

Dear Family,

I am a member of a group of concerned addicts in Marietta, Ga., who have been doing what we could in the effort to help the Fellowship regain control of its service structure. What I am writing here is simply the voice of one addict. Although many of my fellow members here would agree with much of what I say, I do not presume to speak for them.

Narcotics Anonymous stands at a pivotal moment in its history. Within the next year, I believe that one of two things will happen: Either the Fellowship will begin to regain control over our literature, our world services, and the spiritual direction of our service structure and our Fellowship as a whole; or World will complete its coup d'etat, and will by then be securing their takeover of our literature, service structure, money, even the Fellowship itself as a unified entity.

If World succeeds in becoming our powerful central government, with group conscience lying in the ashes of its victory, then our Fellowship may be doomed. Too many addicts simply will not support an organization such as the one N.A. is threatening to become. If World wins (I hate to speak of it in terms of winning and losing, but at this point we are fighting for the survival of this Fellowship) there will be a split. Maybe "fragmentation" is a more accurate term, because the split that may happen will probably not be an organized and coordinated split by a significant portion of the Fellowship. It is more likely to be a case of many of our most dedicated members more or less dropping out, or going to A.A., or keeping their home group and essentially forgetting about the rest of N.A. A case of many others, not so involved in these issues, but still turned off by the bullshit and the controversy, going to A.A., or simply leaving N.A., with the inevitable tragic results.

If World does complete its takeover of the Fellowship, Narcotics Anonymous will gradually wither and dry up, maybe even die. The N.A. Tree will die if it is cut off from its spiritual roots. Addicts will die, who might have lived.

Many groups will break away. Perhaps some areas and regions, as well. There will be disruption in local N.A. communities all over. If World wins, that which would tear us apart will finally prove stronger than the ties that bind us together. The disease will have won.

For the disease of addiction has taken over our world services. You study the actions of the "trusted servants" at world. The manipulation, the hustling, the lies, the secrecy, the almost sociopathic way in which World leaders can speak in tones of utmost sincerity, with an apparently thorough command of the facts, motivated by devoted and selfless service to N.A., look us right in the face - and tell us cold, calculated lies, deliberately planned to guide us into believing theirs is the wisest course of action, while at the same time shielding their deceit and thievery under the cloak of spiritual service. World leaders, most of whom have "served" continuously for the past ten years or more, have suffered complete and total spiritual relapse. They manifest every symptom of this disease short of actually using.

The other alternative is that the Fellowship win this war. Our one hope is that the Fellowship regain control over that which is ours. We must live the truth that we have only one ultimate authority - a loving God, however you may define your relationship with God. It is through God that we have acquired spiritual principles to live by. It is our responsibility to defend these principles and to preserve the Fellowship that gave us new life. If we are to do this, I believe the coming year is the turning point. If we are going to preserve the spiritual fellowship we love, we must do so now.

Many who read this are already active in the struggle. Following are some thoughts I have about what we are doing, and what we can do.

~~The first thing we can do is lay siege to Van Nuys, Ca.~~

In Marietta, we recently held a workshop on the literature trust document. Soon we will have a workshop on the Operational Rules portion of it. So far, we have made to fundamental changes. We changed the "trustor" from the W.S.C.



to the Fellowship, which will exercise its authority as trustor through its "elected representatives" at the W.S.C. In addition to making us the trustor, it provides for RSR-only voting on matters pertaining to the "trustee", who, of course, is the WSO, Inc. The second change eliminates all authority on the part of the WSO, Inc. to control how the money is spent. (This is something they slip into this document, rather quietly, in hopes that most people won't notice it.)

Many of you will get copies of the report we will put together after the second workshop.

Of course, as most of you know, this workshop is an exercise in futility. World will do what they want, period. They will pass the trust document; they will pass the Guide to Service; they will defeat RSR-only voting. No matter what. In short, World will do WHATEVER IT TAKES to maintain control of the literature (its major source of money - a few million a year) and of the money.

It is my belief that we have only one recourse left to us: to destroy the WSO, Inc. By "destroy" I mean to take the basic text away from them, along with the rest of the literature if we can. Without the huge (for N.A.) sums of money the basic text brings them, they will be an impotent tiger, all roar and no claws. It seems to me the only way we can do this is through the courts.

It seems clear to me that they are in contempt of court. I am no lawyer, but I had to educate myself in the law when I filed a lawsuit a few years ago. I am also good at analyzing written language. In the court agreement of 1991, they agreed to submit certain motions regarding our literature to all registered groups. Instead, they placed motions on the W.S.C. agenda on whether or not they should do that. That is not what the agreement stated. This seems to me a clever dope-fiend move to manipulate the agreement. They further showed their bad faith by speaking out against the motions, and voting

as a solid block against these motions. (The exception was Greg P., who voted in favor of the motions.) WSO, Inc. also agreed to work with several members of the fellowship (Grateful Dave, Bo S., etc.) in developing the literature trust. As most of you know, they showed bad faith there, as well. It is clear they never intended to relinquish their theft of the basic text. As good politicians, they only wanted it to seem like they were working with the Fellowship on that issue.

