A man with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue pinstripe suit, a white shirt, and a yellow and blue checkered tie, stands behind a dark wooden desk. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His hands are resting on the desk. In the background, there is a large, light-colored world map on the wall and a lamp on the right side.

# INSIDE SCIENTOLOGY

**High-ranking defectors provide an unprecedented inside look at the Church of Scientology and its leader, David Miscavige.**

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# INSIDE SCIENTOLOGY

## About Part One

This *Times* special report focuses on the Church of Scientology and its leader David Miscavige. Former executives have come forward to describe a culture of intimidation and violence under Miscavige. These chapters were first published by the *Times* on June 21, 22 and 23, 2009.

» MORE

## About Part Two

More former church staffers are now on the record with accounts of abuses by Miscavige. This part was first published by the *Times* on Aug. 2, 2009.

## Glossary

Some of the terms found in these stories.

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High-ranking defectors say Scientology's leader enforces loyalty with beatings and bullying.

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- » A Letter from David Miscavige
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**About Part Three**

Some staffers who left the church say the church paid private investigators to spy on them and infiltrate their groups for years. The former No. 2 church officer in Clearwater says he was locked in a cabin aboard the church cruise ship, the *Freewinds*, after his first attempt to leave. These chapters were first published by the *Times* on Nov. 1, 2, 3, 15, and Dec. 31, 2009.

**Online**

[tampabay.com/scientology](http://tampabay.com/scientology)

Go online for more on the Church of Scientology, including video interviews, reader comments and previous coverage of the church.

This Digital Newsbook was produced for the *Times* at the Reynolds Journalism Institute in Columbia, MO.  
[www.rjionline.org](http://www.rjionline.org)

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## About This Story

Mark C. "Marty" Rathbun left the Church of Scientology staff in late 2004, ending a 27-year career that saw him rise to be among the organization's top leaders. For the past four years, he has lived a low-profile life in Texas. Some speculated he had died.

In February, Rathbun posted an Internet message announcing he was available to counsel other disaffected Scientologists.

"Having dug myself out of the dark pit where many who leave the church land," he wrote, "I began lending a hand to others similarly situated."

Contacted by the *St. Petersburg Times*, Rathbun agreed to tell the story of his years in Scientology and what led to his leaving. The *Times* interviewed him at his home in Texas, and he came to Clearwater to revisit some of the scenes he described.

Seeking to corroborate Rathbun's story, the newspaper contacted others who were in Scientology during the same period and have left the church: Mike Rinder, one of Rathbun's closest associates for two decades; Tom De Vocht, whom Rathbun named as key to his decision to leave; and later, Amy Scobee.

Rathbun and Rinder were well known to the reporters, who had interviewed them dozens of times, sometimes combatively, through years of controversy in Clearwater. They also hosted the reporters in Los Angeles in 1998, when Miscavige granted the only print media interview he has given.

Two reporters met Rinder in Denver, where he now lives, but he declined to be interviewed. About a month later, two Washington-based lawyers who work for the church showed up unannounced in Denver, informed Rinder that they had heard about the newspaper's visit and asked what he had revealed.

They reminded him that as one of the church's top legal officers, attorney-client privilege did not end when he left the church. They told him he could hurt the church by going public.

Weeks later, after the church provided the newspaper with a 2007 video of Rinder heatedly denying that Miscavige hit him and others, Rinder decided to talk to the *Times*.

De Vocht was interviewed in Winter Haven. Scobee was interviewed in Pinellas County, when she and her husband came to visit relatives.

The reporters interviewed the four defectors multiple times, and met with church spokesmen and lawyers for 25 hours.

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**Thomas C. Tobin** has covered the Church of Scientology off and on since 1996. He can be reached at [tobin@sptimes.com](mailto:tobin@sptimes.com)

# THE TRUTH RUNDOWN

HIGH-RANKING DEFECTORS SAY SCIENTOLOGY'S LEADER ENFORCES LOYALTY WITH BEATINGS AND BULLYING.



Times (1998)

**After L. Ron Hubbard died, David Miscavige became Scientology's leader. Former church executives say Miscavige beat his staff. Church officials say the defectors are lying.**

BY JOE CHILDS AND THOMAS C. TOBIN  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**he leader of the Church of Scientology strode into the room with a boom box and an announcement: Time for a game of musical chairs. David Miscavige had kept more than 30 members of his church's executive staff cooped up for weeks in

a small office building outside Los Angeles, not letting them leave except to grab a shower. They slept on the floor, their food carted in.

Their assignment was to develop strategic plans for the church. But the leader trashed their every idea and berated them as incompetents and enemies, of him and the church.

Prove your devotion, Miscavige told them, by winning at musical chairs. Everyone else — losers, all of you — will be banished to Scientology outposts around the world. If families are split up, too bad.

To the music of Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* they played through the night, parading around a conference room in their Navy-style uniforms, grown men and women wrestling over chairs.

The next evening, early in 2004, Miscavige gathered the group and out of nowhere slapped a manager named Tom De Vocht, threw him to the ground and delivered more blows. De Vocht took the beating and the humiliation in silence — the way other executives always took the leader's attacks.

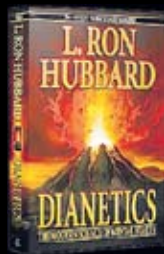
This account comes from executives who for decades were key figures in Scientology's powerful inner circle. Marty Rathbun and Mike Rinder, the highest-ranking executives to leave the church, are speaking out for the first time.

Two other former executives who defected also agreed to interviews with the *St. Petersburg Times*: De Vocht, who for years oversaw the church's spiritual headquarters in Clearwater, and Amy Scobee, who helped create Scientology's celebrity network, which caters to the likes of John Travolta and Tom Cruise.

## WHAT IS THE TRUTH RUNDOWN?

It's a Scientology term for a confession in which a member searches his memory for sins that caused him to believe something bad about the church and its leaders.

### SCIENTOLOGY'S ORIGINS



Scientology, which means "knowing how to know," is based on the works of L. Ron Hubbard. His best-seller, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, was published in 1950. Scientology was established in Los Angeles in 1954.

One by one, the four defectors walked away from the only life they knew. That Rathbun and Rinder are speaking out is a stunning reversal because they were among Miscavige's closest associates, Haldeman and Ehrlichman to his Nixon.

Now they provide an unprecedented look inside the upper reaches of the tightly controlled organization. They reveal:

- Physical violence permeated Scientology's international management team. Miscavige set the tone, routinely attacking his lieutenants. Rinder says the leader attacked him some 50 times.

Rathbun, Rinder and De Vocht admit that they, too, attacked their colleagues, to demonstrate loyalty to Miscavige and prove their mettle.

- Staffers are disciplined and controlled by a multilayered system of "ecclesiastical justice." It includes publicly confessing sins and crimes to a group of peers, being ordered to

jump into a pool fully clothed, facing embarrassing "security checks" or, worse, being isolated as a "suppressive person."

At the pinnacle of the hierarchy, Miscavige commands such power that managers follow his orders, however bizarre, with lemming-like obedience.

- Church staffers covered up how they botched the care of Lisa McPherson, a Scientologist who died after they held her 17 days in isolation at Clearwater's Fort Harrison Hotel.

Rathbun, who Miscavige put in charge of dealing with the fallout from the case, admits that he ordered the destruction of incriminating evidence. He and others also reveal that Miscavige made an embarrassing miscalculation on McPherson's Scientology counseling.

- With Miscavige calling the shots and Rathbun among those at his side, the church muscled the IRS into granting Scientology tax-exempt status. Of-

## TIMELINE » SCIENTOLOGY HISTORY



**May 1950:** L. Ron Hubbard's book, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, is published.

**1954:** The first Church of Scientology opens in Los Angeles.

**Late 1975:** The Southern Land Development and Leasing Corp. buys the Fort Harrison Hotel and old Bank of Clearwater in downtown, and leases it to a secretive group called United Churches of Florida.



fering fresh perspective on one of the church's crowning moments, Rathbun details an extraordinary campaign of public pressure backed by thousands of lawsuits.

- To prop up revenues, Miscavige has turned to long-time parishioners, urging them to buy material that the church markets as must-have, improved sacred scripture.

Church officials deny the accusations. Miscavige never hit a single church staffer, not once, they said.

On May 13, the *Times* asked to interview Miscavige, in person or by phone, and renewed the request repeatedly the past five weeks. Church officials said Miscavige's schedule would not permit an interview before July.

At 5:50 p.m. Saturday, Miscavige e-mailed the *Times* to protest the newspaper's decision to publish instead of waiting until he was available. His letter said he would produce information "annihilating the credibility"

of the defectors. Beloved by millions of Scientologists, church spokesmen say, Miscavige has guided the church through a quarter-century of growth.

The defectors are liars, they say, bitter apostates who have dug up tired allegations from the Internet and inflated the importance of the positions they held in Scientology's dedicated work force known as the Sea Org. They say it was the defectors who physically abused staff members, and when Miscavige found out, he put a stop to it and demoted them.

Now they say the defectors are trying to stage a coup, inventing allegations so they can topple Miscavige and seize control of the church.

The defectors deny it. They say they are speaking out because Miscavige must be exposed.

Rathbun says the leader's mistreatment of staff has driven away managers and paralyzed those who stay. "It's becoming chaos because ... there's no



**Jan. 28, 1976:** It's announced that Scientology is the real buyer of the Fort Harrison Hotel.

**1977:** Scientology files the first of many lawsuits contesting its Pinellas County property tax bill. In Washington and Los Angeles, federal agents raid Scientology offices. According to FBI files, Scientologists arrived in Clearwater with plans to control civic leaders and discredit critics. The files also reveal that Scientologists staged a phony hit-and-run accident with Clearwater Mayor Gabe Cazares in an attempt to discredit him.



form of organization. Nobody's respected because he's constantly denigrating and beating on people."

"I don't want people to continue to be hurt and tricked and lied to," Rinder said. "I was unsuccessful in changing anything through my own lack of courage when I was inside the church."

"But I believe these abuses need to end ... This rot being instigated from inside Scientology actually is more destructive to the Scientology movement than anything external to it."

## BEATINGS: RANDOM, WHIMSICAL

At 49, Miscavige is fit and tanned, his chiseled good looks accented by intense blue eyes. His frame is on the short side at 5 feet 5, but solid, with a matching, vise-like handshake.

The voice, resonant and strong, can transfix a crowd of thousands. Many call him "COB," because he is chairman of the board of the entity responsible for safeguarding Scientology,

founded by L. Ron Hubbard in 1954.

"He is one of the most capable, intelligent individuals I've ever met," Rathbun said. "But L. Ron Hubbard says the intelligence scale doesn't necessarily line up with the sanity scale. Adolf Hitler was brilliant. Stalin was brilliant. They were geniuses. But they were also on a certain level stark, staring mad."

Rathbun, Rinder, Scobee and De Vocht say they participated in and witnessed madness, from musical chairs to repeated physical abuse.

What triggered Miscavige's outbursts? The victims usually had no clue.

"If it wasn't the answer he wanted to hear, he'd lose it," De Vocht said. "If it was contrary to how he thought, he'd lose it. If he found it to be smart aleck, or it was a better answer than he had, he would lose it."

Rathbun and Rinder list the executives they saw Miscavige attack:



### October 1979:

Hubbard's wife, Mary Sue, and 10 other church staffers are convicted of conspiring to steal federal government documents and cover it up.

### December 1979:

An estimated 3,000 gather at Clearwater City Hall to protest the church coming to Clearwater. Across the street, Scientologists stage a counter rally, dressed as clowns and wearing animal costumes.

Marc Yager: At least 20 times.

Guillaume Lesevre: At least 10 times.

Ray Mithoff: Rathbun said Miscavige “would regularly hit this guy open-handed upside the head real hard and jar him. Or grab him by the neck and throw him on the floor.”

Norman Starkey: “Right in the parking lot, (Miscavige) just beat the living f--- out of him, got him on the ground and then started kicking him when he was down,” Rathbun said.

He said he saw Rinder “get beat up at least a dozen times just in those last four years ... some of them were pretty gruesome.”

Said Rinder: “Yager was like a punching bag. So was I.”

He added: “The issue wasn’t the physical pain of it. The issue was the humiliation and the domination.... It’s the fact that the domination you’re getting — hit in the face, kicked — and you can’t do anything about it. If you did try, you’d be attacking the COB.

“It was random and whimsical. It could be the look on your face. Or not answering a question quickly. But it always was a punishment.”

Scobee said Miscavige never laid a hand on her or any other woman, but she witnessed many attacks, including the time the leader choked Rinder until his face turned purple. Rinder confirmed that account.

De Vocht estimated that from 2003 to 2005, he saw Miscavige strike staffers as many as 100 times.

Rathbun, Rinder and De Vocht admit that they, in turn, hit others. In January 2004, Rathbun pummeled Rinder and had to be pried off by several church staffers.

“Yes, that incident happened,” Rinder said. “It wasn’t the only time that Marty or I was involved in some form of physical violence with people.”

He recalled holding a church staffer against a wall by the collar and pressing into his throat.



**Jan. 24, 1986:** L. Ron Hubbard dies of a stroke at his ranch in California. He was 74. The honor of announcing his death falls to David Miscavige, who delivers the news to Scientologists at the Hollywood Palladium. Miscavige says Hubbard's body “had ceased to be useful, and had in fact become an impediment” to the important work he has left. “The being we knew as L. Ron Hubbard still exists.”

Rathbun said he attacked many people, many times, including throwing Lesevre across a table, boxing Starkey's ears, and tackling Yager down a flight of stairs — all, he said, on Miscavige's orders. He said he threw another staffer against the hood of a cab at Los Angeles International Airport. As a crowd gathered to watch, he cocked his fist and told him to improve his attitude.

De Vocht said he “punched a couple of guys” during one of many sessions where managers confessed their wrongdoings to their peers, a gathering that got raucous and physical. Embarrassed about it now, he says he easily rationalized it then: “If I don't attack I'm going to be attacked. It's a survival instinct in a weird situation that no one should be in.”

The four defectors each said the leader established a culture that encouraged physical violence.

“It had become the accepted way of

doing things,” Rinder said. “If COB did it, it was okay for everybody else to do it, too.”

Rinder said Rathbun was Miscavige's enforcer. “If Dave didn't want to go do any dirty work himself, he sent Marty to do it for him.”

Rathbun doesn't deny it. It's difficult to get the truth, he said, “unless you talk to somebody who's got some dirt on their hands. And I freely admit I got dirt on my hands, and I feel terrible about it. That's why I'm doing what I'm doing.”

Rathbun wasn't exempt from Miscavige's attacks. “He once grabbed me by the neck and banged my head against the wall.”

Nobody fought back.

“The thing is, he's got this huge entourage,” Scobee said. “He's the ‘savior’ of everything because he has to bail everybody out because we're all incompetent a-----, which is what he repeatedly tells us.

**May 1987:** Establishing himself as church leader, Miscavige becomes Chairman of the Board of the Religious Technology Center, which owns the religious trademarks of *Dianetics* and Scientology.



**Feb. 14, 1992:** David Miscavige sits for his only television interview, with ABC's Nightline, hosted by Ted Koppel.

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“You don’t have any money. You don’t have job experience. You don’t have anything. And he could put you on the streets and ruin you.”

Church spokesman Tommy Davis said the defectors are lying. Responding to Rinder’s contention that Miscavige attacked him some 50 times, Davis said: “He’s absolutely lying.”

Yager, Starkey, Mithoff, and Lesevre all emphatically told the *Times* that Miscavige never attacked them.

Davis produced court affidavits in which Rathbun and Rinder, while still in Scientology’s top ranks, praised the leader as a stellar person and vigorously denied rumors he had abused staff.

Davis pointed to a 1998 *Times* story in which Miscavige denied the same rumors. Rathbun backed him, saying that in 20 years working with Miscavige, he never saw the leader raise a hand to anyone.

“That’s not his temperament,”

Rathbun said then. “He’s got enough personal horsepower that he doesn’t need to resort to things like that.”

Says Rathbun now: “That was the biggest lie I ever told you.”

Davis played video of a confrontation between Rinder and a BBC reporter in London in 2007, just before Rinder left the church. The reporter repeatedly asked about the Miscavige rumors, which Rinder heatedly denied as “rubbish.”

Now Rinder says that he lied to protect the church, and that his loyalty to Miscavige was misplaced. He said he did then what Miscavige’s staff is doing today: “Just deny it. Nope. Not true. Never happened.”

The Church of Scientology describes itself as working for “a civilization without insanity, without criminals and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where man is free to rise to greater heights.”

## Scientists Get Tax Exemption, Ending Long Battle With the U.S.

By STEPHEN LANKER  
Washington Post Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17 (AP) — The IRS has agreed to grant a tax exemption to the Church of Scientology, ending one of the longest-running tax disputes in American history.

“This puts an end to what has been an incredibly long and bitter battle,” said Marty Rathbun, president of a Scientology organization, who said the settlement would end a decade of tax battles that reached after two

Widespread Exemptions

Officials at the Internal Revenue Service said the settlement would be used to settle the dispute of the church’s status as a religious organization in local federal courts reached after two

**October 1993:** The IRS recognizes Scientology as a tax-exempt church, settling a 40-year battle. It’s a monumental victory for Scientology, not only for untold millions of dollars in taxes it would save, but for legitimizing it as a religion. *The New York Times* story announcing the settlement identifies Marty Rathbun as “president of a Scientology organization” that got the exemption and quotes him in the second paragraph: “This puts an end to what has been an historic war. It’s like the Palestinians and the Israelis shaking hands.”

Scobee says Miscavige does not practice what Scientology preaches. He liberally labels church members as enemies, which forbids any contact with family and friends still in Scientology.

“You cannot call yourself a religious leader as you beat people, as you confine people, as you rip apart families,” she said. “If I was trying to destroy Scientology, I would leave David Miscavige right where he is because he’s doing a fantastic job of it.”

## **‘THIS NEVER HAPPENED’**

Character assassination.

That’s what the defectors are doing to Miscavige, according to a team of two church lawyers and two spokesmen.

Rathbun, Rinder, De Vocht and Scobee: All of them failed at their jobs, broke Sea Org rules and were ethically suspect, the team said. Stack these four failures against a man of Miscav-

ige’s stature and it’s clear who is credible and who is not.

“It’s not a question of they have a version and we have a version. It’s that this never happened,” said Monique Yingling, a non-Scientologist lawyer who has represented the church for more than 20 years. “There is a story here, and it’s not what you’ve been told.”

As the lawyers and spokesmen defended Miscavige and sought to discredit his detractors, they produced materials from the four defectors’ “ethics files” — confessions, contritions, laments that the church keeps to document their failures.

The documents illuminate a world of church justice outsiders rarely see. This ethics system keeps Scientologists striving to stay productive. It relies on the notion that at any given time, every human activity can be reduced to a statistic and everything — a group, a person, someone’s job or mar-

**Jan. 25, 1994:**

Pinellas property appraiser rules \$19 million of church property tax exempt.



**October 2004:** Tom Cruise receives Scientology’s Freedom Medal of Valor. Cruise effusively praises David Miscavige.

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SCIENTOLOGY**

riage — can be measured and placed in one of 12 “conditions.”

The lower conditions include “Confusion,” “Treason” and “Enemy.” The highest condition is “Power,” followed by “Power Change” and “Affluence.”

Moving up the ethics ladder requires that the subject pen confessions or soul-searching memos called “formulas,” which are said to better the individual as he or she examines what went wrong. These memos also can give the church a ready source of written material to use against members who would turn against Scientology.

More documents are generated when a person wants to leave, or “blow.”

In 1959, Hubbard wrote a policy stating that a person leaves as a kind of noble gesture when he can’t help himself from injuring the church. To justify leaving, Hubbard believed, the person thinks up bad things to say about the church.

Anyone who leaves has committed “overts” (harmful acts) against the church and is withholding them. The church is obligated to make such people come clean, Hubbard said, because withholding overts against Scientology can lead to suicide or death by disease. They must write down their transgressions to remain in good standing when they leave.

Yingling and Davis said the church doesn’t relish using documents from ethics files. But after the four defectors spoke out against Miscavige, the lawyer and spokesman said they had no choice.

They produced documents showing Scobee violated Sea Org rules on “romantic involvement outside of marriage.” Scobee said the church is exaggerating.

She acknowledged violating the rules by committing a sexual act in a supervisor’s room, but noted the man involved was her future husband. An-

**March 2007:** The BBC program Panorama was preparing an expose on Scientology when reporter John Sweeney confronted Mike Rinder in London and repeatedly asked if Miscavige ever hit anyone, including Rinder.



Rinder, far left, repeatedly called the allegations “rubbish” and “absolutely false, totally and utterly” and accused the reporter of ambushing him.

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other document said she “started a relationship” with a man not her husband in 1988. Scobee said it was a non-Scientologist electrician who asked her to run away with him. She said she declined and reported it to a supervisor but was disciplined anyway.

A document from July 2003 cited poor performance and declared her unfit to work at the California base.

Scobee counters that the church kept her in positions of responsibility for more than 20 years. She was pictured in a 1996 church magazine as one of the “most proven” and “highly dedicated” senior executives in Scientology.

“The point is, it doesn’t matter if I was God or if I was a sloppy janitor,” Scobee said. “What I saw is what I saw.”

De Vocht was in a condition of “Treason” when he authored a memo in 2004 saying he made a land deal in Clearwater that lost the church \$1 million. In a 2002 letter to Miscavige, he confessed to squandering \$10 million in church funds through waste and overspending on two projects.

Asked about those documents, De Vocht said the writings in the ethics formulas reflect the distorted culture created by Miscavige, not reality. “You say whatever you have to, to appear to be cooperative. It’s not a voluntary action. It’s a cover your a--, get with the



## WHAT CHURCH MEMBERS BELIEVE

Scientology describes itself as the handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, others and all of life. A person is an immortal spiritual being — a “thetan,” from the Greek letter “theta,” meaning “spirit” — who has a body and a mind and lives on from lifetime to lifetime. By following Scientology practices, a person can achieve spiritual awareness. Scientologists believe that the “reactive mind,” the part that works on a stimulus-response basis — not under the individual’s control — commands one’s awareness, purposes, thoughts, body and action.

program thing or you’re going to get beat up.”

Praising Miscavige was part of the formula, De Vocht said. “He’s our pope, our leader, and he can’t do wrong. ... If you say, ‘I’ll do everything I can to get it right,’ then you can be okay. You don’t have an option other than to bow down and say, You’re right and I’m wrong.”

The church says that Rinder, Scientology’s top spokesman for decades, is an inveterate liar. In its ethics files, the



church says, Rinder admits that he lied 43 times over the years.

“It was a real problem, Mike’s propensity to lie.... Obviously he had an issue with the truth,” said Davis, Rinder’s successor as spokesman.

After denying Miscavige hit him or anyone else, Rinder is lying now, Yingling said. “He left because he was demoted... He is bitter now and he has in his bitterness latched on to the one allegation he so vehemently denied for so many years.”

## PRACTICES

Through spiritual counseling called “auditing,” Scientologists believe they can reduce and ultimately erase the power of the reactive mind and reach the State of Clear, a landmark step in the full discovery of one’s true nature. A lie detector-like device called an e-meter, below, is used in the auditing process.



Added Davis: “One of the things he was known for saying was, ‘Well, if I’m so bad, why keep asking me to do things?’ You know the answer to that question?... The ultimate answer to that question is ‘Mike, you know what, you’re right. Why keep asking.’ And we stopped asking. And then he left and nobody came for him.”

Like the other defectors, Rinder says he’s sure he wrote whatever is in the ethics files, but he says the admissions are meaningless, they were just whatever his superiors wanted to hear. “All of these things were written to try and get into good graces or curry favor.”

