

To the honorable Judge Bates,

My name is Nicholas Langorian and I am one of the defendants charged in the January 6th riot at the U.S. Capitol. First and foremost, I would like to state that I recognize the fact that my actions on that day went beyond my Constitutional right to peacefully assemble and were therefore unacceptable. I consider myself to be a patriot and, accordingly, I have the utmost respect for our Constitution and the consequent law and order of our Nation. Due to an anticipated exceedingly long waiting period and the fact that I understand that the court will likely find my actions to be to some degree unlawful, I am considering negotiating a plea agreement in lieu of a jury trial. While a part of me does feel compelled to exercise my right to a trial, I see now that the vast majority of evidence that would favor my case pertains primarily to mitigation factors rather than anything exculpatory. I want to be clear that I fully understand and agree that what happened on January 6th at the Capitol was entirely reprehensible, and I recognize that I took part in some of the unsavory behavior of the crowd that day and am thereby culpable for my role in it. I am writing this letter in the hope that I will be able to communicate to you who I am as well as describe to you some of the things that I experienced which lead to my involvement with the January 6th crowd.

Though I have become entirely disillusioned with any notion of the world of politics since these events have transpired, the truth is that my involvement with the movement behind President Trump provided me a feeling of belonging to something bigger than myself that I had long been seeking. I was raised mostly by my dear grandparents, whom I owe my life to, on account of the fact that my parents were far too young and consistently unfit to be parents to me. When I was 4, my father attempted to hurt or kill my mother, who was only 21 at the time, and in doing so burned my house and everything we owned to the ground. Since then, my mother has been divorced 3 times and has long since moved away to Florida. My father has given his entire life away to drugs and alcohol and is essentially homeless. When I was 15, I attended a WWASP reformation school called Cross Creek Programs. My mother was going through her second divorce and I had been bounced around many different households from Vermont to Florida at this point and I was struggling with a number of things including depression and substance abuse. Though my 17 month stay at Cross Creek was difficult and unwelcomed, it did provide me with a great tool set for going forward and being successful in life. After graduating the program, I returned to Vermont where I completed high school and began working full time. I have worked primarily in construction trades including excavation and masonry, and for several years taught boxing skills to youth after work while myself going as far as to compete in the

Vermont Golden Gloves and achieving a 6-1 amateur record. During this time I regularly attended AA/NA meetings. In 2016 I made the decision to enlist in the U.S. Army as an infantryman. I was deeply troubled by the rise of ISIS and felt compelled to be of service to my nation. I excelled in infantry school, and due to my exemplary PT, marksmanship, and ASVAB scores, I was offered a unique opportunity to try out at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School qualification course, though after completing Airborne School at Fort Benning, I transferred to Fort Bragg and decided to withdraw from the course and get married to my girlfriend of six years. This ended up being a terrible mistake that I will regret as long as I live. Our relationship quickly fell apart and she returned home to Vermont. I was overwhelmingly depressed and ended up turning back to substances in order to cope with the loneliness and hurt that followed. I was administratively discharged under honorable conditions in September 2018. I returned to Vermont and continued working construction jobs for the next several years.

During this time, I was introduced to what has been dubbed "QAnon." I cannot deny my involvement with this group or the profound impact it has had on my life. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of misinformation related to the beliefs and motives of this group within the public discourse. In regards to my case, I believe the most important aspect of this controversial topic is the fact that these individuals were consistently encouraged by highly respected members of society such as President Trump, Lt General Michael Flynn, General Flynn's attorney Sidney Powell, and Lt General Thomas McInerney. The list could go on to include Mike Pompeo, Dan Scavino, Eric Trump, Donald Trump Jr., Ezra Cohen Wainick, Jack Posobiec, and Lin Wood, to name some of the most prominent advocates. There is absolutely no doubt, and I have every intention of showing to the court, that these individuals promoted and in effect facilitated and took responsibility for what I call the Q information network. The evidence of this is substantial to say the least. I think it is only fair that the court and Americans at home understand that this phenomenon went on for 4 years and culminated in the "Stop the Steal" movement between November 2020 and January 6th 2021. It is also important to understand that it was lead by retired Senior intelligence officers who attained one of the highest possible statuses within the U.S. military. The group who followed that leadership are patriots who only want what is best for their families and neighbors. They are good people, many of whom have served the United States in some capacity.

I, like many of those patriots who may have been seeking a higher purpose, felt that I had finally found a community where I belonged and was valued. I rediscovered my Christian faith and felt like I was learning a great deal about myself and the world around me. Despite the fact that I now feel lied to and betrayed by the leaders who I respected, that time of my life will always stand out as one in which I made a great deal of extremely positive friendships and diligently applied myself to a newfound sense of spirituality and higher learning. What we were doing was never meant or expected to turn violent. We were simply sharing information amongst ourselves and simultaneously cultivating spiritual relationships with each other. Though I admittedly became fearful of the government and various secret societies, that period of my life will always remain one of the most positive and uplifting I have ever experienced. Very few of us expected anything like what happened on January 6th to transpire. After it did, I immediately was filled with regret for my actions. Donald Trump's words and Jacob Chanley's teachings about non-violence further made me realize that our movement was not meant to be represented by violence and that what I had done contributed to something that caused grief and hardship to many people. I traveled to D.C. for my first ever political rally dressed in plain clothes simply because the President of the United States asked me to be there. I have no connection to any kind of organized group or militia. Furthermore, I harbor absolutely no sentiments related to white supremacy whatsoever, nor do any of the other Trump supporters whom I have connected with.

By the time that January 6th came around, so many people, including myself had become genuinely upset and fearful. Inflammatory rhetoric from high ranking military generals and their allies, much of which I intend to present as mitigative evidence, is what I believe ultimately pushed people to engage in violence at the Capitol. I want to make it clear that I do not believe in any way that the things I have mentioned justify or excuse my or anyone else's actions that day. I deeply regret what I did for a number of reasons. Chiefly, that our movement was never meant to be violent. Beyond that, it would certainly appear that we were lied to. Though it is frustrating that no apparent official investigation or audit has taken place, such as happened after the 2016 election cycle, such matters are both over my head and out of my hands.

My life prior to January 6th primarily consisted of working full time with masons and producing various types of content for the online communities I was involved with in my free time. At home, I was tending a large vegetable garden, raising over 50 ducks and chickens, and caring for my dog and cats. I have been playing guitar and several other instruments since I was very young, and I write and record my own music. I spend a great deal of my free time in nature

and make sure to stay physically fit and consume a clean and natural diet. I enjoy hunting and fishing, and have continued to pursue boxing and several other martial arts as a means of staying active and healthy. I cut my own firewood from my property and take care of my household on my own. Around the 10th of January, I had moved to South Carolina for a number of seasons, mainly to stay with my grandparents who recently turned 75, and my great grandmother who recently turned 92. Because of the remarks of people like Robert David Steele and Dr. Charlie Ward, I had genuinely expected the following months to be a difficult and confusing time for everyone, and my intention had been to be close to my family and help to comfort, protect, and inform them about what was happening.

My intention when I go home is to return to South Carolina and continue working the job I had with Chaves Enterprises, which is still available to me. John Chaves and my grandparents are willing, as they have done already, to show up and speak to the court on my behalf. The time that I have sacrificed with them because of this has already been far more than any political protest is worth, especially considering the uncertain state of affairs that has been brought about by the pandemic. I deeply regret having anything to do with it. Being incarcerated has been very sobering to say the least, and I see now that I was manipulated and lied to. I have no desire to bring harm to anyone. I am a Christian and a patriot and I only want what is best for the future of our nation. I allowed myself to get caught up in a frenzied mob and my emotions got in the way of my values and judgment. The events of January 6th do not reflect the character of myself or any of the other defendants I have met. Every single one of us have met for Bible study each day everywhere I have been. I have no desire to have anything to do with politics of Washington D.C. ever again. I intend to live a simple and peaceful life.

There is much I have left unsaid and likewise much that could be expanded on, but I will save it for the court room. This is my first time being incarcerated and I wanted to use some of my time to reach out to you so that you might better understand who I am and how I wound up here. I acknowledge that I was in the wrong. I hope that by cooperating with the investigation and presenting mitigative evidence to the court that I am able to reach an agreement that satisfies the law, the court, and my family. Thank you for your time.

***Blanchard and Wall, LLC***  
*Mitigation and Sentencing Advocacy Services*  
*Fairfax, VA*

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December 14, 2021

**Mitigation Report**

**Re: Nicholas Languerand**  
**U.S. District Court, District of Columbia**  
**Docket No. 1;21-CR-00353-JDB-1**

**Sources of Information**

- 1) Client interviews on 10/06/2021 and 11/15/2021
- 2) Interviews with client's grandparents, Susan and Charles Killian on 10/14/2021, 10/22/2021, and 12/09/2021
- 3) Interview with Vermont LCSW, Sean Ryan, on 11/23/2021
- 4) Review of educational, military, criminal, and court records

**Case Background and Mitigation Summary**

Blanchard and Wall, LLC, was hired to investigate and identify potential mitigating factors in the case of Nicholas Languerand, a 26-year-old male who entered a guilty plea in the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia on November 3, 2021, to one count of Assaulting, Resisting or Impeding Certain Officers using a Dangerous Weapon, in violation of Title 18, U.S.C., Sections 111(a) and (b). Sentencing is currently scheduled for January 20, 2022.

The following mitigating themes were identified during the investigation: 1) family dysfunction and parental neglect; 2) post-traumatic stress; and 3) substance abuse disorder.

This report is a comprehensive chronicle of the information that was collected and incorporates the mitigating factors that emerged.

**Background of Family Dysfunction and Parental Neglect**

Nicholas Languerand (hereinafter referred to as "Nick") was born in Morrisville, Vermont, on April 13, 1995. His parents are John Languerand ("John"), age 47, of Morrisville, and Jennifer Killian ("Jenny"), 43, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Reared

in Lamoille County, Vermont, Nick's childhood was unstable, and he experienced pervasive neglect and trauma. His mother was still a teenager when she gave birth to him, and his father was just 21 years old. John and Jenny were living with Jenny's parents,<sup>1</sup> Charles and Susan Killian (hereinafter, "Mr. Killian" and "Mrs. Killian"), but soon after Nick was born, they moved in with John's mother. Mrs. Killian recalls that she and her husband had an argument with John and Jenny after they expressed concern about John's quick temper, controlling manner with their daughter, and rough and detached manner with Nick.

A year after Nick's birth, John and Jenny wed and the Killians allowed them to move into a trailer parked on their property. Jenny was immature and self-involved, while John was immersed in his work and drug and alcohol habit (as confirmed with public records, John's own father was a severe alcoholic who died at the age of 45 from cirrhosis of the liver, when John was only 12).

Mrs. Killian advised that John, a heavy equipment operator, had a strong work ethic but was seldom sober during his leisure time. Jenny drank excessively as well, though not nearly to the extent her husband did. The pair frequently fought when they were drunk. Indeed, they got into an altercation outside their house during Jenny's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party, reportedly because of her infidelity. John punched someone's car windshield, shattering it. Mr. and Mrs. Killian heard the commotion and walked over to the trailer to take Nick, then only four, to their house. The police were called, and they issued John a temporary restraining order, barring him from the property. Later that night, Jenny joined Nick at her parents' house.

At some point late in the night, John steeled back to the trailer, thinking his wife would soon return. He released propane gas into the house and turned up the heat. At 4:00 a.m., the trailer exploded. Jenny had decided to stay with her parents that night, so the trailer was unoccupied at the time of the explosion. After the police determined John was the culprit, they issued a warrant for him. John was soon arrested and charged with Arson and related offenses. In court, the prosecutor agreed to a reduced sentence if John agreed to participate in substance abuse treatment and anger management counseling. He did, and the judge imposed a six-month jail term followed by ten years of supervised probation.

Mrs. Killian recalls that while John was incarcerated, Nick would ask her questions such as, "Why did my dad burn all of my toys?" Mrs. Killian took Nick to a counselor for a short time and recalls him drawing several pictures for the counselor of a house on fire. Mrs. Killian could not recall the name of the therapist or agency but said it was near the Lamoille County courthouse. Nick did not see his father at all during this time, and he and his mother remained with the Killians.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan and Charles Killian adopted Nick's mother when she was an infant.

After John was released from custody, Jenny decided to reconcile with him. John saw Nick, and afterwards, Nick exclaimed to his grandmother, "I saw my daddy and I didn't even get a spanking!" Jenny and John moved back into John's mother's house with Nick in tow. Within months, the couple began arguing as before, and they separated for the final time. Jenny then took Nick and moved into a new trailer on her parents' property on the site of the burned trailer. She later filed for divorce. Nick had no contact with his father for the next year or more, until the divorce settlement allowed John visitation. Nick recalls seeing his father perhaps two weekends a month after the settlement; however, he mainly sat alone in his father's truck all day on construction sites where his father was working.

