

CBS MEMORANDUM

FROM: Jan Legnitto
TO: DAN RATHER and PHIL SCHEFFLER
DATE: Tuesday, December 11

Re Bob Meehan's Palmer Drug Abuse Program 713 977-8334

All the people I've talked with who have left the Palmer Drug Abuse Program agree on two things: that Bob Meehan is a superb con man and that he's dangerously unstable -- "a fanatic, a psychopath."

Sam Booth, a disenchanted former staff member, recalls that Meehan came back from a law enforcement conference in 1973 or 1974 and told him he had talked with God, God had told him now was the time to seek his power, and that he was to use PDAP as a vehicle for that purpose. Meehan was also fond of telling PDAP staffers that a psychiatrist at Lexington Federal Prison had told him that the only way he'd ever make it would be to become an actor.

Sam Booth was in PDAP from 1973-75 and was a senior counsellor in charge of fund raising. When he left the program, Meehan began referring to him as "the evil force." Booth now owns his own business in Houston and will not talk for tape. But he has a wealth of information. 713 939-0496 (h) or (w) 681-0365.

Although Bob Meehan says his salary is only \$23,000 a year, Booth and others have told me he's taking at least \$120,000 a year out of the "non-profit" PDAP program. He drives a Lincoln Continental and lives in the fashionable Quail Valley section of Houston. Where does PDAP get its money? Some of it comes from contributions from parents at PDAP meetings where Meehan lays a heavy guilt trip on them; some comes from foundations like M.D. Anderson; but the vast majority of it comes from hospitals where there are PDAP programs.

Potential PDAP members contact Meehan's headquarters in Houston where they initially make contact with PDAP counsellors, all of whom are non-professionals and former members of the program. The counsellors refer the kids with drug and/or alcohol problems to a hospital where PDAP has a resident program. At least 3/4 of the kids are 17 and under, and all but a few of them are insured. Four to six weeks in a PDAP hospital can cost \$15,000. The program, which supposedly consists of intensive individual and group therapy has a consulting psychiatrist named Dr. Jason Baron, who also has his own private practice. Kathy Welch, a woman who used to be the bookkeeper for Baron, says that Baron billed 60-80 patients at Houston International Hospital \$40 a day seven days a week whether or not he saw them. His fee has since gone up to at least \$50. Barbara Ludiker received a \$1600 bill from Baron who saw her son only twice. It's unclear whether Meehan gets a kickback from Baron's take.

Not a good witness

Olds

Not true

7-10M

THE HOSPITALS There are two companies that operate hospitals in which Bob Meehan has had PDAP programs: Hospital Affiliates Inc. which ran Houston International Hospital and Contemporary Health Services which split off from Hospital Affiliates. Both outfits seem to be controlled by Fred Kotzen and Art Pfeiffer (sp) who split the fees with Meehan. How this works is not clear, but at various times Meehan has had PDAP floors at Houston International, and most recently at Plaza Del Oro Medical Center and Deer Park in Houston and East Dallas in Dallas. (Kotzen and Pfeiffer brought in PDAP under the auspices of their own hospital program called PASA -- Program for Alcoholism Stress and Anxiety). I'm told that Ed Leach, Meehan's executive director at PDAP admitted to WFAA that PDAP was taking \$6000 a month out of East Dallas Hospital. The take in Houston has to be many times that amount.

PASA

Kotzen - turquoise Lodge - Albuquerque Alc Rehab Pgm

THE PROGRAM PDAP teaches sobriety and the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

But it doesn't teach members to take those steps and apply them to the real world. Patrick Carmichael who joined PDAP in 1973 and left the program three and a half years ago, says that PDAP gets kids off chemicals but discourages them from returning to a normal life. Carmichael says it's a cult and the counsellors themselves cannot make it on the outside.

713 524-4531. Others like Tom Arledge say that less than half the kids who enter the program really have a drug problem -- most of them have trouble with their parents, with adolescence, and the drug angle is exploited by Meehan so that PDAP can claim remarkable results and continue to grow. Arledge was assistant director of PDAP and left the program four years ago. 713 777-1478. He talks about Meehan's "first contact" approach where counsellors yell and scream at kids and threaten to get them sent to prison if they don't cooperate. This technique, which is similar to Synanon's attack therapy, frequently leaves kids begging and whimpering, emotionally devastated. As far as the counsellors' behavior with each other is concerned, Arledge says that any criticism of Meehan's tactics is regarded as treason and punished by an unrelenting attacks by Meehan and other counsellors.

Meehan himself is volatile and charismatic. He likes to conduct EST-like round robins with PDAP members, which are very religious and emotional. He refers to PDAP as God's program, has frequently had a light shining on him while conducting meetings. Meehan encourages total dependence on PDAP by convincing people that they can't make it without the program.

Aside from PDAP's success (he's opening a new program in Beverly Hills on February 12 PDAP franchises cost \$25,000), Meehan has fulfilled another dream. To become a rock star of sorts. He started the Bob Meehan Boogie Band, with some very fine musicians, which now plays mostly to his own disciples, for seven and eight dollars a performance. He writes his own material.

THE METHOD OF CONTROL It varies, but in general it involves exerting pressure and using fear to keep people in the group and to sever contact with dissenters.

Janet and Bob Gaffney were married and both were in PDAP. He quit because he wanted to become a draftsman, and took to drinking -- but only an occasional beer. Janet's PDAP job took her to Austin to work. One night, she went to a PDAP and returned to see Bob with a married couple who informed Bob that Janet was leaving him. They're getting a divorce. 713 974-4382.

In April, 1976, Marcus Ray Wilson was found at his Texas high school with queludes, was suspended from school, and was admitted to Houston International Hospital's PDAP Program. He was there for ten days when the PDAP went on an

take?
Similar to

W r m g
emphasis

Did
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outing at Galvaston Bay. and he and a friend had a few beers..On returning to the hospital the Palmer people three him off their floor and had him admitted to the psychiatric unit where "an ex marine homosexual" beat him to death.