

NA Trust

Telephone
Settlement
Conference

#2 6/25/97

Rachel
Houseman

C

U: I'm not sure about on the list, I just have a rough draft.

GH: The first point that, there appears to be a question regarding the accuracy, or inaccuracy of the background statement, or the style in which it is written. What needs to be stated in this section?

U: I got some of that from Bo's input and some from Jim's input. Maybe they can elaborate on that.

JM: I've gone on from these questions. I thought that was an excellent job, Stu. I appreciate it. I've gone on from these questions, and I have some simple responses. I think that this background statement, very simply needs to be focused on the fellowship rather than services, and most particularly, that portion of the fellowship exemplified by the 1981, before the literature conferences. The composition of the literature committee, the process that was happening then, and the four conferences that occurred then. I believe that it needs a simple description of the bond of trust that does exist between the spiritual fellowship of N.A., and its services, including ASCs, RSCs, WSC, WSB and their agents, primary service center, WSO. To the statement, "our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." That's kind of what the background statement needs to be focused on in my opinion.

The '81 literature committee and those four conferences were something that happened in the fellowship, was a phenomenon that didn't have a precedent and hasn't happened since. The members that worked there, and the fellowship that they were representative of developed a trust bond with the service structure that the results of their work would be used in the same spirit and manner that the work was developed. This must be, in my opinion, the foundation and the basis of this literature trust document.

BS: Roughly, I agree.

GD: I agree. The fellowship and the people who wrote and participated are actually the authors and the owners. I think you've got it switched around. I didn't send any input because I've got some minutes of the conference here, it says to me that the things that we had discussed in Harrisburg and other times, and the promises that were made to Jim and Kathleen and Bo and myself and others that were present at the time, were ignored. It's like you've got the exclusive rights to do whatever you want to do as far as I'm concerned, it seems like that is "your" trust. The trust that I had that you wouldn't ask for these things and you wouldn't do the things that you have done, you violated that trust.

ST: I never said that we wouldn't ask for it. I put it in the Conference Agenda Report. That's not true, Dave. I told you I was going to ask for it.

JM: What I understand, Stu, what I remember was that in those documents that you gave us your assurance that you would share that something was in process, and that after the process was completed, that you would ask for this, and mention that in any

requests for it. I felt you made yourself very clear and agree substantially with Dave.

ST: No. What I agreed to was the fact that I would ask for this in lieu of producing any other document. I agreed that this document was premature to distribute at the conference at that time. It needed some work. I instructed the conference that we would be working on this document and would send it out.

BS: In the interest of time, can we be send the relevant documents on this. I'm blind to it. I don't have copies of it.

U: What don't you have?

GD: I didn't get anything.

BS: I don't have any WSC minutes from '91.

GD: Did anybody get the amplifications and the other materials that were supposed to be send, because I received nothing.

U: They were just done. They'll be coming in the next package.

BS: Let's clear one thing here. I talked with Dave last night, and he's gained some admirable strength, but he felt very offended and betrayed in whatever he found in the WSC motion in the minutes. Stu, you're saying you don't think you betrayed anything, that you kept perfect faith and trust. I was never real clear what it was that Dave was asking assurance that you not do. Now he says you've done it. Can I get some paperwork on this, so I don't have to do that addict thing of "make it up and pretend it's so"? It's a little facetious. It takes a marvelous amount of time and attention to participate in something like this, and the idea that some of the participants would be withheld information or events would be very shaky to me. I'm not going to waste my time, whatever happens.

GD: I feel like it's kind of a waste of time. I do so because of my own personal intimate knowledge and understanding of the promises that were made. The last conference call, I said that I had fulfilled my end of the bargain 100%, Stu, you said yes, and everyone was amazed that you had said yes. The fact of the matter is, from what I understood in the court, you were supposed to go from the court to the vote, without any comment.

ST: No, no, no, no, no. The only comment that wasn't supposed to be taken, was I wasn't supposed to put a prelude to the motions that went out to the fellowship. That's what was indicated by the court.

GD: Was there not a three-hour discussion before the votes were taken at the conference? Was there not papers sent out four or five days before the conference to RSRs about...I have it, it's dated March 28 "For distribution. An essay on the fourth and ninth tradition changes."

ST: The only thing that was sent out that had anything to do with

those three motions was the issue of the low cost text, and that was ordered by the court that it was done. That was it. We said nothing, we publicized nothing, we did nothing.

GD: There wasn't three hours were of discussion before the votes were taken at the conference?

ST: At the conference, I gave my report.

GD: And then Terry Middlebrook gave her report, and all that information in which I saw nothing positive, not even in the WSO Report, nothing positive at all...