When Nick was six, Jenny found a house to rent about an hour west, in Colchester, Vermont. While she and Nick were residing there, she met Sean Vance (Sean), a Vermont native who works in the excavation industry. The pair began dating and soon, Sean moved in with them. Nick took a liking to Sean and was happy to have a stable adult male present. Jenny and Sean bought a house together after Jenny learned she was pregnant, and in 2004, when Nick was nine, she gave birth to a girl she named K[REDACTED]. Ten months later, Jenny and Sean legally wed. They purchased a small single-family house and had a second child, named K[REDACTED]. The family then moved a third time. By now, Jenny and Sean were having marital issues, but 12-year-old Nick was unaware anything was amiss.

As described by his grandparents, Nick had begun exhibiting behavioral problems and developed low self-esteem. He was acting up in school and putting little effort into his classwork. Mrs. Killian recalls that Nick appeared to be seeking attention from his mother, who was preoccupied with her young children, while also trying to win approval from Sean, who was noticeably more affectionate with his biological children than Nick. John, meanwhile, was an ever-volatile presence in Nick's life. Then one day Nick told his grandmother that his mother and Sean were sending him back to his father's house to live. He was crying and his grandmother called Jenny, pleading with her to let him stay with her. Jenny refused and sent Nick to John's.

Nick had to change schools for a third time. John's probation term had just come to an end, and he returned to his previous drinking patterns. He also began using marijuana and other drugs once again. Nick was at home by himself a lot when not in school because his father worked long hours. When his father was home, he was drunk. Because Nick had no supervision or guidance from John, he did his own laundry and made his own meals. His grandparents sent him food and tried to bring him to their house for dinner weekly to ensure he consumed some healthy food. Nick had told his grandmother about finding marijuana in the house that belonged to his father. Also, during one dinner with his grandparents, Nick told them about an occasion when he and a friend went with his father to his father's friend's house. His father and the other man got so drunk they passed out. Nick and his friend then started drinking from the open alcohol containers, and Nick got sick and vomited.

After Nick had been with his father for about ten months, his father attempted to gain custody of him, but the court denied the request because John had just incurred his fifth conviction for Driving While Intoxicated. Meanwhile, by this time Nick had taught himself to play guitar and was teaching himself to play drums. He was a freshman at Peoples Academy High School (Peoples) in Morrisville and had a small group of friends with whom he played music and smoked marijuana. One day John found marijuana belonging to Nick and showed up the school “making a scene” outside the principal’s office. He wanted to know who supplied Nick with the marijuana. Later that day, an administrator found a couple of students in possession of marijuana and suspended them. Because several students had seen and heard Nick’s father earlier in the day, many assumed he had “snitched” on the boys who were suspended. Rumors quickly spread and Nick became a target of bullying. Jenny found out about the situation and told Nick he had to return to Colchester. Nick did not want to move yet again but was forced to. He moved back in with Jenny and Sean and enrolled at Colchester High School (CHS).

Nick joined CHS’s drumline and formed a small band. He began to make friends through shared musical interests and often stayed after school with peers to rehearse in the band room. Academically, Nick was under-performing; however, aptitude tests reflect that he was very capable. He said he was simply disinterested in homework and studying.

Nick and his mother fought because of Nick’s errant behavior -- he was smoking marijuana and skipping school with his friends so they could play music instead. By the time he completed ninth grade, his mother was ready to return him to his father.

John was drinking heavily and had a short temper. Nick recalls his father dragging him out of bed one night, yelling about a minor transgression. After only a month, Nick moved in with his grandparents. Mr. and Mrs. Killian said Jenny and Sean did not seem inclined to address Nick’s ongoing needs and John was simply unfit. Nick returned to Peoples for tenth grade; however, some classmates who still considered him a “snitch” from the previously described incident began harassing him. He stood up to his aggressors, which resulted in physical altercations and school suspensions for him and others. Nick’s grandparents became concerned that Nick’s struggles had grown too serious for them to adequately address, especially since they had no legal decision-making authority. During this period, Jenny and Sean decided to relocate to Florida. They moved into an apartment near the ocean in Jupiter/Juno Beach, and Nick went to visit soon afterwards. Nick recalls that the apartment was lavish, and there was a teenaged girl living next door who played guitar. He quickly decided a complete change from all he had known could propel him in a better direction and asked his mother if he could move in with them in Florida. She said yes.

Nick returned to Vermont and packed his belongings. Then, accompanied by his grandmother, he flew to Florida. His mother was at the airport waiting; however, she was upset and announced that she and Sean were separating. According to her, Sean had been unfaithful and had developed a gambling habit. She had just found another apartment in nearby Palm Beach Gardens for her and Nick to live in, and Sean was going to live in the beachfront apartment with K████ and K████.

When Nick arrived at his mother's new apartment, he was dismayed. It was small and run down, and in an unsafe neighborhood. His mother said it was all she could afford. She told him one bedroom was hers and the other was for Nick's half-siblings when they came to stay overnight. She did not want Nick using his siblings' room when they were not there. Jenny put a mattress on the floor of the coat closet and that became Nick's bedroom.

Jenny was employed full-time for Jet Blue Airlines, and she volunteered to work extra hours, hoping to earn a promotion. When she was at work and Nick's siblings were at the apartment, Nick was required to babysit. Occasionally, Nick would visit Sean and stay with him overnight. Sean told Nick that it was Jenny who had been unfaithful, and that she was seeing a work colleague named Ryan. Ryan had recently relocated to New York, but he and Jenny still saw each other because Jenny often traveled for work.

Nick began attending tenth grade at Palm Beach Gardens High School, but immediately disliked his new school. He described it as deteriorating and overpopulated. Its size - almost 3,000 students<sup>2</sup> - and the chaos overwhelmed him, and he immediately began skipping school. Soon he became acquainted with older neighborhood teens who had either quit or graduated from school. The group was largely unemployed and had a penchant for misusing pharmaceutical medications. Nick started experimenting with different drugs and dating a 20-year-old woman named Lindsay. He was 15. He recalls a day when Lindsay gave him a bottle of Adderall to hold in his backpack. His mother found them and called police. He was taken into juvenile custody and Sean later came to claim him. After that, Nick began spending more time at Sean's. Sean allowed him to have Lindsay over, and Sean's apartment was so much nicer.

Jenny had previously broached the idea of Nick attending a boarding school and had mentioned that her work colleague, Ryan, had attended one. Nick was not interested. After Nick had been in Florida for about three months, she again brought up the idea. While Nick was not interested in attending school in Palm Beach Gardens, he did not want to go away to a boarding school. Soon thereafter, his mother was having difficulty paying her bills, so Nick went to stay with Sean full time. It was not long before Jenny lost her apartment and moved back in with Sean as well. Nick thought they might reconcile; however, that did not happen.

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<sup>2</sup> Peoples Academy had just over 200 students and Colchester High School had about 600 students.

A month after Nick's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, his mother told him they were going to Vermont for a visit. At the airport, the pair got into an argument and did not board their flight. Early the next morning, Jenny's friend, Ryan, called Nick from New York and told him not to "blow it" with his mother because she was in fact planning to surprise him with a trip to Las Vegas. The following day, Jenny asked Nick if he wanted to take a road trip with her and Sean to the Hoover Dam and other tourist spots. He eagerly said yes. A couple of days into the trip, Nick was asleep in the backseat of the car when he was awoken and told they had reached their destination. He looked around and saw that they were at a gated facility in a remote area. Jenny announced that it was a boarding school, and that Nick would be staying there. Nick was at first confused, and then angry. Then when staff came to the car and took him inside, locking the gate behind them, he became frightened. Inside, staff immediately shaved his head, took out his earring, and escorted him to a barren room that would be his dormitory for the next year and a half.

The facility, called Cross Creek Academy (CCA), was a WWASP (World-Wide Association of Specialty Programs) school located in La Verkin, Utah. CCA had strict rules.<sup>3</sup> Nick advised that for the first several months, he tried to keep a low profile and simply obey staff so he could avoid harsh discipline. He described feeling traumatized. Over time, he acclimated somewhat, and when he had been there for nine months, he was allowed visitors. His grandparents flew out to see him over a weekend, and Jenny and Sean visited once. Mrs. Killian recalls not knowing in advance of his placement that she would be unable to speak with him for so long, so she was relieved to see him. He told her he was fine, but to her, he seemed subdued and dejected about being unable to leave for another year.

CCA claimed to provide high school courses and award diplomas; however, there is significant evidence in public documents they in fact, did not. While Nick said he did some academic work, he did not take courses that would satisfy high school graduation requirements. He attended Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA) meetings and eventually was able to lead them, which he enjoyed. On December 14, 2012, he received a Certificate of Completion from CCA's affiliate, Youth Foundation, Inc.,<sup>4</sup> in La Verkin, Utah, for having completed 84 hours of personal development training, 72 hours of leadership training, 100 hours of peer mentoring, and 75 hours of community service (see Appendix A).

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<sup>3</sup> Information about WWASP schools and Cross Creek Academy specifically, is detailed in the following section of this report as well as in appendices.

<sup>4</sup> Youth Foundation Inc. eventually replaced Cross Creek Manor, but the company employed most of the same staff and followed the same principles of WWASP. Many complaints were filed against Youth Foundation Inc., and in 2013, the school was closed.

In mid-December 2012, Nick had completed program requirements and he returned to Vermont. By this time his mother was living and working in New York, and Sean had returned to Vermont with his and Jenny's children. Jenny was focused on her career with the airline, and although she was able to travel to Vermont to visit her children at no cost, she seldom did. Meanwhile, Nick's father had just incurred his 6<sup>th</sup> Driving While Intoxicated conviction, a felony. The arrest record reflects that he was driving on a suspended license when police attempted to pull him over for erratic driving behavior. He got out of his truck, ran into the woods, and then tripped and fell. He refused to submit to a breathalyzer, but a blood test conducted after he was transported to the station showed that his blood alcohol concentration was a .017.

Nick lived with his grandparents for the next four years or so. In fact, as verified with court documents, his grandmother became his legal guardian so she could assist in re-enrolling him in high school. School administrators advised her it would be better for Nick to obtain his GED because of his age and lack of connection with the students now attending. Nick took the GED exam and on February 6, 2013, was awarded a GED from the State of Vermont.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, he took adult education courses through Stowe High School's (Stowe, Vermont) adult education program, and in June of 2013, was issued a high school diploma (Appendix B).

Nick began operating heavy equipment alongside his father on construction and excavation sites and joined The Hardwick Amateur Boxing Club (he had learned to box while at Cross Creek Academy). Later, he competed as a light heavyweight in a Golden Gloves competition. He began dating a woman named Logan Green, and unfortunately, also returned to the use of drugs and alcohol.

Nick had always wanted to work side by side with his father, so he was happy he had the opportunity now. Still, it did not take long for him and his father to start arguing. He recalls that after work, they frequently drank together in the local bars. Once they were both drunk, they would fight. Nick tried living with his father again, but John was staying in a rudimentary structure he had built from downed telephone poles and only had a generator inside. There was no plumbing or insulation, and it was too cold to live in during winter months. In fact, John usually simply stayed on couches of friends and co-workers during the colder months.

In early 2015, Nick and Logan broke up, and Nick spent that summer living in the trailer of a woman he had begun dating. That November, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He began exercising in preparation of his military training, and in the spring of 2016, went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for basic training. He and Logan had reconciled, and she joined him in North Carolina. The pair got married and obtained an apartment off the military base. Logan became homesick, and when the couple

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<sup>5</sup> Records from the State of Vermont reflect that Nick received a score of 580 in Language Arts/Writing (79<sup>th</sup> percentile), 590 in Science (82<sup>nd</sup> percentile), and 620 in Social Studies (88<sup>th</sup> percentile).

went back to Vermont for the Christmas holiday, Logan decided she was not going to return to North Carolina. Nick was upset. He returned to North Carolina alone. Soon thereafter, he discovered that Logan was seeing a former boyfriend back in Vermont.

In early April 2017, Nick went to Fort Benning, Georgia, to attend the Army's Airborne Course. He received his diploma on April 21, 2017 (Appendix C). While he had some successes in the military, his mental health and substance abuse issues proved too great, and he ultimately tested positive for cocaine. In October 2018, he was officially discharged administratively, under honorable conditions. His rank at discharge was E-1, Private, 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

By the time Nick returned to Vermont in 2018, his grandparents had relocated to South Carolina. His mother had moved back to Florida and had married a man named Joel Gil-Rodriguez (the marriage ended in divorce after less than two years). Nick and Logan decided to give their relationship another try, and they planned to move into a trailer together in the fall. Logan later decided not to, and the pair separated for the final time. For the next couple of years, Nick lived alone in the trailer. He found employment with a construction company but had to stop working when his driver's license was suspended for multiple traffic violations. He did manage to secure another job as a cook in a local restaurant for several months.