Davis said Rinder has not been able to deal with his fall from spokesman for an international church to his current, workaday job.

“Mike left. I think we can all agree he is bitter,” Davis said. “This is a guy who ran with the big dogs in the tall grass ... it’s a very exciting life. And now he is selling cars, and it must be a hell of a shock.”

The church released numerous pages of files it kept on Rathbun. Among them: a 1994 letter that said he had completed a Truth Rundown — one of many types of confessionals — and apologizing for leaving the church briefly the year before; three confessions for striking and verbally abusing

staff dozens of times; and documents where he admits that he mishandled situations.

In a 2003 document, Rathbun writes a “public announcement” detailing two decades of flubs, including: making himself out to be more important than he was, making more work for Miscavige, mismanaging staff and messing up major assignments, including the church’s long-running battle with the IRS.

Rathbun says he wrote what Miscavige wanted to hear.

The church made special note of an affidavit dated June 6, 2009 — after the *Times* asked the church about Rathbun — authored by a Sea Org member whose name the church blacked out. She criticized Rathbun for being violent and abusive and playing a role in her family’s recent effort to wrest her out of Scientology.

Rathbun says yes, he tried to help the family, because the woman voiced strong doubts about returning to Scientology.

Like De Vocht’s, many of Rathbun’s confessions are marked by bountiful praise of Miscavige. He writes, for example, that the leader “single-handedly salvaged Scientology.”

Scientology’s international management cadre lives and works on the church’s 500-acre compound in the

## **SCIENTOLOGY SAYS: IT’S BEEN A ‘RENAISSANCE’**

Scientology has enjoyed unprecedented growth, spokesmen say, a credit to the “hands-on” leadership of David Miscavige. Church material has been updated and new churches opened.

» All of church founder L. Ron Hubbard’s books, lectures and course packs have been translated into the 17 languages spoken in Scientology’s target markets.

» Nine new churches, called orgs, opened since 2004, plus four smaller test centers, including in downtown St. Petersburg and Plant City. Three orgs opened this year — Dallas, Nashville and Malmo, Sweden — with five more to open before year’s end, in Las Vegas, Rome, Brussels, Tel Aviv and Washington, D.C.

» In Clearwater, the church’s signature property, the Fort Harrison Hotel, re-opened in March after a \$40 million renovation.

arid hills opposite Mount San Jacinto from Palm Springs.

Rathbun orchestrated a “reign of terror” there in 2002 and 2003, church representatives say, masquerading as an ethics officer while Miscavige was in Clearwater handling legal and other matters. They say the leader returned in late 2003, summarily demoted Rathbun and began to clean up his mess.

Rathbun says he was away from the base for almost all of 2002 and 2003, handling lawsuits and other sensitive matters at Miscavige’s behest. When he returned to the base in late 2003, he said, it was Miscavige who had established a “reign of terror.”

The church said Rathbun has inflated his importance in Scientology; they say that after 1993, he never had a title.

But in a 1998 Scientology magazine, Rathbun is featured as the main speaker at a major event at Ruth Eckerd Hall attended by 3,000 Scientologists. The magazine said he was “inspector general” of the entity charged with safeguarding Scientology. Also, the church provided the *Times* a court document from March 2000 that listed Rathbun as a “director” of the same entity.

If Rathbun’s responsibility was as limited as the church says, the *Times* asked, how did he get people to submit to a reign of terror? Davis, the church spokesman, erupted.

## HOW MANY SCIENTOLOGISTS ARE THERE?

The church claims 9 million members worldwide, 3.5 million in the United States. Religious experts and researchers estimate no more than a few hundred thousand in the United States. A researcher on the 2008 American Religious Identification Study, the largest such U.S. study, said Scientologist ranks have leveled or dropped in the past decade. The 2007 Pew Forum’s Religious Landscape Survey found that fewer than three-tenths of 1 percent of adults described themselves as Scientologists.

**6,000** Scientologist churches, missions and groups worldwide

**159** countries with Scientologist entities

**2,000** church members living in the Tampa Bay area, according to the church

**1,400** Clearwater-based church employees

“He’s the one who’s saying that Dave Miscavige beat these people,” Davis screamed. “And he’s saying that Dave Miscavige beat the exact same people that he beat. And that’s what pisses me off. Because this guy’s a f----- lunatic and I don’t have to explain how or why he became one or how it was allowable.”

“The fact is he’s saying David Miscavige did what he did ... And now I’m getting a little angry. Am I angry at you? Not necessarily. But I’m g-- d--- pissed at Marty Rathbun. Because he knows that he was the reign of terror.”

## LANDING IN CLEARWATER

Fall 1975. An outfit calling itself the United Churches of Florida announced it would rent the Fort Harrison Hotel from the Southern Land Development Corp., a company with plans to buy the historic building.

No one — not even lawyers for the seller — could find out anything about Southern Land. Not even a phone number.

When the sale closed on Dec. 1, Southern paid \$2.3 million in cash for the landmark property, where for 50 years locals held weddings, New Year’s bashes and civic events.

The newcomers promptly closed the hotel to the public. Uniformed guards armed with mace and billy clubs patrolled the entrance.



**>>** At the OT Summit 2007 at Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater, Miscavige announced the release of a new edition of Hubbard’s 18-volume basic texts. Used by Scientologists for half a century, the volumes contained errors. Miscavige corrected thousands of pages over three years and listened to a Hubbard lecture every night.

**233 million**

books sold by church founder L. Ron Hubbard

**1,084** published works by Hubbard, a world record

### **TOMMY DAVIS, CHURCH SPOKESMAN**

“It’s just unbelievable what’s happened in the world of Scientology. It’s a renaissance. It’s a revitalization. It’s everything we always dreamed of ... It’s pinch-yourself material.”

On Jan. 28, 1976, a public relations team from Los Angeles came to Clearwater and announced that the real buyer was the Church of Scientology of California.

The deception put a scare into the sleepy town with gorgeous beaches. Clearwater Mayor Gabe Cazares was incensed by the group's evasive and then heavy-handed tactics.

"The Fort Harrison has been here for a half century and now, for the first time, it is actually a fort," he lamented. "It's frightening."

Locals grew anxious as they heard that Scientology was a cult with a beligerent streak. It had sued the State Department, the Justice Department, the IRS, the CIA, the LAPD — any agency that pried or denied its requests.

Why did Hubbard choose Clearwater? He had run the church for years from a ship, the *Apollo*, and wanted a

"land base." He sent scouts on a mission: Find a big building, near a good airport, in a warm climate.

A property in Daytona Beach made the short list. So did the Fort Harrison.

It was to be Scientology's "flagship." Hubbard sent dispatches on how "Flag" should be run, everything from marketing plans to the staff's grooming and dress. It would be "huge, posh and self-supporting," Hubbard wrote, "a hotel of quality that puts the Waldorf Astoria to shame."

Hubbard trademarked a motto for the hotel: "The friendliest place in the whole world."

He would die a decade later, but already the next generation of church leaders was forming.

## THE YOUNG TURKS

Hubbard called it "fair game." Those who seek to damage the church,

## SCIENTOLOGY'S PROPERTIES »

The church owns a staggering array of properties, from a college on 55 acres in England to a luxury cruise ship. The church often buys historic buildings and refurbishes them in grand fashion.

**The Base:** The 500-acre "Int" base is in an arid area 80 miles east of Los Angeles. It's home to top church executives, including David Miscavige, and Golden Era Productions, the church's media and publications division.



he said, “may be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologist. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed.”

Mayor Cazares raised questions about the new group inhabiting the Fort Harrison, calling it a cult and trading lawsuits with the church. The *Times* and the *Clearwater Sun* investigated.

Scientologists followed Hubbard’s playbook and went after enemies. They tried to frame Cazares in a fake hit-and-run accident. They intercepted *Times*’ mail and falsely accused the paper’s chairman, Nelson Poynter, of being a CIA agent.

By the spring of 1976, Hubbard — the “Commodore” — was realizing his vision for the Fort Harrison. Scientologists from around the world checked in for long stays. They spent thousands

on counseling called “auditing,” which seeks to rid the subconscious mind of negative experiences, leading to “higher states of spiritual awareness.”

Mike Rinder, a 20-year-old Australian, ran the hotel telex, sending and receiving dispatches from Scientology outlets around the world.

David Miscavige, a 16-year-old from suburban Philadelphia, dropped out of 10th grade on his birthday that April and came to work at the Fort Harrison. He tended the grounds, served food and took pictures for promotional brochures.

In no time, the cocksure Miscavige was supervising adults. In 1977, after just 10 months in Clearwater, he was transferred to California, where he joined the Commodore’s Messenger Organization, an esteemed group of about 20 who took on “missions” assigned by Hubbard.



#### Hollywood, Calif.:

Scientology owns buildings in and around Hollywood, including this office building, which features a ground-floor museum, and the Celebrity Centre International, a restored hotel where celebrities study and receive Scientology counseling in a “distraction-free” environment.



**The ‘Freewinds’:** Scientology uses its cruise ship as a religious retreat and for recreation. The highest level of Scientology auditing, OT VIII, is offered exclusively on the ship.

Late in 1978, Miscavige was put in charge of the crew remodeling Hubbard's home on a Southern California ranch. Among the group was a 21-year-old former college basketball player who had joined the church a year earlier in Portland.

Thirty years later, Marty Rathbun says he can picture the first time he laid eyes on the teenage boss, strutting about, "barking out orders." No mistaking David Miscavige.

## THE EARLY POWER PLAYS

In the mid 1970s, the IRS hired a clerk-typist named Gerald Bennett Wolfe. What they didn't know was that he was a Scientology plant — code name "Silver."

He broke into an attorney's office at IRS headquarters in Washington and copied government documents for months, with help from the Guardian's

Office, the church's secretive intelligence arm.

The IRS had revoked Scientology's tax exemption some 10 years earlier, saying it was a commercial enterprise. Scientology fought back, withholding tax payments, unleashing its lawyers and using Silver to infiltrate the agency.

But his undercover mission backfired. On July 8, 1977, the FBI raided Scientology headquarters in Washington and L.A., seizing burglary tools, surveillance equipment and 48,000 documents.

In October 1979, Hubbard's wife, Mary Sue, who directed the Guardian's Office, and 10 other Scientologists were convicted on charges of conspiring to steal government documents or obstruct justice. Her husband, named an unindicted co-conspirator, went into seclusion at his ranch near La Quinta, Calif.

### The Fort Harrison:

The church put \$40 million into lavishly renovating the 82-year-old hotel, including the grand lobby. Scientologists from around the world come to Clearwater, the church's spiritual mecca.



### The Flag Building:

Across from the hotel, the "Super Power" building has sat vacant and unfinished for six years. It eventually will have 300 rooms for the church's core practice of auditing. It's to be the only place in the world where a classified program called Super Power will be offered, thus the nickname.



By then, two of the young men from the remodeling detail were trusted aides to the self-exiled church founder. Rathbun delivered Hubbard's mail and messages; Miscavige was his "action chief."

In January 1981, Miscavige asked Rathbun to join him on a road trip to the Super Bowl. Driving eight-hour shifts from L.A. to New Orleans, they got to know each other along the way.

Later that year, Hubbard gave Miscavige a critical assignment: Resolve the crush of lawsuits and investigations that threatened the church. Miscavige chose Rathbun and three others to help handle the job.

Rathbun says he spent six months prioritizing cases and developing strategy.

"I put together units to handle cases, one in Clearwater, one in New York, one in Boston, one in Toronto," he said. "They would answer to me. I was sort of becoming in charge of the legal operation."

Miscavige, meanwhile, was disposing of internal rivals and building power. At age 21, he talked Hubbard's wife into resigning.

It didn't hurt to have Hubbard's approval. His son had filed a lawsuit claiming that the company overseeing Hubbard's assets, headed by Miscavige, was siphoning his fortune. Hubbard

responded with a declaration stating that he had "unequivocal confidence in David Miscavige, who is a long-time devoted Scientologist, a trusted associate and a good friend to me."

Rinder, in turn, became a trusted associate to the emerging leader. Miscavige pulled his childhood acquaintance out of Clearwater to help dissolve the Guardian's Office, the arm of Scientology that had stolen the IRS files and committed other offenses.

He installed Rinder as head of the new international Office of Special Affairs. Part of Rinder's new job was to spread a revised narrative about Scientology: The church's new leaders were appalled to learn of the Guardian Office's dirty tricks. That was not, they said, what Scientology was all about.

## **BESTING HIS RIVALS**

On Jan. 27, 1986, thousands of Scientologists gathered at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles, where a solemn Miscavige delivered the news: The founder had moved on to a new level of research that would be "done in an exterior state ... completely exterior of the body."

At 74, L. Ron Hubbard was dead.

Miscavige yielded the microphone to church attorney Earle Cooley, who did not mention Miscavige by name, but helped cement him as future lead-

er. Cooley disclosed that Hubbard, who had died of a stroke, left the bulk of his estate to Scientology, giving final instructions that were “his ultimate expression of his confidence in the management of the church.”

He left no explicit succession plan,

leaving open the question of who would lead the church.

Months later, Miscavige, Rathbun and another executive took control of the Religious Technology Center, the RTC, which Hubbard created as the highest ecclesiastical body in the



**LATE 1975:** Built in 1925, the Fort Harrison Hotel was one of Clearwater's ritziest spots. Purchased under an assumed name, it's now Scientology's international spiritual headquarters.



**JAN. 28, 1976:** Hello, Clearwater. Through Arthur Maren, left, and Fred Ulan, the Church of Scientology announces that it's the real buyer of the Fort Harrison Hotel.



**JANUARY 1976:** A church security guard patrols the Fort Harrison Hotel. Guards armed with mace and billy clubs barred the public from the hotel.

church. They dismissed the staff and pressured the head of the office to step down.

Miscavige became the RTC's chairman of the board, a title he still holds. Rathbun took the high-ranking post of inspector general for ethics.

The last rivals for control of Scientology were Pat and Annie Broeker, who had assisted Hubbard in his last years. The founder had elevated them to "loyal officer" status, a higher rank than Miscavige, a captain.

The Broekers also had custody of Hubbard's last writings, the cherished upper levels of Scientology auditing that he wrote by hand while in seclusion. For a church that depends in large part on auditing fees, the papers were a gold mine not only spiritually, but financially. Miscavige wanted them.

Rathbun reveals what they did:

The day Pat Broeker and Miscavige flew cross-country to meet church lawyers in Washington, Rathbun positioned a team of about 20 men outside the Broekers' ranch in Barstow, Calif.

During a layover in Chicago, Miscavige called with the signal for Rathbun to phone the ranch caretaker. Rathbun told her that Miscavige and Broeker had called with a message: The FBI planned to raid the ranch in two hours. If they didn't get Hubbard's papers out, they might be lost forever.

The woman let Rathbun and his guys in.

"It worked like a charm," he said.

Miscavige's rise was complete. At 26, he answered to no one in Scientology.

For Rathbun, the point of the story is that Miscavige maneuvered his way to the top, he was not the chosen one. But Scientologists believe he was anointed. "And when they believe that, they're willing to do almost anything."

It was a conversation days after getting their hands on Hubbard's last writings that Rathbun says showed him that Miscavige saw himself not as a political climber but as a chosen leader.

Miscavige seemed in awe of his new responsibilities, so Rathbun tried to buck him up. "I said my basketball coach in high school had these inspirational sayings. One, from Darrell Royal of the Texas Longhorns, stuck with me. He said, 'I don't worry about choosing a leader. He'll emerge.'"

"That's false data!" Miscavige shot back.

Said Rathbun: "He rejected that so fast. Boy, when I suggested he was anything other than anointed, he jumped down my throat."

## **SCIENTOLOGY VS. THE IRS**

By the late 1980s, the battle with the IRS had quieted from the wild days of break-ins and indictments. But

Miscavige was no less intent on getting back the church's tax exemption, which he thought would legitimize Scientology.

The new strategy, according to Rathbun: Overwhelm the IRS. Force mistakes.

The church filed about 200 lawsuits against the IRS, seeking documents to prove IRS harassment and challenging the agency's refusal to grant tax exemptions to church entities.

Some 2,300 individual Scientologists also sued the agency, demanding tax deductions for their contributions.

"Before you knew it, these simple little cookie-cutter suits... became full-blown legal cases," Rathbun said.

Washington-based attorney William C. Walsh, who is now helping the church rebut the defectors claims, shepherded many of those cases. "We wanted to get to the bottom of what we felt was discrimination," he said. "And we got a lot of documents, evidence that proved it."

"It's fair to say that when we started, there was a lot of distrust on both sides and suspicion," Walsh said. "We had to dispel that and prove who we were and what kind of people we were."

Yingling teamed with Walsh, Miscavige and Rathbun on the case. She said the IRS investigation of Miscavige resulted in a file thicker than the

FBI's file on Dr. Martin Luther King. "I mean it was insane," she said.

The church ratcheted up the pressure with a relentless campaign against the IRS.

Armed with IRS records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, Scientology's magazine, *Freedom*, featured stories on alleged IRS abuses: lavish retreats on the taxpayers' dime; setting quotas on audits of individual Scientologists; targeting small businesses for audits while politically connected corporations were overlooked.

Scientologists distributed the magazine on the front steps of the IRS building in Washington.

A group called the National Coalition of IRS Whistleblowers waged its own campaign. Unbeknownst to many, it was quietly created and financed by Scientology.

It was a grinding war, with Scientology willing to spend whatever it took to best the federal agency. "I didn't even think about money," Rathbun said. "We did whatever we needed to do."

They also knew the other side was hurting. A memo obtained by the church said the Scientology lawsuits had tapped the IRS's litigation budget before the year was up.

The church used other documents it got from the IRS against the agency.



Times staff photo

**JUNE 1978.** A few years after establishing a “base” in downtown Clearwater, members of the Church of Scientology pass out literature to pedestrians.

In one, the Department of Justice scolded the IRS for taking indefensible positions in court cases against Scientology. The department said it feared being “sucked down” with the IRS and tarnished.

Another memo documented a conference of 20 IRS officials in the 1970s. They were trying to figure out how to respond to a judge’s ruling that Scientology met the agency’s definition of a religion. The IRS’ solution? They talked about changing the definition.

Rathbun calls it the “Final Solution” conference, a meeting that demonstrated the IRS bias against Scien-

tology. “We used that (memo) I don’t know how many times on them,” he said.

By 1991, Miscavige had grown impatient with the legal tussle. He was confident he could personally persuade the IRS to bend. That October, he and Rathbun walked into IRS headquarters in Washington and asked to meet with IRS Commissioner Fred Goldberg. They had no appointment.

Goldberg, who did not respond to interview requests for this story, did not see them that day, but he met with them a week later.

Rathbun says that contrary to ru-



Times staff photo

**NOV. 30, 1979.** In a parody complete with German accents, Scientologists goose step outside the *Clearwater Sun*, saying the paper treats the church as Nazis treated the Jews.

mor, no bribes were paid, no extortion used. It was round-the-clock preparation and persistence — plus thousands of lawsuits, hard-hitting magazine articles and full-page ads in *USA Today* criticizing the IRS.

“That was enough,” Rathbun said. “You didn’t need blackmail.”

He and Miscavige prepped incessantly for their meeting. “I’m sitting there with three banker’s boxes of documents. He (Miscavige) has this 20-page speech to deliver to these guys. And for every sentence, I’ve got two folders” of backup.

Miscavige presented the argument

that Scientology is a bona fide religion — then offered an olive branch.

Rathbun recalls the gist of the leader’s words to the IRS:

*Look, we can just turn this off. This isn’t the purpose of the church. We’re just trying to defend ourselves. And this is the way we defend. We aggressively defend. If we can sit down and actually deal with the merits, get to what we feel we are actually entitled to, this all could be gone.*

The two sides took a break.

Rathbun remembered: “Out in the hallway, Goldberg comes up to me because he sees I’m the right-hand guy.



Times staff photo

**DECEMBER 1979.** Tensions run hot as thousands turn out for an anti-Scientology rally at Jack Russell Stadium. When Mary Sue Hubbard was sentenced in Washington for conspiracy to obstruct justice, the Clearwater church issued a statement saying it was “pursuing common sense legal remedies for clear-cut violations of our civil rights by mad dogs locally in Clearwater.”

He goes: ‘Does he mean it? We can really turn it off?’ “

“And I said,” turning his hand for effect, “‘Like a faucet.’ “

The two sides started talks. Yingling said she warned church leaders to steel themselves, counseling that they answer every question, no matter how offensive.

Agents asked some doozies: about LSD initiation rituals, whether members were shot when they got out of line and about training terrorists in Mexico. “We answered everything,”

Yingling said, crediting Miscavige for insisting the church be open, honest and cooperative.

The back and forth lasted two years and resulted in this agreement: The church paid \$12.5 million. The IRS dropped its criminal investigations. All pending cases were dropped.

On Oct. 8, 1993, some 10,000 church members gathered in the Los Angeles Sports Arena to celebrate the leader’s announcement: The IRS had restored the church’s tax exemption, legitimizing Scientology as a church,



not a for-profit operation.

“The war is over,” Miscavige told the crowd. “This means everything.”

## **RECHARGED ON THE FREEWINDS**

The euphoria was short-lived. With the tax cases ended, court records became public. Newspapers wanted to know why Miscavige and his wife together made around \$100,000 while at the time most church staffers made but \$50 a week. Miscavige was furious, and got angrier still when Rathbun argued it would be an insignificant story.

Shortly after, Miscavige’s wife, Michelle, came to Rathbun’s office and, without a word, removed the gold captain’s bars from his Sea Org uniform. Miscavige called him an SP, a suppressive person, and Rathbun was forced to confess his sins before his own staff.

Rathbun was done. “I thought to myself: You know what? That’s it. What am I doing here?”

From the safe in his office at the California base he took three 1-ounce pieces of gold, worth about \$500 each, slipped on a bomber jacket, ate breakfast in the mess hall and drove east toward Pensacola, to visit a friend. Miscavige tracked him down and arranged to meet in New Orleans.

“He begged me to come back,” Rathbun recalled, adding that Miscavige offered the carrot of a two-year stint

aboard the *Freewinds*, a Scientology cruise ship where parishioners get the highest levels of counseling while sailing the Caribbean.

Rathbun said Miscavige told him:

*You’ve worked hard, you deserved a reward. Go spend time on the ship. Get yourself right, get in touch with what made you love the church in the first place. Hone your skills, come back as the best auditor on the planet.*

It was just what Rathbun needed to hear: “I couldn’t have been more thankful.”

He came aboard the *Freewinds* late in 1993. He worked odd jobs, devoured Hubbard’s writings and spent eight to 10 hours a day receiving counseling and training to be an auditor.

After two years at sea, he reported to Clearwater, to Flag, where the church bases its best auditors and offers upper levels of training. But the quality of auditing had slipped. Rathbun’s assignment was to help bring it back up.

Late in the summer of 1995, a woman exited an auditing room at the Fort Harrison Hotel, raised her arms above her head and shouted with delight — a breach of the all-quiet protocol on the auditing floor.

“Who’s that?” Rathbun asked a supervisor.

“That’s Lisa McPherson.” ■

# THE LEADER OF THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

## DAVID MISCAVIGE

**Born:** Suburban Philadelphia

**Age:** 49

**Joined Scientology:** As a child, with his parents; joined Sea Org at age 16.

**Family status:** Married to Sea Org member Michelle Miscavige. They have no children.

**Career highlights:** The ecclesiastical leader of Scientology since 1987, when he became chairman of the board of the Religious Technology Center. The RTC is responsible for preserving, maintaining and protecting Scientology and ensuring that its practices hold true to the original "technology" set out by founder L. Ron Hubbard.



