

A Reading on Mount Carmel Youth Ranch AKA Triangle Cross Ranch in Wyoming  
Guest Sermon by Bob Hummel, Guest Sermonizer for October 12th, 2022 and beyond.....

I was a resident of Mount Carmel youth ranch from December 2003 to February 2005. I was also employed by the ranch from approximately August 2005 through October 2005 as a ranch hand. During my time there this is what I witnessed. Triangle Cross Ranch, formerly Mount Carmel Youth Ranch, was formally incorporated by Jerry Schneider in 1992 after a tragic accident left him disabled. Unable to operate his ranch, he turned to the community for help. As he put it, the boys just kept coming, and he kept “helping” them. By all means, it sounds like it started off with a good purpose.

Fast forward to 2003, I was sent out to the ranch for a multitude of reasons. Academics, depression and self-esteem issues were the 3 main reasons. Jerry assured my parents that he could help. I didn't know what mount Carmel youth ranch was other than a scenery change as put by my parents. I arrived December 29, 2003 and upon arrival was subjected to a jail style strip search by Steve Alexander. I was placed into the wilderness program where we lived in a canvas tent and cooked very basic meals over a cast iron wood stove in the tent. I spent the better part of 2 months in that tent with inadequate clothing. During minus 30-degree days all I had on my feet were a pair of cotton socks and summer hiking boots. My clothes didn't fit, as they were purchased by the ranch prior to my arrival. Those clothes included an oversize coat and wrangler blue jeans as well as a few button up shirts.

Fast forward to day 20 at mount carmel youth ranch. My parents initially said I would be going home after 3 weeks. On day 20, I was allowed my first communication with them in the form of a phone call. They informed me I would not be coming home as scheduled. I tried pleading with them and telling them how cold I constantly was. The phone call was disconnected by Matt Schneider, Jerry's son and the assistant director. I couldn't believe my parents lied to me. I was in tears. Matt told me to calm down, I couldn't, I didn't know how. Matt told me to do push-ups, but I refused. He then told me to do a higher number than initially instructed. I still refused. He then said you don't know who I am, do you? I replied with " I don't give a goddamn who you are!" The next thing I knew, I found myself falling over the back of the chair I was sitting in. I hit the floor and my face went numb. The next sensation I felt was something warm traversing my face. It was blood. It took a few moments to realize Matt had bull rushed me, grabbed my neck with his left hand to push me over the back of the chair I was sitting in and once I was on the ground punched me in the face with a closed fist. He then proceeded to tell me if I'm ever told to do anything again, I better listen the first time, or this will happen again. Steve Alexander witnessed the entire incident but did not do or say anything to stop it.

I was put on solitary, which entailed losing food privileges. In the wilderness program, I was basically limited to bread and water, maybe cold refried beans. I also was punished by doing all the chores. I slept on the cold ground in the middle of winter outside the tent in negative temperature nights with a sleeping bag I brought from home that was rated for 50-degree weather. Things went on like that for maybe another week. I stayed in the wilderness program for approximately 2 months. In this program, we were forced to go to

church and pray every day, once we got back to the camp, usually we ran at least the last 2 miles back, we ate breakfast which usually consisted of tortillas filled with peanut butter and did ranch chores, whether it be fix fence, cut wood, or scrape timber beams so a log cabin could be built, we did it. During the Wyoming winter in a pair of hiking boots. Repeated requests for winter footwear and insulating clothing were continuously ignored or denied. I was very uncomfortable around certain staff members. Matt Schneider, obviously for hitting me in the face and several others who in their counseling sessions asked strange questions like how often do we masturbate and what we think about while we're masturbating. These were grown men asking these questions. It all seemed strange but if I didn't answer I was going to get hit again. That particular individual is now deceased. Homosexual activity occurred in the wilderness program amongst other students. Those students were usually kicked out of the program despite that homosexual activities were something Jerry promised he could cure young men of. It was a disease to the Schneiders. During my time in the wilderness program, we were allowed to shower twice a week.