In the winter of 2019, Nick met his current girlfriend, Michelle. At the beginning of 2020, he was hired as a laborer at a masonry company, and that summer, began raising chickens. Mrs. Killian recalls Nick telling her during a phone call that she, Mr. Killian, and his animals were "my only family."<sup>6</sup>

In the fall of 2020, Nick was laid off from work and Mrs. Killian suggested he move to South Carolina to live with them since the climate allowed for year-round employment and was less isolating. Nick did not want to leave Michelle, so he declined. Still, Michelle was spending significantly less time with him anyway because his trailer was so cold and remotely situated. Nick was laid off from work in November and was mostly by himself in his trailer with no vehicle and no television. He began spending all his time on the Internet, which is when he began consuming information being fed to the public from far-right groups such as QAnon and The Proud Boys.

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<sup>6</sup> In a 2017 article called, "Lasting Effects of Abandoning or Emotionally Unavailable Parents," Clinical neuropsychologist Audrey Sherman discusses the emotional difficulties people often develop if their parents divorced, and/or if one or both parents did not maintain a consistent presence in their lives, such as attachment disorders, depression, fear of abandonment, distrust of others, jealousy and possessiveness in relationships, and low self-esteem. Nick has exhibited all these symptoms.

It is necessary to point out that Nick moved no less than 16 times during the first 18 years of his life. Nick also changed schools at least nine times during the same period. He attended three elementary schools, two middle schools, and three high schools. This does not include his 17-month stay at the reform school in Utah, or his return to schools in which he had previously been enrolled.

Research conducted in 2010 by the American Psychological Association concluded that frequent relocations during childhood are related to poorer well-being in adulthood, including lower life satisfaction and fewer long-term relationships (Appendix D). Given Nick's isolation, estrangement from his parents, history of neglect, mental health issues, and addiction, it is easy to see how he adopted some of the radical beliefs espoused by QAnon and other organizations (see Appendix E).

Soon after participating in the January 6, 2021, riot, Nick moved to South Carolina to live with his grandparents. He secured employment with Chaves Enterprises (Chaves), an excavation and construction-site preparation company. He worked for Chaves steadily until his arrest for the instant offense (Appendix F).

### **Post-Traumatic Stress**

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network ([www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)) defines complex trauma as the wide-range long-term impact of a child's exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature. The traumatic events can disrupt many aspects of a child's development and the formation of healthy self-identity. Complex PTSD has been widely studied and is found to be associated most often with chronic traumas. Further, childhood adversity and prolonged stress in childhood is associated with an increased risk for the later development of PTSD.<sup>7</sup>

As described previously, Nick witnessed the total disintegration of his home and all his belongings when he was just four years old. To make matters worse, he learned quickly that it was his own father who was responsible. While he saw a counselor for a short time, he was too young to fully comprehend the situation, so was unable to process the event in a manner that would allow him to avoid being permanently

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<sup>7</sup> Complex PTSD is usually associated with chronic and repeated traumas and includes the symptoms of PTSD coupled with disturbances in self-organization, emotion regulation, self-concept, and relationships (Cloitre, Marylène et al. "Evidence for proposed ICD-11 PTSD and complex PTSD: a latent profile analysis." *European journal of Psychotraumatology* vol. 4 10.3402. 15 May. 2013).

Childhood adversity is associated with an increased risk for the later development of PTSD. There is rapidly expanding literature documenting the long-lasting effects of early adverse experiences and persistent stress during childhood on the development of neurobiological systems. These experiences essentially program subsequent stress reactivity and vulnerability to develop PTSD (Sherin, Jonathan E, and Charles B Nemeroff. "Post-traumatic stress disorder: the neurobiological impact of psychological trauma." *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience* vol. 13,3 (2011): 263-78)

scarred. Additionally, his father abruptly dropped out of his life because of his incarceration for the offense. Once his father did return to the community, he was in and out of Nick's life. During periods Nick saw or lived with his father, the conditions were generally appalling -- the elder Languerand was almost always drunk, brusque and unaffectionate.<sup>8</sup> Nick's mother, meanwhile, was preoccupied with her other relationships, and later, her career.

Nick was forced to move and change schools' numerous times, mainly because his parents were unwilling or unable to spend the time and energy necessary to attend to his emotional and behavioral problems. His grandparents tried to help, but without authority to make decisions apropos to him, they were limited in what they could do. Nick's feelings of parental abandonment only became worse when, at 15 years of age, he was deceived by his mother and stepfather, and left at a reform school on the other side of the country. Nick was forced into a highly controlled environment operated by strangers, without warning and without recourse. Abruptly, he lost contact with all his friends and family for the nine months. Of course, the act of abandonment by his family was by itself traumatic for Nick, but it was made more distressing by the deplorable conditions at Cross Creek Academy. The facility was a haven for abuse and neglect. In fact, beginning in 2002, investigations of child abuse and unsanitary conditions were launched by several agencies, and during ensuing years, over 20 WWASP-affiliated facilities were closed. Eventually, the organization was dissolved. Multiple lawsuits have been filed against the corporation alleging abuse, fraud, sexual molestation, and racketeering (see Appendices G and H).

While Nick denied receiving harsh punishments at CCA, he acknowledged witnessing other students being physically disciplined by staff. He said he avoided much of the dreaded consequences to disobedience by being a stickler with facility rules.

Once Nick returned to Vermont in December 2012, he tried to reintegrate. His grandparents became his legal guardians so they could assist him in getting enrolled in a GED program. After receiving that certificate, as well as an official high school diploma, he began working. Still, his mother was living in New York and was not available, and his father was drinking heavily whenever he was not working.

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<sup>8</sup>A 2001 study by the U.S. Department of Education found that children from father-absent homes are more likely to drop out of school, suffer low self-esteem, abuse drugs, join gangs, and commit criminal activity. Michael K. Carlie, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Missouri State University wrote in his 2002 book, Into the Abyss, that low family involvement, low parental control, and poor relationships between parent and child contribute significantly to youths' decisions to join gangs. The primary attraction of gangs is their ability to respond to the child's needs that are not otherwise being met. They often provide youth with a sense of family and acceptance that is otherwise lacking in their lives. While Nick never joined a gang, the parental neglect and lack of a positive father figure led to feelings of abandonment and made him susceptible to groups that promised acceptance, kinship, and male bonds.

Nick stayed with his grandparents for a while before moving into a trailer. Over the next couple of years, he experienced intermittent isolation because of weather conditions and lack of transportation; and found himself drinking and using drugs once again. He decided he had to take a positive step for his future, so he joined the military. Unfortunately, he could not abstain from drug use and, after two years of service, was discharged for testing positive for cocaine.

Over the next two years, Nick floundered. While he worked regularly and began a relationship that remains intact today, he spent a lot of time alone, using alcohol and drugs. The occasional contact his mother maintained with him fell off to nothing, and while he saw his father regularly, the relationship continued to be erratic.

Nick has demonstrated a need for mental health treatment since childhood, and although he has had short stints in therapy, he has not been evaluated for specific psychiatric disorders, nor has he been prescribed psychotropic medications to alleviate symptoms of PTSD he has exhibited over years. These include depression, self-destructive behavior, impulsivity, distrust about the world, cynicism, hopelessness, a negative self-concept, isolation, and addiction.

### **Substance Abuse**

Surrounded by alcohol and drugs during his childhood, Nick inevitably began experimenting with substances at an early age. He was smoking marijuana recreationally with friends by the time he was 13 years old, and eventually developed a daily habit. He also began drinking alcohol during his early teenage years, and often drank to excess. By the age of 19, Nick was using cocaine and experimenting with prescription medications and hallucinogens. He took LSD and other similar drugs once or twice a month from 19 years of age until April 2021, when he was arrested in this case. His daily use of marijuana also continued until April of 2021.

After Nick incurred an arrest in Vermont in 2019 for driving under the influence of alcohol, he was accepted into a court diversion program. His pretrial monitor at the Lamoille Restorative Center in Hyde Park, was John Strout. Mr. Strout arranged for Nick to receive an assessment and referred him for six counseling sessions with LCSW Sean Ryan at Stowe Therapeutic Solutions. Mr. Ryan advised that Nick was limited with what he shared and attended sessions more to comply with the court than to gain insight into his addiction. He said that it was evident Nick was drug and alcohol dependent. Still, Nick was not referred for substance abuse treatment, and his case was successfully closed after the sessions with Mr. Ryan were completed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Nick Languerand is a young adult male who presents as bright, insightful, and contrite. Nevertheless, it is evident that he would benefit from a comprehensive psychological evaluation so that his mental health issues can be properly treatment with combined therapy and medication. Further, he needs extended substance abuse treatment and in this writer's opinion, would benefit from regular participation in a 12-step program for the fellowship and support for abstinence it would provide.

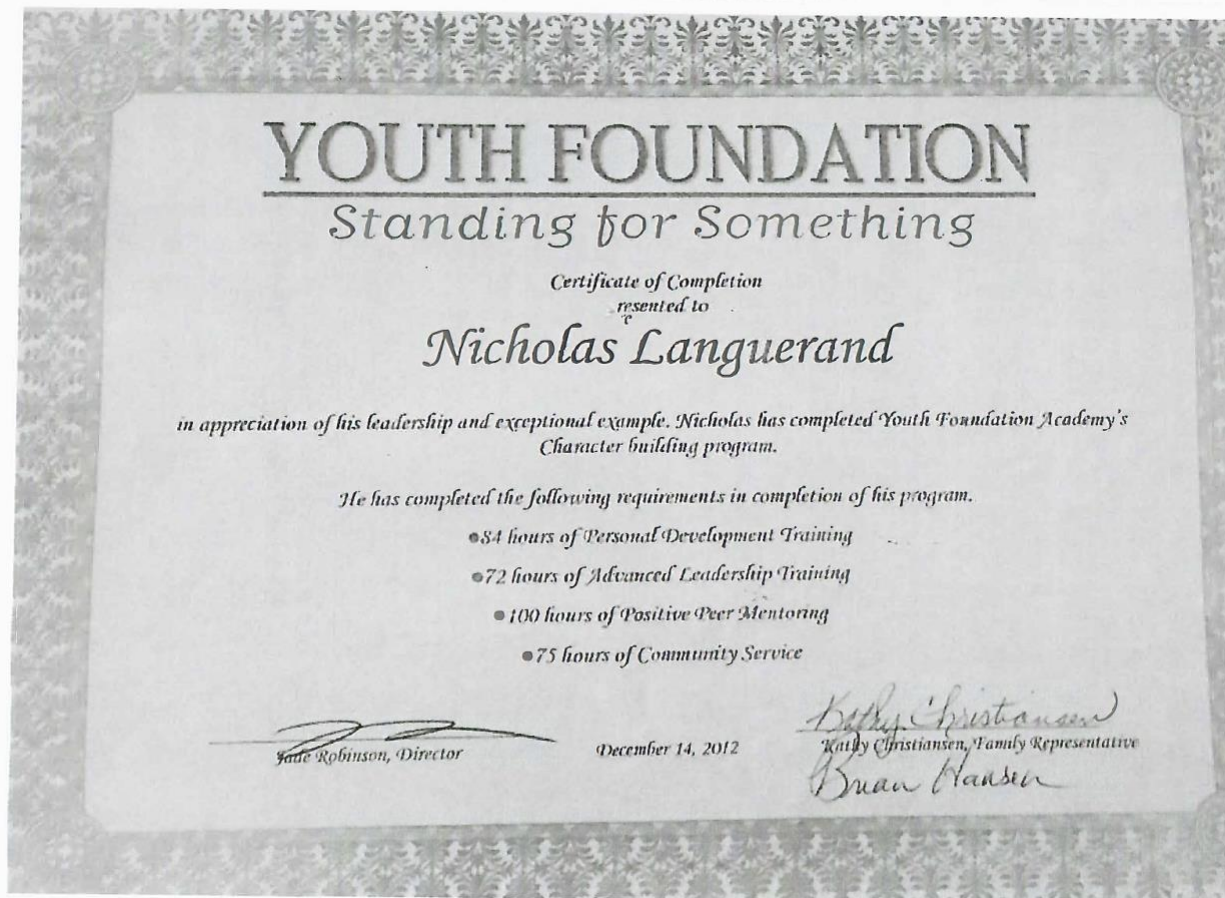
Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Nina S. Blanchard