He dropped out of high school and joined Scientology staff in Clearwater, where among other jobs he delivered telexes and worked as a steward. In early 1977 he was sent to La Quinta, Calif., to work with Hubbard, who was making Scientology training films. By age 19, he headed the Commodore's Messenger Organization, responsible for sending out teams to investigate church problem areas.

One such area was the Guardian's Office, the church's intelligence and legal unit. Eleven of its members were convicted in 1979 for conspiring to steal government documents and cover it up. David Miscavige broke up the "GO." In 1982, Hubbard appointed him to manage his fortune through a corporate entity outside the Scientology umbrella.

After Hubbard died in 1986, David Miscavige rose to his current post by asserting himself over other church executives. From 1991 to 1993, he worked to get the IRS to restore the church's tax-exempt status.

Works primarily from Scientology's base outside Los Angeles and travels to church facilities worldwide, including its spiritual headquarters in Clearwater. Church officials say he is leading a "renaissance" with new releases of Hubbard's books and a major expansion program.

*"While one can complain about the conditions we live in and it all can seem overwhelming, we take a different view that the most important commodity on Earth are people ... So, yes: We believe in human rights and are doing something to make them an everyday fact." — MISCAVIGE, IN A SPEECH*

## THE DEFECTORS

## MARTY RATHBUN

**Born:** California**Age:** 52**Joined Scientology:**

At age 20, in 1977

**Left Scientology:** 2004**Family status:**

Divorced from Sea Org member Anne Joasem. They had no children.

**Career highlights:** A top lieutenant to David Miscavige. Key player in legal affairs unit. David Miscavige's "detail guy" during lengthy negotiations with IRS; among those who signed settlement agreement. Inspector general and board member of Religious Technology Center, church's top ecclesiastical authority. Says he audited Tom Cruise and other celebrities.

**Now:** Lives near Corpus Christi, Texas. Works as reporter for weekly and monthly newspapers. He counsels and audits people who have left Scientology, accepting whatever they choose to pay.

*"I had my share of people that I slapped around too. I don't feel good about it. And I seek them out and I try to apologize where I can."*



## MIKE RINDER

**Born:** Australia**Age:** 54**Joined Scientology:**

At age 5, when parents joined. Joined Sea Org at 18, in 1973.

**Left Scientology:** 2007**Family status:**

Divorced from Sea Org member Cathy Rinder. They have an adult son and daughter, both Sea Org members.

**Career highlights:** Head of Office of Special Affairs for 25 years, overseeing legal efforts, investigations and media relations. Became the public face of Scientology, doing countless interviews with TV and print reporters, many in Tampa Bay area. Was in first group of Scientologists to occupy Fort Harrison Hotel in late 1975. Became chief administrator in Clearwater from 1978 to 1981, then ascended to executive strata of international church.

**Now:** Sells cars in Denver.

**ON THE CHURCH'S CONTENTION THAT THE DEFECTORS ARE PLOTTING A COUP:**

*"They are saying that just so they can position this for the Scientology public... If they can keep saying: This is an attempt to take over or overthrow, then it is going to gain traction with Scientologists. I have absolutely no intention of going back or taking over or anything. None. It's just a PR positioning."*



## THE DEFECTORS

### TOM DE VOCHT

**Born:** Belgium

**Age:** 45

Joined Scientology: At age 10, in 1974, when mother joined.

**Left Scientology:** 2005

**Family status:**

Divorced from Sea Org member Jennifer Linson. They had no children.

**Career highlights:** Supervised numerous church construction projects in downtown Clearwater and, in later years, at the church compound in California. From 1986 through 2000, had administrative authority over Clearwater operations. Started working full time for church at 14, as bellhop at Fort Harrison Hotel.

**Now:** Lives in Polk County. Buys and sells used furniture.

*"I was at it for 28 years.... That was my life. Those were my friends. ... I respect them. I still consider the vast majority of them my friends. I would love to hear from them. ... I've never really seen it (Scientology practices) do any harm to anybody. That's for damned sure. And I wouldn't have done it for all those years if I didn't think there was something good about it."*



### AMY SCOBEE

**Born:** Washington state

**Age:** 45

**Joined Scientology:**

At age 14, in 1978

**Left Scientology:** 2005

**Family status:** Married

to former Sea Org member Matt Pesch.

They left the church together in 2005. They have no children.

**Career highlights:** Oversaw several operations sectors during 20 years as manager at the church's international base in California. Built the network of Scientology Celebrity Centres, assembling and training staff to match four-star service levels. Oversaw church's film and taping facilities. As teenager, managed kitchen, housekeeping and grounds crews in Clearwater.

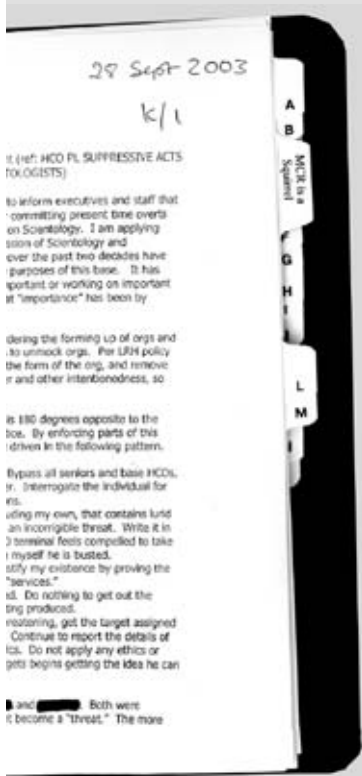
**Now:** Lives in Seattle area. Buys and sells furniture.

*"I never had a job ... No high school diploma because I started on staff when I was 14. I had no bank account, no driver's license. I knew nothing of the outside world because I had been there for so long."*



# SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE: 'TOTAL LIES'

In 25 hours of meetings with reporters, the two church lawyers and two spokesmen extolled the accomplishments of David Miscavige and attacked the credibility of the defectors.



The defectors are spewing “absolute and total lies,” a church spokesman said, in an effort to tarnish Miscavige, a revered religious leader.

The defectors are vengeful failures, said lawyer Monique Yingling, a non-Scientologist who represents the church.

“They didn’t leave because one day they decided they wanted a different life,” she said. “They left because they were removed from post, demoted and they couldn’t handle it. That’s basically it.

“And now they are out there bitter and disgruntled and attacking the one individual who is really responsible for what’s happening to the church. That’s your story.”



**Monique Yingling**



**Tommy Davis**

**Catalog of confession:** The church prepared binders of indexed material that included confessions the defectors wrote during their time in Scientology.

## **SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE** (continued)

Yingling and chief church spokesman Tommy Davis acknowledged that violence became part of the management culture. "Some of them were beat up," Yingling said. "But not by David Miscavige. You know by who? Marty Rathbun."

Davis said his own internal investigation found that Rathbun attacked 22 Sea Org members in the years before he left the church — 50 instances in all.

The violence played out at the church "base" outside Los Angeles in 2003 and 2004, the church says, when Miscavige was in Clearwater negotiating to end the wrongful death lawsuit that Lisa McPherson's family filed against the church.

Back at the base, the church said, Rathbun instituted a "reign of terror."

Yingling said Miscavige returned to California, put a stop to Rathbun's brutality and got back to expanding the reach of Scientology. "When that (McPherson case) was wrapped up in 2004, he did go back to the base and essentially said ... 'I don't have to have my time and energy distracted to those legal lines. So what we are going to do now is what I've always wanted

to do and concentrate on the expansion of the church. And either you're with me or you're not with me.' ...

"And it turned out these individuals you are talking to weren't willing to get on board. And for that reason they were taken off post."

Yingling cited another reason Rathbun and Mike Rinder were demoted: After McPherson died, they made mistakes when they worked with the church's legal team in Clearwater.

"Unfortunately, the extent of their bungling was not discovered until afterward. ... They were removed from post and a lot of it has to do with McPherson."

Rathbun's real agenda is to hijack Scientology, the church says, pointing to postings on Internet message boards from "T. Paine" — who the church said is Rathbun. One post concludes Miscavige "has no right to his position in Scientology. He was not appointed, elected or even nominated. He just grabbed it. It's time we grabbed it back."

Said Yingling: "Marty is basically saying he wants to come in and set things straight in Scientology and all

## SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE (continued)

he has to do is get rid of Dave and then he's going to take over."

Rathbun said he didn't write the posts; the administrator of the Web site told the *Times* someone else wrote them.

Davis said Rathbun is hurting financially and, against all church rules, is conducting auditing sessions on his own. "I will tell you exactly what this is about," Davis said. "This is about money, plain and simple. He (Rathbun) ran out. ... And what he is doing is drumming up business. He is using your publication to do it."

Davis and Yingling said church growth spiked in the years after the defectors left. "I have represented this organization for more than 20 years," Yingling said, "and I've never seen such expansion."

Scientology says: It's been a 'renaissance'

Scientology has enjoyed unprecedented growth, spokesmen say, a credit to the "hands-on" leadership of David Miscavige. Church material has been updated and new churches opened.

All of church founder L. Ron Hubbard's books, lectures and course

packs have been translated into the 17 languages spoken in Scientology's target markets.

Nine new churches, called orgs, opened since 2004, plus four smaller test centers, including in downtown St. Petersburg and Plant City. Three orgs opened this year — Dallas, Nashville and Malmo, Sweden — with five more to open before year's end, in Las Vegas, Rome, Brussels, Tel Aviv and Washington, D.C. In Clearwater, the church's signature property, the Fort Harrison Hotel, re-opened in March after a \$40 million renovation.

At the OT Summit 2007 at Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater, Miscavige announced the release of a new edition of Hubbard's 18-volume basic texts. Used by Scientologists for half a century, the volumes contained errors. Miscavige corrected thousands of pages over three years and listened to a Hubbard lecture every night.

Calling Miscavige "the author of the Renaissance," Davis said the church's numbers refute the defectors' claims of a slowdown. "The fundamental problem in their allegations is apparent in that it's incongruent with the great growth experienced." ■



# THE CHURCH'S ELEVENTH-HOUR APPEAL

The Church of Scientology pressed vigorously Friday (June 19, 2009) to delay publication of the *Times*' Scientology story. Its spokesmen and lawyers said that the few days the newspaper gave the church to respond to Mike Rinder, who only recently agreed to go public, was not enough time. The church also said the *Times* needs to talk to more people.

Church spokesmen, executives, attorneys and others flew in from around the country to meet with reporters in Clearwater. The parade started with ex-wives of the three male defectors. All three are Scientologists still. Each praised Miscavige's visionary leadership and said their ex-husbands can't be trusted.

Jennifer Linson said her ex, Tom De Vocht, had a reckless streak. Anne Joasem said her ex, Marty Rathbun, "lives for war." Cathy Rinder said her ex is so out of touch with their children he doesn't know his 24-year-old son has skin cancer.

Next came Norman Starkey, a church executive who knew Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. He said Miscavige never attacked him. "I know everything he is doing is exactly in line with what Mr. Hubbard had in mind."

Hubbard biographer Danny Sherman told a story of Miscavige spotting an injured sparrow, talking to it and checking back later to see if it lived. "It was immensely tender."

New York lawyer Eric Lieberman said he has represented the church 32 years and worked with Rathbun, who he said is aggressive and prone to ill-advised decisions.

After eight hours, when reporters readied to leave, church spokesman Tommy Davis brought in nine senior members of the management team. They stood shoulder to shoulder in front of the exit and insisted they be heard. Marc Yager, Guillaume Lesevre, Ray Mithoff, Mark Ingber, all said Miscavige never struck them.

## ELEVENTH-HOUR APPEAL (continued)

“I stayed up all night, scribbled notes on a piece of paper of things I had to tell you,” Lesevre said. “And obviously you don’t want to hear me. Fine. I want it on record that you don’t want to hear what I’ve got to say.”

Ray Mithoff: “These guys are attacking — they’re not just attacking him, they’re attacking my whole religion and saying things about my base, the place I’ve worked for 27 years.”

Greg Wilhere, yelling, said, “Mr.

Miscavige never hit, abused anyone. And I know it better than anyone because I’ve been by his side more than Rinder, Rathbun and the rest of them.”

David Bloomberg: “Do you not think that you are perhaps being used as a pawn in a very sick game?”

Lyman Spurlock: “What they want to do is extort money from the church. ... and right now the St. Pete Times is their extortion vehicle. ... you’re just their lackeys. They’re using you.” ■

**At 5:50 p.m. Saturday (June 20, 2009), David Miscavige e-mailed this letter to the Times:**

## A LETTER FROM DAVID MISCAVIGE

Dear Mr. Childs and Mr. Tobin,

I have been advised that you have decided to move forward with your story without my interview. This, despite the fact confirmed more than three weeks ago that I would make myself available on a date certain (6 July), after you spoke to other relevant Church personnel and toured Church facilities, and that I would provide information annihilating the credibility of your sources including the fundamental crimes against the Scientology religion that were the reasons for their removal from post. You were advised that information would include addressing the extraordinary “admissions” of one of your sources regarding a long-settled legal matter.

I was advised Thursday that you would only interview me on Friday, although you well knew it would be impossible for me to meet with you this week because of a long standing commitment to be aboard the SMV Freewinds for a week of religious events at the Church’s annual OT Summit. I am at a loss to comprehend how the St. Petersburg Times can publish a story about me and the religion I lead without accepting the offer to speak with me, on the pretense that you cannot wait until after I have fulfilled my religious commitments.

While you have already received unequivocal statements from more than a score of witnesses, along with documentary evidence, providing uncontrovertible proof that your sources are lying, I remain ready to sit down for the requested interview on the date previously confirmed. If you decide not to avail yourself of this opportunity, I insist you do not misrepresent the fact that the decision was yours, not mine.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,  
David Miscavige

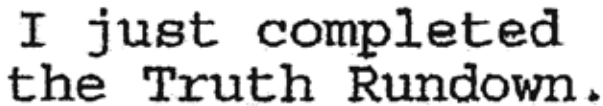
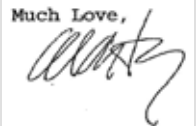
**Editor’s note:** *The Times first requested an interview with Mr. Miscavige on May 13, and offered to meet with him in person, or interview him by telephone at any time since.*


## INSIDE THE CHURCH'S SECRET ETHICS FILES

A key tenet of Scientology is that an individual who admits and takes responsibility for his bad thoughts and acts feels unburdened and joyful. Church members write confessions, which go into "ethics files" that are supposed to remain secret. But to rebut the defectors' allegations about David Miscavige, church officials took the extraordinary step of releasing excerpts from the files. In them, the defectors admit transgressions and praise the leader. The church says the files undercut the credibility of those attacking Miscavige. The defectors say the "confessions" are given under pressure, and writing them is the only way to survive inside Scientology.

### MARTY RATHBUN

The church says Rathbun is a liar, a bully and an incompetent who screwed up task after task. Church attorney Monique Yingling cites a "phenomenon in Scientology" when the accuser has committed bad acts he attributes to another; she says that's what Rathbun is doing.

A black and white photograph of a handwritten note. The text is written in a bold, slightly irregular, hand-drawn font. It reads: "I just completed the Truth Rundown."A black and white photograph of a handwritten note. The text "Much Love," is written in a simple, clean font. Below it is a stylized, cursive signature that appears to be "Marty".

 April 19, 1994: Communication. "While I didn't spread any lies about you directly, it did become manifest to me that my actions over the past year have potentially created black PR on you. ... To me, worse than all the shortcomings and overt acts and their effects, is the potential effect they had of tarnishing your image and presence and power. I say 'potential' only because I think it would be presumptuous of me to suggest I could do any real harm to you. ... I did want you to know that I have never regretted anything as deeply as I regret having betrayed you."

# INSIDE THE CHURCH'S SECRET ETHICS FILES

## MARTY RATHBUN (continued)

Marty took over the handling of ██████████ in August 2000. It was evident ██████████ was enturbulating everyone in sight and defying any and all authority on the base. Marty cross ordered tech and policy and decided to audit out the aberration rather than allowing group justice to take its course. ██████████

Dec. 8, 2001: Suppressive Person Declaration. Referring to himself as "Marty," Rathbun said he had harmed and undermined colleagues. "Marty took advantage of a number of false reports he had put in place over years giving a false picture as to his role in handling external attacks and the IRS in particular."

"Marty then engaged in a campaign to covertly and systematically take out and undermine any executive or staff who might expose him. He did this through abusing his privilege to act as a security checker. ... He began the out-tech practice of sec checking people with no formal session set up, and brow beating hair-raising confessions out of them."

Marty Rathbun - Step B - Public Announcement (ref: HCO PL SUPPRESSIVE ACTS SUPPRESSION OF SCIENTOLOGY AND SCIENTOLOGISTS)

Sept. 28, 2003: Public Announcement: Rathbun wrote: "I have developed a slick false PR technique of positioning myself as having been integral in handling threats during and after the fact, when they are actually terminatedly handled by COB. By calculation I have lost the Church 43 million dollars on losses and expenses that could have been avoided...."

Miscavige "has single-handedly salvaged Scientology from potential external ruin ... Had he not been here and done what he has, Scientology would have been lost. ..."

Rathbun writes that had he not wasted so much of the leader's time, "Scientology would be so big not a dime would have to be diverted to defense

# INSIDE THE CHURCH'S SECRET ETHICS FILES

## MARTY RATHBUN (continued)

because no one would dream of fooling with it, and we would be very well on the way to a clear planet."


"The motivation for these acts are a psychotic computation for self-preservation: keep enough chaos and threat stirred up in the environment, make myself appear to be a solution to it instead of the instigator of it, and lots of people go down and remain in turmoil while I go unrecognized as the source of it and survive." "I recognize my actions have been unfounded and ignorant and destructive in the extreme."

## MIKE RINDER

The church says Rinder is a habitual liar, noting one "Admission" he wrote to Miscavige in which he said he lied 43 times over the years.

February 2005: Apology. "Dear Sir, I owe you something way beyond and, in addition to an apology, my gratitude for saving my life. Your insistence for months and years that I get straight is the only thing that has actually brought me to my senses. Several times in the past I pretended to myself, you and others that I had confronted my out ethics and gotten myself handled. It was not true."

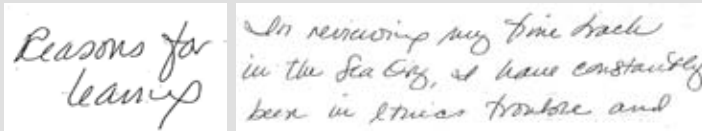
**I recognize very clearly how Treasonous I have been towards you and Scientology. This comm. is to inform you of my Step B and**

 June 4, 2005: Announcement. "I recognize very clearly how Treasonous I have been towards you and Scientology. This comm. is to inform you of my Step B and Doubt Announcement. The announcement is to go to "persons directly influenced" and that is most definitely you. Your insistence that I get straight is what made me confront my suppressive acts. I know that when you say something it is true and it is what has kept me going ..."

# INSIDE THE CHURCH'S SECRET ETHICS FILES

## AMY SCOBEE

The church says Scobee violated rules on “romantic involvement outside marriage.” In her “confession” the 2D reference is for Second Dynamic but is used as slang for sex.



Jan. 16, 2005: Reasons for leaving: “I have constantly been in ethics trouble,” Scobee writes, to the point that she has become a “distraction to the group.”

Jan. 22, 2005: Specifics on 2D activity: In graphic detail, Scobee outlines everything from “holding hands” to back rubs that “evolved into full out 2D” and the time “we were in the C/S office and had sex.”

## TOM DE VOCHT

The church says De Vocht was demoted for overspending on renovation projects he oversaw.

### Treason: Find out *that* you are

I made a deal (illegally) on the Oak Cove which I let go, took no responsibility for, dropped comm lines and everything about it and ended up loosing the church \$1,000,000.00 between actual output and potential gain in interest. This too became COB's cycle and had to be handled – me being part of the cycle being handled.

July 20, 2004: Treason report. De Vocht writes that he blew a land deal in Clearwater that not only cost the church \$1 million, it wasted the time of the Chairman of the Board — Miscavige — cleaning up De Vocht's mess.'

# DEATH IN SLOW MOTION

SCIENTOLOGY DEFECTOR'S INSIDE STORY OF LISA MCPHERSON'S DEATH INCLUDES ADMISSION: I DESTROYED EVIDENCE.



Family photo

**At a ceremony at the Fort Harrison Hotel in September 1995, Lisa McPherson is introduced as “clear,” meaning that through Scientology counseling, she had rid herself of all interference from troubling images buried in her subconscious. Two months later she had a nervous breakdown. After 17 days in Scientology’s care, she was dead.**

BY THOMAS C. TOBIN AND JOE CHILDS  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**he night after Lisa McPherson died, the leader of the Church of Scientology sent word for one of his top lieutenants to wait by a pay phone at the Holiday Inn Surfside on Clearwater Beach.

When Marty Rathbun answered the ringing phone in the lobby, David Miscavige let him have it:

*Why aren't you all over this mess? The police are poking around. Do something.*

“Yes sir,” Rathbun said.

McPherson, a 36-year-old parish-



ioner in apparent good health, had spent 17 days in a guarded room at the church's Fort Harrison Hotel. Scientology staffers tried to nurse her out of a mental breakdown, but she became ill. She drew her last breaths in the back seat of a van as they drove her to a hospital in the next county.

Her death on Dec. 5, 1995, triggered nine years of investigations, lawsuits and worldwide press coverage. Alive on the Internet, it stains Scientology's reputation still.

Now, for the first time, comes an inside account from the upper ranks of Scientology — from the man who directed the church's handling of the case.

Rathbun, who defected from Scientology's staff in late 2004, admits that as prosecutors and attorneys for McPherson's family prepared subpoenas, he ordered the destruction of incriminating evidence about her care at the Fort Harrison.

He and others who have left the church disclose for the first time that Miscavige was involved in McPherson's Scientology counseling. Just weeks before her mental breakdown, they say, it was the leader himself who determined that she had reached an enhanced mental state that Scientologists call "clear."

For years Rathbun was adamant

## WHY SCIENTOLOGY ABHORS PSYCHIATRY

Scientologists strongly oppose psychiatry, which they say fails to recognize that man is a spiritual being. They also oppose "mind-altering" psychiatric drugs. At best, they say, those drugs suppress a person's mental problems; at worst, they cause severe and lasting damage.

### THE CHURCH SAYS:

"Scientologists are trying to create a world without war, insanity and criminality. Psychiatry is seeking to create a world where man is reduced to a robotized or drugged, vegetable-like state so that he can be controlled."

### BEHIND THE SPAT

Scientologist Tom Cruise publicly ripped Brooke Shields for taking an antidepressant for postpartum depression. He said she needed only vitamins and exercise.

that the church did nothing wrong. Now he says that McPherson's care was a debacle from the start. It was a "perfect storm of incompetence and irresponsibility" within the church, he said. "You couldn't justify it."

He disclosed that the church was prepared to pay almost any price to make the case go away. He said he sent an emissary to McPherson's funeral in Dallas with authority to give her mother, Fannie, whatever she wanted. The approach was rebuffed because the family didn't trust the church.

"Whether it was financially or any other thing, we're taking care of that woman because it was on our watch. If she needed \$5 million, we would have come up with \$5 million."

Church officials say Rathbun is a bitter ex-member who inflated his importance in Scientology and whose motives are suspect. They say Miscavige demoted Rathbun in 2003

in part for missteps he made in the McPherson case.

A settlement agreement with the woman's family forbids them from providing specifics, said Monique Yingling, a long-time Scientology attorney and friend of Miscavige. Still, she said that Rathbun botched the case from the start, and "possibly caused the whole thing."

## A LITTLE FENDER-BENDER

McPherson joined Scientology in Dallas, her hometown, when she was 18. She worked for a marketing company owned by Scientologist friends; the company moved to Clearwater in 1994 to be near the church's spiritual headquarters, and McPherson came, too.

