

Florida-based Straight Inc. drug rehab center sued

DEC 2 1982

TRIBUNE

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — A Fairfax County man has filed a class-action suit against a drug rehabilitation program in which he once participated, charging that it brainwashes drug users and holds them against their will.

Fred Collins, 20, a former Virginia Tech student, Wednesday filed suit against the Florida-based Straight, Inc., in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, a suburb of Washington, D.C.

The suit alleged "outrageous and unconscionable conduct" by Straight in its five branches, including one in Fairfax, and asked for \$750,000 in damages for Collins and each of about 4,000 participants in the six-year-old program.

Collins charged he was held captive by Straight for 5½ months earlier this year. According to Collins, his parents knew he was being held, but they were not named as a party to the suit.

He also alleged that the firm's program involved mental and physical abuse, solitary confinement and "a prolonged diet of water and peanut butter sandwiches."

Collins' parents could not be reached for comment. Ronald Goldfarb, a Washington lawyer representing Straight, declined comment on the suit Wednesday.

Straight, a private, non-profit company, also operates programs in St. Petersburg and Sarasota, Fla., Atlanta and Cincinnati.