Mitigation Specialist,  
Blanchard and Wall, LLC

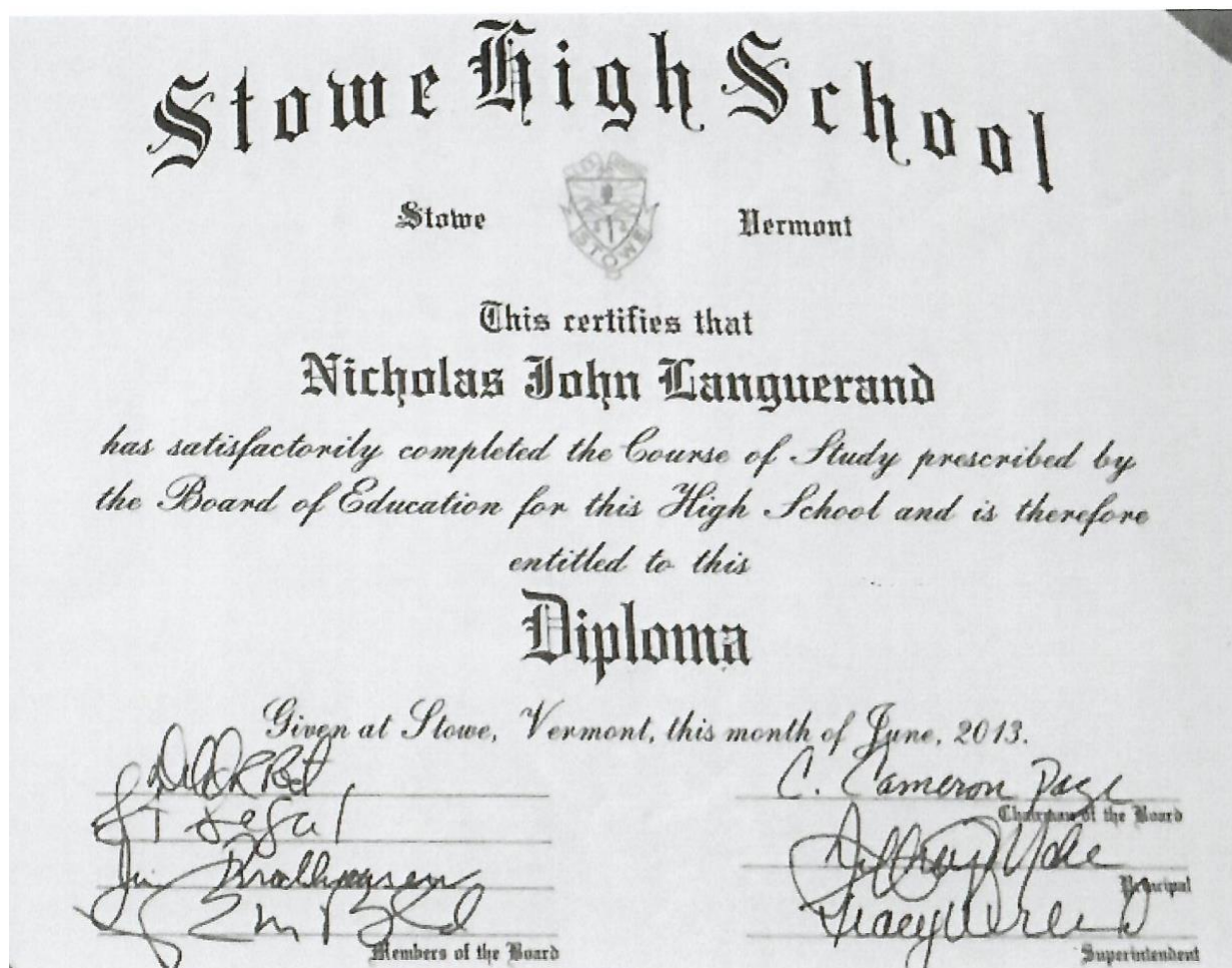
## APPENDIX A

### Youth Foundation Certificate of Completion



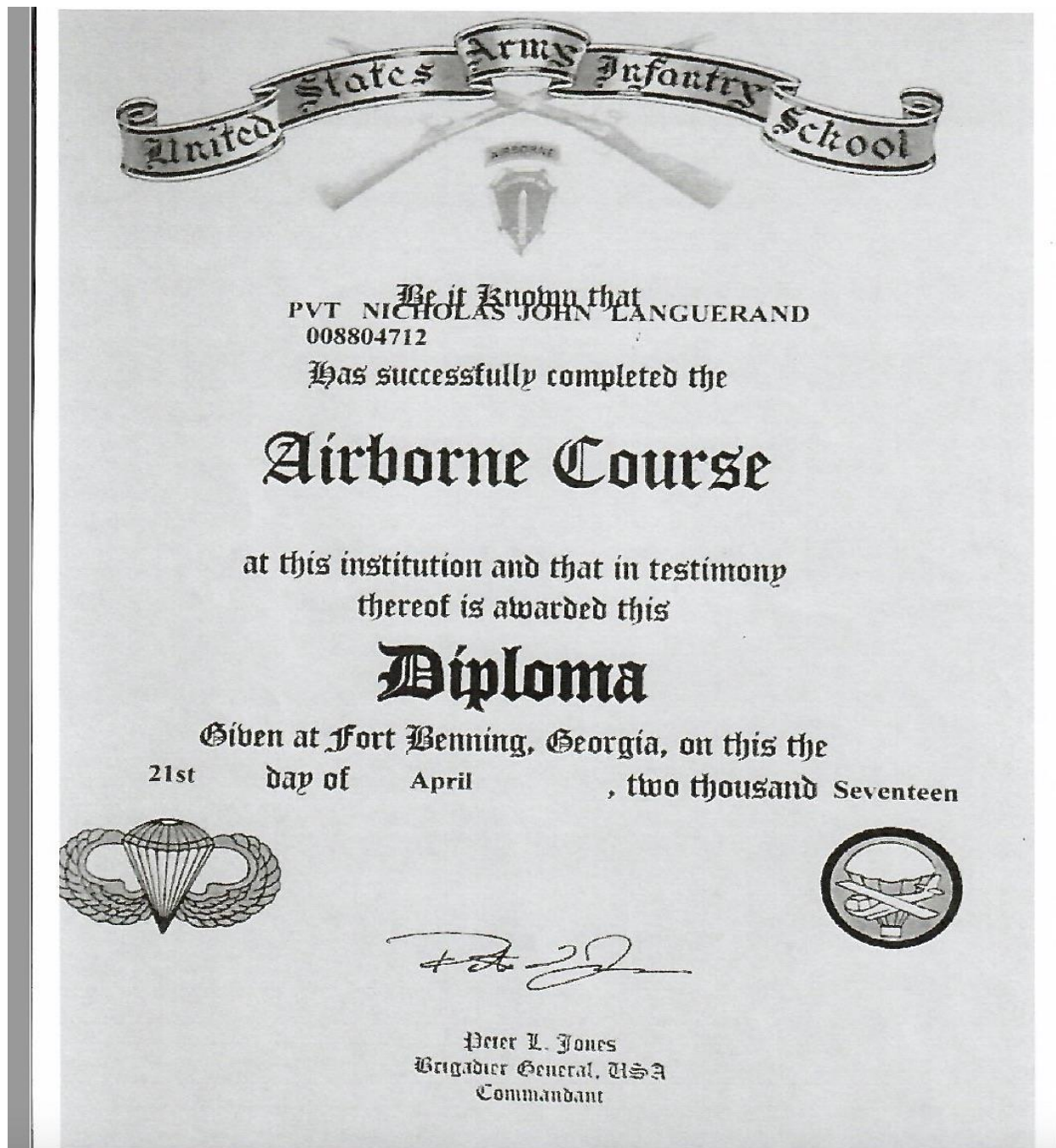
## APPENDIX B

## Stowe High School Diploma



## APPENDIX C

## U.S. Army Infantry School Airborne Course Diploma



## APPENDIX D

### Research on Long-Term Effects of Repeated Moves during Childhood

In its Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 98, No. 6 [2010], the American Psychological Association reviews a study conducted by University of Virginia Social Psychologist Shigehiro Oishi, of the long-term effects moving repeatedly during childhood has on people later in life. Entitled “Residential Mobility, Well-Being, and Mortality,” the study included 7,108 American adults. It tested the relation between the number of moves these individuals experienced in childhood and their well-being over a ten-year period.

Dr. Oishi noted, “We know that children who move frequently are more likely to perform poorly in school and have more behavioral problems, however, the long-term effects of moving on well-being in adulthood have been overlooked by researchers.” The participants, aged 20 to 75, were contacted as part of a nationally representative random sample survey in 1994 and 1995 and were surveyed again 10 years later. They were asked how many times they had moved as children, as well as about their psychological well-being, personality type and social relationships.

Dr. Oishi and others tried to determine if different personality types, such as extraverts, introverts, perfectionists, and neurotics (defined in this study as moody, high strung, and nervous) -- affected frequent movers’ well-being. Among introverts, the more moves participants reported as children, the worse off they were as adults. This contrasted to the findings among extraverts. Dr. Oishi pointed out that, “[m]oving a lot makes it difficult for people to maintain long-term close relationships,” and that while “[t]his might not be a serious problem for outgoing people, less outgoing people have a harder time making new friends.”

The findings showed neurotic people who moved frequently reported less life satisfaction and poorer psychological well-being than people who did not move as much and people who were not neurotic. They also reported fewer quality social relationships.

The research also looked at mortality rates among the participants and found that people who moved often as children were more likely to die before the second wave of the study. Dr. Oishi stated, “We can speculate that moving often creates more stress and stress has been shown to have an ill effect on people’s health,” but that “we need more research on this link before we can conclude that moving often in childhood can, in fact, be dangerous to your health in the long-term.”

## APPENDIX E

### QAnon and The Proud Boys

Groups such as QAnon claim to fight to protect western culture from extinction and protect white men who are losing their place in society. As described by Paul Elliott Johnson in “The Art of Masculine Victimhood: Donald Trump’s Demagoguery,” published in 2017 in the journal, *Women’s Studies in Communication* (Vol. 40 (3)), Iss. 3), the perceived social exclusion many conservative-leaning young people feel because of the country’s changing demographics as well as an increased rejection of traditional values, makes these individuals susceptible to recruitment. They feel a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Joseph M. Pierre, MD, is a clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and the Acting Chief of Mental Health Community Care Systems at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. In a September 2020 article published in *Psychology Today*, he explained the appeal of QAnon, noting that its many facets - conspiracy theory, religious cult, and alternative reality role playing game, capture a broad spectrum of people. It paints liberals and globalism as the “roots of all evil,” which appeals to conservative voters and politicians. It also suggests we are amid a “climactic and apocalyptic battle between good and evil,” which attracts many evangelical Christians. A newer lure has been the organization’s campaign to root out sex trafficking and child abuse. According to Dr. Pierre, once someone begins accepting any or all these ideologies, the psychological rewards of group affiliation and of being called to play a part in a larger narrative becomes hard to reject. Further, once people mistrust reliable information, they are vulnerable to propaganda and false information. This is especially true when the disinformation is reinforced by someone in a position of power and influence, and when it is consumed on the Internet via a daily barrage of reinforcing messages.

The organization, The Proud Boys, also has a purposeful message to pull in members. Using entertaining means, such as “memes,” it provides an outlet for male grievances that have arisen in reaction to a culture of feminism. Its portrayal of males as victims attracts many men who have faced romantic rejection or loss of a significant female figure. Members are encouraged to be hyper-masculine and to support rigid gender roles.

Provocation is a central component of the organization’s recruitment strategy. It comes across as “edgy” and “counter-culture.” Further, like QAnon, it suggests that western culture is under attack.



JOHN F.  
**CHAVES**  
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(843) 385 7045

10/7/21

Dear Judge Bates,

My Name is John F Chaves Jr, I am the President of Chaves Enterprises Inc of Conway, South Carolina. This letter represents a true and accurate account of my personal knowledge of Nicholas J Languerand both on a level of a business owner and a field worker that worked alongside Mr Languerand. On 1/19/21 Nicholas (Nick) was hired and worked doing both labor and operation of heavy equipment. His past experience working construction with his family in VT was apparent in his working skill set. Along with his service in the Army gave him a good working character. Nick always showed up on time and was eager to handle the daily work load. Nick never complained about working hard or handling tough tasks. Which in today's construction industry is hard to come by. I have taught Christian Faith Class in Ma and SC for 20 yrs and have frequently talked about the Christian faith. Nick had expressed being more outgoing and social in his faith. I have not known Nick to lie or be distrustful he has been a good employee and friend. Nick's position has not been filled and look forward to him returning to the workforce as a productive, responsible person to our company and the community. Thank You for your time in reviewing this letter. "Peace be with you "

Sincerely,

John F Chaves Jr

10/06/2021

Hello,

My name is Jonathan Chaves and I am writing on behalf of Nicholas Languerand. Nick has been incarcerated for a good part of the year 2021 and I wanted to share my experience with Nick in hopes to display a different perspective about Nick and his character as a person.

I met Nick through work early this year as my father hired him for our family business. In the first few days of Nick working with us, it was just him and I on the jobsite. It was clear he and I were going to work well together and he was going to be an asset to our team. Nick showed great effort and cared about the work he was doing. Aside from being a great worker, he quickly became one of my friends and grew to be someone I spent time with after work. My home life and work life are usually separate, yet even when I first met Nick, I invited him to my home. I could tell he was a genuine person and felt in no way uncomfortable by having him over my house. He was always a very mellow, happy person; whether it be on the jobsite or outside of work. Nick and I shared an interest in motocross and spent time at the motocross track watching the racing on the weekends. Nick quickly introduced me to his family, including his ex-wife and grandparents, in which we are still in contact to this day.