Shortly before 6 p.m. on Nov. 18, 1995, her Jeep Cherokee ran into a boat trailer stopped in traffic on S Fort Harrison Avenue.

## THE LISA MCPHERSON CASE » KEY DATES & EVENTS



**1994:** Lisa McPherson, a longtime Scientologist, moves from Dallas to Clearwater with her employer, AMC Publishing. The company is operated and staffed mostly by Scientologists who want to be close to the church's spiritual headquarters.

**September 1995:** In a ceremony at the Fort Harrison Hotel, McPherson is publicly declared "clear," a state in which a Scientologist is said to be free of inhibitions caused by painful images in the subconscious. In her last five years, McPherson spent more than \$175,000 on Scientology counseling. She is 36.

McPherson, frantic, walked up to the driver pulling the trailer, put her hands on his shoulders and asked, "Where's the people? Where's the people?"

Firefighters had her move her car to the side of Belview Boulevard. She signed a statement saying she did not want medical care. As officers and paramedics tended to other duties, they saw McPherson had stripped off her clothes and was walking along Belview.

They took her to Morton Plant Hospital, where doctors discussed having her committed for psychiatric evaluation under Florida's Baker Act.

But Scientology considers psychiatry and psychiatric drugs evil. The church believes it offers less intrusive and more humane treatment for problems of the human mind.

Adamant that McPherson not be exposed to psychiatry, about 10

church members showed up at the hospital and said they would take care of her. She said she wanted to leave with her friends and signed out against a doctor's advice.

Church staffers checked her into the Fort Harrison and assigned her to Room 174 of the cabanas, a group of less formal rooms facing the street behind the hotel. Four members of the church's medical office were assigned to watch McPherson. Staffers from various departments were pulled in to help — including a payroll officer, a file clerk, a secretary, a personnel director, security guards and two librarians.

Supervising was Janis Johnson, a doctor unlicensed in Florida, who was a church medical officer.

For more than two weeks, they tried to calm, feed and medicate McPherson. They gave her chloral hydrate, a mild sedative. A staff dentist, unlicensed in Florida, mixed aspirin,

## THE LISA MCPHERSON CASE »

**Nov. 18, 1995:** After a minor traffic accident, McPherson takes off her clothes and tells a paramedic: "I need help. I need to talk to someone." She is taken to Morton Plant Hospital for psychiatric evaluation but signs out against a doctor's advice. Church members take her to the Fort Harrison. Supervising her medical care was Janis Johnson, right, who was not licensed to practice medicine in Florida and whose license was restricted in Arizona.



Benadryl and orange juice in a syringe and squirted it down her throat.

The staffers kept logs of what they did. Trying to calm McPherson, a staffer tried to force three Valerian root caplets down her throat, but McPherson spit them out. “My idea

of closing her nose so she has to swallow so she can breathe through her mouth is only marginally successful,” the staffer wrote.

McPherson slapped and screamed at her caretakers. She babbled, she vomited her food. She destroyed the

## FROM STAFF LOGS »

### December 2

**1 am - 3 am** I gave her 4 Valerian root capsules, 4 Orinthane (not positive of the name — haven’t seen the bottle, but it is one of the herbal sleeping preparations) and approx 6 oz of cal mag.

She has gotten drowsy from time to time but at 3 AM is still awake + talking.

We also cut her fingernails. This will reduce the risk of scratches to herself + us. She has scratches and abrasions all over her body + on elbows + knees has pressure sores. None of them are open + none of them look infected.

**8 am.** ... I will give her more of the herbal sleep preparations + will be in comm with Janice later about other measures to ensure she gets some serious sleep today.

The finances for her protein drinks ran out last night. I was in comm a security guard who said the source of the money was Lisa’s employer + he thought he could get more this morning.

### December 3

**1:00 - 1:30 a.m.** Tried to feed her again but wouldn’t take anything. She thought we were psychos or other enemies who wanted to kill her.

**10 a.m.** She slept most of the time — several hours of really good deep sleep. When she awakened this a.m. she was very confused + combative ...

**2 p.m.** Appears to be awakening. She has tried to stand several times but is not strong enough yet. I am going to feed her some mashed banana + protein powder. Have been in comm /c security re getting more money for her.

**3 p.m.** She is resting now. She originated that she knows we are trying to help her although she doesn’t know our names and we don’t talk to her. The rest of her comm. is the usual confused stuff. She also had a couple oz’s of water. Body wise she is very restful + gentle. She has tried to stand a couple of times but is not strong enough.

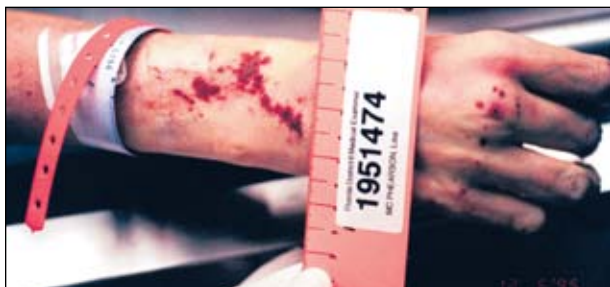
**6:30 p.m.** Fixing more banana + protein powder + half + half.

ceiling lamp and broke glass in the bathroom. She jumped off the bed, fell on the floor, ran around the room.

She pondered a light bulb, saying, "You have to follow the light, as light is life."

"She was like an ice cube," one caretaker wrote. "She refused to eat and spit out everything she took. Her breath was foul ... had a fever to my touch."

By the evening of Dec. 5, McPherson had lost about 12 pounds. Johnson, the church doctor, telephoned David Minkoff, a Scientologist and a doctor at Columbia New Port Richey Hospital. Minkoff said to take McPherson to Morton Plant Hospital down the street.



**DECEMBER 1995:** One of Lisa McPherson's caretakers said it looked like she had chicken pox, but the medical examiner said insect bites caused her lesions.

But Alain Kartuzinski, a church counseling supervisor, told Minkoff he feared that McPherson would be exposed to psychiatric care at Morton Plant, and Johnson assured Minkoff that McPherson's condition was not life-threatening.

What they didn't tell Minkoff: McPherson was limp and unable to walk. Her breathing was labored, her eyes fixed and unblinking. Her face was

## THE LISA MCPHERSON CASE »

**Dec. 5, 1995:** After 17 days, the Scientologists caring for McPherson worry that she has become seriously ill. They drive her to a hospital in New Port Richey — past four closer hospitals — so she can be seen by Dr. David Minkoff, a Scientologist who works in the ER. McPherson is not breathing, has no heartbeat and is gaunt, bruised and unkempt. Minkoff pronounces her dead. There is no local obituary and no public police report of her death.

**Dec. 16, 1996:** News of McPherson's death leaks out. The church's version of what happened: She checked into the Fort Harrison Hotel for "rest and relaxation" and "suddenly fell ill."

gaunt, a sign of severe dehydration.

Minkoff agreed to see her. With McPherson in the back seat of a van, her caretakers drove 45 minutes to the Pasco hospital, passing four other hospitals on the way.

They rolled her into the ER splayed across a wheelchair. She had no pulse, no heartbeat and was not breathing. Minkoff pronounced McPherson dead.

He took Johnson aside and yelled at her.

“I was shocked out of my wits,” he said later. “I really wasn’t in the mode of finding out what happened. I was more in the mode of, ‘How could you bring this person up to me like this?’”

## MISCAVIGE’S ROLE

Scientology employs a unique brand of counseling called auditing. In a quiet room, an “auditor” asks the parishioner prescribed questions

while monitoring a device called an electropsychometer, or e-meter. Scientologists say there is a “charge” associated with areas of upset in a person’s life, such as marital conflict or a childhood accident.

When such topics come up, the e-meter’s needle responds. The act of locating the troubling episode dissipates the charge and the needle floats back and forth. The person is supposed to feel better.

One goal is to reach “clear,” a state where the mind’s negative images are gone and the person is said to be rid of all fears, anxieties and irrational thoughts.

John Travolta, Kirstie Alley and Tom Cruise are among the celebrities who have extolled the benefits of Scientology. Parishioners from around the globe travel to Clearwater to be audited by the best. Scientologists come for the deluxe accommodations

## THE LISA MCPHERSON CASE »



**January 1997:** The Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney’s Office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement join Clearwater police in the investigation. Medical Examiner Joan Wood tells reporters there is no way McPherson “suddenly fell ill.”

**Feb. 19, 1997:** In Tampa, McPherson’s relatives file a wrongful death lawsuit against the Church of Scientology, alleging that Scientologists allowed McPherson to languish in a coma without nutrition and liquids while she was held in isolation at the Fort Harrison Hotel.

and the top-flight, “Class 12” auditors, whose services, Rathbun said, cost \$1,000 an hour.

But back in 1995, Rathbun says, even the church thought most of its Class 12 auditors were not worth the money. They were burned out, their sessions rote and uninspired, like a doctor with a poor bedside manner.

“These guys are all overweight, they’re obese, they’ve got back problems. They don’t sleep enough,” he said. “And one of the problems, I realized, is for 15, 20 years they’re cash cows.”

He said they were “just getting milked nonstop.”

Rathbun and others say Miscavige was in Clearwater in 1995 to launch “The Golden Age of Tech,” an initiative aimed at raising the quality and precision of auditing at Scientology’s mecca.

Rathbun said he was assigned to help. Miscavige would look in on pa-

rishioner auditing sessions from a control room with video feeds from multiple counseling rooms.

One of the parishioners was Lisa McPherson.

“He’s watching live with the videocameras every session that she’s in and (supervising), saying ‘Do this next, do that next’ and so forth,” said Tom De Vocht, a top church executive in Clearwater who has since left the church and is speaking out for the first time.

The folder containing records of McPherson’s auditing history came in and out of Miscavige’s office, said De Vocht, whose office was next door and who had overseen a renovation of the leader’s living quarters.

Don Jason, then a high-ranking officer at the Clearwater spiritual headquarters, said he saw Miscavige take off his headphones and say McPherson had achieved the state of clear

## THE LISA MCPHERSON CASE »

**Dec. 5, 1997:** Thousands of Scientologists demonstrate outside Clearwater police headquarters and the *St. Petersburg Times*, accusing both of discriminating against them.



**Nov. 13, 1998:** After reviewing the McPherson case for 11 months, State Attorney Bernie McCabe charges the Church of Scientology with two felonies: practicing medicine without a license and abuse of a disabled adult.

in a previous session. Jason, 45, said he saw the leader write a note that McPherson's auditor would read to her, informing her of her new status.

Scientologists who are "clear" don't go psychotic, Jason said, so for a person to have a breakdown so soon after was a "huge problem."

Church officials say De Vocht and Jason are wrong. "I can tell you that's utterly, totally false," said Angie Blankenship, a top administrator in Clearwater from 1996 to 2003.

"I was here. Chairman of the board (Miscavige) wasn't even here at the Flag land base during that time. He's a liar. Never happened."

Yingling and church spokesman Tommy Davis also said Miscavige was not in Clearwater at the time, and they say they have minutes of meetings he attended in California to prove it. They also question how De Vocht and Jason, almost 14 years lat-

er, could remember anything about a woman who then was just another parishioner.

Jason said the moment stood out because staffers require special training and refresher training to be able to identify when someone becomes clear. "So it did strike me as like, 'Wow'?" that Miscavige had that expertise.

Not only that, "I was standing right next to him when it happened," said Jason, who left the church in 1996 but still finds Scientology valuable.

"This is a huge deal," De Vocht said of Miscavige's involvement. "There's no way not to remember it."

De Vocht said he worked closely with Miscavige during that time. He said the leader zeroed in on McPherson because she was having issues with her counseling and was the friend of a prominent church member.

He said he saw Miscavige view

## THE LISA MCPHERSON CASE »

**February 2000:** After reviewing medical information provided by Scientology, Wood changes McPherson's death certificate. She amends the manner of death from "undetermined" to "accident."

**June 12, 2000:** His review complete, McCabe drops the charges, noting that Wood's change of opinion undercuts the state's requirement to prove a criminal case beyond a reasonable doubt.

**May 26, 2004:** The church and the estate of Lisa McPherson reach a settlement. The terms are confidential.



McPherson's auditing sessions through a video feed and write notations in her counseling folder.

"I watched him personally," De Vocht said. "A whole bunch of people watched him personally."

The church's representatives said there are no notations by Miscavige in McPherson's file. In any case, they say, Miscavige would have been qualified to supervise McPherson's case had he been so inclined. "He is an expert in every field," said Jessica Feshbach, a church spokeswoman.

Rathbun recalled walking through a hallway to the auditing rooms at the Fort Harrison and a woman bursting through a door.

"She's going, 'Aaaaaah! Yahoo!'" She's screaming at the top of her lungs," he said.

It was McPherson, cheering about the news that she had been deemed clear.

Her accomplishment was celebrated in a ceremony at the Fort Harrison in September 1995. By mid November, she would be back at the hotel, babbling to her caretakers.

## INTROSPECTION RUNDOWN

When Rathbun learned that McPherson had died, he interviewed the 15 to 20 Scientologists who had cared for her.

## THE BRIDGE TO TOTAL FREEDOM

Scientology says it does not ask its members, known as thetans, to "strive" for greater awareness. Rather, it provides a set of goals so that when achieved, "one is more ethical, able, self-determined and happier." Scientology says man "has long dreamed of a bridge spanning the chasm from one's current location to a higher plateau of existence, and this chart is the embodiment of that dream."

## BEYOND CLEAR

Lisa McPherson was declared clear, "a being who no longer has his own reactive mind." But that is just one step on the ascending levels of auditing a Scientologist must achieve to cross the Bridge to spiritual freedom.

## INTROSPECTION RUNDOWN

A procedure L. Ron Hubbard devised to calm a person in psychosis. The person is isolated in a dark room and not spoken to except for frequent auditing.

"It was like walking into a disaster area," he said. "They all looked devastated. They lacked sleep. Some of them had scratches and bruises from getting hit by Lisa. All of them were extremely emotionally distraught because each one of them put it on their shoulders that they had done something wrong."

Their feelings were justified, Rathbun said. "The whole thing was done wrong. I can't tell you what a technical crime this was" in terms of Scientology methods.

The caretakers had given McPherson an "introspection rundown," a procedure created by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. The goal is to isolate and calm a psychotic person enough to be audited. She is to be kept in a silent environment with no one around to "re-stimulate" mental images that might upset her.

Yet church staffers came and went from McPherson's room, as did guards using walkie-talkies, Rathbun said. One staffer cried in a corner. Others held McPherson down while trying to medicate and feed her.

Instead of calming, McPherson grew agitated and self-destructive during her 17-day stay.

Rathbun said he has participated in several introspection rundowns, and none lasted more than a day or two.

He said it was obvious to him that McPherson was the victim of "out-tech," a term for Scientology malpractice.

Rathbun had another problem: Kartuzinski, the auditing supervisor, and Johnson, the medical officer, had lied to Clearwater police. They said McPherson had not received an introspection rundown, and they said there was nothing unusual about her stay.

"That's the hand I'm dealt," Rathbun said. "I've got two false sworn statements to law enforcement agents" on top of how badly the Scientologists handled McPherson.

It was such a "dog's breakfast" of facts, he said, his first instinct was to do something entirely out of character.

"I really truly, sincerely wished that I was in a position where I could just follow my heart," he said. "Because my heart in December 1995 was to go straight to the state attorney's office and say, 'My God. There's been a terrible accident ... We want to take responsibility.'"

But that wasn't in the playbook. His nearly two decades immersed in Scientology culture had taught him: When under siege, close ranks, never admit fault.

He said he wrote an internal report that concluded church procedures had been violated, but the mistakes

did not contribute to McPherson's death.

He put the report in a manila envelope and sealed it the way he learned years earlier as a 20-something newbie handling Hubbard's correspondence. Slice the seams with a razor, cover them with tape and melt the tape so no one can open the envelope without tearing it. Then off the envelope went to the church's California base.

For a year, not a word about McPherson's death had appeared in the media.

But in mid December 1996, details of the Clearwater police investigation leaked to reporters. An autopsy report from Pinellas-Pasco Medical Examiner Joan Wood concluded that McPherson died of a blood clot in her left lung caused by "bed rest and severe dehydration."

Rathbun coordinated the public response, which he now acknowledges began with lies. Church spokesmen said McPherson had been at the Fort Harrison for rest and relaxation. They said she could come and go as she pleased. They denied that she had received an introspection rundown.

McPherson "suddenly fell ill" and participated in decisions about her care, church officials said. Her death was an unfortunate accident, unre-

lated to anything Scientology did.

Wood spoke out, saying her autopsy contradicted the church's statements. The veteran medical examiner said there was nothing sudden or accidental about McPherson's death. Her health deteriorated gradually over about 10 days, and she probably was unconscious toward the end.

The church sued Wood for access to her records. A Scientology lawyer called her: "Liar. Liar. Liar. Liar. Liar. Hateful liar."

McPherson's family sued the church for wrongful death.

And the Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney's Office investigated whether to file criminal charges.

## **DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE**

In early 1997 as investigators closed in, Rathbun met with church staff at Scientology offices in Hollywood, Calif. They combed the daily logs that McPherson's caretakers kept during her 17 days at the Fort Harrison.

Three entries particularly troubled Rathbun.

One contained a bizarre sexual reference McPherson had made. Another revealed that no one thought to remove the mirror from the room of a psychotic woman bent on harming herself. The third was one caretaker's



DOUGLAS R. CLIFFORD | Times (1998)

**DECEMBER 1998:** Protesters gather on the three-year anniversary of Lisa McPherson's death. Her relatives, accompanied by a private security detail, came from Dallas to the Fort Harrison Hotel for the first time. They placed a wreath outside the hotel and thanked people worldwide for their support.

opinion that the situation was out of control and that McPherson needed to see a doctor.

Rathbun concluded the notes had to go.

"I said, 'Lose 'em' and walked out of the room," he recalled, adding that the decision to destroy the records was his own.

"Nobody told me to do it and I did it," he said. "The truth is the truth and right now I'm going to confession, and I really think it's something that hurt the church more than it hurt the people

that were trying to get recompense.

"But it is what it is, and I know it could potentially be a crime."

In a recent interview, State Attorney Bernie McCabe said it was clear the records were missing because the church handed over entries for every day of McPherson's stay except the final two before she died. That the church appeared to be hiding something only fed McCabe's sense that something was amiss.

Prosecuting Rathbun is not an option, because the time to bring

destruction of evidence charges expires after three years, McCabe said. “We’re done.”

## **STRESS RATCHETS UP**

On Nov. 13, 1998, McCabe’s office charged the church’s Clearwater entity with two felonies: criminal neglect and practicing medicine without a license.

The church now faced the prospect of trials and embarrassing testimony in both criminal and civil court.

Miscavige delegated dealing with lawyers and reporters to Rathbun and to Scientology’s chief spokesman, Mike Rinder. But the church leader kept hold of the controls, working to forge Scientology’s message from behind the scenes.

Rathbun revealed that while he and Rinder conducted phone interviews, Miscavige often was at their side, directing what to say and gesturing wildly when he thought they got it wrong.

A key legal issue in the McPherson family’s wrongful death lawsuit was whether Miscavige could be added as a defendant. Church lawyers argued that he should not be named in the suit because he dealt only with ecclesiastical matters. The family countered that Miscavige “totally controls” and “micromanages all of Scientology.”

In December 1999, a Tampa judge ruled that Miscavige could be added as a defendant.

For the church leader, it was “a big snapping point,” Rathbun said.

“That was like the explosion of all explosions that he was now potentially going to get deposed and his name would be embroiled in that litigation. He became progressively more antagonistic, violent, irrational.”

William C. Walsh, a Washington, D.C., human rights lawyer who has represented Scientology for years, said the account is far-fetched.

“One thing I do know is Dave Miscavige, and I’ve known him from December 1999 on and way before that,” Walsh said. “And I never saw any change in his personality when he became a defendant in the case. He didn’t become more antagonistic. He did not become more violent. And he’s never been irrational.”

Said Yingling: “He wasn’t happy to be a defendant. That’s true. But he took it in stride with everything else that was happening in the case.”

Rinder and Rathbun recall an afternoon on the third floor of a small office building overlooking N Fort Harrison Avenue, when they say Miscavige attacked Rinder. They say the leader shouted obscenities at Rinder, grabbed him and, while holding him

in a headlock, twisted his neck and threw him to the floor.

Of the dozens of attacks Rinder says he endured, this one was the most painful.

“I remember my neck was out of place, and for maybe 30 minutes I couldn’t speak because my larynx had been squashed against the back of my throat,” he said.

Clamped in the headlock, Rinder said his thoughts tracked a familiar arc: *What did I do to cause this?*

When Miscavige dresses you down or, worse, punishes you physically, “You get into trying to figure out what you have done to him,” Rinder said. “And that’s the thing with the beatings. What did I do to cause this to happen to me?”

## OVERPREPARE. ATTACK, ATTACK

Reminiscent of how Scientology fought the IRS to restore its tax exemption, the church would not be outworked defending itself from the criminal charges in the McPherson case.

Scientology spent millions of dol-



DOUGLAS R. CLIFFORD | Times (1998)

**APRIL 5, 2000:** David Miscavige, hands steepled, makes a rare public appearance. At a pretrial hearing in St. Petersburg in the criminal case against Scientology, an estimated 200 Scientologists turn out. Many had signed affidavits saying that the state’s prosecution of the church for the death of Lisa McPherson had burdened the practice of their religion.

lars, and church lawyers filed thousands of pages of medical studies and consultant reports that said McPherson’s care at the Fort Harrison could not have caused her death.

The case collapsed after Wood, the medical examiner, unexpectedly changed her official finding on the manner of McPherson’s death. Previously “undetermined,” she changed it in February 2000 to an “accident.”

Prosecutors dropped the charges four months later, citing Wood's conflicting and confused interpretations of the evidence.

Conspiracy theorists suggested that the church somehow "got to" Wood.

Rathbun denies it. He says the medical examiner changed her conclusions in the face of the reams of scientific information from church experts.

"There was no blackmail on her," Rathbun said. "There was no intelligence. It absolutely was all evidence. I swear to God."

Wood, reached at her home, declined to comment.

McCabe said it was his impression that evidence and expert testimony swayed Wood. "One thing you quickly come to realize when dealing with (Scientologists) is that they are persistent," he said. "And they were persistent with her."

In May 2004, four years after the criminal charges were dropped, the church settled with McPherson's family, ending their lawsuit. The terms remain secret.

In a speech to the International Association of Scientologists, Miscavige proclaimed victory over government officials, over the press and over others who he said tried to use

McPherson's death to bring down the church.

He said the roots of the attack stretched from the German government, which opposed Scientology, to the Clearwater police, which investigated the church for two decades.

"They were just looking for anything to get us," he told the crowd. "We always knew we'd win."

Quoting Hubbard, he listed the qualities that would always hold Scientology in good stead. "Constant alertness, constant willingness to fight back."

## **WINNING BUT LOSING**

Though Scientology prevailed on the legal front, the McPherson case set back a long-running effort by the church to cultivate a benign, mainstream image.

Among the details that emerged: In McPherson's last five years, she had spent at least \$176,700 on Scientology services and had \$5,773 in the account she kept at the church. She died with \$11 in her savings account.

The case reignited passions about Scientology and its practices, bringing pro- and antichurch protests back to the streets of Clearwater after years of relative calm.

Some people paid a price.

Minkoff, the Scientologist doctor

who pronounced McPherson dead, was disciplined by the state of Florida. Without having met McPherson, he had written prescriptions for her during her stay in the Fort Harrison.

Kartuzinski, the supervisor in charge of her stay at the Fort Harrison, was banished for years to work in the church's laundry in Clearwater.

