

July 5, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Triangle Cross Ranch, (Mount Carmel) Clark, WY

In writing the above salutation, I truly hope this concerns all who receive this. I am writing about my grandson, [REDACTED]. He is a young boy of [REDACTED] as of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] has been diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome and high anxiety. Mid-year in his first year of high school, [REDACTED] took up with the wrong crowd; was skipping school and had just become involved in drugs. My daughter, [REDACTED], worked very closely with the administration at [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] to make this a successful year. Despite the combined efforts, the school personnel indicated that [REDACTED] case would soon have to be turned over to the [REDACTED] process due to his truancies. My daughter, a single parent, began to research alternative programs. She found one in Clark, WY, the Triangle Cross Ranch (TCR). There were many phone calls made and much discussion to determine if this was a valid, reliable alternative. [REDACTED] was told about a past licensing issue, but when all was said and done, she trusted this program would in fact offer a possible solution and answer to prayer concerning her son's future.

There is so much that transpired before the final decision was made. [REDACTED] approached my husband and me for help in funding the expenses. My husband and I, [REDACTED] & [REDACTED], [REDACTED] parents, are retired and on a fixed income with some savings. We did a lot of soul searching and after speaking to [REDACTED] Parent Advocate, we too decided we had to try to save [REDACTED] from the possible downhill slide into drug abuse, dropping out of school and living on the streets. Things happened very quickly at the end of May. The individuals who were to transport [REDACTED] for a sum of \$2,400 called and said they were coming through Spokane in two days and would pick [REDACTED] up and deliver him to the ranch in Clark, WY near Cody. We chose to use TCR's transportation because in the past when [REDACTED] does not want to go, he will bolt and run even when the car is running.

My husband, [REDACTED] and I agreed to make three \$4,000.00 installments for the 3 months [REDACTED] had decided would hopefully be sufficient to turn [REDACTED] around and all we could afford at this time. I spoke with [REDACTED] in TCR's financial services, and requested a contract or at least something that detailed what was being provided and how the payments would be made. I asked that when the next payment was due to please contact me before running the credit card to guarantee funds were available in the right account before processing. I never received a contract nor any other paperwork detailing what the \$4,000.00 covered.

[REDACTED] was transported on May 25, and arrived the same day at Triangle Cross Ranch. Since then [REDACTED] has received progress reports and been in contact both with the program director, [REDACTED] and her son [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] elected to take time from her job as a massage therapist to spend the July 4 weekend with [REDACTED]. She spoke with [REDACTED] several times prior to making the trip. She made arrangements to stay at a nearby ranch. [REDACTED] had said it would be fine for [REDACTED] to spend time with his family off TCR premises while they were visiting. [REDACTED] left [REDACTED] with her son, [REDACTED], Thursday, July 1, after work and drove straight through arriving in the Cody area around 1:00 AM MST. The following day she drove to the ranch. On her way she stopped to ask a man in a truck if she was on the right road to the ranch because all signs said Mt. Carmel and nothing indicated it was TCR. The man pointed and said drive to the end of the road. She did and arrived at an old building where still no signs indicated it was Triangle Cross Ranch. She went into the building and not seeing anyone said, "Hello" and only then did a man sitting right there finally acknowledge her.

(She later learned this was [REDACTED] bunkhouse staff, with whom she had spoken previously.) [REDACTED] inquired as to where she might find her son. The man was less than helpful and said she could wander around to find him. (Wander around a 50,000 acre ranch?)

After entering another building where a man in authority, one who is supposed to represent TCR's Catholic beliefs was sitting in his underwear talking with two boys, one of whom was [REDACTED] son, [REDACTED] (The man in the underwear [REDACTED] later learned was the owner of TCR, Jerry Schneider.) It was at this time [REDACTED] again saw the same man who directed her initially and was told that was [REDACTED] director. She was told he would most likely come to meet her. He never did. (This was the second time [REDACTED] the director, made no effort to introduce himself even though he knew to expect her.)

[REDACTED] took her son to Cody for the first part of the day with plans to return in the afternoon so he could show the family around TCR and ride horses. [REDACTED] texted [REDACTED] with their plans and said she would like to meet with him at that time. He responded to her text only to ask when she was leaving.

When [REDACTED] and her sons returned to the ranch to ride horses, [REDACTED] met them while on the road. Son, [REDACTED], told his mom to stop so [REDACTED] could stop and talk to them (trusting he would.) [REDACTED] slowed and pulled to the side of the road hoping Mr. [REDACTED] would finally acknowledge them and introduce himself. [REDACTED] drove past and did not stop even though he would have seen her Washington license plates and recognized the car as the same vehicle and people who asked him for directions the previous day. This surprised her and put her son [REDACTED] in an awkward position questioning why; and feeling the need to defend and excuse the odd behavior.

[REDACTED] did later share that [REDACTED] was hard to get along with and had a volatile temper. Having seen him rip a kid's shirt when angrily attempting to throw the kid,

After riding horses and spending the day together [REDACTED] and his brother found activities to occupy themselves so [REDACTED] decided to drive back to Triangle Cross hoping to speak with [REDACTED]; however now she was obviously having second thoughts about this situation. She saw [REDACTED] truck, but not the director himself. She then went to the bunkhouse where a man was lounging on a couch. At this point [REDACTED] was feeling so uncomfortable with the situation and the filthy conditions, she collected her son's belongings and asked for his medication and asked him to please inform [REDACTED] she was withdrawing [REDACTED] from the program. The man snickered and said, "Ok." Almost as if this happens whenever a parent arrives at the ranch. At no time did any responsible adult ever approach her - not even to check her ID to be sure she was [REDACTED] mother.