My hopes in writing this letter is to shed light on the fact that Nick is being portrayed as a person he is not. As stated earlier, Nick is a hardworking, genuine, family-oriented, kind person who in no way has been a threat to anyone around him. I truly believe Nick's character and reputation have been slandered though false accusations and exaggerated tales. Overall, I am willing to defend Nick, even though him and I have only known each other for a short amount of time. This speaks to how much of a positive impact Nick has made on my life and my family's business.

If you would like to speak further on this matter, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Chaves

843-957- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gmail.com

## APPENDIX G

### Worldwide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP)

As background, Robert Lichfield (Lichfield) and others, including relatives and friends with whom he previously worked at boarding schools for troubled teens, started their own specialty schools and related businesses in 1990s. In 1997, Lichfield formed Teen Help, LLC (Teen Help); National Contract Services, LLC (NCS); WWASP; and other entities. Teen Help handled admissions to specialty schools -- parents/guardians would contact Teen Help and staff would assist them in placing their child at one of their schools. The staff received a commission from the chosen school. NCS provided billing, collections, and other financial services for the schools in exchange for a percentage of each school's gross income. WWASP provided seminars, a magazine, a policy manual, and other services in exchange for a fee of \$75 per student per month from the schools. WWASP member schools were required to sign contracts with companies owned by Lichfield and his relatives.

WWASP had dozens of facilities in the United States and other countries, including Mexico, Jamaica, and Samoa. When first opened, Nick's school, Cross Creek Manor, had a supervisor (Cameron Pullan) with a high school education and prior work experience in plumbing. The residential manager (Chaffin Pullan, Cameron's brother) had previously worked as a handyman and waiter.

Over several years, WWASP became known as one of the largest troubled teen industry corporations; but following several investigations of child abuse and unhealthy conditions, over 20 WWASP-affiliated programs closed. Eventually the organization dissolved. Multiple lawsuits have been filed against the corporation alleging abuse and fraud, the most notable being a joint action lawsuit filed in September 2011 in Utah's 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Court on behalf of 350 former students.

Evidence presented during a 2010 wrongful death trial in the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Sanders County, Montana, disclosed elements of WWASP's basic program, including challenges students could take on to earn privileges, such as (a) student will carry a bucket of rocks every step taken for days to weeks, as determined by staff, (b) male student will dress as a female, and (c) student will jump blindfolded off a bridge into a pond during winter (*Newman v. Lichfield*, 364 Mont. 243, 272 P.3d 625, 2012 MT 47 (Mont. 2012)).

The widespread allegations of abuse spurred a federal investigation by the Government Accountability Office and Congressional hearings in October 2007 and April 2008 and resulted in the proposal of H.R. 5876 (Current version H.R. 3024) - Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act.

## APPENDIX H

### WWASP Survivors Testimonials

A website dedicated to those who attended WWASP programs, called WWASP Survivors ([www.wwaspsurvivors.com](http://www.wwaspsurvivors.com)), provides testimonials from many alumni who describe neglect and abuses. A random sample has been selected and incorporated herein:

#### **Cross Creek Manor Survivor Statement – Angelique (with responses)**

“In May of 1993 I was sent to a girls home called Cross Creek Manor (CCM) in southern Utah where I lived for four and a half months. This facility is owned and operated by a notorious umbrella organization called Worldwide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP). While attending I was physically attacked, suffocated, tormented, and put in isolation on a regular basis for three-day periods at a time.

I was denied all access to communicate with the outside. Once a staff member (while invading my privacy) told me I wipe the wrong way after using the toilet. In addition, I was put on unprescribed and inappropriate medication that created physical side-effects, essentially, I was drugged.

I was kept in isolation on and off during my stay, including my final day, right up until being transferred into the college dorms at Seattle Pacific U (a Bible college I had been pre-accepted to prior to my incarceration). I had no contact with the outside world prior to this other than brief visits at a “hospital” called Brightway.

Brightway was more of a packaging center, than a hospital. It was a detainment center, but also the UPS for the herds of lost (or rather abandoned) children, a branding center for human cattle that decided who went where. They apparently mixed up so many “packages” and caused so much damage, they had to close; however, there are plenty of other places like it still operating.

I mention my attendance at a Bible college because the youth at Cross Creek Manor (CCM) were meant to feel like they were criminals or that they were somehow mentally disturbed, and I certainly was not; nonetheless, that’s how we were treated during our incarceration. The primary difference between prison and residential centers today is that prisoners are allowed a lawyer and a phone call.

While attending I was deprived of an education, lied to, and my mail was confiscated. I was denied appropriate exercise, sanitary conditions, and emotional/medical attention. I also slept on a floor in the isolation room where I peed to avoid staff monitoring me in the bathroom and making sick remarks.

Originally, back in California, I was told I was going to an in-state, nature focused boarding school to obtain emotional support in response to childhood abuse, something that had been obfuscated from some time.

I had two months left of high school and couldn't finish because I was sent to a Charter Hospital for a month after having a breakdown. While attending Charter I found myself near my community in a safe therapeutic environment that offered virtually everything I needed except for a longer stay and a regular therapist that I knew well enough to confide in. They had many other specialists, therapists, and diverse forms of expressive therapy that were wonderful. I was willing to do anything to overcome what was setting me back.

Cross Creek promised to offer a high school diploma. Had the truth of their dubious unaccredited "diplomas" been revealed I might not have missed out on graduating from Catholic school.

When I got to Cross Creek what I found was that I was out of state, in Utah in a basement across the street from a cemetery. From the beginning I found myself forced into writing essays about how I was "bad" that took several hours to complete per essay. The first one was about being a liar because I showered at the wrong time (having not been informed there was a shower schedule). That incident landed me a three-day stay in isolation, a room with white walls not much larger than a twin bed.

After that I wrote a letter to friends asking them to come and get me even though I had no real idea where I was (we traveled through the night). That was a turning point for the worse, and staff repeatedly put me in isolation. One time I sat down on the bed and the frame gave way, they added three more days to my solitary confinement. I speculate the bed was already broken because the other isolation room had no bed. Despite the innocent nature of the incident, it was termed "destruction of property" and "malicious mischief." As for the cause of the latter accusation, I had to put the bed upright so I could find enough space to sleep on the floor. Both resulted in essays and more isolation.

Some girls seemed sympathetic knowing of the length of time I was spending in there and others used it as leverage to advance in the program. Many ganged up, telling me I just wasn't working with the program. This occurred in my first group therapy session which I was quite excited about attending having just come out of isolation, but I soon learned "group therapy" for the most part was simply attack therapy.

Attack therapy involves people confronting each other in a verbally abusive way. I am yet to learn of any studies that demonstrate that it is therapeutic or helpful in any way. An example of attack therapy is telling a rape victim that the abuse was her fault, suggesting that she is a slut and that the rape was simply a reaction to her style of dress or emotional state.

Girls living in the basement with me who had less privileges than the others and little to lose began to demonstrate sympathy towards me verbally and almost unanimously towards the abuse I was being subjected to. I don't know if staff felt intimidated by this, but either way it just became a game for them to use me as an example. Maybe they feared an uprising.

The worst incident I experienced in Utah began was when I was put face-first against a wall for over ten hours and then told to stand on my tiptoes to reach a dot taped to the wall with my nose. The verbal taunting, enjoyment of this staff member, and the aggravation of not being able to do anything but stare at a wall led me to turn the corner and there I had two men that grabbed me and threw me in the isolation room again. This time they jumped me, put me in painful police like lock position with my arms behind my back while they bashed my head into the floor causing significant and a large visible facial laceration.

They then proceeded to sit on me to so I couldn't breathe and after gasping several times for air and pleading for my life, I became speechless. I was certain they would kill me, and they could get away with it. No one would have known about it because they were able to do all this other abuse, why wouldn't they get away with killing me? There was no one there to stop them, and maybe no one cared. It wasn't like I received any mail except a postcard from Bali at the time and a letter from my future college roommate that I couldn't respond to.

So, as I became asphyxiated and unable to save myself, the young staff member they had put in charge of me to make sure I didn't try to leave looked completely shocked, and it was perhaps that look of shock that saved my life. Not all kids are that fortunate. About a dozen kids die every year in programs from abuse or torture like compression suffocation.

When I came out of isolation my face would twitch oddly, not like an eye twitch, but a full muscle spasm. It continued so much that I became worried that people would see and think I was weird. I also frequently lost control of my bladder; unfortunately, we had to ask permission to use the bathroom and only use it at designated times. Since some of the staff was annoyed, we needed to use the restrooms they started to limit the amount of water we could drink.

Later I read an account by a parent saying her daughter was given Haldol, a medication given to people with schizophrenia, which wasn't prescribed to her. I looked up the medication to see if there were any side effects such as facial twitching, and sure enough this was one of the major side effects. A girl with schizophrenia, named Emily, had left the program not much earlier than when I got there. She later committed suicide after being subjected to more frequent, but similar types of abuse including sexual abuse.

In my case, the Haldol could easily have been slipped into food before I received it in isolation. The side effects would explain my difficulty focusing and facial twitches. When Emily was part of the program her and another friend were woken up frequently in the middle of the night. It's something that occurred in other WWASPS programs in order to sleep deprive and break the subject into submission.

A highlight of WWASPS programs is behavior modification. For parents who don't really know what that means, it sounds great; however, if they had done more research about what was really involved and the results of such experimentation, I suspect many parents may not have signed their kids up. As a result of various abuses many kids have suffered from borderline personality disorder and PTSD. In the worst cases some kids are disabled for life and there have been suicides.

There are still staff currently at CCM that were employed when I attended. One, employed shortly before my departure seemed neither harmful nor helpful, but complacent. The other, the manager, sent my mom away when she came to investigate why my school packets never arrived. It so happened that her visit was the same day I received serious lacerations to my face, she was told that visiting me would interrupt the process. The manager, and many employees were talented at manipulating people, often through emotion, especially guilt.

Keeping this story short has been trying and forcing myself not to live these things over and over has proven vexing. I've realized I was suffering most of the symptoms of post trauma and have since overcome my fear of therapists

and received several years of ongoing therapy. I've been active in advocating for community issues and have found CAFETY, the Community Alliance for the Ethical Treatment of Youth, a resource of inspiration."

Response 1 - Christa Adkins on August 12, 2015 at 11:04 am

"I was in cross in CCM, sometime in 1992 or 1993, as well. As I read your account, memories came flooding back--the nightmare. I spent most of my time in the basement, as well. I was in isolation many times and told that I wipe wrong. Most of it I have shut out. I finally worked my way up in levels, went on an outing, and ran away. It was the single worst experience of my life. Glad to see you hear sharing your experience and speaking out about the truth!"

Response 2 - Elizabeth Dane on March 26, 2018 at 7:49 pm

"Hello ladies, i too eas at Cross Creek from 92 to 93. I was 12 yrs old, the youngest girl there. I remember a few things but i too have blocked most of it out. I remember being so desperate to get help for all of us, i wrote a letter to another girls parents who were pucking her up, i dropped it over tge upstairs rail looking over the fountain

One of the staff saw and picked it up. I was immediately dragged to the basement and thrown into solitary. What a joke. I remember a staff member always brought me a butterfinger when he worked and would watch me change all the time...gosh...so many things. When i got out after a year j met up with a girl there. We were besties through high school. Both of us suffering from depression...she ended up committing suicide about 7 yrs ago....i suffer from depression anxiety and PTSD. Id love to hear from anybody else there during that time. I have forgotten names but i remember Patti and Tina."

Response 3 - Amelie on June 14, 2018 at 3:46 am

"Your name and the reference to Seattle Pacific triggered a memory I'd long forgotten. If I'm not mistaken, I was there when this happened to you. I saw a rather spirited young woman held on the floor, contained, and put in isolation. I was new, in the basement (of course), and was told that it was a repeat pattern and that you were one of the "problem students". I remember being instructed that if I didn't follow the system, that the same would happen to me. I applaud your courage for fighting back then, and for speaking up now. 25 years, and I'm just coming to the realization that I did not deserve to be shipped to a lock down. None of us deserved what happened there."