Scientology parishioners were called on to dig deeper into their pockets. The church's Clearwater entity, the Flag Service Organization, typically took in \$1.5 million to \$2 million a week, Rathbun and others said, providing a picture of Scientology's revenues never before disclosed.

Miscavige decided the exorbitant legal bills from the McPherson case were to be paid from the Flag operation, Rathbun said, so church registrars urged parishioners to come in for more auditing and other services.

"It was a matter of, 'Step things up, get people in,?' " he said. "They brought in a lot of money during that period."

Yet another group would pay in a different way. According to Rathbun and other high-ranking defectors, Miscavige grew more violent and erratic as the McPherson case wore on.

Said Rathbun: "Working under David Miscavige from 2000 forward was a steadily deteriorating situation." ■

## IT CAN BE EXPENSIVE

Lisa McPherson spent at least \$176,700 on Scientology services her last five years. She died with \$11 in her savings account. Here are costs of some Scientology services.

**\$16.95** Cost of a large, softcover copy of Hubbard's seminal book, *Dianetics*

**\$35** Required donation to take a Scientology extension course

**\$200** Cost of a week of beginning auditing sessions on *Dianetics* through the church

**\$13,500** Required donation to take a one-year course to become a Scientology auditor

**\$220,000** Required donation to take a two-year, 16-course upper-level training program called the Saint Hill Special Briefing Course



# ECCLESIASTICAL JUSTICE

DEFECTORS: LEADER EMPLOYS VIOLENT CONFESSIONALS  
AND DEGRADING RITUALS.

SCIENTOLOGY OFFICIALS: WE'RE NOT FOR EVERYONE...



Getty Images

**David Miscavige, at the 2004 opening of the Church of Scientology, Madrid: "We want you to know who we are, what we believe, and all we stand for."**

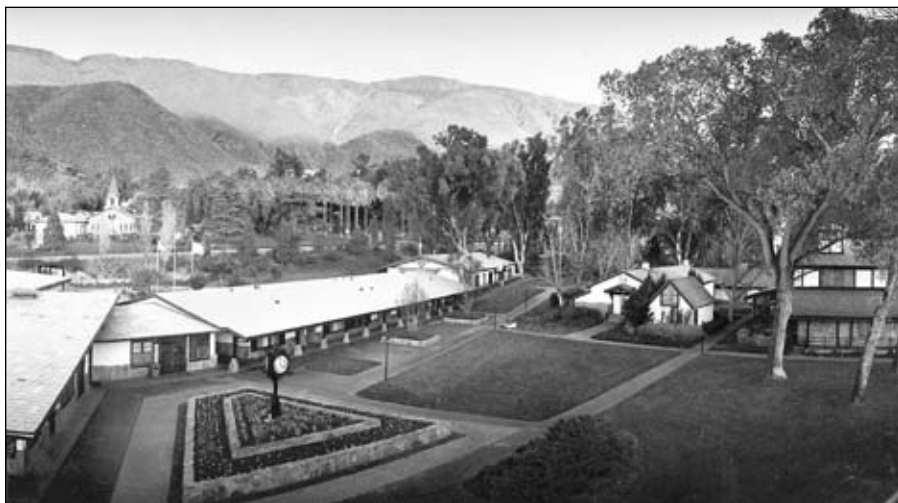
BY THOMAS C. TOBIN AND JOE CHILDS  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**he four high-ranking executives who left Scientology say that church leader David Miscavige not only physically attacked members of his executive staff, he messed with their minds.

He frequently had groups of managers jump into a pool or a lake. He mustered them into group confessions that sometimes spun into free-for-alls, with people hitting one another.

Mike Rinder, who defended the church to the media for two decades, couldn't stomach what was happening on the inside.

The tactics to keep executives in line "are wrong from a Scientology viewpoint," said Rinder, who walked away two years ago. "They are not standard practice of Scientology. They are just not humanitarian. And they are just outright evil."



Handout photo

**THE CALIFORNIA BASE:** Almost all the violence the defectors described took place at the church's 500-acre, fence-enclosed compound in the arid hills east of Los Angeles. The base is home to Golden Era Productions, or "Gold," the media and publication division of the church. The base is also home to the church's international management headquarters, often referred to as Int.

Church spokesmen confirm that managers are ordered into pools and assembled for group confessions. It's part of the "ecclesiastical justice" system the church imposes on poor performers.

Rinder and the other defectors couldn't cut it in the tough world of Scientology's Sea Org, a group whose members dedicate their lives to service of the church, the church says. Rather than accept their own failings, the defectors are putting a sinister

twist on something that is normal.

The Sea Org is a "crew of tough sons of bitches," said church spokesman Tommy Davis, an 18-year veteran of the group.

"The Sea Org is not a democracy. The members of it agree with a man named L. Ron Hubbard. They abide by his policies ... and we follow it to the T, to the letter, to the punctuation marks. And if you disagree with that and you don't like it, you don't belong. Then you leave."

## A BETTER THETAN

The order came about 10 p.m. on a winter's night: Report to the swimming pool.

From around the church's postcard-pretty base in the mountains east of Los Angeles, some 70 staff members turned out in their Navy-style uniforms. David Miscavige was unhappy with the troops, again.

The punishment the leader had in mind was not new to members of the Sea Org. Hubbard, the church's late founder, "overboarded" Sea Org members in the 1970s when he ran Scientology from a ship named the *Apollo*.

Miscavige had the staffers line up at the diving board in their uniforms, and one by one, jump into the pool. Before each person went in, Norman Starkey, once the captain of the *Apollo*, called on them to be better spiritual beings. He recited a traditional Sea Org saying:

*We commit your sins and errors to the deep and trust you will rise a better thetan.*

Miscavige ordered the group to go to an office in their wet clothes and stay put until they figured out where they had failed.

Tom De Vocht says he can't recall what angered Miscavige that chilly night early in 2005. But he well remembers the doubts that crept into

his head as he sat wet and shivering.

*What am I doing here?*

De Vocht had joined the church with his mother when he was just 10 and rose to a top executive post at Scientology's spiritual headquarters in Clearwater. But in the months after that mass dunking, he no longer recognized the organization.

Neither did Rinder, who went into the pool that night with De Vocht.

Two others already had acted on their doubts. Marty Rathbun, one of Miscavige's top lieutenants for years, left in 2004. Amy Scobee, who held several executive posts, left in 2005.

The four defectors, speaking publicly for the first time, each served more than 25 years in the Sea Org.

"Right, wrong or indifferent, I felt I was doing something for the good of man, and I'll never give that back," said De Vocht, who left in 2005. "But the longer I was in it, it got crazier and crazier as Dave took over."

## NORMAL VS. ABNORMAL

Confession is ingrained in Scientology culture. Admit all your bad thoughts and transgressions, leave nothing out, and you will feel free, unburdened, joyful.

The four defectors say Miscavige took the practice to a new level. They said he convened group confessions

that came to be known as “seances.”

The executives would confess sins they had committed against Miscavige, reveal their bad thoughts about Scientology and make personal disclosures, including sexual fantasies. If someone couldn’t come up with a transgression, the others bullied him into admitting something. Anything.

“And Dave would sit there and listen to it and enjoy the hell out of it,” said De Vocht, who recalled one seance when he said Miscavige struck executive Marc Yager and threw him to the floor, then singled out Faith Schermerhorn, a midlevel administrator who is black.

“He goes, ‘By the way, (Yager) thinks black people are n-----, and he doesn’t want Scientology to help blacks. Go kick him.’ So (Yager) is

down on the ground and she’s kicking him,” De Vocht said.

“Everybody in that damned room — people are wild and out of control,” he said. “I punched somebody. Everybody was punched. And screaming and yelling. It just got like, *What the hell is going on here?*”

The church provided the *St. Petersburg Times* with sworn declarations from Yager and Schermerhorn denying that the incident happened. In Yager’s declaration, he said he is not prejudiced and Schermerhorn is a friend.

Schermerhorn wrote that she has never heard Miscavige use the n-word: “As a matter of fact, I know that Mr. Miscavige has been the person in Scientology who has done the most for black people.”

Rinder said a group confession

## SCIENTOLOGY » CELEBRITIES

Scientology loves its celebrities. Church founder L. Ron Hubbard reportedly started “Project Celebrity,” a program that rewarded church members who recruited celebrities to Scientology.



**Celebrity Centre:** The Manor Hotel, built in Hollywood in 1929 and restored in 1992, is the home of the church’s Celebrity Centre International. In the 1930s and ’40s, the hotel was home

to, among others, Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn and Clark Gable. Today, the church says, the manor at 5930 Franklin Ave. caters to “the artists, politicians, leaders of industry, sports figures and anyone with the power and vision to create a better world.”

early in 2004 stands out for him because Rathbun, his longtime friend, ended up attacking him.

“You stand up and there’s 50 people in the room all screaming and shouting, ‘What did you do? And you did this and you did that.’ And I’m standing there saying, ‘No, I didn’t do that,’” Rinder said.

The group ganged up on him. He had to have done something: *Come on. Own up. Come on.*

“And then when I said nothing, that’s when Marty leaped on me,” Rinder said. “And that’s psychotic. There is a term for it in Scientology. It’s called Contagion of Aberration. ...

“When you get a group of people together, they will stimulate one another to do things that are crazy.”

Davis, who succeeded Rinder as

church spokesman, said the term “seance” is not used in Scientology and Miscavige never encouraged violence. But it’s not surprising that Rathbun attacked Rinder, Davis said, because Rathbun physically attacked other managers all the time.

Rinder said the ugly moment was an example of the corrosive atmosphere at Scientology’s base near Los Angeles. “There’s an attempt to play people off, one against the other. And you know that and you see it,” Rinder said.

Rathbun’s attack “wasn’t motivated by hatred toward me, it was motivated by some attempt at preservation for him.”

Davis cited church founder Hubbard’s policy that encourages members to confront and “come clean” when they have done something to

## SCIENTOLOGY » CELEBRITIES



**Amy Scobee** with **Isaac Hayes** at a Celebrity Centre International gala event in the early 1990s.

**Tom Cruise:** The actor is probably Scientology’s best known, most fervent supporter. In 2004,

Miscavige presented Cruise with the church’s first Freedom Medal of Valor and called him “the most dedicated Scientologist I know.” When Cruise married Katie Holmes in 2006, *People* magazine said “the best man was Cruise’s best friend, David Miscavige.” And who audited Tom Cruise? Marty Rathbun says that Miscavige entrusted him with that task.



bring down their group. It's one hallmark of a successful organization.

"It's not for the purposes of punishment," Davis said, "and it's certainly never for the purpose of trying to make the person feel guilty for it."

The church says Rathbun and De Vocht acted so inappropriately — roughing up staffers — that they were required to confess publicly. "They were definitely guilty, definitely in violation of the mores of the group," said spokeswoman Jessica Feshbach.

"And were they confronted by peers and asked, What's going on? Absolutely. Because that is the responsibility of the group."

Letting down the group also can result in overboarding, church spokesmen said. It's a Sea Org ritual akin to traditions in other religious orders.

Starkey, the 66-year-old former captain of the *Apollo*, said plenty of people have been overboarded in his 50 years in Scientology.

If a Sea Org member messes up, "you throw him over the g-- d--- side of the ship," Starkey said.

"He falls into the water, he swims around, climbs up the ladder, gets off at the dock, walks back in again. He never does that again. He knows that that is the way we operate. That is what the Sea Organization is like."

Church lawyer Monique Yingling said overboarding is part of ecclesiastical justice. "They're not backing away from it or ashamed of it," she said. It has been done hundreds of times, with precautions taken to make it safe.

In the example De Vocht and Rinder recounted, church spokes-

## SCIENTOLOGY » CELEBRITIES

**John Travolta:** He reportedly attributes his career success in large part to Scientology. After he began auditing sessions in the mid 1970s, he landed a lead role on the TV series *Welcome Back, Kotter*. He starred in *Battlefield Earth*, a movie based on a work of science fiction by L. Ron Hubbard. Travolta and his wife, Kelly Preston, come to Clearwater often. In March 2007, hundreds turned out to see the couple at the grand opening of the Scientology Life Improvement Center of St. Petersburg, right.



men said, the pool was heated, towels were provided, a lifeguard was present. And Miscavige wasn't even there.

De Vocht and Rinder say he was. "He was standing right there, laughing," Rinder said. "It was very entertaining for him."

Rinder said he doesn't remember any towels at the ready, that night or any of the 10 or so other times he says large groups of staffers were escorted to the lake under guard and required to jump in fully dressed.

He disputed Yingling's contention the "overboarding" incident as described, with a large group of people, is accepted church practice. He said it's meant to address an issue with an individual.

Which is how church spokesman Davis said he punished a subordinate.

"It was a guy who was blowing it and kept blowing it and kept blowing it — making mistakes, underperforming," he said. "It was my responsibility to uphold the ethical standards of the Sea Org. Yeah, absolutely, I tossed the guy in."

If the defectors could not hack such punishments, Davis said, they could have left years ago. "The g-- d--- front door wasn't locked. And if they had a problem with it they could have walked out."

## INTENSE AND HANDS ON

The defectors were not only soft, they couldn't maintain the accelerated work pace Miscavige established, the church says. Rathbun flubbed so many assignments, such as his handling of the Lisa McPherson wrongful

## SCIENTOLOGY » CELEBRITIES



**Chick Corea:** The pianist posed at the Fort Harrison Hotel before he played at the 2002 Clearwater Jazz Holiday.

### Anne Archer:

Among her many movie roles, Archer played the betrayed housewife in the movie *Fatal Attraction*. She is a Scientologist, and her son, Tommy Davis, is the church's chief spokesman.





death lawsuit, that Miscavige had to take over, distracting him from more important duties, spokesmen said.

With Rathbun gone, Miscavige focused on growth plans: “2004 was a paradigm shift, the point where everything changed,” Davis said. “Where Mr. Miscavige was able to get on to what he always wanted to get on to.”

Davis played DVDs of Scientology ads now on cable TV. He outlined a multimillion-dollar international expansion program to open an array of “ideal orgs,” each with course rooms, displays that explain Scientology to the uninitiated, facilities for community outreach groups, and rooms for auditing, the core counseling of Scientology.

The church revamped its Web site, improved the books that are the

foundation of Scientology and restored the grainy films of Hubbard’s landmark lectures. All of this accomplished in the past four years, all led, planned, designed and created by Miscavige.

The spokesmen described him as a “hands-on” leader working in video editing bays, proofreading manuscripts, helping write scripts, staying up each night to listen to every one of Hubbard’s 3,000 lectures and setting up a construction office to outfit the 66 new buildings the church has acquired since 2004.

Miscavige is intense, church spokesmen said, but he never behaves in degrading, crude or violent ways, and he never altered church policy. The church brought more than a dozen international managers

## SCIENTOLOGY » CELEBRITIES



**Erika Christensen and Beck**, both raised Scientologists, at the Celebrity Centre’s 36th anniversary gala in 2005.

**Other famous Scientologists:** Kirstie Alley, Jenna Elfman, Doug E. Fresh, Jason Lee, Geoffrey Lewis, Juliette Lewis, Elisabeth Moss, Priscilla Presley, Lisa Marie Presley, Leah Remini, Giovanni Ribisi, Greta Van Susteren

**Former Scientologists:** Leonard Cohen, Nicole Kidman, Demi Moore, Van Morrison, Dini Petty, Mimi Rogers, Jerry Seinfeld, Patrick Swayze



to Clearwater to speak to the *Times*. All said they worked with Miscavige for years and spoke of his kindness and compassion.

All of them deny the defectors' allegations that Miscavige hit them.

"They're such lies," said Ray Mithoff, his voice shaking. "I've known the man for 27 years."

Said Mark Ingber, a Sea Org member since 1968: "I've never been beaten to a pulp in my life. Mr. Miscavige is my friend."

## THE BEST AND WORST

One night before Christmas 1997, Miscavige's wife, Michelle, telephoned Rathbun and Rinder. The leader wanted to see them. Right away.

From different parts of the California compound, they jogged to his quarters.

They say Miscavige bustled through the screen door in a terry cloth bathrobe and without a word grabbed Rinder around the neck, slapped him, slugged him and threw him against a tree.

Rinder ended up in ivy, mud on his uniform, his lip bleeding. Miscavige led them to the officers' lounge, poured Rinder a glass of Scotch and said it would make him feel better.

The leader of Scientology turned and walked toward his quarters.

People would flinch when Miscavige walked by, De Vocht said.

"That's how routine it was," he said. "His whole entire outlook was that everybody was out to get him. Anything and everything anybody else touched was going to be screwed up, and he had to do it himself. He didn't trust anybody."

Scobee described working in her office cubicle along the wall of a large conference room. Miscavige was seated alone on one side of the table facing several staffers, including Jeff Hawkins.

"So I'm not paying attention and all of a sudden I see David Miscavige jump up on top of the table — the conference room table," Scobee said.

He lunged at Hawkins, she said, and the two of them landed at her feet. Miscavige "stayed on top of him and was choking him and hitting him and grabbing his tie. Buttons were flying and change falling out of Jeff's pockets. And I'm sitting here going, 'Oh my God!'"

Hawkins has spoken and written publicly about the 2002 incident.

Church executive David Bloomberg tells a far different story. Bloomberg said that he was seated next to Hawkins that day and that Hawkins became belligerent with the leader. Hawkins fell out of his chair and end-

ed up putting a scissor lock on Miscavige's legs.

"Mr. Miscavige did not touch Jeff Hawkins," Bloomberg said.

At his best, Miscavige inspires staffers, Rathbun said, recalling times the leader invoked a dispatch Hubbard wrote in the 1980s: The planet's fate rests on the shoulders of "the desperate few."

Miscavige used it to stir a sense of mission and make you feel special, Rathbun said.

"He'd make you feel like you were really important. And that's why you would do stuff for him."

But the defectors said Miscavige's tendency to change plans, micromanage and undermine the chain of command paralyzed the management team and stifled growth in the years before they left. To pump up revenue, Rathbun said, Miscavige repackaged old Scientology books and services and marketed them to parishioners as must-have, new products.

He cited the church's recent blitz urging members to buy new versions of "the basics," a collection of Hubbard books that are the foundation of Scientology. In 2007, Miscavige told



Photo courtesy of Amy Scobee

**IDEALISM OF YOUTH.** Scientology says "you can increase your ability as a spiritual being to become free," Amy Scobee says. "So I wanted to be part of the crusade to accomplish that."

Scientologists who had bought and studied the books for decades that the volumes were flawed, with whole passages missing, out-of-order or written by editors.

No wonder people complained about not being able to understand them, the leader said. The church put the volumes in their proper state and was selling them anew.

Said Rathbun: "He's telling (parishioners) literally to their faces, 'You didn't understand the first thing about Scientology because you couldn't possibly have because the books were screwed up.'"

The 18-volume set now sells for \$450, down from the 1986 price of \$738.

Davis, the church spokesman, describes the reworked collection as a sensational development, a historic recovery of Hubbard's work comparable to the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls.

Said Yingling, the church attorney: "It was received with such joy by the Scientology public at large."

Rathbun, De Vocht and Scobee said they were privy to weekly internal data reports that showed a gradual decline in key statistics, including the value of church services delivered and the number of auditing hours and courses completed.

"These are the statistics that are supposed to matter," Rathbun said. "All that stuff's been going down."

De Vocht described Miscavige's decisionmaking as erratic. He said the leader often changes course, resulting in situations like Scientology's multimillion-dollar "Super Power" building in downtown Clearwater. The mammoth structure, finished on the outside, has sat vacant for six years.

After repeated design changes, work on the interior restarted this month.

Davis and Yingling trumpet Scientology's worldwide expansion. The past five years, the church has acquired 80 properties; three new

churches — called orgs — opened this year, with five more on track to open by year's end.

## **IS THIS THE REAL LIFE?**

They called it the Hole.

For months, the small building at the California base was like a prison for more than 30 of the highest-ranking officers in the Sea Org.

They could leave only once a day, for a shower, otherwise they stayed put. Food was brought in. They slept on the floor, men around the conference table, women in the cubicles and small offices ringing the room.

Miscavige called meetings at odd hours, 2 a.m., 4 a.m. Day after day, the exhausted executives puzzled through management structure and the pricing system for church services, trying to guess what their leader wanted.

He rejected their ideas, cursed them, branded them "suppressive persons" who put their church at risk. He demanded they go back at it; they could not leave until they got it right.

Sometimes Miscavige would let someone out of the Hole or throw in somebody else. Rinder says he was there from the start. In January 2004, Miscavige added De Vocht to the mix.

"Everyone gathered around the table. He's throwing things, yelling at people, beating people up," De Vocht

remembered. "It was a weird scene, let me tell you."

Later that month, Miscavige threw a bigger name into the Hole: Marty Rathbun.

The leader told the others not to listen to a word Rathbun said, he was not to be trusted: *I know you all have come to respect this guy over the years, but he is the guy that's f----- me up.*

A few days earlier, Rathbun says, Miscavige had pushed his head against a wall and slapped him hard across his left ear for not being tougher on the staff. He figures that must be what landed him in the Hole.

The building consisted of small offices and a conference room tucked into two double-wide trailers. When Miscavige tramped down the corridor, the hollowness of the floor made a klunk, klunk, klunk sound.

Four days into Rathbun's stay, the klunking signaled Miscavige's arrival, flanked as always by his wife, who took notes, and an assistant with a recorder so that everything the leader said could be transcribed and distributed across the base.

Miscavige announced that they were going to play musical chairs to de-



**YOUNG AND DEVOTED:** Marty Rathbun at a Sea Org event. He had an early spiritual "win" that kept him in Scientology for years. "I went exterior. ... I had this real understanding that I am separate and apart from the body."

termine who among them was the most committed to the tasks at hand. All but the winner would be reassigned to Scientology's far-flung outposts.

Some staffers cried at the thought of being separated from family. Others made ready, positioning chairs around the 30-foot long, maple conference table.

Miscavige used a boom box to play Bohemian Rhapsody, by Queen.

*Is this the real life?*

*Is this just fantasy?*

*Caught in a landslide*

*No escape from reality*

When the music stopped, the uniformed Sea Org members jostled for chairs, knocking each other aside.

Two men fought so hard a chair came apart in their hands.

Losers were told where they were being assigned, husbands and wives finding that they were to be thousands of miles apart. Rinder said Miscavige taunted one husband for showing a soft side by consoling his tearful wife.

“Oh yeah,” Rinder said. “It was fun and games.”

Again, church officials said, the defectors are making the normal seem abnormal. Miscavige was merely trying to make a point, they said, citing a Hubbard policy that says frequent personnel transfers are like “musical chairs” and can harm a group’s progress. Miscavige wanted the group to see for themselves how destructive that can be.

Yingling said Miscavige had been away from the base and returned to find that in his absence, Rathbun had transferred hundreds of staffers. “That’s why nothing was getting done,” she said.

Rathbun and Rinder said it was the opposite: Nothing was getting done because Miscavige took top managers from their posts and ordered them to the Hole. Rathbun said Miscavige berated him for not transferring more people.

From evening into the wee hours of the next day the game of musical

chairs dragged on, sometimes interrupted by the leader lecturing the group on their incompetence.

“It’s like *Apocalypse Now*,” Rathbun said. “It’s bizarre.”

The game ended with two women competing for the last chair.

“It was definitely a physical struggle and they were grappling and wrestling,” Rathbun recalled. “Then (Miscavige) leaves and says, ‘Okay, good. We’ll see you f----- tomorrow.’”

Miscavige never carried out his threat of mass transfers.

## ONE BEATING TOO MANY

The next night, Miscavige ordered his executives to jog from the Hole to a building where staffers made CDs of long-ago lectures by Hubbard.

With the group still huffing from their 400-yard run, Miscavige grilled De Vocht, who had overseen renovations to the building. He slapped De Vocht, threw him to the floor and began to choke him.