ST: Dave, those RSRs came there with the vote. There's no votes after the discussion. Those votes were taken by their respective fellowships. Those votes were taken back in their fellowships. They went out in the agenda report. They all came with a vote from their fellowship.

GD: Then why was there a need for three hours of discussion?

ST: Because I give a report every year. There was no cross discussion. There were questions and answers after the report, which they cut short and forced the end of discussion. We went into session, I asked for a committee of the whole, and they refused it and wanted to vote. They voted and then they went into a committee of the whole after the vote. That's what came then.

JM: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Stu, but I believe we need to move on from here. A lot of us weren't there, and we're just really not positive what happened. The reports that we get indicate that you betrayed the trust that we felt we had established. I think that that's something we must deal with. However, for us to deal with it, when I don't have all the details and facts, and Dave seems to have a whole lot of it, but all of us aren't on the same page. I don't think that we're going to make any progress toward dealing with it. Dave and I, and perhaps to a lesser degree, Bo think that this process that we're participating in right now may be of some value. I'm questioning the value from what I've heard of the conference. However, I'd like to go through the motions of it, and see if we can set some positive change. I think if we discuss this any further on this particular conference call, until I have minutes of the conference and Bo has too, and Dave and Bo and I and perhaps others, Billy, have had a chance to visit, we're going to be spinning our wheels. There isn't any sense doing that. Let's go on to your agenda and deal with it, and any other input that might come up. Deal with these things that come up point by point and see where we're going to go as a working group from here. If you guys, in fact, have snared us into something, deluded us, and Bo can trust, I guess I'm not going to have to make amends for that. If I do this work and it's all for naught, at least it's built character some. Dave doesn't have a lot of time to build character, but I'm going to go ahead and do that.

BA: I have one question before we proceed. I want to know...In Harrisburg, Carl Deal was involved in this, right?

U: No.

BS: No.

BA: He also send input to the office on this?

U: I talked to Carl this morning, and we have not received any input as of this morning. We did not receive any fax from him.

BA: Carl informed me that he'd be mailing it, and I know that I received fax input from him.

U: Billy, I can only tell you what I've received here at the office. I talked to Carl this morning, and he said that he was going to fax the material. I have not received anything across yet.

BS: What the hell has that got to do with anything? What has he sent?

BA: He sent a lot of input to this. That's what it has to do with.

BS: Well, I'm open to that. I think he's an excellent servant. What did he send?

BA: I'll be mailing it to you, Bo.

BS: Okay, but can you give us a rough...

BA: I'll just put it in the mail to you.

BS: Okay, but can you give us a rough picture of it? You don't have to read it. Is it just interesting stuff, Billy?

BA: It has a lot to do with what we're doing, and I just feel...I talked to Carl two days ago, he told me that he mailed it, and I received my packet, and it was not attached. He faxed it to me that same day and I received it. I wanted to see it. I just have a hard time with things that seem to get lost in the mail over the years. That's what's going on, I'm going to have to have a lot of caution in anything that I do, and I will have distrust with what's happening. I'll be real honest with that.

U: We got everybody else's input.

BS: We can all presume that that's going to be coming in, so we'll just have to wait and see.

GD: I'm sitting here with the minutes of the conference, and I see all the motions. You tell me one thing, and 20 people that were there tell me another. The only way we're ever going to know what's right is if you were to send the tapes of that day to all of us, so we could determine what, in fact, did actually occur at the conference. If you want me to trust you...

BS: Well, just those two or three hours. That's a good bit of listening right there, not the whole damn day, just that section.

GD: There's a lot of stuff here, I'm sure, that spanned over four or

five hours. I'm looking at the minutes, making that determination.

U: That section was about eight and a half hours long.

BS: Relating to the copyrights?

U: No, the overall...

GD: The literature, the WSO presentation, the motions, the votes, the committee of the whole.

BS: It's eight hours long?

U: The whole thing was.

GD: If you could get those copies and send them out, then we would have a better idea of what the conference felt like, and what they wanted. If you want me to at least modify my feelings at this trust, then that would go a long way. I don't like to operate from a position where I've got no information. I don't like to make a mistake or get something wrong. From what I'm looking at here, and from what people have told me, and from the publications and things that people have sent me, and looking at the WSO Report, I didn't have much faith to start with, and I put all whatever remaining faith that I had in Narcotics Anonymous and the principles, and the trusting when we went to court, I put whatever I had left there. I don't have any left.