Response 4 - Kerry Burns on April 27, 2020 at 5:42 am

"I was sent to this nightmare facility in the early 90's. I still have nightmares about it. The basement is real, the "House Parents" (mormon couples that were married) slept on mattresses at night and blocked the doors. I remember the 500 word essays I had to write, I remember isolation, I remember the different "Phases". Phase 3 was the bottom of the bucket. You just kept your mouth shut and played the game, hoping you would advance to a "Phase" that moved you out of the basement and into the actual house. This place was horrible and I was there when Karr was there, he is a horrible human. I was told if I didn't change my attitude I would end up in the cemetery across the street. "Mowing the lawn" consisted of us getting on our hands and knees and actually pulling the grass out without hands. But the girls in the higher "phases" that lived in the house were treated a little better. But they only treated them better so they would smile and act happy when parents would come take a tour. They made it seem like summer camp. That place is probably the biggest reason I went to Paralegal school and now law school, I want to stop places like that. It's not "therapy", it's brainwashing to make you feel worthless. I could go on and on, but I'm sure you get the picture by now. CCM reminds me of human trafficking, minus the sex, but same torture. Your just money, your not a person to those people. When I left there and went home, I told my dad "you send me back there, I'll hang myself the in the shower!" That's coming from a girl that is not suicidal, just a girl that was having a hard time cause her mom died in a plane crash and actually needed someone she could cry to. CCM didn't help me, they just taught me to cry quietly, which I still do today!"

Response 5 - Kristen Susemihl on December 6, 2020 at 9:23 am

"I'm sorry (not really), but this is absolute BS. Yes, it was tough as f\*\*\* at first, but if you actually worked the program instead of fighting it, you would be in a very different place. I'm sickened by these articles. I knew girls who would do news interviews when their parents visited and took them off site and agreed to the interviews. Several girls bragged about the BS they made up so they could convince their parents to remove them. Two of them died after they left. One from suicide and one from an overdose. I was there from early 1996 to 1998 (I finished the program after I turned 18) and I can't imagine where I would be if I didn't get the help I desperately needed. And no, I was not brainwashed.... I hope more people who had the same experience that I had come forward. This is sickening."

**Survivor Testimony – Cross Creek Manor – La Verkin, Utah 2007  
By Xandir O’Cando**

“On May 10th of 2007 at around 2:30 in the morning two strangers barged into my bedroom. I started screaming and crying, as in my mind I was sure that these two strangers had broken into my house and were going to abduct me, rape me, kill me, or in some way harm me. They immediately told me that if I did not shut up that they would handcuff me. I was not being in any way violent or threatening. I was reacting in fear for my life by being vocal and hoping that someone would come to help. I had no idea what was going on. I stopped screaming, still in fear for my life. They started going through my closet digging out clothes as I was only in a night gown. They still had not explained what was going on. I asked, frightened, what they wanted from me, trying to see if I could in some way appease them and get them to leave. They then explained that they were going to take me to a school. It took me a second to understand what they meant by this, as this was an extremely bizarre way to introduce a child to a new school. It then occurred to me that this was what my mother had arranged for my brother several years ago when she had him shipped away to Cross Creek. The two strangers were from Teen Escort Service, a for-profit company that transports teenagers, usually by force, to WWASP (Worldwide Association of Specialty Programs) facilities.

I was extremely upset and cried the entire trip, but I obeyed all of their orders. Even though I was being cooperative they said it was their policy to put a belt around the bust of the child and hold the belt so that there would be no chance of attempting to run. It was so humiliating to be led around like a fucking dog around the airport. It was also extremely uncomfortable to have this strange older male putting his hand so close to my breast. I never understood how any of this was legal but definitely knew that none of it was ethical. To this day I feel extremely angered, disturbed, and violated by this entire experience. In addition to this they “forgot” all of the psychiatric medication I had been on at my house. It’s not that I am for psychiatric meds, but it certainly did not feel healthy or normal to go from taking this medication regularly, to just not having it and stopping without tapering off of it.

From the moment I arrived at Cross Creek, I was treated as though I was broken, dirty, and inhuman. During my stay I saw many others treated this way. I had never spoken to R., the program director, before and my first experience with him was horrible. He asked me why I was there, and I told him all of the things I’d done that I could think of that could possibly be perceived as “bad”. He yelled at me, saying that I was lying and that I didn’t love or care about my parents. I was shocked and confused, unsure of what I had done to deserve this treatment from someone I had just met. To this day,

the only thing I can think of that I possibly could have left out was my attraction to other females. In one of the Parent-Child seminars we were made to attend, my mother shared with me that this was one of the biggest “issues” that caused her to send me to Cross Creek. Not the drugs, not the sex (she told me she had no knowledge of me being sexually active prior to being forced to disclose it to her), not the issues with school, but just the fact that there was a possibility that one day I might fall in love with a female. Sorry for not realizing what a horrible, broken child this made me, R.

Shortly after I arrived, my “HOPE buddy” (the student they assign to “mentor” you and teach you the rules in your first few weeks) started asking me about my past, why I was there, and what issues I needed to work on. I talked briefly about my experimentation with soft drugs, my issues with depression (something I’m pretty sure most teenagers experience), and the abusive relationship I had been in with my first girlfriend. As soon as I said the words “girl” and “relationship” in the same sentence she said “STOP! STOP! We can’t talk about that.” I was filled with shame regarding my sexuality simply from the fact that I was not even allowed to talk about homosexuality in any way shape or form. Shortly after this incident I started talking to the therapist they assigned me to there about this abusive relationship I had experienced, and how it bothered me that I was not allowed to talk about a part of me that I have no control over. His response was that I DID have a choice over whether I was attracted to females and that I should just deal with these thoughts of same sex attraction. His opinion was that this was probably a result of some anger I had toward men, particularly my dad and that I probably just wanted to be with females because they were “safer” (even though I had been with an abusive female before!!!) He also said that ultimately this was probably just a phase and a result of my crazy teenage hormones. He believed that if I tried hard enough and ignored these thoughts and feelings one day I might marry a nice boy.

I had no interest in having a relationship with anyone there, but when other girls formed relationships with each other, the repercussions were pretty extreme. I understood why it was not allowed, as relationships are generally distracting no matter the gender of either partner, but the way people were treated was pretty unnecessary in my opinion. It usually involved lots of yelling, ostracizing, and shaming. I remember one R. meeting where two girls were being confronted about this and R. was yelling about how stupid they were being and how no one would be able to trust them now. He went on to say that he had “nothing against homosexuality, but it was not the way God intended things.” and that the Bible did not condone it. These “God” and bible references were used on a regular basis, along with religious videos, praying, etc. even though Cross Creek claimed that they were not in any way religious. The rule book and protocol also appeared to be directly based off the Mormon

religion (no caffeine etc.) The program reprimanded children for telling their parents about this religious influence and regularly tried to hide it from parents. I am in no way against people having their own beliefs and following whatever religion is right for them, however I think that it's completely and totally immoral to lie to parents about what they are getting. More on this later.

The queer shaming was present in nearly every aspect of the program, including the language used. We were not allowed to use curse words such as "shit", or "bitch", but I never saw anyone reprimanded for saying "fag" or "faggot." This fostered an environment in which teasing and bullying for all sorts of things were fully tolerated. I even remember a facilitator in a seminar trying to trigger a girl by calling her a "dyke." And no, before you say something, I really don't care about breaking confidentiality of seminars at this point because I am fed up. What these people said and did broke me down and created so much shame inside of me.

In addition to shaming people on basis of sexual orientation, they taught children that sex was evil and damaging outside of marriage, another blatantly religious notion. We were forced to regularly watch videos involving horror stories of abortions gone wrong, shown gruesome pictures of STDs that had been left unattended for long periods of time, and told that if we had sex before marriage we would likely die or get some horrible ailment. Rather than promoting safer sex methods, we were shown that abstinence was the only option that would not result in death or unwanted pregnancy.

Rigid gender roles were also a big part of the Cross Creek way of life. Many of the rules were extremely gender based. Boys were allowed to crack their backs and knuckles, though girls were not because it was "unladylike". Boys got meal portions double the size of girls. Boys were allowed to use more curse words than girls were. The list goes on.

I remember when they moved the girls from Center 1 to Pro 1 (these are all names of the dorms we stayed in.) The boys had been living in Pro 1, and when they moved the girls in the dorms were extremely messy. Rather than having the boys come back and clean up this mess, they made the girls clean all day. This was completely, and totally humiliating. What a great way to build confidence and teach girls how to be independent and stand up for themselves.

Before I say this next part, I want to state that it is not my intention to bash all of the staff at Cross Creek. Some of the staff were very supportive (A.D., M.C., etc.) and this is not in any way meant to be directed at you, nor is it a blanket statement. There were staff however, that made me feel very unsafe

and uncomfortable. Some of the staff, in my opinion, were downright cruel, hurtful and borderline (if not blatantly) abusive. I can't tell you how many times I saw staff make comments about myself or others insinuating that we were bad children, unclean, impure, dirty, not innocent, untrustable, the list goes on. The grievance system that was in place was, in my opinion, ineffective on the whole. From being a part of the student government system for some time that handled grievances, I observed that grievance system, like everything else at Cross Creek, put the blame on the student and diverted responsibility away from the adult.

I'd also like to mention how many times I saw staff and administration, tackle and restrain children when it was completely unnecessary. So many times, I saw kids simply refuse to go to gym class or get out of bed and as punishment they were violently tackled, restrained in a painful position, and taken to a small isolation room where they were usually watched by two or three staff members. This was also what they did when a child harmed themselves. This method is extremely violent, and I remember at least one incident that happened when I was there where they tackled a girl and restrained her face down against the ground and as a result, she got rug burn on her face to the point that she was bleeding and had visible scabs on her face. Another time a girl shared that being tackled and restrained gave her flashbacks of a rape she'd experienced, to which the program director responded that he felt no remorse for it and that it was really her fault for doing whatever she'd done to be restrained. You could argue that this might be appropriate in cases where a kid is being violent towards others, but from what I saw, more often than not, this was absolutely not the case and the child being restrained was not being violent. In addition to tackling and restraint being (in my humble opinion) immoral, it is unsafe, and this has been proven. If you look on the website for the Coalition Against Institutionalized Child Abuse, (Organization under reorganizing) You can see a long list of deaths that have occurred in "behavioral modification" facilities not unlike Cross Creek as a result of tackling and restraint: Holy the Children Memorial; also, GAO Report: Concerns Regarding Abuse and Death in Certain Programs for Troubled Youth.

Cross Creek's methods of "therapy" and recovery were also extremely invasive, humiliating, and in my opinion did much more harm than good. As someone who does intern work at a local rape treatment center and talks with victims of assault on a regular basis, as well as being someone who has survived various forms of violence and abuse, I have seen how damaging it can be to force someone to share about such delicate issues before they are fully prepared and ready. I cannot speak for everyone, but for me, being forced to disclose information that was not ready to come out was extremely painful and humiliating. The seminars based your success on how "emotional" you

were, meaning that if you did not share some horrible part of your life or simply did not have one, or if you were not crying and sniveling while you did it, you were booted out of the seminar and forced to stay in the program another two months. The obsession the program had with “accountability” also led to them blaming people who had experienced abuse for their abusive situations. I vividly remember a facilitator yelling at a girl while kicking her out of a seminar for not participating or being “real” enough. She told her in an extremely vivid and foul language (the f-bomb included) that if she continued the behavior that got her to the program she would be raped again. She had the student write an essay on this.

I will forever be haunted by the day that I was in group and the program director barged in and started saying that it’s as if I have “ABUSE ME” written on my forehead, insinuating that I was just asking to be abused in some way by the way that I carried and presented myself. I carry so much shame from this comment, and because of it constantly have to remind myself not to blame myself for the abuse I have experienced.

The way that Cross Creek taught me to interact with people was to analyze every facial expression, action, and word, and reflect this back to them in a cold, harsh, and usually demeaning way. I feel so much remorse for the way I treated people at Cross Creek, as well as the way I allowed people to treat me. It took me a while after I graduated to discover that this method did not work at all in the real world, and that if I was to have any friends, I would need to drop the robotic, unempathetic, and borderline malicious way of interacting with others that I had learned to use for two and a half years. I’d like to sincerely apologize to those of you who spent time with me at Cross Creek that I treated this way. I feel nothing but sadness when I realize how heartless and programmed I became.

What disturbs me more than anything is that I believed all of the things I was told. When people use the word “brainwashing” to describe what went on at Cross Creek and other WWASP programs, I don’t think it is in any way exaggerating or being over dramatic when you consider all of the media we were FORCED to watch, read, and listen to. The program director used to joke about and downplay the brainwashing claims by saying that some of our brains “could really use some washing.” The “educational/emotional growth” videos we had to watch twice a day, the “motivational” tapes three times a day, the “self-help” books we were forced to read, and more than anything the “motivational seminars” with facilitators up in your face yelling about all the things you did wrong to mess up your life and land yourself in a program all contributed to this. With all of this influence coming at me from every direction at every moment I believed that following the rules, “working my program”, going to the seminars, etc. was genuinely going to improve my self-

esteem, my relationship with my parents, and the overall outcome of my life. I tried hard to follow the endless list of rules, be “accountable”, and when I got “dirty in my program” (another good example of shaming lingo and language that means you broke rules without giving yourself demerits) I would confess and take the consequences whatever consequences were involved.

