence and not according to the law of press releases," he said.

The Collins complaint, filed Dec. 1 in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, alleges that Collins was imprisoned for 5 1/2 months at **Straight** facilities in Florida and Fairfax and at his parents' home, and that he was subjected to prolonged mental and physical abuse.

Collins escaped from his parents' home Oct. 31 by breaking a coded alarm system, according to his complaint. The class-action suit seeks \$750,000 in damages for Collins and each of about 4,000 **Straight** participants. Collins' parents were not named as codefendants.

At a hearing in U.S. District Court in Alexandria yesterday, Goldfarb asked the court to quash subpoenas for four current **Straight** patients.

Papers filed by Collins' attorneys yesterday morning contend that the four--Steven [REDACTED], Wade [REDACTED], Brian [REDACTED] and George [REDACTED], the plaintiff's younger brother--are being held against their wills and prevented from communicating with attorneys or members of their families.

Former deputy chief prosecutor Steve Merrill, representing the [REDACTED] brothers, and James Jay Harney, representing George [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], said their clients have denied the allegations and wish to "abide by the program." The motion to quash was delayed until Friday morning, when a preliminary hearing is scheduled.

"Because we are so successful, we are a threat to those who use **drugs**," said **Straight** Executive Director Bill Oliver in a statement released yesterday. He said that although similar allegations have been made in other cities, "no

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investigation of **Straight**, anywhere, by any individual or any group, has ever stood up."

Dr. Miller Newton, national clinical director, said there are procedures for any client, except court-ordered internees, to withdraw from the program. An adult, he said, may walk out at any time, although it is "discouraged."

"It's like a mental ward: If an patient walks up to an orderly and demands to be let out, nobody rushes to unlock the door."

Forward Steve Bouchie scored 19 points, 14 in the second half, as No. 6 Indiana broke open a tight game and defeated Notre Dame, 68-52, last night in South Bend, Ind.

The defeat was the third in seven days for the Irish (2-3), who also lost to No. 2 Kentucky and No. 5 UCLA.

Indiana (4-0) never trailed and was tied only twice. The Hoosiers led, 26-25, at halftime.

"We did some things better offensively in the second half," said Indiana Coach Bob Knight. "I wasn't pleased at all with our offense in the first half. I was not pleased with our shooting."

Notre Dame's John Paxson, averaging 17.5 points, was held to 10.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: Picture, RONALD L. GOLDFARB . . . criticizes "trial by press release."

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