GH: Let me try to put it into perspective for you, Dave, at least what I believe. This trust document will supersede all previous decisions. The decisions that were made by this year's conference were temporary if we find that those decisions are no longer usable in the trust document. That's how I tend to look at that and what we discussed at the conference. I understood Stu to make a commitment that he would not present the trust document, which will be the policy that is established when we get through the review period, hopefully, and the fellowship approves it. The decisions made by the conference are temporary in that light, because the trust document will supersede all of that.

GD: It seems that the perception that the members that were together in Harrisburg and various other communication that you and I have had personally, that you see things one way, and I know I see things another way, and I'm taking a straw poll down the ranks of the people we have on the phone here. You've got people on the phone here who have not been intimate to this stuff, but Oma and myself, Jim and Kathleen, and Bo and his girlfriend that were in Harrisburg, in that room with you, we made, all of us, made agreements together. It sounded like there was something that could come out of all of it that we would all be happy and satisfied with, and there were things discussed at that time. One of those things was that three months after the conference, when we should take and put out the trust document. That was one item. The second item was the idea of exclusivity and ownership of the properties. You would have the exclusive rights to ownership, that was going to be held in abeyance. You promised that you would not ask for those things and/or the right to sue any group,

area, or region, or member, until such time as we had developed the document.

ST: I didn't promise that. Anybody else who was on the phone that was there, did I promise that?

JM: Yes, I do believe that approximately what he's saying is what we agreed to as a group. However, I really don't think that we need to spend a lot of time right now going over that and salving up those wounds. If in fact, our impression of what you said was made in good faith by you, George's word that this trust document will supersede all previous decision, including temporary decisions made at WSC '91, is enough for me to go ahead and not was the fellowship's money and time, and my time, any further trying to do this, trying to salve this up. It's a waste of time, but I may be wrong. I just need to feel that everyone involved here agrees with George's perception that what we're working on shall supersede anything that's been done previously.

ST: Now, that's what I promised.

JM: Does everyone agree that what we're working on is something that can transcend all previous policy in this area and the areas attached to it?

GD: It seems to me that if it's a legal instrument that's executed, then that will, in fact, supersede even the decisions of the conference. The conference will have to ratify whatever it is that we end up coming up with, because we'll not have any rights to put something like that out, without the fellowship. I may be going even further to say that the fellowship, as a whole, has an opportunity to look at it. The other thing is, that we talked about having a little budget last time so we could communicate with one another. I can't afford to communicate with anybody. If we're going to proceed, I'm willing to proceed. I've given most of my input to Jim, because Jim and I have a relationship where we understand each other, so I gave him most of the input that I had, and he factored most of that into his input.

We've already done some initial work. I just think that our ideas, and I would like to hear from the other people on this particular question, Roy and Billy, and others. Does corporate N.A. own our property, or does the "creator," being the fellowship, own the property? We're looking at the question here of whether...The first literature document that you sent us made the owners the beneficiaries. That's kind of screwy. You guys get the budgets and the travel and the office, you guys are the beneficiary of our work. It's really the other way around. I think we have a chasm between corporate N.A. and spiritual N.A. We have to decide as a fellowship, whether we are a corporate entity, and go on with that, or whether we are a spiritual entity.

ST: We have a corporate entity, because a corporate entity does certain things on behalf of the fellowship. Service. It only exists for the fellowship. They benefit its worth. It has no other purpose.

- GD: I'm looking at it, and we may argue over two million dollars, but I'm looking at twenty million dollars over the past five years, and I'm wondering what we got for it.
- ST: That's quality judgement. It doesn't exist for anything else other than services to the fellowship. That's what it was intended to do. Now whether the services were good, bad, indifferent, that's something that has to be dealt with from a quality control situation, not from...
- GD: Stu, I know what you believe. I think that we're just talking and we could not be further apart, I don't think.
- BS: What do you think Stu believes?
- GD: I think he believes that it's a business, an agency, this, that, and the other thing. If that's the case, efficient business and successful businesses run on spiritual principles, on good sound principle and practice. It's like it says in the 11th step, "results count in recovery." I haven't seen the results that one would expect for the amount of income that's passed through that office over the years. The controversies and controversial issues that have come perhaps as a result of perhaps me, or the tension created in different philosophies. Do we want to carry the message to the addict who still suffers? Well yeah, we do, but we only want to do that when we can do it with computers and...
- BS: Dave, let Stu say what he believes. In view of what you've said, what do you believe, Stu?
- ST: I believe that there's a business aspect to Narcotics Anonymous, and that's why you have a corporate arm. I believe that corporate arm operates in that capacity. I don't believe the corporate arm is a beneficiary of the fellowship. I believe actually the reverse. I believe that the corporate arm solely services the spiritual arm. It has no other function other than to protect, and pursue the aims of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. It has no other...
- BS: Don't you understand, though, the reason we're on the phone? There have been some serious breaches of fellowship trust? And like I said on the last phone call, that these are not mysterious, will of the whist, variations on how people who live in different parts of the United States express themselves in English? The severe disorders...
- R: Hey everybody, this is Roy. I think what I'm hearing, and I realize that I'm just being brought in on this whole process here, is that we really do have sort of a difference of opinion. I have to tend to agree with Jim at this point, though. We do have five things that were written down here. If we're going to progress at all, and maybe some day we'll reach perfection, but let's go with progress for now, maybe we ought to try to do what we can with these five issues here for today.