I by no means had a perfect program, but I gave it all of my honest effort and did what I could to be a good Cross Creek student. By putting faith in this system however, I also internalized all of the stigma, shame, and religious beliefs forced upon me. I believed that maybe if I just suppressed my sexuality, as well as ignored my obvious attraction to girls, that maybe all of this would go away. My body and subconscious reacted to this. Shortly after arriving at Cross Creek, I stopped getting my period for about 8 months. This was apparently a common thing that happened in the program when girls first arrived, as the body was reacting to some serious stress. I also started wetting the bed shortly after arriving at the program. This had not been an issue for me since the age of 3 or 4. This bed wetting issue continued until I left the program. After I graduated, it stopped completely.

The program director and other administration on several occasions acknowledged that Tranquility Bay, another WWASP program that has now much to my relief been shut down, did indeed have an infamous history of reported abuse. He used this to say that we were so very “fortunate” to be in Cross Creek and not at programs like that. Yet kids who were “acting out too much” at Cross Creek were sent to Tranquility Bay as punishment. Some have said that Tranquility Bay was merely a “last resort” or that the things that happened at TB were just a “part of Jamaican culture” but I would have to strongly disagree about both of those things. Since when is abuse ever an appropriate option? It isn’t. No matter what someone has done, it’s not okay. It is also extremely racist and ethnocentric to say that abuse is just a part of the culture of Jamaica, especially when you look at American society, which I could very well say the same thing about.

Shortly after I left the program I was raped. I shared what happened with my mother, who then told me, like Cross Creek did, that it was my fault, I asked for it, and that I should have known it would happen. She then proceeded to share her own twisted version of the story with my Cross Creek therapist, who shared it with my group. I was mortified and my self-esteem was completely destroyed by this utter lack of confidentiality and complete betrayal of trust.

It has taken me so much time to recover and de-program myself from all of the lies I was fed at Cross Creek. It took me a while to realize just how badly and inappropriately I and others had been treated at this facility. It's not to say that there were not a few small kernels of wisdom that I can still use from the program, but they came at such a huge cost. My soul feels wounded from the things I saw and experienced at Cross Creek and healing will be a continual process.

If there was one thing that I gained from my experience at Cross Creek, it was realizing that no one regardless of their past or current actions deserves to be treated the way this program and other WWASP facilities treated me and so many other students. Abuse is abuse, no matter how you slice it. This realization along with other life experiences is partially responsible for my current career path regarding abuse prevention and recovery, as well as my involvement and activism in the human rights movement.

Even if you choose not to believe me or anything that I have written, there are piles of evidence to support the idea that there is mistreatment at Cross Creek and other WWASP affiliated facilities. A little bit of research will reveal that this lawsuit is not the first that WWASP or Cross Creek has faced. My therapist used to use a phrase when he suspected that kids were "dirty in their program." He used to say "Where there's smoke, there's fire..." That is certainly the case with WWASP and Cross Creek. There is a reason that the Coalition Against Institutionalized Child Abuse, Community Alliance for The Ethical Treatment of Youth, and many other organizations like them exist. There is a reason why seventeen WWASP affiliated schools have been shut down. There is a reason there have been so many lawsuits. Clearly if all of this has happened, I must not be completely insane.

The rebuttal against this argument has included that Cross Creek is no longer a part of WWASP. This argument is pretty much void seeing as they are still directly affiliated in that all of the WWASP affiliated programs still use the same seminars as each other, the same escort service, the same billing company, and are all still a part of Teen Help LLC, the marketing arm of WWASP and the entity that processes admissions paperwork. They also refer to each other and send children to other WWASP affiliated facilities when one facility can't handle them. I don't think it would be at all presumptuous to conclude that the people who ran WWASP are the same people who are still raking in all of the money with these programs.

WWASP officials claim that the organization itself is out of business, probably because of their infamous history of abuse, but clearly all of the WWASP programs are still affiliated and WWASP has not completely faded out. Many schools have changed their names multiple times, including Cross Creek

(formerly Browning Academy) and it's clear to me that there is a lot of shadiness and hiding goes on with in these programs. It seems as though WWASP and its affiliates are trying to sweep some things under the rug, and outright lie to parents, students, former students, and the general public.

Here's a bit about the history of WWASP and Cross Creek. WWASP was founded by Robert Browning Lichfield. He started Browning Academy, now Cross Creek, the first WWASP affiliated school in 1987, at a time when he had little money and was living in a small apartment with his wife and four children. His field of study was in business (he attained absolutely no credentials or education in psychology, therapy, or education) though he never graduated college and within several years he had become a very rich individual and had added many more schools to his chain of "behavior modification"/tough love" schools. He was indeed mormon and has, in several interviews stated that God was his inspiration in starting these schools and one of his goals was to "get kids in touch with their higher source." He is also a major contributor to the Republican party, donating thousands of dollars each year <http://www.city-data.com/elec2/elec-LA-VERKIN-UT.html>. From what I've read his massive sum of money and big political influence have gotten him and his colleagues out of the situations in which he and his criminal organization have been questioned. But please, do not take my word for it. Do your own research. This information is readily available to those who are willing to look."

Response 1 - Jeff on August 20, 2015 at 2:15 am

"To make this clear I was on the boy's side. We also were not allowed to crack our knuckles and we were also not allowed to curse. I never heard anyone say fag or Faggot. Everyone got equal portions we were just allowed to have seconds if it was available."

Response 2 - James Patrick Weber on April 28, 2017 at 9:45 pm

"I was at Tranquility Bay in Jamaica and after the first day, the case worker, Joan Davis, had me beaten, tortured, starved, and regularly water-boarded/ half drowned for over a month before I was even given the chance to change my initial statement about "being open to loving someone, regardless of their gender", in response to the flat question in front of all the boys in my group "Are you gay?". I had to repeatedly say with believable confidence that "being gay is SICK AND WRONG", and that I had chosen not to be once I was finally dragged out of confinement laying on my face all day, every day... The horrors I witnessed, the murders and deaths, the girl who killed herself in front of me, the gay man they were burning alive in the street outside the gates.... the

months of forced silence and brainwashing.... no words can express the evils and horrors done to me by the staff, a bunch of ignorant Jamaicans from the hills... and then after 14 months they caught a love note from another boy before I could receive it. At that point even my vindictive case worker, Joan Davis, had the sense to tell my parents I was in danger, there was a plot by the staff to kill me, and to take me home... my parents waited and both of my siblings, my older brother and baby sister, died in a horrific auto accident... that's when they decided I should be sent home.... i made level 5 that day, their perfect soldier ready to rat anyone out to raise my status.... I still have nightmares and flashbacks to this day, and a rage is inside me that the gentle sweet 15 y/o that was dragged out of his bed in handcuffs within 24 hours of coming out of the closet never had. It's all I can do to cope, and my parents are still in denial."

Response 3 - Asia on September 23, 2017 at 2:27 am

"James, your story is horrific and my heart breaks for you. No parent should have ever sent their child to a place like this, and no adult should ever ever ever hurt a child like this. I hope you heal; I hope you have good people around you now, and that something changes so that these disgusting places stop traumatizing kids."

Response 4 - Zachary Bruno on July 3, 2018 at 8:05 pm

"I'm sorry to hear that I was at cross creek academy on the boys side as well, my therapist was there, I was out on staff buddy and made to wear orange shirts walk in a line and when my parents came to visit they saw a staff member mike twist my arm behind my back and push my head against the wall I was 14 my parents said nope. I took me out of there after a year. I was so happy to be home. I'm 28 now and wish I could run into the scumbags."

## **Lyndsay's Story**

### **Cross Creek Manor & Tranquility B**

"1) I spent 14 months at Cross Creek Manor (WWASP) in Utah, and an additional 18 months in Tranquility Bay, in Jamaica. I was at Cross Creek when there was a violent incident between two girls... a girl, level 5, 15, named April, stabbed another girl, Karen, a level 6, 16... with a 6 - inch steak knife. Karen suffered a punctured lung and was hospitalized. There was widespread fear throughout the facility that copycats would follow. Also during my stay there, self-mutilation was a very popular trend. Every day

there were girls in Isolation for cutting themselves or attempting suicide. During my entire 14 months there, this trend was ignored and treated as if it were nothing. Once I was in class and a girl began crying, and broke her pen and started to dig the broken plastic into her arm. Another girl reported this to the teacher to which she replied, "Get on task". No measures were taken to ensure the girls safety and nothing was done until she dripped blood on the floor and smeared it on the desk. She was taken to isolation, but only after she cleaned up her mess upon the insistence of the staff. The Nurse told the girl that since she had done this to herself she would be denied medical attention. No bandages, and there nothing was used to clean the gauges in her skin.

2) I came to Tranquility Bay on July 17th 2000. Before that I had been at Cross Creek Manor in Utah for 14 months. When I saw the blatant disrespect the staff showed the students and me, I was shocked. It literally took me several days to understand it. They lacked entirely a sense of compassion and shouted orders at the students and I. I observed that a failure to comply was treated with brutal restraint. After a weeks stay there I was sent to staff watch and restrained several times for such things as not asking permission to talk, taking too long in the restroom, and making religious statements contrary to the staff's personal beliefs. One of the staff, upon my questioning, admitted that she loved to restrain students. Also a staff told me that she beat her children when the misbehaved, and that physically hurting a child was the "best way to teach them".

3) In August of 2000, I was in staff watch with several other students, and we were having breakfast in the study hall room. I remember having a conversation about what we would do if we were "free"... at this point a male staff walked in. he got behind me, grabbed both of my wrists and slammed me into the floor. Then he sat on top of me and ground his knee into my back. When he got off of me, he got up and said that we were not to talk. I remember showing an indifferent nurse the bruises the following day. She told me "Don't come to me with any restraint injuries, if you were restrained, you deserve it."

4) I was at Tranquility Bay on August 10th 2001 when Valerie Herron committed suicide by jumping off of the third story of the female facility building. She had recently arrived at the program. At exactly 6:00pm, I heard a series of horrifying sounds. First, a sound that sounded like a crack of thunder, a crunch, and an earthquake. Then the screams came. I rushed out onto the second story balcony with Carol and Cindy. There in the courtyard lay Valerie in a pool of blood. Immediately after the incident our staff informed us that if any of the girls discussed this we would be sent straight to staff watch. This order was made by supervisors and carried out by the

family staff. This particular incident was only one of many in which supervisors made rules before asking Mr. Kay. About a month after the incident, I was working in transitions with Karen and Sherry, cleaning out the supply closet (this closet held hygiene supplies for students as well as uniforms for new students) and I found 4 of Valerie's uniforms, folded neatly, ready for a new girl to adopt. Only 1 was missing, the one she died in. It shocked me and reminded me of books I have read about concentration camps, where the dead peoples uniforms are reused and passed on. We talked to the staff in charge of supplies, and he said there was nothing wrong with the uniforms, they had only been used once, and that we needed to "chill now man".

5) A few girls in my family had severe yeast infections from the climate and lack of air conditioning and malnourishment. She told my case manager several times in-group that she needed to see a doctor, and the response was "Please, keep your nasty girl problems to yourself." In turn, nothing was done. The rules by which students at Tranquility Bay are to abide by are for the most part unnecessary and irrelevant to their recovery and or growth. Literally, the program at Tranquility bay has nothing to do with recovery, only compliance and total structure. When I arrived at TB, I had Alcoholics Anonymous Step-work from my previous program, and I was told to keep it in storage because I wouldn't need it nor would I ever have time to use it. This was step-work my therapist recommended that and that my parents bought and sent to me upon his request. During my entire stay at TB, I did not write one word in the step-work handbooks. This is something that surprised me and still does. WWASP is a sick organization whose LAST concern is the children it claims to help and love. It sucks parent's bank accounts dry with no regard to the families it may be affecting. As it draws you in with lies of your child's salvation, it financially rapes you."

**Alexander Chomakhidze, October 25, 2012 at 7:40 am**

"As a student enrolled in horizon academy and riverview academy i was constantly the subject of laughter and disrespect by the staff Yahia Irochen, He called himself a strong man homosexuality was unacceptable for him. As a 'punishment' for me being a gay guy he emotionally abused me on daily basis and told other students gay jokes about me which hurt a lot. Once when we went to a 'Field Trip' to the lake in (Southern Utah) i did not get in the water so he called the other guys and told am to pick me up and throw me in the water, even though i was screaming and telling them that i did not want to they still dropped me in a rocky area of the lake and as i got up i got pushed into the jagged rocks again this time by Yahia where i got hurt and bruised along with multiple cuts. He was just watching all of this and laughing. this was one of the most traumatic experiences in my life."

