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Straight settles suit filed by ex-client**BYLINE:** STEPHEN KOFF**SECTION:** TAMPA BAY AND STATE; Pg. 3B**LENGTH:** 335 words**DATELINE:** ST. PETERSBURG

ST. PETERSBURG - A Hillsborough County man who claimed he was assaulted by participants and employees at the **drug** treatment program **Straight** dropped his lawsuit Friday in an out-of-court settlement.

Straight, a national program based on Gandy Boulevard in St. Petersburg, has faced similar allegations concerning its controversial techniques before. But the suit filed by Jeffrey ██████████ 20, and his mother, Rene ██████████ was unusual because it charged that **Straight** participants smoked marijuana and hashish and drank beer while in the program.

Straight officials said the charges were unfortunate and untrue.

"Obviously our position is that we deny any such treatment of the young man," said Linda Hedden, a **Straight** vice president.

Lawyers said the terms of the settlement, reached as they prepared to go to trial Monday, are to remain secret. Records in Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Court show ██████████ attorney recently offered to settle for \$ 35,000 but **Straight** countered at \$ 5,000. Mrs. ██████████ said she has not been told the exact figure. "It's well under \$ 10,000, I'm sure," she said. A Tampa real estate broker, Mrs. ██████████ said that after pre-trial costs are paid, "I'm going to wind up with a couple hundred dollars."

"Nobody's a millionaire after this one," said her attorney, William W. Chastain. "But everybody got some money and paid some bills, and the ██████████ family got a chance to move on, which is what they wanted to do."

██████████ dropped out of Plant High School in Tampa to attend **Straight** in late 1985. His lawsuit alleged that he was beaten, taunted and spat upon while in the program. The suit also said ██████████ was offered **drugs** and beer at least 10 times while staying with "host families" under **Straight's** supervision.

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