I have one question regarding number one off the bat: What background statement? Either I didn't get that, or it's part of

this document, and I just haven't been able to pick it up.

GH: Your copy doesn't have it, Roy, and I apologize. Neither you nor Billy received the background statement.

GD: I don't see anything either.

GH: You should have that, Dave from what was sent before.

GD: I didn't get the question answered, when I asked for the philosophical differences.

ST: The problem that I have, and one of the reason why that motivated me to pursue a trust document, is that the corporate arm can never be the leading arm. What you've had over the years is the corporate arm being the leading arm, and it can't do that. The only way not to do that, is to design an instrument that allows the other arm to orchestrate and direct the corporate arm. It doesn't exist today. That's what you have to do to get the other head in charge of both. Otherwise, the corporate arm is always going to be so efficient, it's going to gobble up. You need to have hoops that the corporate arm goes through to gain its direction and its latitude. Without it, it would just do it based on the personalities. You've got to take all that shit out of there.

GD: Well, Stu's got his trustee hat on now.

ST: Did you really say that Dave?

JM: I think the further we get away from issues and the closer that we get to philosophy, the less difference we're going to find between ourselves. Perhaps there really is something we can do here. Perhaps the experiences that I've had in the past make me more paranoid than I need to be right now. I really believe that we'll demonstrate our similarities and our differences by attending to our agenda.

ST: Let's get back to the background statement. One of the reasons I pulled that out, I felt that possibly Bo or someone else could possibly take this background statement and articulate another one that describes the background as it stands. So we have a comparable section. I don't know what anybody else thinks, but that's one of the reasons why I wanted the group to see this. If there are parts of this that are workable and others that aren't, then others can be added. We need to get other work done. I wasn't part of any of those literature committees, so someone else will have to do that.

JM: At the risk of monopolizing time, let me offer an introductory paragraph: "During the years between 1978 and 1982, N.A. began the process of self-definition and maturity that would allow our fellowship to become a worldwide force for recovery from addiction. A relatively small group of people, ordinary recovering addicts, developed our fellowship's first significant item of property, our "Basic Text," the book entitled "Narcotics Anonymous." This collection of N.A. members worked as part of the

literature subcommittee of the World Service Conference. The four major writing and editing literature conferences were located both centrally and in geographic extremes across the fellowship, so the maximum number of N.A. members could attend and participate. Every member who wanted to help write our book had the opportunity. The committee eventually numbered in the hundreds of active participating members. Each had a role and a voice in the content of our Basic Text. During this time, the members of the fellowship of which they were representative, developed a trust arm with the service structure, that the results of the book would be used in the same spirit and manner it was developed. This is the basis and foundation of our literature trust document."

BS: That's as good as it gets, I think.

ST: You've got that written down?

JM: Yeah, I can rattle something like that off without writing it down.

ST: You need to send it to us.

JM: I shall.

R: Does it reflect anything similar to what you had originally put down, Stu?

ST: I think the document we have starts from World Convention.

JM: The document you have illustrates the office's relationship with the fellowship. Much of what's in that document, much of what's in the existing background, needs to be factored into a final background statement. I'm just changing the focus with this introductory paragraph to that one special point in time when that one special thing happened that has...

ST: ...everything that's comes in the background statement. I got it. Okay, we need that.

BS: Anyway, I'll be happy to help with that, Stu, although I think what Jim read is terrific. What did you think of my input?

ST: I read it. I liked it. I didn't know how to...I really didn't go beyond looking for differences, but I didn't know how to factor it into the background statement.

BS: The thing that seems to be evolving in some of my talks with Jim and Dave, and just in general as a result of working on that input, was that there was a verbal trust statement that we told people so commonly that we didn't realize what it was. But it went like, "there will be no by-lines, no royalties paid to us for doing this work, and the proceeds will go to the fellowship forever in the form of services." That was basically our operating, verbal trust document agreement. That was delivered to lit workers by the hundreds. Since they liked that, they came and did the work.