After those approximate 2 months, I was moved to the bunkhouse. I slept indoors in a bed and was given better food. My school work started then. Our schedule was similar, we cleaned the bunkhouse first thing in the morning, went to church, ran the last 2 to 3 miles back, ate breakfast, did the dishes, finished cleaning up and did school work. School work was always over by 12 PM. The rest of the afternoon was spent working on the ranch. We didn't stop until after the work was done, the work varied with the season, but usually it entailed tending to cattle, moving metal irrigation pipe that weighed over 50 pounds, walking fields with a shovel to make sure the water was irrigating the fields. Stacking bales of hay that weighed over 50 pounds, building barbed wire fences. Tending Jerry's cattle heard that was sometimes in the open wilderness where wolves, grizzly bears and mountain lions inhabited. On multiple occasions I witnessed Jerry calling other boys over to help him wipe his butt after he went to the bathroom when he was out supervising our work detail.

While in the bunkhouse our parents were told we were given a monthly allowance, that happened maybe 4 or 5 months out of the 14 months I was there. Jerry is documented in a newspaper article as saying we were paid employees of the ranch. We were never consistently paid. Sometimes, we worked 18-hour days in the spring when laying irrigation pipe. We didn't do school work; we didn't do anything else but work when the ranch needed it. We were constantly subjected to an environment where safety precautions were not taken, it was just get it done. During my time in the bunkhouse, I was subjected to reduced rations in the form of punishment. Sleep deprivation as form of punishment. Being told by staff members I had to stop taking my doctor prescribed medication. Being forced to sleep in a closet. Being forced to sleep outdoors during winter without adequate clothing. In my time there I witnessed several staff members under the influence of methamphetamine or prescription pain killers. Occasionally, I found what I now know to be methamphetamine paraphernalia. In my last several months at the ranch, I was given a high-powered hunting rifle by Jerry Schneider and allowed to go hunting by myself, usually for coyotes. Occasionally, I was told to take another boy with me. This boy in particular frequently experienced uncontrollable mood swing

episodes. Usually, I was afraid. In December 2004, another student put a rope around my neck and choked me until I blacked out. I required surgery from this incident, during which 2 fractures were repaired. One was from that incident, the other was older, I can only assume it was from when Matt Schneider hit me on my 20<sup>th</sup> day. The cause of the older break was never verified due in part to my feigning ignorance as to the cause. A Park County Sheriffs deputy was dispatched to investigate the assault. In the meantime, the boy who assaulted me ran away while on instructions to go for a punishment run and plant a small flag alongside road 1AF when he felt the distance warranted the punishment. I was not allowed to speak with my parents prior to being forced to speak with that sheriff's deputy. Matt Schneider was in the room the entire time I was talking to the deputy, monitoring everything I said. My parents were notified several days after the incident by staff members and they immediately wanted me to be seen by a doctor. The doctor asked why I hadn't come sooner. I replied with, I couldn't. That was true, Jerry and the staff at Mount Carmel Youth ranch didn't let me see a doctor for injuries sustained that required surgery, until my parents demanded I do so.

Some people will ask why I did it. Stockholm's syndrome sums it up perfectly. For the first time in some of our lives, Jerry was to all of us what we needed. A father figure. He was willing to step in and be that person that us troubled young men so desperately needed or wanted. He told us he was proud of us and that he loved us, as long as we kept working on his ranch. We were brainwashed into thinking he loved us, when really all he did was take advantage of us. This manipulation was very carefully orchestrated in an effort to further Jerry's own interests and agenda. The depth of Jerry's "love" was solely dependent on what and how much we could do for him in the form of manual labor or tuition money. He played the humble disabled cowboy very well and used that injury to take advantage of countless families looking for any port in the storm for their struggling son. He benefitted from countless families' situations in the form of tuition dollars and free labor, that he otherwise would have had to pay employees to do.