De Vocht can’t recall why he was attacked. Maybe he hesitated with an answer. Maybe he gave a look the leader didn’t like. Whatever the reason, he accepted his drubbing in silent, degrading submission.

Miscavige grew angrier if you expressed pain or resisted, the defectors said.

“You’re literally sitting there thinking, I’m not going to hit this guy,” De Vocht said. “It happens so suddenly, what do you do? And then if you want to go after him, how many other people are going to pummel you? You’ve got to realize this place is so cultish it’s scary.”

Scobee says the executives at the California base were trapped. They dared not speak to each other about Miscavige’s behavior, afraid they would be found out in confessions known as “security checks.”

A person who said something negative about Miscavige might withhold it in her own confession, Scobee said, but someone else would invariably report it in theirs.

“So you don’t want to go against him,” she said. “It wasn’t even an option, as amazing as it seems. Now, after being out, I would so do everything different.”

For Sea Org members, there’s a personal struggle as well. “You put your life into the church and you do think that is your route to freedom,” Scobee said. “There are a lot of great things about it ... and you don’t want to throw that away. You don’t want to risk it.”

Why not just leave?

Easy to say, according to Rinder.

Scientology preaches self-reliance. You alone control your environ-

ment, your condition in life is no one else’s doing but your own.

But just as strongly, Scientology holds that if you leave the church, something is wrong with you. Somewhere in your past is an “overt,” a transgression.

“It becomes a big sort of dichotomy,” Rinder said. Staying in an unhappy situation is no way to control your environment. “But if I leave, I’m doing something wrong, too. It’s like a catch-22.”

For Rinder, the Scientology experience he knew and loved had become something foreign, a work climate increasingly strange and abusive.

It also was at crosscurrents with the kinder, gentler public posture the church sought to build over the past 20 years, a message that Rinder, as chief spokesman, conveyed time and again: The church purged the law-breakers and dirty tricksters of the 1970s and reinvented itself.

“We just stopped doing things that I and others considered to be foolish and harmful and off policy,” Rinder said.

Except at home.

“Now, the irony is what’s being done on the inside is foolish and harmful and abusive,” he said.

Rathbun saw and delivered many beatings over the years. But he said

Miscavige's attack on De Vocht the night after the musical chairs game clarified his thinking.

Four days earlier, when Miscavige put Rathbun in the Hole, he instructed everyone not to talk to him. But De Vocht quietly defied that order, asking Rathbun to help them figure out what to do to please Miscavige. Now De Vocht was being beaten.

"I'm watching this go down, and I just had this incredible connection... this humanity connection with Tom," Rathbun said. "I subscribe to the Pop-eye philosophy: 'I can take so much but I can't take no more.'"

"I still have a thread of dignity and I see it being crushed in people around me. What am I going to do? Am I going to become one of them, too?"

As the rest of the group herded back into the Hole, Rathbun broke off and ducked into some bushes. He went for his motorcycle, a Yamaha 650, wheeled it to the back gate of the compound and hid in the brush for about 20 minutes. When the gate opened for a car, he sped away.

Rathbun said he felt rage and loss, mixed with an odd excitement.

"I'm kind of exhilarated that I've made the step, and I'm hauling a-- because I'm thinking someone's following me." ■

## SCIENTOLOGY IN EUROPE

The Church of Scientology enjoys tax-exempt status in the United States and has greatly expanded its reach around the globe. But it faces fierce resistance in several European countries.'

### IN FRANCE

The church and six of its French leaders are on trial, accused of organized fraud. Prosecutors want the group banned and fined.

### IN BELGIUM

Prosecutors are pursuing fraud and extortion charges against the church's Belgian operation, which they have called a "criminal organization."

### IN GERMANY

Officials are no longer pursuing a ban on Scientology, but intelligence services continue to monitor the group.

# LEAVING THE CHURCH: A HUGE STEP

Those who join the Sea Org dedicate their lives to Scientology and sign a 1-billion-year contract, to symbolize their commitment to serve in this life and the next ones. Many of those who leave undergo a “security check” to see if they have ill intentions for the church, and many are cut off from contact with family still in Scientology.

## MIKE RINDER

In March 2007, David Miscavige assigned Rinder to get the BBC to spike a story it was preparing. A reporter and film crew had been to Los Angeles, asking pointed questions about Miscavige. Rinder followed them back to the UK.

Working out of church offices in North London, Rinder wrote network executives, asking to meet. He camped out at BBC offices.

On March 31, he intercepted the reporter at a church test center. A church videographer stood by. Blocking the doorway and face to face with the reporter, Rinder repeatedly denied allegations Miscavige abused his deputies. “It’s rubbish,” he said.

The story aired May 14, but it did not expose Miscavige. Rinder was relieved.

But Miscavige still was furi-



Times photo (1998)

ous with him. The first week of June, Rinder says, the church leader wrote that he was to be sent to a remote part of Australia. And a manager in the London office told Rinder that Miscavige had phoned to say that first he was to report to the church’s facility in Sussex, England, and dig ditches. He was not to return to the United States.

The church says Rinder was not told to dig ditches and was not told that he could never return to the United States.

Rinder picked up his briefcase and headed for the subway. He knew the route well. Go to Victoria Station, catch a train to East Grin-



**MIKE RINDER (continued)**

stead, in Sussex. He had made the trip many times.

But not this day. He exited the subway before reaching Victoria, walked up to street level and toured one of his favorite cities.

A few days later he called Tom De Vocht, saying he was flying into Orlando. Could Tom pick him up?

De Vocht hadn't seen his old friend since he left the church two years earlier. On the way to De Vocht's apartment, they stopped at Kohl's to get Rinder something to wear.

Rinder stayed a few days, then went to Virginia. He wrote the church, saying he wanted to talk to his wife and also wanted his stuff, except his motorcycle and bicycle. Give them to his kids, he wrote.

He did not talk to his wife.

Soon a FedEx package arrived, including a check for \$5,000, to cover the motorcycle "and everything else," Rinder said. The only items not sent were family photos.

Rinder and his wife, Cathy, divorced after 35 years. A Sea Org member for 35 years, Cathy Rinder called her ex-husband's allegation that Miscavige struck him on some 50 occasions "outrageous."

"I slept with Mike," she said, "and I would have seen it."

The Rinders have two adult children, both Sea Org members. Since he left the church in 2007, Rinder has had no contact with them and didn't know their 24-year-old son battled cancer the past 18 months.

A Sea Org member since he was 18, Rinder is 54 and lives in Denver. He sells cars.

**MARTY RATHBUN**

After riding away from the California base aboard his motorcycle in February 2004, Rathbun flew to Clearwater to "sort things out" with his wife, Anne, a longtime Scientologist. Eventually, he hoped to

sort things out with Miscavige, too.

Rathbun was a "potential trouble source" for any Scientologist he encountered. For 10 months, he ate alone, roomed alone in staff housing — his wife in a separate apart-

**MARTY RATHBUN (continued)**

ment — and pulled a daily shift in the church's furniture mill.

Through his wife, Rathbun conveyed that he wanted to confront Miscavige. He said he waited for 10 months but the leader never came to see him.

On Dec. 12, 2004, he walked away from 27 years in Scientology. He rented a car and drove around the South for 35 days, stopping at the southern tip of Texas, where he found it easy to blend in.

"It's not a big thing that a guy in middle age comes into town destitute or depressed. There's a lot of that along the border," he said. "So it wasn't like I stuck out like a sore thumb. It was nice."

In Clearwater, a church critic put up posters asking, Where's Marty Rathbun? On the Internet, there was speculation: "Is Marty Rathbun dead?"

Now divorced, Rathbun and his girlfriend of three years share a stilt house near Corpus Christi, Texas. They have a dog, Chiquita.

His former wife, now Anne Joasem, remains in the Sea Org. She said Rathbun was violent and saw his role as a warrior for the church.



THOMAS C. TOBIN | Times photo

She said he told her he was leaving because the church was entering an era of expansion and he didn't want to get in the way.

Rathbun scoffed at that. "This is all manufactured. This is Miscavige-scripted stuff."

Rathbun writes for two small newspapers but considers himself more activist than journalist. Last year, he worked as an organizer for the Obama campaign. He also hawked beer at a local ballpark.

He said he gives advice and counsel — and listens a lot — to people in and out of Scientology.

He has an e-meter in his home office and says he still practices Scientology. He is 52.

## AMY SCOBEE

When Scobee first saw Miscavige physically strike a church executive, back in 1995, she said she rationalized it this way: The guy must have done something really wrong to make the leader angry.

The next six years, she saw more abuse and other dehumanizing practices, she said, before she had an epiphany:

“What I am seeing is completely insane and I am nonstop trying to make it make sense, and it doesn’t.”

She started speaking up and constantly got in trouble. She was sent to Scientology’s Rehabilitation Project Force, RPF for short, a work detail that is supposed to offer Sea Org members a chance to sort things out, recharge, reorder misaligned priorities. Scobee called it “slave labor.”

She had to scrape the inside of a septic tank with a wire brush. She dug drainage ditches.

Scobee was married 17 years to fellow Sea Org member Jim Mortland. But she said they rarely saw each other because they were often assigned to different locations, had different schedules and were



Photo courtesy of Amy Scobee

kept apart a total of five years because of the RPF.

In 2003, a church “Fitness Board” found her unfit to work at the California base and “off-loaded” her to the RPF in Clearwater.

At first, she thought, she would try to redeem herself. But then she started thinking she wanted to leave. She asked fellow Sea Org member and longtime friend Matt Pesch if he wanted to leave with her. He did.

They began the cumbersome process of “routing out.” They knew they faced confessionals called security checks, but Scobee was shocked to learn she was being declared a “suppressive person,” an enemy of Scientology. She

**AMY SCOBEE (continued)**

would be allowed no contact with any church member.

“I blew up. Somebody’s going to do a sec check on me and put me on the streets after 27 years of working my a-- off around the clock, not getting paid. I was really livid.”

During the routing out process, Scobee said she and Pesch were guarded 24 hours a day and fed only beans and rice.

Two months later, on March 1, 2005, Scobee and Pesch told their handlers the process had gone on too long. They left separately.

The church gave her \$500, most of which paid for her flight back to her home near Seattle. On the way

to Tampa International Airport, she had her driver stop at a salon so she could get a haircut.

Twenty-six years after coming to Clearwater as a 16-year-old Sea Org newbie, she said she boarded the plane with about \$175.

“That’s how much I started the world with,” she said.

“I never had job. I had no prior job experience. No high school diploma. I had no bank account. No driver’s license. ... I knew nothing of the outside world.”

A few weeks later, Pesch traveled to Seattle and the two married. They buy and sell used furniture. Scobee is 45.

**TOM DE VOCHT**

De Vocht said Miscavige hit him twice, first in 2004 after musical chairs, and again in May 2005 in the film studio at the church base in California.

“He slapped me across the face, pushed my neck and head up against the wall, which hurt pretty good.”

De Vocht told his wife, Jenni-

fer, a Miscavige aide, that if it happened again, he would fight back.

Days later, De Vocht said, he was summoned to a room, where about 15 people waited, including his wife. Miscavige telephoned from Clearwater and over a speaker phone read an order declaring De Vocht a “suppressive person,” an enemy of the church.

## TOM DE VOCHT (continued)

Not allowed to talk to his wife again, he bunked in a small room. Rinder shadowed him for three days, pitching reasons to stay.

But De Vocht wouldn't budge. He agreed to a limited number of confessions called "security checks," but he told everyone he was leaving, that Sunday afternoon at 3:30. He also asked to talk a last time with his wife. Rinder told him no.

Sunday came. The guard at the base wouldn't open the front gate so De Vocht scaled it and walked to Hemet, a city 6 miles away. Rinder walked with him.

De Vocht, a 28-year Sea Org member, had his \$300 severance pay. He checked into a hotel and called his brother in Florida to come pick him up. Days later, Rinder met De Vocht and turned over his belongings and his two dogs, Puggers and Guppers.

The church also called, saying he had left his wet suit. De Vocht gave a forwarding address. Two weeks later, the wet suit arrived, along with a "freeloader's bill" for \$98,000 to reimburse the church for courses he took for free as a



JAMES BORCHUCK | Times

Sea Org member. He hasn't paid a dime.

De Vocht and his wife, now Jennifer Linson, were divorced after 19 years. She told the *Times* her ex-husband successfully completed a number of construction projects in Clearwater, but badly overspent on a key project at the base, was demoted, became bitter and left. They haven't spoken since.

"I don't hold anything she had to say against her," De Vocht said, "because she was put up to saying it."

He is 45 and runs a furniture business in Winter Haven.

ACCOUNTS OF ABUSE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE CHURCH EMBOLDEN OTHERS TO TELL THEIR STORIES.



# STRENGTH IN THEIR NUMBERS



**THE DEFECTORS**  
WHO THEY ARE,  
WHAT THEY SAY  
[CLICK HERE](#)



BY JOE CHILDS AND THOMAS C. TOBIN,  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**hey are stepping forward — from Dallas and Denver, Portland, Las Vegas, Montana — talking about what happened, to them and their friends, during their

years in the Church of Scientology.

Jackie Wolff wept as she recalled the chaotic night she was ordered to stand at a microphone in the mess hall and confess her “crimes” in front of 300 fellow workers, many jeering and heckling her.

Gary Morehead dredged up his recollection of Scientology leader David Miscavige punishing venerable church leaders by forcing them to live out of tents for days, wash with a garden hose and use an open latrine.

Steve Hall replayed his memory of a meeting when Miscavige grabbed the heads of two church executives and knocked them together. One came away with a bloody ear.

Mark Fisher remembered precisely what he told Miscavige after the punches stopped and Fisher touched his head, looked at his palm and saw blood.

These and other former Scientology staffers are talking now, inspired and emboldened by the raw revelations of four defectors from the church's executive ranks who broke years of silence in stories published recently by the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Those behind-the-scenes accounts from Marty Rathbun and Mike Rinder, the highest officials ever to leave Scientology, were buttressed by detailed revelations of highly placed former managers Amy Scobee and Tom De Vocht.

Now their stories have prompted other former Scientology veterans to go public about physical and mental abuses they say they witnessed and endured.

Some want to support and defend the initial four, whom church repre-

sentatives labeled as liars attempting a coup. Others say they feel more secure now that Rathbun, Rinder and the others are on the record with their unprecendented accounts of life on the inside.

But fear still prevents many defectors from talking. For every former church staffer willing to speak out, one or two more refused.

Those who talked confirm the earlier defectors' stories of erratic, dehumanizing treatment and provide a deeper view into the controlling environment in which members of the religious order known as the Sea Org live and work.

Four men joined Rinder, De Vocht and Rathbun in saying: David Miscavige assaulted me.

Church spokesman Tommy Davis said the new defectors' accounts of physical abuse by Miscavige are "false and categorically denied."

"It is clear that these new 'accounts' were stirred up by your recent articles," Davis said in a written statement, "and are nothing more than the ranting of anti-Scientologists on the grassy knoll of the Internet corroborating each other."

The church provided the *Times* two dozen written declarations from current and former church executives and staffers. Referring to those statements, Davis said: "You have been provided with volumes of evidence to show that

your original sources are delusionary, bitter and dishonest; your new sources are more of the same.”

Those new sources are men and women who joined Scientology as children, teenagers or young adults and spent decades laboring to advance the mission envisioned by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.

Morehead, who drives a tow truck in Portland and spent almost a decade as security chief at the church's sprawling base outside Los Angeles, described how Miscavige struck a church executive in the chest so hard, “I could hear the hollow thump and see (him) lose his breath from the impacts.”

How does Morehead manage such recall after 15 years?

“It's just like you remember when you touch a hot stove,” he said. “You're never going to do it again, right? It hurts, there's pain ...

“Well, it's as clear and conceptual as that is. I have a hard time remembering my address, but I can certainly remember this. You hold on to this because what the hell could you have done then, and what the hell can you do now?”

## **A NEW AWARENESS**

Like countless college kids in the mid 1970s, Steve Hall was searching for meaning in life. He stumbled across

a personality test he picked up a couple of years earlier at a Rolling Stones concert and stuck in a drawer.

He sent it in and got a call. “I asked the girl what Scientology was, and she said it's a way you can become more aware. ... She summed up everything that I wanted at the time.”

Hall got involved with the church to the point that his mother hired a “deprogrammer” from Los Angeles to come to Dallas and get her son out. Hall says he threatened to kill the guy if he ever contacted his mother again.

In the mid 1980s, Hall landed what he imagined would be his dream assignment: A position living and working at the 500-acre “Int” base, east of Los Angeles, home to top church executives and Golden Era Productions, the church's media and publications division.

But it was no dream.

“There was this incredible atmosphere of people not being in communication. People seemed afraid to speak to each other. ... Nobody was laughing for the most part. It was very somber and solemn. ... That did not at all seem in keeping with anything I'd ever experienced with Scientology because everywhere else I'd been it was just the reverse. People were laughing and joking.”

Hall joined the church marketing unit in 1987, which brought him into



more frequent contact with Miscavige, who holds the title Chairman of the Board, or COB. Hall said it was a shock the first time he saw Miscavige attack an executive, Ray Mithoff. The second time was like something out of a cartoon.

Hall says Miscavige came up behind two seated executives — Marc Yager and Guillaume Lesevre — grabbed their heads and banged them together. Then he ground them against each other. Lesevre had blood coming out of his ear.

Then came the time when Hall and about 20 others were summoned to the Religious Technology Center headquarters. “You don’t get called up to Building 50 because it’s some good news or something fun. It was always like everybody would literally be in terror. You were supposed to sprint from wherever you were up to Building 50, which is way the hell up the hill.”

The group took their seats, the chairs in rows, spaced about 2 to 3 feet apart in all directions. Huffing and puffing, Hall said he worked to keep his breathing under control, so he wouldn’t get singled out.

“You end up waiting a long time. Nobody f----- breathes, no one says anything. It’s dead quiet. You could hear a pin drop. Everybody’s just ... waiting. Then finally COB walks in.

“He starts walking amongst us. Nev-

er says a word. Just stops and glares at each person. Sometimes he stops and sometimes he doesn’t stop. When he got in front of me he stopped, he looked at me, I looked back at him, careful not to seem to be resisting or whatever.

“He took a step forward. He stopped. He looked back at me again. He backed up, he looked at me even closer. He said, ‘He’s out-ethics. That son of a b---- is out-ethics,’” he’s breaking the rules of Scientology.

“Then he walked on, he walked down the aisle, looked at a couple other people, turned to start going down the next aisle right where Marc Yager was sitting on the end. And then suddenly, without warning, he starts slapping the bejesus out of Marc Yager, open-handed.”

There were as many as 10 head slaps. Yager didn’t resist, just put his arms up and took it.

For Hall, the last straw came in November 2003. Hall wrote scripts for Scientology videos and had been assigned to work under Mike Rinder, the church’s chief spokesman. Hall says he had creative differences with Miscavige, which was a problem, because nobody is to question the COB.

Miscavige came by to see an edited video. “He ordered Mike and me stand shoulder to shoulder. ... So Rinder and I are pressed up against each other,

and right up in front of us is DM ... and he says, 'Play the video.'"

The video over, Miscavige drew close. "We're standing there sort of at attention. He looks at me, he looks at Rinder. He looks at me, he looks back at Rinder. And then suddenly, with violence, he flashed his arms up and grabbed Mike Rinder's head and body-slammed his head into the cherry wood cabinets.

"He lifted Mike Rinder nearly off of his feet and smashed his head into the wall, and he banged his head into the wall three times, just *BANG, BANG, BANG!*"

A dozen others watched. "But everybody's afraid to move, because anything you did would be like, 'Are you making me wrong?' Don't make COB wrong. So if you showed any kind of reaction or upset, you would be, 'making COB wrong.'"

Miscavige left the room. "Rinder stood there with his hair mussed, his shirttail out and red marks on his face."

"It so could have been me," Hall said. "And that was the message I got was that you're next."

Rinder said Miscavige abused him so often that his recollections of specific attacks sometimes run together. Asked about Hall's account, he said, "That happened more than once."

Though long disillusioned with his

life in the Sea Org, Hall said he didn't want to leave his wife, who was also a staffer. He finally accepted that he had to give up her and everything else.

His last day, church security went through his belongings and confiscated photos of his wife. They videotaped a lawyer posing questions and Hall taking blame for any problems he had with the church. He also promised never to sue the church.

"I had one last goodbye with my wife. ... They told me she doesn't want to go with you and it was her decision, we didn't influence her in any way. They said you could talk ... they led us to rooms."

In tears, they hugged. "She told me all the rooms were bugged. She whispered all the rooms were bugged and they could probably hear it."

## FOCUS ON EXPANSION

Miscavige, 49, has been intense and demanding since he started working full time for Scientology at age 16 in Clearwater. He quickly proved himself and was handpicked to work at Hubbard's side, at Scientology's administrative headquarters in California.

The founder gave his young aide one important assignment after another. Miscavige delivered, building a reputation as a problem solver. He persuaded Hubbard's wife to resign as head of the

church's troubled intelligence unit, known as the Guardian's Office.

Hubbard died in 1986 and Miscavige took control, asserting himself over other department heads and church executives. In the early 1990s, he earned admiration throughout the ranks in leading an unyielding effort to win the church a tax exemption from the IRS.

This decade he has pushed church expansion, extending Scientology's reach into more than 60 countries with a sustained campaign to build new churches, remodel existing facilities, translate Hubbard's teachings into the languages of target markets and disseminate the church's community outreach materials worldwide.

Miscavige is deeply admired, church officials say, not only by the thousands of staffers in the Sea Org, but by millions of Scientology parishioners worldwide.

"Any Scientologist of any duration will tell you that the church wouldn't be here if it wasn't for David Miscavige," church spokesman Davis said in interviews with the *Times* in May and June.

Nine new churches opened since 2004. This year, the church will set a record, opening eight more, he said. "It's just unbelievable what's happened in the world of Scientology. It's a renaissance. It's a revitalization. It's everything we always dreamed of."

In his letter to the *Times* last week, Davis said that as in the first stories, the new defectors are twisting church practices and discipline to make the normal seem "abnormal and abusive. They know this could not be further from the truth."

## **CAMPING OUT**

Shelly Corrias gave nearly two decades to the dedicated work force known as the Sea Org. She left in 2002.

She remembers the time Miscavige punished top staffers Norman Starkey and Greg Wilhere, ordering them to camp out in tents for days in a high, open area of the mountainside base, near the Bonnie View mansion built for Hubbard. They were assigned hard labor and forced to shower with a garden hose.

Corrias said it was striking to see Starkey — one of Scientology's elder statesmen, who had worked with Hubbard and served as a trustee of his estate — treated so crudely.

Said Corrias: "How can you take these high executives and send them up to sleep on the ground and they can't even go to the dining room to eat, their food brought up to them?"

"He particularly picked on Norman," said Claire Headley, who worked on Miscavige's staff for eight years before leaving the Sea Org in 2005. She

said the leader often tried to take Starkey “off his high horse” and once made him wear a name tag that said “figure head.”

Morehead, the security chief, said Miscavige sent him to town to buy camping gear for another group that faced the tent punishment: Starkey, Yager and Mithoff.

Miscavige made them set up camp at night and came by to shine a flashlight in their eyes, and he recalled the way Miscavige taunted them as they struggled to assemble their gear in the dark:

*You guys think you're so hot? If only the rest of the Sea Org could see you now!*

He ordered that a portable toilet be set out in the open, no privacy, Morehead said, and posted guards to watch them round the clock. Nobody protested, they just took their punishment.

Morehead said he told Miscavige that he had turned off the sprinkler system, but the leader told him to turn it back on so a shower would roust them in the morning.

“He was giddy about what was going on with these guys,” Morehead said. “They were just a joke, proving him right. It was acknowledging of the fact that he brought them there because they were just incompetents.”