November 4, 2021

Michele L'Esperance

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Vermont. [REDACTED]

U.S. District Judge John Bates

Re: Sentencing for Nicholas Languerand

To the Honorable Judge Bates,

Hello, my name is Michele L'Esperance, I am Nicholas Languerand's girlfriend, and we are extremely close. Over the last couple of years, I have witness first hand how much Nicholas has worked on himself, to become a better, stronger person. He has made plenty of rash, and somewhat childish, mistakes in the past, yet, rather than continuing down a self destructive path, he has worked hard to make personal gains to improve himself. He has learned and grown greatly from his mistakes, and wants to do, and be, better. He deserves the chance to continue making changes towards being a better man, and I sincerely hope he is given the chance to do so. He had a rough upbringing because his parents had him very young, and they never really showed him the unconditional love and support, that parents should give to their children. Due to the fact that he never got to experience a healthy child-parent relationship, he never really got that fundamental feeling of safety and belonging.

Nicholas is a good, kind-hearted person, who loves his country deeply. His involvement in the Trump movements gave him a sense of belonging and greater purpose. He has longed to be a part of something bigger than himself, and to make a real difference in the world, and that is what he thought he had found. He just unfortunately got sucked into something that was not as it seemed, and quickly got out of hand. He had no plan when attending the January 6th rally, other than to bare witness to what was taking place. He fully realizes that he succumbed to the crowd mentality, and got carried away

in the heat of the moment. He has expressed great remorse for his part in what took place.

I also wanted to set the record straight on a very serious matter. Although Nicholas did get sucked in to online conspiracy theories, he was **absolutely** not part of any type of militia group. Before he went to stay with his grandparents in South Carolina for a new job, we lived together in Vermont, and spent all of our time outside of work together. So, I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt, that he was most definitely not hanging out with, or in contact with, any militia groups. He did have a regular old target in the back yard that he would sometime like to do some target practice on from time to time. Many people with a military history enjoy target practice, as well as the routine of cleaning and maintaining guns, in a safe and respectful manner. I can honestly tell you, that is the only reason why he owned firearms. There was nothing devious or unusual about it.

I know who Nicholas John Languerand is, inside and out. I know how he thinks, I know what his passions are, and I've seen his every flaw and scar that he holds. I know exactly who he is, and he is not a vicious, dangerous, or malicious person. He got riled up in the heat of the moment, and made a mistake. He has expressed to me many times that he has great remorse for his part in what took place, and genuinely regrets his actions on January 6th. He is willing to pay penance for his mistake, and has learned and grown significantly from this entire experience. He has focused his time in jail on staying out of trouble and helping others. He has strengthened his spirituality, and relationship with the Lord, through participating in Bible studies and Prayer groups. He also helped guide other incarcerated individuals on their religious paths, and became a leader within their prayer groups. I feel that he has found that missing piece in his life through his religion, for this has given him a great sense of purpose and belonging. I do believe this will keep him out of trouble and on the right path moving forward. Additionally, he has completed a substance abuse course through Northern Neck Regional Jail, and has expressed that he got a lot out of the experience. Even while being incarcerated, he has continued to take steps towards betterment.

It would be an absolute waste to lock him up for a significant amount of time, especially considering he is willing and able to make reparations through community service. He wants to help people and the community, and put his time and strengths towards something with purpose and meaning. Isolating him in inhuman conditions, rather than to put him to work through community service, would only be a detriment to his self improvement, and the good he could do for others. He is a Veteran, a Christian, and a hard worker, and locking him away for an extended amount of time would not benefit anyone. I strongly urge you to take my words to heart when considering Nicholas's case, for I have stated the God's honest truth here. I appreciate you taking the time to read what I have to say.

Thank you and God bless!

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Michele L'Esperance". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'e'.

Michele A. L'Esperance

Dear Judge Bates:

We are Charles and Susan Killian, grandparents of Nicholas Languerand. Charles was a software developer until retired 17 years ago. Then he was a volunteer EMT for 10 years. Susan was a registered nurse in a hospital and then a school nurse. We lived in Vermont until 2016 before moving to South Carolina. We adopted 2 children, Charles and Jennifer. Jennifer is Nicholas' mother.

We love Nicholas and he's more like a son to us than a grandson. He has always been a part of our lives. When he was born Jennifer was 17 and his father John was 21. They lived with us for a couple of months, but after a disagreement, John and Jennifer took Nicholas and moved in with John's mother.

The next year they got married. Although we had our doubts, we decided to support them and let them put a trailer on our property. They wanted to buy the property that the trailer was on but their marriage was too unstable so we said no. Jennifer had 2 early miscarriages. When John seemed to be controlling Jennifer, rough with Nicholas, and not nurturing, we encouraged her to leave.

On July 9, 1999, Jennifer's 21st birthday there was a domestic problem. The police were at the trailer and put a restraining order on John. We took Nicholas home with us. At 4 a.m. there was an explosion and the trailer was burning. The police instructed us to take and hide young Nicholas to where John didn't know. John was captured and charged with arson. An attorney convinced Jennifer to drop the arson charges against John so he could get into anger management and substance abuse courses to avoid lengthy time in jail.

We hired a lawyer for Jennifer to get out of the marriage and the lawyer claimed that John would never see Nicholas. Nicholas was 4 years old at the time and wanted to know why his daddy burned his toys. Sue took Nicholas to see a therapist for a while in Hyde Park, Vt. while Jennifer worked. Nicholas drew a picture of a house burning.

Jennifer lived with us for a couple of weeks and put up another trailer on the same site. At the court hearing, to our astonishment, she decided to go back to John. John served 6 months in jail. When Nicholas saw John for the 1st time after 6 months, Nicholas said "Guess what Grammy, I saw my daddy and didn't even get a spanking". They all lived with John's mother and went to couples counseling and Sue watched Nicholas. She met Jennifer every day so Nicholas could continue to go to school in Wolcott until the end of the year. They all moved back into the trailer. Several months later Jennifer divorced John but he had shared legal & visitation rights.

Then Jennifer rented out the trailer and rents a house with Nick in Colchester, VT. The next year Jennifer dates Sean Vance and he moves in with them. Nicholas really wanted to be a Vance! They bought a house in Colchester and had a baby girl named Kiera. Nicholas was nine. Jennifer and Sean got married.

A couple of years later they moved to a new home nearby and Keegan was born. There was a notable difference in the attention Sean paid to Nicholas. Sue mentioned Nicholas' low self esteem to Jennifer. Jennifer wanted an outreach program for Nicholas, but John wouldn't sign.

In seventh grade, Nicholas was told that he was going to live with John, and he cried and cried that he didn't want to go (complete surprise to Nicholas and us). We asked Jennifer not to send him and we would have taken him and pleaded with Sean that this is not good for Nicholas.

Nicholas lived with John. He was alone a lot or spent time at his friend Mike's house. He had dinner once a week with us, and Sue sent food home. Nick said, "I used alcohol, at dad's friends house with dad who was passed out upstairs. Dad's an alcoholic."

After 10 months John goes to court to get custody, but Nick was sent back with Jen till around 9th grade. When the court was going to send Nick to foster care, we took him. Although Sue drove him back and forth to school, and he played Lacross, he was using marijuana and by 10th grade other stuff. He cut classes and we got calls from school. Eventually, he was suspended, went to John's for a couple weeks and then back with us. As Nick said, "he was bounced around."

Meanwhile, the rest of Nick's family had moved to Florida. Although he thought he was finally going to be with family and friends, when he arrived in Florida, Jen was moving out of the apartment and wanted a divorce. Nick slept in the closet in her apartment where he didn't seem to mind. The other two children were also with her. Nick ended up cutting classes. Soon they all went to Sean's condo, because Jen couldn't afford her apartment. Nick was not attending school and staying out very late. He said, "In Florida, things got bad and I gave up on myself".

In April of 2011 when Nick turned 16 a family trip was planned, but instead Sean and Jen drove Nick to Utah and enrolled him at Cross Creek. Nick was unaware. We were not allowed to see, talk or write to him for 9 months. Jen and I visited him at that time. Sue attended a few work shops and Jen did one with her. Nick was upset he had to stay so long. (20 months). Schooling was what he accomplished himself on the computer.

Jen was to take him to Ireland for graduation, but never did. She worked in NY then back to Florida, eventually losing custody of her other children with Sean.

On 11/6/12 Sue got legal custody of Nick in Vermont so he could attend a different H.S. and live with us. The high school counselor advised Nick getting his GED instead. He wanted and got a high school diploma, also. He took a CCV course. In spite of a spotty education, he does exceptionally well on the SAT exam. He dates Logan, but their relationship was rocky. He really wanted to work with his dad (like other friends did), but seeing dad working with him included drinking with him.

During the summer when Nick was 19, he helped put siding up on our house with his grandfather. Nick walks away from an old friend (drug person) and doesn't see him any more. After Nick and Logan split he lives in the trailer with a young woman for the summer. Then Logan sought him out at his restaurant job and they get back together before he enlists in the Army in Nov. 2016 ( age 21). They marry secretly and moved to an apartment off base in N.C. That Sept. Nick said" life is good" but Logan was homesick. When they go to VT. around Christmas there was a problem, she stays in VT. Nick was upset them not being together and her seeing old boyfriend. The police said Nick **"didn't have to attend the hearing"**. Nick obeyed the restraining order. After some time he began talking with Logan, and she wanted him out of the army. After two years in the army and doing menial jobs, a signing of cocaine use was an out to get out of the army with a general discharge.

Logan was supposed to move into the trailer with Nick that first winter but did not. In early spring the oil furnace broke. Nick befriends a woman who later stole his dog and damaged his guitar.

The 2nd winter Nick meets Michelle and bought a pellet stove, but the water freezes occasionally. Michelle stays at times but does not live there. He says they don't argue but they did split after about a year.

In summer of 2020, Nick planted a garden in Vt and had chickens and ducks. "Animals are my family", he said. He accumulated auto violation tickets over time and lost his drivers license. His truck broke down helping his uncle. He depended on others to get to work.

In fall 2020 - We asked him to come to South Carolina to work, stay with us and get on his feet. He thought about it and decided not to come. He worked on insulating the trailer, took down an inside wall so it would heat better, cut wood and bought a small wood stove. He was laid off in November from his job, alone in the trailer, no job, no vehicle, no tv.

Nick asked Sue and Michelle to go to the rally on January 6th but we didn't. Around that time, Sue told him it was unhealthy to live in the trailer that was so isolated for him and not productive. He followed QAnon. He is not a terrorist, not a member of the Nazi group or white supremacy group or proud boys.

On 1/17/21 it was getting very cold in Vt and he asked if he could come to SC. Charlie drove to VT to get Nick. Charlie said for him to bring the guns because someone would steal them. Also the machete which was used in a job cutting cedar to make furniture was also brought down so no one would steal that, too.

Immediately, in Little River Nick got a job with John Chaves. They formed a mutual respect for one another. Nick worked hard and sometimes worked 6 days a week. We drove him to and from work or John would bring him home. Nick paid off all vehicle tickets, paid back a debt to his great-grandmother, had dental work done and wisdom teeth out, cat neutered and cell phone fixed. He was about to buy a used truck then the next step was to get a place of his own.

In early March - Logan came down to Little River to see Nick and they talked. After that weekend she went back to Vt. At the end of March, Nick and Sue went up to VT to get his VT license. Logan had a flat tire. He borrowed my car jack to help her and came right back to where we were staying. He said he was honest with her and didn't want to renew a relationship.

On April 15, 2021- the FBI & Swat Team pounded on our door and burst in and arrested Nick at 6 a.m. who was getting ready for work. They scared my mother-in-law who is 95 years old and it was very upsetting to all of us.

Nicholas is a smart, hardworking, caring young man. In the past, he volunteered to take care of and do chores with horses for a stable. In high school, before leaving for Florida Nick gave all his winter clothes away to friends. After learning to box, he volunteered at a boxing club to instruct youth in the area. He has great gratitude towards us for helping him. My hospice client loved Nick playing guitar for her and always asked, " How's my boy?" He is a good person. He helps lead a prayer group in jail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Killian", written over a horizontal line.

Charles Killian

11/23/21

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Killian", written over a horizontal line.

Susan Killian

## Nicholas Languarand reference

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 10:20 AM

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nicholas Languarand reference</b>
<b>From</b>	<a href="#">Charles Killian</a>
<b>To</b>	wlw wwelchattorney.com
<b>Sent</b>	Sunday, January 16, 2022 8:02 PM

Dear Judge Bates,

My name is Charles Killian, and Nicholas Languarand is my nephew and was my neighbor. Nick has always been a hard worker, and has worked with me professionally (I am a mason and he tended for the company I work for). He has helped me out around my property as well. He has always thought of others, most significantly all of us in this country, considering the state of our union. That thought of others is what made him a asset as a neighbor. There was never a time when I asked him to help with anything that he hesitated to. It also helped him with work, he takes direction well and was good about completing the job. I also remember when Nick had a bunch of cuts on his hands. I asked him about it and he said he had a knife pulled on him. Oh... I know I would have defended myself too. I didn't press for any more details after hearing it was self defense. At heart he's a good man, and I hope that you can help him have a better future. Thank you for your time your Honor,  
Charles Killian

Sent from my iPhone