I never reported anything that went on to authorities for several reasons. One being almost immediately upon arrival we were made to believe we were deceitful and manipulative boys who have no integrity. Even if we tried saying something, nobody would believe us. Ranch staff had already told our parents we would say anything we could to get out of here. Secondly, all communication was censored including mail and phone calls. If we said something they didn't like in a letter, we were forced to rewrite it saying we were having fun and enjoying our time etc. Phone calls were immediately disconnected by staff members if we began to say something negative about the ranch. We were prisoners under the guise of therapy. Secondly, whenever a Department of Family Services inspection was scheduled to occur, whether it be random or scheduled, we were never around for the inspection. We spent several days prior cleaning and making everything look as good as it could for the inspector. Whenever that inspection occurred, we were always on a different part of the ranch, sometimes miles away working. In other words, we never had the opportunity to talk one on one to a DFS representative. DFS claims these inspections were random, but for some reason beforehand we would always spend days cleaning prior to their arrival. Somehow Jerry knew they were coming. It always happened that way.

Jerry made a comment to me recently during a phone call from him to myself to inquire about a lawyer contacting me regarding an ongoing lawsuit against Mount Carmel Youth Ranch / Triangle Cross Ranch. During this phone call he made the comment when I confronted him about Matt hitting me while I was a resident at the ranch. When I wouldn't give Jerry the information he wanted, Jerry made the comment: "Apparently Matt didn't hit you hard enough." Comments like that from a person who parents entrust to help their struggling son are the reason Jerry, Matt and Mark Schneider deserve to remain on any and all watch lists available to the general public.

I believe Jerry and the entire Schneider family should remain on the watch list for several reasons, primarily being, these people are predators who take advantage of desperate family's situations for financial gain. Personally, I can claim physical abuse, by staff and other residents. I can claim being brainwashed by the Schneider family into believing they are doing God's work. God's work doesn't entail hitting children and forcing them to work countless unpaid hours improperly clothed in adverse weather working around wolves and grizzly bears with no protection. God's work does not entail emotionally abusing children to the point of them thinking they are worthless unless they do whatever the Schneiders say to do. Jerry is quoted in newspapers lying to reporters about our treatment here and goes so far as to move residents to a different state to avoid oversight by the Wyoming Department of Family Services. He continuously skirts around the issue of whether or not he is providing treatment that requires a certification to do so. As the Wyoming Supreme Court ruled, "healthy individuals do not pay for the privilege of stacking hay." Shortly thereafter, Jerry is quoted as saying he moved his operations to Montana where Wyoming agencies have no jurisdiction. I frequently saw Jerry write Mount Carmel Youth Ranch checks for his own benefit. He frequently used our tuition dollars that were supposed to be spent for our care at Cabela's in Billings Montana, or for personal purchases at different vendors in the Park County Wyoming Area. Jerry's operation was always a for profit entity in which he was the only one who benefitted. His daughter, Angie Woodward opened her own program, Trinity Teen Solutions, for girls which is now closed due to ongoing legal investigations. Matt Schneider opened his own program, Rocky Mountain Frontier, that mimics Triangle Cross and works very closely with Triangle Cross Ranch. Pictures of his program were taken on Triangle Cross Ranch, formerly Mount Carmel Youth Ranch property. Mark Schneider is the ranch foreman at Triangle Cross. Tom and Susan George, Susan, Jerry's daughter and Tom, Jerry's son in law are involved in Triangle Cross. Practically the entire family is involved in this industry under the guise of helping struggling youth. The reality is, they're causing more harm than good. They're not doing God's work; this is a very profitable scheming enterprise they don't want to let go of. I believe Jerry started out with good intentions, however, once he realized how profitable this could be, he focused only on the money. The rest of his family followed suit. These people are dangerous predators and need to be avoided at all costs.

[End of Guest Sermon. For more information, see <https://www.heal-online.org/mtcarmel.htm>. COPE offers thanks to Bob Hummel for the guest sermon.]

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

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