Two more staffers — Mike Sutter

and a woman named Hare O'Hare — later were placed on the same punishment with the three executives. Morehead said O'Hare was not exempt from Miscavige's order that no one bathe or use the toilet in private.

## A CRUEL CONFESSIONAL

As many as 400 staffers were summoned to the mess hall, where a small group of staffers were given special seats of dishonor. Church executives would introduce them with scorching assessments of their recent performance.

“They had to get up one at a time into a microphone and confess their crimes,” said Jeff Hawkins, who left the Sea Org in 2005.

The crowd screamed and jeered.

“They're out for blood so ... you have to make it sound good. Otherwise they'll just shout you down,” Hawkins said. “I saw people just led away in tears from that treatment.”

Jackie Wolff choked up as she recounted her turn at the microphone late in 2003. She was singled out after taking over the assembly line for E-meters, the lie detector-like devices Scientologists use to pinpoint areas of spiritual distress during counseling.

Wolff's staff had been cut down to four from about 10 the year before, and E-meter production was down.

She didn't see how she could make up the backlog, but supervisors disagreed. The crowd turned on her, screaming:

*Why is this happening?*

*What are your crimes?*

*You're hurting Scientology!*

Wolff says she tried to answer:

*There are only four of us on the assembly line.*

*If we speed it up, the quality will suffer.*

*I just don't know.*

"The feeling of standing up there in front of all these people was very intimidating and very scary," she said. "It was like your life was on the line. And to me it wasn't Scientology any more."

Three months later, Wolff ended her 23-year career in the Sea Org.

## RUNNING IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS

There's a spiritual exercise in Scientology called the "Cause Resurgence Rundown." You run around a circular track, at your own pace, until you reach a point that "you have a realization that you're in control of your own body and mind."

That's according to Marty Rathbun, a defector who once was one of the top church officials charged with protecting Scientology's religious practices.

Church founder L. Ron Hubbard described the running procedure in dispatches but it has not been formally

made part of the church practice, Rathbun said, which is why some parishioners would not be familiar with it.

It's supposed to be done at the suggestion of a "case supervisor" in charge of the parishioner's spiritual counseling, called "auditing." Rathbun said it's to be done gradually, the person building endurance at his own pace.

"The whole thing was about getting a thetan (spirit) centered and getting all of his energies straight," Rathbun said. "Miscavige immediately turned it into a torture."

Multiple witnesses say the same. As a form of punishment, Sea Org members had to run around a circular dirt track with a pole at the center for hours on end in the desert heat.

"You would be on it anywhere from eight to 12 hours a day," Morehead said. "For every hundred people that were out there doing the running program, one of them was there because it was part of their actual (spiritual) progress."

Rinder recalls being sent to the track with others to run until they had a "cognition," a realization. It was supposed to be about something in their lives — but instead of focusing on themselves, the runners tried to divine what Miscavige wanted to hear so he would end their punishment.

"That was all sort of a joke," Rinder

said. "What cognition are you supposed to have that will now satisfy Dave? ... People spent years trying to figure that out."

## FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNTS

To the three men who previously told the *Times* that Miscavige attacked them, add four more.

### JEFF HAWKINS

He worked more than 15 years at the base, mostly in marketing and design. His TV spot featuring a rupturing volcano promoted *Dianetics*, Hubbard's megaselling book.

Hawkins recalled the day in 2003 when he and a group of senior staffers toured one of Miscavige's prized construction projects, Building 50, a colossus of buffed metal, chrome and marble.

Leading the pack from room to room, Miscavige was every bit the voluble docent, extolling the unique features.

"I was standing by the door and as he's walking out and without any warning, he rabbit punches me right in the gut. ... Just a quick punch to the stomach, right under the rib cage."

Another time, a meeting of Hawkins' marketing team, Miscavige turned angry. "He gets pissed off at me for whatever reason. I was usually the punching bag. And he wails on me and

knocks me to the ground."

"I stand up and he notices my cheek is bleeding. So, he called his assistant (Laurisse Stuckenbrock). He says, 'Lou,' and points to my face. She rummages in her purse and gets out a bottle of antiseptic that she carries with her, believe it or not. And she daubs that on my face. So, it's like she knows the drill. If there is a visible mark, then that's got to be taken care of."

Before leaving, Miscavige turned to Hawkins. "He says to me, 'Do you know why I beat you up?'"

"I say, 'No, sir.'"

"He says, 'To show you who's in charge.'"

Church executive Amy Scobee previously told the *Times* about a day she was working in her office cubicle at the edge of a conference room when a Sea Org member landed at her feet, with Miscavige on top of him. It was Hawkins underneath.

Hawkins said dozens of Sea Org members had been summoned to the international management conference room. The leader did not like the latest infomercial script.

"He was reading out sections of it with great sarcasm. And then he started pointing at me and saying, 'Look at how he looks at me.'"

Hawkins tried to explain himself, which only got him in deeper.

"You see that disrespect?" he said Miscavige shouted to the group. "You see how he talks to me?"

Miscavige jumped onto the conference table, Hawkins said. "He's like crouched in the middle of the table, and then he launches himself at me."

Hawkins fell back off his chair and landed in Scobee's work cubicle.

Two other defectors who attended the meeting confirmed Hawkins' account. Two current executives who were there say it didn't happen.

## MARK FISHER

Fresh out of Langley High School in suburban Washington, Fisher skipped

college for a different adventure: In the mid 1970s, he came to Clearwater to help Scientology settle in its newest frontier. He was 17.

Miscavige, who dropped out of high school the day he turned 16, had come three months earlier.

Fisher and Miscavige bunked with four other recruits on the ninth floor of the Fort Harrison Hotel. Fisher opened his foot locker one day and pulled out his Langley High letter jacket and diploma.

Miscavige told Fisher he probably was the only high school graduate in the group. "He said, 'What a waste,'" Fisher recalled.

### SUPPRESSIVE PERSON DECLARE

#### MARK FISHER

MARK FISHER, former Golden Era Productions staff member, is hereby declared a Suppressive Person.

In the past several months Mark clearly showed that he was a squirrel administrator. He would not apply standard admin, but would knowingly alter it and carry out his post functions based on his own know-best. He had a habit of quickying post cycles by "taking shortcuts" instead of applying standard admin and performing his post duties in a way that would give him a product. He confessed himself to

## MARK FISHER'S SUPPRESSIVE PERSON DECLARE

A Scientologist "declared" a Suppressive Person cannot have any contact with other Scientologists, even family who are in the church. Mark Fisher's "declare," dated Oct. 19, 1990, finds him guilty of eight suppressive acts, including "malicious rumor-mongering to destroy the authority or reputé of higher officers." It says "Mark received very extensive, standard ethics and correction actions, but despite this he continued to commit suppressive acts and be an enturbulative source in the org."

Fisher stayed in Clearwater. Miscavige went West, handpicked for Scientology's esteemed crew serving as the right hand of Hubbard. The bookish Fisher absorbed Hubbard study and training classes, advancing to management as an evaluator of statistics and performance metrics.

By late 1983, Fisher was in California, managing a team of five who provided administrative support to the emerging leader. He also tended to household needs of Miscavige, his wife and their dogs.

Fisher married in 1984. In 1990, his wife was sent to a work detail as punishment for performance issues in the audio-visual facilities.

"I got really upset with it," Fisher recalled. "I started getting disaffected."

He hatched a plan: Sneak away and then come slinking back. He would be punished — and get to see his wife.

It didn't work. He was ordered to dig weeds, far from where his wife toiled.

A second hammer came down. He was stripped of everything he had attained in Scientology — he was an OT7 and a trained auditor. So he rebelled — "I was being really defiant," he said — and got slapped with more work assignments.

In August 1990, he was up on a scaff-

old painting the inside of a garage when in came Miscavige, assistants in tow.

Miscavige told Fisher to come down.

"He put his hands around my throat," Fisher said, and shouted, "You want to sue Scientology?"

Fisher said he collapsed and curled up as Miscavige kicked and punched him and pulled the hair on the back of his head.

Fisher stood, touched the back of his head, showed his bloody palm and told Miscavige: "You notice I did not lay one finger on you."

That was the end for Fisher. "I didn't join Scientology to see people get beat up."

Morehead said he witnessed this, as did defector Marc Headley. But Yager said he was present and, "at no time did Mr. Miscavige strike or otherwise harm Fisher."

## **BRUCE HINES**

Hines remembers back to the mid 1990s and the unmistakable sound of Miscavige's footsteps coming down the hall.

"Where is that m-----f-----?" he heard Miscavige shout.

Hines was in Room 106 of the Del Sol executive offices. A veteran auditor, Hines usually worked at the church's



Celebrity Centre in Hollywood. He said he counseled Nicole Kidman and Kirstie Alley.

But counseling the wife of one of Miscavige's favorite speech writers had not gone well, and Hines had been called back to the base.

Hines braced himself as the footsteps drew near.

Miscavige poked his head in the office, Hines recalled, and said: "There he is."

Without another word, Hines said, "He hit me in the head. He just hit me in the head, in the side of the head," an open-handed blow.

"It did sting and it did knock me back. And then he got right up in my face and was kind of yelling at me. Then he walked out. The next thing I knew, I was on the RPF."

Scientology bills its Rehabilitation Project Force as an opportunity for wayward Sea Org members to find redemption through manual labor. Some defectors say it can be abused.

Hines said he spent three years on the RPF, on a labor crew that cleared land, painted old mobile homes and built sheds at Happy Valley, a church-owned tract about 10 miles from the base.

Finally authorized to return to the base, he reunited with his wife and their son, who was born in 1984, prior



## THE GROUP ANONYMOUS

The church says the *Times'* sources are bitter and dishonest liars. To help make that case, Scientology provided the photos above, which show Bruce Hines and Claire Headley with protesters of Anonymous, a group the church describes as "cyber-terrorists and religious hate mongers, who have repeatedly targeted the church."

to a church ban on children imposed on Sea Org members. It took all of three weeks for him to land back on the RPF. His offense? He didn't stand up when Miscavige came into a room.

This time was worse. He lived in an 8-by-10-foot shed and slept on concrete. He couldn't talk to anyone. He was under constant guard. Letters he wrote his wife were read and returned to him. She divorced him while he

toiled in isolation.

Looking back at his six years in the RPF, Hines views it as a mind-control technique.

“In the RPF, they try to get you to take responsibility. You are supposed to confront the evil things you did, and deal with those in auditing. You are there because you are evil.”

“And you are there because you were destructive, and you were destructive because you were acting on your evil purposes. And I, the whole time I was in the RPF, I am trying to convince myself that it was me, it was my own fault.”

In 2001, he was sent to work in the church’s offices in New York City. He was on the roof, chipping tar, when the planes hit the World Trade Center. He went to ground zero and volunteered.

By 2003, Hines had lost interest in Scientology. The rich mix of life in New York, he said, “made this whole military lifestyle of the Sea Org seem kind of ludicrous.”

He made his way by bus to Denver, where he had grown up. He finished college in 2006, with a degree in physics, and this summer completed his master’s in electrical engineering.

## MARC HEADLEY

Headley made movies for Scientology. By the early 2000s, he was named

a producer at Golden Era Productions, the church’s umbrella division for its prized audio-visual efforts.

In 2004, Headley led Miscavige on a tour of the A/V area. Miscavige asked about a timetable on a project, and Headley said he made the mistake of answering in a “smart-aleck” tone.

He said Miscavige pushed him against a shelf unit and started punching him. He fell onto a countertop, and Miscavige continued to slug him in the chest.

When it ended, Headley said, senior Sea Org member Greg Wilhere pulled him aside and explained that Miscavige had come from a difficult meeting. Wilhere said in a written statement that Headley’s entire account is “a complete lie.”

A few months later, Headley was on the hot seat again. He had bought and sold equipment and an audit determined \$250 was missing. Headley was ordered to the RPF.

The next morning, he sped off in his motor bike and made his way to Kansas City, where his father lived. Weeks later, his wife, Claire, made her break and joined him.

They sued Scientology in January, contending that the wages paid Sea Org members — about \$75 a week — violate labor laws.

The church says the lawsuit has

no merit. Sea Org members work on a “volunteer basis” and receive weekly stipends. The church covers all living, medical, dental and other expenses, which helps workers focus on their jobs, “without having to worry about paying your bills, cooking dinner, paying property taxes or this and that.”

## A CHANGED MAN

Most of the defectors said that the church tried to get them to stay, saying it would be a monumental mistake to give up their chance to reach eternal salvation and warning that life would be awful in the cruel world outside Scientology.

Most started their new lives with little money and few friends. Some still practice Scientology and attribute their job successes to skills the church taught them on interpersonal relationships and how to take responsibility for oneself.

For most, the issue is not the religion but the man leading it.

Russ Williams left the Scientology staff in 2004 after 29 years, most of them at the base. He says he witnessed Miscavige attack Yager, but he minimized it and kept his respect for the leader.

“One time he blew me away,” said Williams, recalling when the leader yelled at him nose-to-nose but re-

turned five minutes later with a pep talk: “I’ve seen you do good work. What happened?”

Sea Org life was always tough, Williams said, but there was an enthusiasm and a feeling of accomplishment that kept people going. Over time, that went away.

“The flavor was gone. It mutated.”

“I think he started out meaning well,” Williams said of Miscavige. “It just got to him. It just got over his grasp and he started falling into this threatening, nasty way of handling people.”

Morehead, the security chief, said the same. He remembers going into town and bowling with Miscavige, and the leader smuggling in food from the burger joint across the street. And Miscavige laughing and taking pictures at Sea Org holiday events — including the time Morehead wore a tutu in the talent show.

But through the years Miscavige grew more intense, and frustrated when Scientology staff couldn’t pull things off the way he wanted.

“There was this guy who once was a good guy,” Morehead said, “who totally turned the church around from what I know L. Ron Hubbard intended it to be.” ■

## SCIENTOLOGY’S RESPONSE »

## THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE

**'CHARACTER ASSASSINATION' BY LIARS**

*This is the Church of Scientology's response to the St. Petersburg Times story that, in addition to the four church defectors the newspaper wrote about in June, quotes 11 more defectors who have provided accounts of physical or mental abuse by Scientology leader David Miscavige.*

The Church of Scientology provided 25 affidavits and declarations from current and former church executives and staffers who uniformly describe David Miscavige as a kind, compassionate, inspiring leader who never has been violent or abusive, physically or mentally.

Yael Lustgarten's statement was typical. "In all the times I have worked with Mr. Miscavige or seen him working with others, I have never known him to be furious, mad, pissed off, much less hit, punch, kick, slap, choke, push, or inflict any form of abuse," wrote Lustgarten, who left the church staff in 2004 after 18 years. "I nev-

er witnessed that, ever."

Before the St. Petersburg Times published stories on the church in late June, two church spokesmen and two church lawyers spent 25 hours with reporters detailing Miscavige's achievements, heralding church expansion worldwide and attacking the credibility of the four former church executives who were sources for that series of reports.

For this story, the Times detailed its reporting July 22 in a two-page letter to chief church spokesman Tommy Davis. He responded with a binder of declarations and a cover letter that said: "Your sources are clearly liars and their fabrications will have no bounds so long as the St. Petersburg Times continues to report them as if they were news."

The "true perpetrators of any violence," Davis wrote, were "your sources."

Marty Rathbun and Mike Rinder, key figures in the earlier stories and the highest executives ever to

## THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE

leave the church's staff, repeatedly are described in the declarations as violent and threatening.

At least 11 declarations cite instances in which Rathbun was abusive. Former colleagues wrote that he grabbed, hit or slugged them, and pushed them against walls. Guillaume Lesevre said Rathbun dragged him by the ear. David Henderson wrote that Rathbun tried to scare him into a confession by waving a baseball bat, then smashing it into a file cabinet.

Rathbun, who worked as Miscavige's right hand for years, said he doesn't remember Henderson's baseball bat incident, but he acknowledges that he hit, grabbed and pushed staffers. He said his actions stopped short of causing injury. "I never put a mark on anybody. ... I'm willing to admit what I did. By admitting it, I'm trying to make reparations."

In the declarations, three women said Rinder hit them. Former staffer Shelby Malone said Rinder slammed her against a wall and pinned her head back by pressing his right forearm into her neck.

Kathleen O'Gorman said Rinder hit her in face with a clipboard, cracking a molar. Marcy McShane wrote that Rinder grabbed and squeezed her shoulders, told her she was "stupid" and threw her into a wall.

Rinder, the chief church spokesman until he left in 2007, said he doesn't recall the incidents cited by Malone and O'Gorman but said he did grab McShane and shake and yell at her. "I acknowledge I did that. And I told her she was stupid," Rinder said. "I regret it ... I feel bad about it."

Davis concluded his letter: "You have been provided volumes of evidence to show that your original sources are delusional, bitter and dishonest; your new sources are more of the same."

"Any reliance on these fabricated tales will be further corroboration of the St. Petersburg Times' willingness to ignore fundamental rules of journalistic ethics in favor of more character assassination." ■

## THE WITNESS LIST GROWS

**I SAW WHAT I SAW VS. IT NEVER HAPPENED**

The new defectors say they saw abuse at Scientology's California base. The church counters with affidavits and declarations from current and former Sea Org members who swear none of it happened. The church says David Miscavige never harmed anybody.

Steve Hall and Marc Headley state that they saw Miscavige smash together the heads of Guillaume Lesevre and Marc Yager in 2003 in the audio/visual facility, causing Lesevre's ear to bleed. Yager and Lesevre deny it. "This alleged incident never occurred and is invented by Steve Hall," said Lesevre.

Hall says he witnessed Miscavige kick Ray Mithoff in the rear while trying to pull off his jacket. Mithoff: A "complete falsehood."

Hall says he saw Miscavige repeatedly strike a seated Yager in 2003. Yager: It "never occurred."

Hall states he saw Miscavige grab Mike Rinder and repeatedly slam his head against an editing bay wall in late 2003. Rinder recalls being attacked this way several times. The church denies it.

Claire Headley says she saw Mis-

cavige push Norman Starkey into a conference table in 2001, causing a back injury that required chiropractic treatment. She says she saw Miscavige grab Starkey by the shoulders and shake him on several occasions. A "complete lie," Starkey says.

The church also provided a "Knowledge Report" Headley wrote in October 2002. It records incidents of physical abuse by Marty Rathbun; one describes Rathbun pushing Starkey to the floor, injuring his back. Rathbun was rough with staff, Headley said, but she added she is not confusing Miscavige's push of Starkey.

Headley states she saw Miscavige push Lyman Spurlock to the floor, causing a back injury. "Never happened," Spurlock wrote, adding, "she had a personal vendetta against me and falsified auditing worksheets in November 2001 to get me in trouble." Headley said she didn't falsify any sheets.

Jeff Hawkins says he witnessed Miscavige strike Yager with his fists in the Cine conference room in 2003 just after he struck Hawkins. Yager: It's false. ■

## THE DEFECTORS WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY SAY



**SHELLY CORRIAS, 48**

**Joined Scientology:** at 17, in Portland, Ore., in 1978. Joined Sea Org in 1983.

**Left Sea Org:** September 2002

**Career highlights:**  
Produced promotional materials and books.

**Now:** Owns digital printing company in Portland. Former husband is in Scientology.

*Referring to the Sea Org ban on children: "I see mothers with their kids. My fiance has kids, and now he has a grandchild. It bugs the hell out of me that I never had a kid. I want a child. It hurts."*



**JEFF HAWKINS, 63**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 21, in 1967 in L.A.

**Left Sea Org:** 2005

**Career highlights:**  
Marketing and design, created TV ad that featured exploding volcano to promote *Dianetics*.

**Now:** Single, lives in Portland, Ore. Freelances as a graphic designer.

*Scientists "say they're the experts in organizational technology. ... Well, then how come you need to have that level of threat and duress to get people to do what you want them to do?"*



**STEVE HALL, 51**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 21, in 1979

**Left Sea Org:** 2004

**Career highlights:**  
Wrote scripts for videos and TV ads. Says he was responsible for the Scientology slogan: "Know life, know yourself."

**Now:** Married, lives in Dallas. Self-employed commercial artist. Divorced former wife while leaving Sea Org.

*On arriving at California base: "You would think that this would be an ideal scene where the basics of Scientology were in full use, and it was just the reverse."*

## THE DEFECTORS WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY SAY



**ERIC KNUTSON, 52**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 23, in 1980

**Left Sea Org:** 1990

**Career highlights:**

Worked as a middle manager for construction and renovation operations at the California base.

**Now:** Married, lives in Plains, Mont. Works as a general contractor and manages his real estate holdings.

*On the time he says he saw Miscavige hit a staffer: "You could hear the actual thudding of the fist against the rib cage."*



**JACKIE WOLFF, 54**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 25, in 1980

**Left Sea Org:** 2004

**Career highlights:**

Personal steward to Miscavige and his wife, personnel director, supervisor of E-meter assembly line.

**Now:** Single, marketing director for California construction and grading company.

*Her "affinity" with Miscavige from working for him for years "didn't outweigh the fear that I always had when he walked in there because you just never knew what kind of mood he was going to be in."*



**RUSS WILLIAMS, 52**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 18, in 1975.

**Left Sea Org:** 2004

**Career highlights:** Came to the California base in 1982 and worked in "compilations" unit, which took the work of church founder L. Ron Hubbard and assembled it into counseling procedures and courses that Scientology parishioners see today.

**Now:** Single. Lives in Phoenix. Works as a medical researcher at a heart hospital.

*"I would still say I'm a Scientologist. ... If the organization reformed, I'd likely become active again."*



# THE DEFECTORS WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY SAY



**GARY MOREHEAD, 43**

**Joined Scientology:** as a child with parents. Joined Sea Org at 13, in 1979 in Los Angeles.

**Left Sea Org:** 1997 Career highlights: Security chief at the California base from 1990 to 1997. Better known by his nickname at the base, "Jackson."

**Now:** Single, lives in Portland, Ore., works as a tow truck driver.

*"I was devastated to see what I believed to be the best of the best people I had ever known be put through such torture."*



**MARC HEADLEY, 36**

**Joined Scientology:** at 8 or 9, after his mother. Joined Sea Org in 1989.

**Left Sea Org:** January 2005

**Career highlights:** Videographer, shot film and video. Oversaw production of TV ads. Designed and installed A/V systems.

**Now:** Owns audio-visual design firm. Married to former Sea Org member Claire Headley. They have two children.

*"It's not every day you get beat up by the leader of your religion. I was a little bit emotional, on the verge of grief or crying and, obviously, a little angry. I wasn't hiding it too well."*



**CLAIRE HEADLEY, 34**

**Joined Scientology:** as a child, in England. Joined Sea Org in 1991.

**Left Sea Org:** In 2005, after her husband.

**Career highlights:** Internal executive at RTC.

**Now:** Married to former Sea Org member Marc Headley. With two children, they live in California.

*"I've known a lot people who have blown (left) ... and I know what happens to those people once they get recovered. I knew if I failed to make it to where Marc was, I would definitely never see him again."*

# THE DEFECTORS WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY SAY



**MARK FISHER, 50**

**Joined Scientology:** at 14, in 1973 in Washington, D.C. Joined Sea Org in 1976.

**Left Sea Org:** September 1990

## Career highlights:

Statistics analyst, trained evaluators. Became corporate liaison to Miscavige, supervising his household, carrying out special assignments.

**Now:** Divorced his wife, a Sea Org member, after he left. A loan officer, lives in Las Vegas.

*"(Miscavige) never wants to be alone. If he goes to the movies, he takes people with him. He likes to be the center of attention. He never likes to be alone."*



**BRUCE HINES, 57**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 20, in Denver in 1972. Joined Sea Org in 1979.

**Left Sea Org:** April 2003

## Career highlights:

Starting in 1987, senior case supervisor evaluating auditing sessions.