While we understand Jerry Schneider is somewhat handicapped, he never dressed and came out to introduce himself after their encounter in the bunkhouse. In the course of the 3 days my daughter [REDACTED] was in the area, [REDACTED] not once made an attempt to contact her not even to question her after having received her text about her decision to pull [REDACTED] from the program.

Hindsight, of course, tells my husband, daughter and myself we should have checked the ranch out first hand. We based our decision on Triangle Cross's website, a professionally designed website that reads like an answer to a parent's prayer particularly a single mom's who is looking for a mentor - a strong appropriate male model for her wayward son. In situations like these parents are often weak and definitely vulnerable and because of

though I must say we know now this was highway robbery and a major scam. More importantly, however, is it has now more than complicated [redacted] effort to get the necessary help her son truly needs.

We now have \$6,500.00 less to put forth for his much needed help. [redacted] is confused and angry because he does not understand what happened. You cannot explain to a troubled youth your concern for his safety staying in a place that is operating so unprofessionally and un-business-like and probably illegally as the way Triangle Cross is operating. [redacted] had bonded with the horses and the outdoor way of life. The unethical behavior of those in authority was not on [redacted] radar screen.

We understand it is a working ranch, so we could somewhat excuse the filth and the fact that the boys are responsible for fending for their own meals with no "camp cook" to provide meals, but for the kind of money we invested, we believe it is unconscionable that the state of Wyoming allows this facility to run under the guise of a Christian-based environment helping troubled youth when it knows of Mr. Schneider's past record. When he applies for a license it may be under a false name, but the location is always the same so how does this happen?

TCR's website promises many things most of which proved to be false. When asked [redacted] expressed the main goal from the program offerings was to get help with [redacted] wayward behavior, but as important was to provide an alternative education to traditional schooling. She was assured TCR would address this aspect. It didn't happen. It appears to be more a ranch using **free child labor at the expense of the parents and grandparents.**

I did not encounter these events first hand but feel there is reason to highly recommend that the appropriate state agencies take a much closer look at Triangle Cross Ranch, its management and its financial records. The health and safety of the other boys who are currently on the ranch could be in jeopardy.

Community newspapers told of a staff worker being brutally beaten by three youth staying at the ranch and one youth within the last year lost the use of his arm due to an accident while using unsafe equipment. We do know while [redacted] was there, a boy lost part of his finger due to an accident, which calls into question what kind of supervision is being provided.

This experience was an unnecessary and most unfortunate set back for us especially [redacted]. We are now 1½ months further from a solution for helping [redacted] navigate the struggles he will face. At this time we have no way to assess the damage done to [redacted].

We pray nothing untoward or harmful happened while there, but as we know time will tell because historically youth when abused cover it up; do not deal with it, nor do they tell – as seen with the events of the Catholic Church.

Thank you in advance for taking a closer look at Triangle Cross Ranch and the way in which it operates.

[redacted], concerned grandmother of [redacted] [redacted] and retired teacher.

Cc: Wyoming State Attorney General
Wyoming State Health Department
Wyoming Department of Family Services
Wyoming Bureau of Better Business

their helplessness and hopelessness at the same time, they are often made prey to unscrupulous people who would take advantage of a those in the greatest need.

I had also asked my brother, an attorney who lives in Cheyenne, WY, to assist in discovering what he could about this ranch. The following is his correspondence:

"I made a few inquiries about the TCR. I learned that they operated for many years under the name Mount Carmel. In 2012 they closed down and surrendered their state license. The Schneiders, who own the ranch began operating as TCR but neglected to get licensed in that name. There was litigation by the state agency and a cease and desist order by the local court. The case went to the Wyoming Supreme Court, which held just 2 months ago that TCR must get licensed by the state. At some point in time TCR actually got a state license to operate.

I have not learned anything bad about the facility or the program. As you may know from their website they are an operating cattle ranch providing work and services for troubled youth with a Christian based philosophy. As you might expect, over the years a few kids have gotten into trouble in the surrounding community, but I did not hear that the facility was considered negligent in those cases.

That happens with state run facilities also since the kids are not locked up or fenced into the facilities. I am still waiting on a few return calls, but don't expect any earth shaking information."

The thing we missed in the above was assuming when a facility receives a license they are legitimate. We now know it was a ploy and strictly a name change to circumvent any further inspections under the previous name Mount Carmel. Had we checked the information under that name, red flags would have popped up all over the place prior to encountering them on the premise itself.

My husband also spoke at length with [REDACTED], parent advocate [REDACTED], who highly recommended this particular ranch over and above many others. At this point we don't know for whom [REDACTED] actually works. He told [REDACTED] he is independent and not employed by TCR. [REDACTED] had numerous conversations with [REDACTED] as well. [REDACTED] also did her due diligence in researching on-line to determine whether this was a safe facility prior to sending [REDACTED] but did not find any poor reviews until after the fact when she searched Mount Carmel Youth Ranch.

Based on the above my husband and I elected to support our daughter in her effort to find an alternative to allowing her son to fall into the Washington state juvenile system, which would not only preclude her parental rights but worse - treat [REDACTED] more like a criminal than a troubled youth with some mental health issues.

We were at a loss as to why [REDACTED] never made an effort to meet our daughter rather to actually ignore and avoid her. This has been very costly and I am not speaking solely from a financial standpoint,