In all of this, they are not only hustling us, they are hustling the judge. I understand that some members are taking up the lawsuit after Grateful died. My suggestion is - file a contempt of court motion. Such a motion will have even more ammunition once the next approval form trust document comes out. It will ignore most of our feedback; it must, because our goal - that the Fellowship own the book - and theirs is mutually exclusive.

Beyond this current case, I can think of two other law suits. It can be proven "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the Fellowship is the true author of the book; that the book was given to WSO, Inc. for custodial purposes, i.e., for copyright protection by a corporate entity; and that said corporate entity then altered the copyrights to make itself the owner. This is copyright fraud, as well as outright theft. Such a lawsuit could seize the book from WSO, Inc. and return it to the principle "authors", who could then establish a safer corporate haven for it.

Another lawsuit involves WSO, Inc.'s role as a fiduciary trust in accordance with the laws of the State of California. WSO, Inc. has a long history of circumventing the will of the Fellowship. The basic text, "How & Why," unauthorized price increases, their bellicose actions leading up to the lawsuit, and much more. There is also the likelihood of financial malfeasance and perhaps even outright financial corruption. Consider that we are putting addicts in a situation where they are managing a multi-million dollar business with very little accountability. Then consider the WSO by-laws. Article 6.04 of their



by-laws permits the WSO, Inc. to conduct "up to 49%" of its business with "interested persons," such as BOD Directors, or their families. It also states that exceeding the 49% limit has no effect on contracts and agreements made by WSO, Inc. (In other words, there is no limit, really.) Article 9.03 is the article to which members are referred by WSO personnel when inquiring about the corporation's finances. It states that only Directors, or their agents or attorneys, are permitted access to the WSO's books. Members of the Fellowship are not permitted access. Nor is any kind of independent audit done, nor any kind of thorough financial report made, nor any kind of budget proposal presented. For the most part, we don't know what they are doing with the money (millions) that WSO, Inc. takes in.

This situation practically begs to be taken advantage of. It is actually unfair for us to put addicts in such a tempting situation. Corruption and outright embezzlement could be accomplished with relative ease, by someone who knew what they were doing, behind the veil which shields WSO, Inc. from the Fellowship's scrutiny.

A lawsuit challenging WSO, Inc.'s fitness as our fiduciary trust would have the power to deliver to World "discovery motions" which would give those filing suit complete access to WSO, Inc.'s books. I have a feeling that what would then be found would sink WSO, Inc. and perhaps negatively impact the wellbeing of some Board members.

My feeling is that, unfortunately, legal action seems to be our most viable alternative. (To those who are involved in the current lawsuit, I am willing to help out in any way I can.)

I do have one other idea. In the infamous Guide to Service, there is one chapter I really like. It is the chapter on national service communities. It gives every nation on Earth (except the United States) the right to establish a national service structure that will best serve that nation. Neither World nor any other nation can infringe on that right.

Why not us? Why should we be the ONLY NATION that lacks the freedom to

create our service structure? The Guide to Service will probably go up for approval at the 1993 WSC, unless World unilaterally implements it. (The Georgia RSR told me the incoming WSC Chair said they might do that. The 12 Concepts delegates to them the authority to do that, I suppose.) Maybe we should propose at the '93 WSC that American regions have the right to vote, by themselves, on whether or not to approve the chapter on national service in the U.S. We could challenge the international Fellowship that they don't have the right to impose on us since they have the autonomy to do that, especially considering that we support many of them.

This might be a way that a sizable segment of the American Fellowship could decide to form its own national service structure. Not a split from the current structure. Simply a choice to exercise the rights the rest of the Fellowship enjoys. If some of us, lets say the East Coast or even a scattered collection of regions across the country, could unite and do this, World could not say no. They couldn't afford to say no.

Once we had a new national service structure in place, World would be largely irrelevant to us. We would need, through legal action or otherwise, to secure our rights to publish literature. Once that was done, we would need nothing from World. We could go to the new WSC once a year and check in, and that would be it. For me, that is the ultimate goal. To make World no longer a source of trouble for the Fellowship, at least in the U.S., whether by taking away their rights to our literature, dismantling them altogether, or creating a national service structure which makes them irrelevant. Not by running away and creating a new service structure. I believe that effort would be doomed to failure. Let's stand and fight for what we believe in. Spiritual principles are on our side, as long as we stay within the traditions and keep our focus on restoring autonomy to the Fellowship.

These are some ideas I wanted to share with you. Please share your ideas with me. I am prepared to do whatever I can to help restore the Traditions.

Yours in Fellowship, *Bob Ford* (404) 436-0180