**Now:** Married, teaches physics at UC Denver. Son is former Sea Org member.

*"A lot of people will ask, 'What do you mean he was hitting people? Why didn't you hit back? ... Or report it to the police?' It's part of that mind control. You really believe that it's you and not them."*



**MARTY RATHBUN, 52**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 20, in 1977

**Left Sea Org:** 2004

**Career highlights:** A top lieutenant to Miscavige. Key player in legal affairs unit. Miscavige's "detail guy" during lengthy negotiations with IRS; among those who signed settlement agreement. Inspector general and board member of Religious Technology Center, church's top ecclesiastical authority.

**Now:** Divorced from Sea Org member Anne Rathbun. They had no children. Lives near Corpus Christi, Texas. He counsels and audits people who have left Scientology.

## THE DEFECTORS WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY SAY



**MIKE RINDER, 54**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 5, when parents joined. Joined Sea Org at 18, in 1973.

**Left Sea Org:** 2007

**Career highlights:** Head of Office of Special Affairs for 25 years, overseeing legal efforts, investigations and media relations. Became the public face of Scientology. Was in first group to occupy Fort Harrison Hotel in late 1975. Became chief administrator in Clearwater from 1978 to 1981, then ascended to executive strata of international church.

**Now:** Divorced from Sea Org member Cathy Rinder. They have an adult son and daughter, both Sea Org members. Sells cars in Denver.



**TOM DE VOCHT, 45**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 10, in 1974, when mother joined.

**Left Sea Org:** 2005

**Career highlights:** Supervised numerous church construction projects in downtown Clearwater and, in later years, at the church compound in California. From 1986 through 2000, had administrative authority over Clearwater operations. Started working full time for church at 14, as bellhop at Fort Harrison Hotel.

**Now:** Divorced from Sea Org member Jennifer Linson. They had no children. Lives in Polk County. Buys and sells used furniture.



**AMY SCOBEE, 45**

**Joined Scientology:** at age 14, 1978

**Left Sea Org:** 2005

**Career highlights:** Oversaw several operations sectors during 20 years as manager at the church's international base in California. Built network of Scientology Celebrity Centres. Oversaw church's film and taping facilities. As teenager, managed kitchen, housekeeping and grounds crews in Clearwater.

**Now:** Married to former Sea Org member Matt Pesch. They left the church together in 2005. No children. Buys and sells furniture.

HCO POLICY LETTER OF 7 DECEMBER 1976

**LEAVING AND LEAVES**

There is no intention of holding on to people who do not want to be where they are.

There is every intention to use our tech to prevent false reports and suppressive actions from occurring, both to the detriment of the person himself and to the organization.



L. RON HUBBARD  
Founder

Adopted as official  
Church policy by  
CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY  
INTERNATIONAL

# CHASED BY THEIR CHURCH

LEADERS FEARED THAT THOSE WHO LEFT SCIENTOLOGY  
WITHOUT PERMISSION MIGHT REVEAL CHURCH SECRETS.  
SO THEY WENT AFTER THEM.

BY JOE CHILDS AND THOMAS C. TOBIN,  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**F**or years, the Church of Scientology chased down and brought back staff members who tried to leave.

Ex-staffers describe being pursued by their church and detained, cut off from family and friends and subjected to months of interrogation, humiliation and manual labor.

One said he was locked in a room and guarded around the clock.

Some who did leave said the church spied on them for years.

Others said that, as a condition for leaving, the church cowed them into signing embellished affidavits that could be used to discredit them if they ever spoke out.

The *St. Petersburg Times* has inter-

viewed former high-ranking Scientology officials who coordinated the intelligence gathering and supervised the retrieval of staff who left, or “blew.”

They say the church, led by David Miscavige, wanted to contain the threat that those who left might reveal secrets of life inside Scientology.

Marty Rathbun, a former church official and confidant of Miscavige, said the leader especially targeted those he had edged aside during his rise to the top or anyone he feared might threaten his position or the church if left alone on the outside.

When the church founder L. Ron Hubbard was in charge, “there were no fences,” Rathbun said. “If somebody blew, they blew. It wasn’t until these purges started with Miscavige — where he was creating enemies and people ... became a threat to him — that we went into this overdrive scenario.”

Church spokesman Tommy Davis “categorically denied” Miscavige knew about or was involved in the pursuit of runaways or spying on former members. He said Rathbun and other former staff are liars, taking their own misdeeds and blaming them on Miscavige and the religion they have forsaken. He said they are trying to undermine Miscavige’s leadership even as he presides over unprecedented church growth.

Miscavige “redefines the term ‘relig-

ious leader,’” Davis said, while some of the *Times* sources are on the “lunatic fringe” of anti-Scientology. He said they are the real villains, who Miscavige dismissed for “suborning perjury, obstruction of justice and wasting millions of dollars of parishioner funds.”

He accused the *Times* of “naked bias” and engaging in tabloid journalism.

“You have a few petty allegations,” Davis said.

“In fact, all you have is a few people who left a religion after committing destructive acts and are now complaining about what they did while in the church.”

The story of how the church commands and controls its staff is told by the pursuers and the pursued, by those who sent spies and those spied upon, by those who interrogated and those who rode the hot seat. In addition to Rathbun, they include:

- Mike Rinder, who for 25 years oversaw the church’s Office of Special Affairs, which handled intelligence, legal and public affairs matters. Rinder and Rathbun said they had private investigators spy on perceived or potential enemies.

They say they had an operative infiltrate a group of five former Scientology staffers that included the Gillham sisters, Terri and Janis, two of the original four “messengers” who delivered

Hubbard's communications. They and other disaffected Scientologists said they were spied on for almost a decade.

- Gary Morehead, the security chief for seven years at the church's international base in the desert east of Los Angeles. He said he helped develop the procedure the church followed to chase and return those who ran, and he brought back at least 75 of them. "I lost count there for awhile."

Staffers signed a waiver when they came to work at the base that allowed their mail to be opened, Morehead said. His department opened all of it, including credit card statements and other information that was used to help track runaways.

- Don Jason, for seven years the second-ranking officer at Scientology's spiritual mecca in Clearwater, supervised a staff of 350. He said that after he ran, he turned himself in and ended up locked in his cabin on the church cruise ship, the *Freewinds*. He said he was held against his will.

And then there's the story of the cook, his wife and the movie stars.

## WINTER IN THE ROCKIES

Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman were to be married on Christmas Eve 1990. The setting: a large rented cabin outside Telluride, Colo., a resort town at the floor of a Rocky Mountain valley.

The couple starred together that summer in *Days of Thunder*. He was the megastar, she the up-and-coming Australian.

In the desert east of Los Angeles, a small contingent from the Church of Scientology's international base took Cruise's plane to Colorado.

Miscavige would be the actor's best man. Ray Mithoff, a long-time Scientologist who worked closely with Hubbard, would officiate. The church's pastry chef, Pinuccio Tisi, would bake the cake. Its five-star chef, Sinar Parman, would prepare the feast.

Parman had been with Scientology's dedicated work force, the Sea Org, for 12 years. He started in 1978, fresh from an apprenticeship at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. He worked as Hubbard's personal chef for two years. (The founder was a meat-and-potatoes man who also enjoyed fish.)

Parman later cooked for celebrity parishioners who visited the church's base camp. He made chicken noodle soup the way Kirstie Alley's grandmother did, and the actor sent him flowers. John Travolta gave him a carton of Camels for his birthday. Cruise brought him a jacket from the set of *Days of Thunder* and would hand him Cuban cigars.

For Telluride, Cruise insisted the minister, the baker and the chef bring their wives for the holiday.

Christmas in the Rockies with Tom Cruise? Parman's wife, Jackie Wolff, was beyond excited.

When they married four years earlier, Wolff worked as a personal assistant to Miscavige and his wife, Shelly. She ironed his shirts, prepared the couple's breakfast, lunch and snacks, and woke them each morning.

Now she worked in personnel, recruiting Sea Org members.

Before flying to the wedding, everybody drew names for a gift exchange. Wolff drew Cruise and got him a Hubbard novelette. It cost \$50, a week's pay.

Cruise put up the Scientology contingent in a hotel in Telluride, but they spent much of their time at his rented estate. Parman cooked; Wolff hung decorations, tidied rooms and helped in the kitchen.

The Miscaviges let it be known not to give church-related gifts, a nod to the non-Scientists at the wedding. Wolff went into town and picked a substitute gift, a black ski mask.

At sunset on Christmas Eve, Cruise and Kidman took their vows. The guests sipped Cristal champagne and Parman prepared a holiday spread that included saddle of lamb.

The next afternoon, Wolff and Parman saw police officers standing at the driveway to keep back the paparazzi. Cruise made sure the officers were fed.

The newlyweds took their guests skiing that day. Wolff will always remember seeing Cruise on the slopes, wearing his new black ski mask.

## **BACK TO WORK**

The glow of Telluride faded as Parman and Wolff returned to life at the Scientology base.

Parman says the church reneged on a promise to pay him extra for cooking at the wedding. Parman had been counting on the money. His credit card balance jumped when he bought proper clothes for Telluride, and he charged his own meals. He worried how on a Sea Org salary he would pay down the new debt.

It wasn't the first time he felt he had done a good job, only to be somehow punished. "I was stewing in my own juices, so to speak."

His wife's job in personnel was no better. Supervisors interfered and gave conflicting orders. Many times Wolff worked into the night and slept under her desk.

Parman and Wolff each thought about leaving the church but couldn't tell the other. Such thoughts were taboo, and spouses were to file a "Knowledge Report" if their partner violated the code. If a spouse didn't file a report and it came out during a confessional, he or she got in trouble, too.



Wolff sensed her husband was as frustrated as she.

“I kind of took a chance at bringing it up. And when he was agreeable I was like, ‘Okay!’ “

Hubbard recognized that the Sea Org wasn’t for everyone. On Dec. 7, 1976, he issued a policy titled “Leaving and Leaves,” on how departing staffers should be handled. It doesn’t help to hold onto staff who don’t want to be there, he said. But Hubbard also said

everyone who leaves is to undergo a “security check,” or “sec check,” to protect the staff and to protect Scientology.

The church had been security conscious from its earliest days as Hubbard, and later Miscavige, battled over government investigations and lawsuits.

Church staffers used pay phones and elaborate mail drops to keep information from falling into the wrong hands. Sea Org members used fake first



Courtesy Jackie Wolff

**WHEN JACKIE WOLFF AND SINAR PARMAN** got occasional “liberty” days in the late 1980s and early ’90s, they left the church compound in the desert and visited family in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Wolff’s mother, Detta Groff, left, didn’t know until recently, 18 years after her daughter and son-in-law ran, that private investigators followed her and other relatives. “It kind of shocks me,” she says



names. Rathbun's real first name isn't Marty, it's Mark. Morehead, the security chief, also was known as Jackson.

"Everything was done CIA fashion," Parman said. "That was the way of life in those days."

After Hubbard died in 1986, his policies became the church's guiding compass. But "Leaving and Leaves" presented a contradiction. If you let people leave when they wanted, as the policy dictated, it could compromise security. But if you held onto people until certain they posed no security risk, they might feel like they were being held against their will.

Under Miscavige, former Sea Org members say, the church put more emphasis on security. Getting out became more difficult.

If staffers like Parman and Wolff insisted on leaving, they were supposed to "route out" of the Sea Org, protocol that could take months. It included a daily regimen of manual labor and "sec checks" — confessionals that surfaced a person's every thought and questioned his reasons for wanting to leave.

Or they could "blow." It was faster to secretly escape, but it triggered the church's "disconnection" practice. If the runaway didn't "route out" properly, he would be labeled "suppressive" and lose his Scientology family and friends.

Parman and Wolff had a decision to make.

## THE CHIEF OF SECURITY

Their living arrangement presented an extra obstacle. They shared a small, church-owned home with Gary Morehead and his wife. The base's security chief from 1990 to 1997, Morehead directed the team that would chase them.

Morehead said he worked with Rathbun to develop a "blow drill," a plan the church followed when someone left without permission, which he said happened maybe once a month.

The drill helped predict where runaways were headed, and find and return them before they spilled secrets to opposing attorneys or the media.

"I had the order and the pressure to find them," Morehead said, referring to people in charge of security above him. "And God forbid I did not find them."

Staff deployed to airports and bus stations. They called all hotels along likely escape routes. They called airlines and pretended to be the runaway checking a reservation. They phoned relatives.

The intensity of the chase mostly depended on what a runaway knew, said Rathbun, who was one of Miscavige's top lieutenants. Rathbun oversaw and participated in staff recovery missions.

"It all had to do with the hierarchy

of how close you were to Miscavige, how much you knew about him and how damaging what you knew might be,” Rathbun said.

He said the leader began each day asking if any problems had arisen overnight, and if anyone had left.

“I had to report it and take the brunt of it,” Rathbun said.

Morehead, who reported to Rathbun, described runaways as “loose cannons

of know ledge.” You wanted them back, under control, before they did damage.

“I could command as many staff as I wanted,” Rathbun said. “I could get 10 guys on the road at once. It was pretty amazing that we could always generally get to these guys before they’d get to their destination.”

When they didn’t, he said, they kept at it, “for weeks, if necessary.”

Morehead remembered the night in



STEVEN GIBBONS | Special to the Times

**GARY MOREHEAD** drives a tow truck in Portland, Ore. In his seven years as chief of security at Scientology’s international base, Morehead says he worked with a number of private investigators who liked working on behalf of the church because tracking down those who “blew” the base was relatively easy work for steady pay. “These guys were like getting candy falling off a tree.”

1990 that Sea Org member Julie Caetano jumped in an irrigation contractor's Ford pickup and sped off, with Morehead and two other vehicles in pursuit.

For three hours, at speeds up to 100 mph, Morehead said they chased the truck around Riverside and San Bernardino counties until the pickup got away across a rutted field. The next day the team tracked down Caetano, and she agreed to return.

The church did not respond to questions about this incident.

Mike Rinder, the church's former intelligence chief, said his department sometimes tracked runaways by getting into their credit card or bank accounts.

The account numbers came from Morehead, whose guards opened every piece of mail at the base, logging staff financial information as they went. Morehead said Sea Org members were told their personal correspondence was examined for security reasons. He said they were not told this included financial information.

"Except for the upper, upper executives, there wasn't a base staff member who I didn't have a bank account number on, a credit card number, social security number and date of birth, phone numbers, you name it, I had it all," Morehead said.

Church recovery efforts also drew

on records from the runaways' Scientology counseling sessions, which often identified sore points in their lives the trackers could press to talk them into coming back, he said.

They also used "ethics files" that included the staffer's transgressions and confessions, as well as the "life history" Sea Org members filled out when they came to the base that included every job held, every friend, every sexual encounter.

When a runaway was found, the recovery team sometimes used someone of influence in the person's life to get them to come back.

Those who were found were told they could be "disconnected" from family and friends.

They were told that the outside world, with its drugs, crime and insanity, was no place to be.

And the clincher: They were forsaking their eternity.

Scientology teaches that people are spiritual beings that transcend human lifetimes and inhabit an endless succession of bodies. Only the church can make a Scientologist aware of this passage and help him navigate it successfully.

That was part of the closing argument when a church recovery team located a target: Run and risk losing everything you worked for — your eternity.

“How do you control someone? You threaten what is most valuable to them,” Rinder said. “And the threat is, that’s going away. And that’s the mental prison that people are put in.”

The church said Morehead and his team were acting “out of concern for the welfare of the blown staff member.”

In “Blow Offs,” a bulletin Hubbard issued Dec. 31, 1959, the founder said someone who wants to leave has done something to hurt the church, is withholding it and is upset about it. The only responsible thing to do is to help the person come clean.

Morehead said he believed that as he went to bring people back.

“Security in my mind-set was secondary,” he said. “But as time went on you found out the (primary) effort was the security concern. We didn’t give a s--- about the person.”

## STARTING A NEW LIFE

Parman and Wolff, in their mid-30s, wanted to reach for a new life right away, not wait until the church said they were ready to leave.

A month after the Cruise-Kidman wedding, they took a week to plan their “blow” and picked a Sunday morning, when staff got its weekly personal time. It would be hours before the day’s first head count.

They knew the church would come

after them because of the jobs they had held. Both had worked for Miscavige, and Parman had spent a lot of time with Hubbard and church celebrities.

They waited until Morehead and his wife fell asleep in their room, gathered a few belongings and drove off.

After about an hour, they pulled into a truck stop to eat and decompress. They stopped at Parman’s parents’ home in Los Angeles, borrowed \$2,000 and took the coast route north.

In Lake Tahoe a day or two later, Parman won a few hundred dollars at craps and lost it back. Wolff shopped. She figured she would need new clothes to find a job in the non-Scientology world.

“You go to the hotel room and it’s like, ‘Oh, a TV. We can watch TV now,’” she said. “It was just kind of like an adventure.”

They phoned their parents and learned that the church had called, looking for them. Wolff’s sisters also had been called, but no one betrayed their location.

They went to Carson City and moved into the home of Wolff’s stepfather’s cousin. The cousin owned a furniture store and gave them jobs. Wolff trained as a salesperson. Her husband, the chef, moved furniture and loaded trucks.

“It was cool,” Parman said. “There was some kind of hope for a life there.”

They thought they were safely “off the grid,” Wolff said. “We figured they’d never find us at my stepfather’s cousin’s house.”

## **ON THE HUNT**

The church got private investigators to tail the couple’s relatives, Morehead said.

“They would just sit there and sit there and sit there and follow the family members around. They had no idea they had church-assigned private investigators sitting on them, watching them.”

The surveillance paid off after several days. The couple were spotted at their temporary home and at the furniture store.

Back at the base, Morehead and his team didn’t wait. The longer runaways stayed gone, the chances of talking them back diminished. Families had a way of convincing them to come home, he said.

They booked seats on the next plane out of Ontario International Airport and had only 30 minutes to get there.

“That is the fastest I’ve ever been driven in a car my entire life,” said Morehead, who had \$3,000 in expense money set aside for security. “We just had to get there, just had to f----- get

there — just that deeply ingrained compulsion.”

It was on to Carson City.

## **FOUND**

The knock came first thing in the morning. Parman peeked out the window.

“We looked at each other and we just went, ‘Oh my God! Oh my God! What do we do now?’” Wolff said. “I was shaking. I was nervous. I was like ... ‘What do we say?’”

There was no thought to refusing to open the door or telling the group to go away. Parman and Wolff were so unnerved that they reacted with compliance. They invited the group into the family room.

The Scientology entourage included Morehead, two other base security officers and two private investigators.

The team delivered messages, called “reality factors,” from supervisors at the base who had examined Parman and Wolff’s counseling files. The team wanted the couple to come to their hotel, undergo security checks and consider routing out properly.

They said they had “auditors” waiting at a nearby hotel, one for each of them. They wanted to help them.

The couple said they would go. Parman was swayed by the argument that leaving might cost him his eternity.

"That is their main hook," he said. "It's your future for the next millennia ... They push that."

For more than an hour the security team searched their boxes, bags and clothes. They said they were looking for pictures the couple might have taken at the Cruise-Kidman wedding. They found nothing.

## RUNAWAYS WHO COME BACK

The Church of Scientology describes "auditing" as a form of spiritual counseling.

The auditor running the session asks prescribed questions intended to locate painful mental images from the person's past that may be limiting his potential. The subject holds two metal cylinders attached by wires to an "e-meter," a device said to pick up electrical currents or "charge" associated with the troubling episodes.

There's also "sec checking," a type of auditing designed to find out if the person has done something to harm the group.

Runaway staffers like Parman and Wolff were referred to as "security particles" and were segregated from others, to keep their inclination to leave from spreading.

At the California base, they often were assigned to the Old Gilman House, beyond a swamp. In Clearwater,

it was at the Hacienda Gardens staff housing complex on N Saturn Avenue, sometimes in rundown units known as "pig's berthing."

Many runaways were assigned to a work detail called the Rehabilitation Project Force. They were not to speak unless spoken to, isolated from family and often "sec checked" for hours every day.

The church says the RPF is a voluntary program that affords a staffer an isolated environment that encourages self-assessment. By mixing physical labor with periods of religious study, security checks and counseling, wayward staffers can reform.

Bruce Hines said the RPF is about mind control. Now 58, Hines teaches physics at the University of Colorado at Denver. He is six years removed from three decades in Scientology.

He figures he audited staff and parishioners for 15,000 hours, with about one-third of the hours conducting "sec checks."

"Sec checking" a runaway was "an interrogation," Hines said. Wrongdoing uncovered during sec checks was recorded by the auditor and often posted on bulletin boards or announced at the daily muster.

"Whatever you've done gets broadcast. And the worse and the juicier, the better. That shows I'm doing my job as

a security checker,” Hines said.

“If the person has blown, they hopefully would go from a frame of mind of, *‘I don’t want to be here. Let me go. You people are holding me against my will’ ... to... ‘I’ve harmed the organization. I need to make up for it. Please let me stay.’*”

To get off the RPF, Hines said, the staffer must identify why he’s destructive.

“You’re not looking for the bad things you’ve done, but the evil in you that prompted you to do those things. It’s predicated on the assumption you’re there because of the evil in you. And you have to root out that evil.”

Church spokesman Davis said it’s “offensive in the extreme” to describe Scientology confessionals in such terms. “Giving an individual the opportunity to unburden himself of transgressions is as old as religion itself,” he said.

Late in 1994, a VIP’s auditing session was mishandled. Hines says Miscavige blamed him, and he spent six of his last eight years on the RPF, on the other side of the auditing table and on a labor crew that cleared land, painted old mobile homes and built sheds.

To get off the RPF, the “security partner” had to demonstrate that his evil intentions were erased. He had to show a new willingness, a deeper sense of re-



Handout photo

**AUDITING**, the church says, improves a person’s “ability to confront what he is and where he is.” The goal is to rid the subconscious mind of upsets. The “**e-meter**” helps identify areas of spiritual distress. The person being audited holds metal cans attached by wires to the meter, which is said to pick up electrical currents associated with troubling episodes.



Times files (1998)

sponsibility. Sea Org members called it a “self-generating resource.”

Hines called it: “Totally in step.”

## **DECISION TIME**

At the hotel in Carson City, Parman and Wolff were audited and “sec checked” day after day for more than a week.

During down time they watched TV or played cards. After more than a week, the recovery team told them it was time to decide. Come back to the base. Preserve your eternity, your family relationships. If you want to leave, fine, just “route out” properly.

“Sinar and I talked about it and then agreed to go back to the base,” Wolff said. “And as soon as we agreed, it’s like we were on a plane within probably an hour or two.”

To that point, the church had paid for airfare, four hotel rooms, food for nine people, around-the-clock shifts by private investigators and other expenses.

“Lots of money and effort was spent on those two,” Morehead said. “Lots of money.”

## **A SOFTENING PROCESS**

Before the flight back to Southern California, Wolff called her mother to assure her she was still intent on leaving. But she was equally intent on doing

it by church rules. She might want to be active in Scientology again some day and wanted to keep her good standing.

A friend got Wolff into the church 11 years earlier, at age 25. She still remembered the realization she had as a little girl in Southern California, standing in her driveway, staring at the rose bushes.

“I knew I’d lived before and I knew I would live again, but I didn’t know how it worked. That’s what kind of started me on this quest. What are we doing here on this planet?”

Her Scientology auditing surfaced a distinct memory of how she died in her previous lifetime: a woman jerked the wheel to avoid oncoming traffic, the car landed on a power generator and she was electrocuted. “It was me,” Wolff said.

It resonated with Wolff when Morehead and his team said it would be a mistake to give up on her spiritual eternity.

Once they returned to the base, the couple spent their days around the Old Gilman House. They studied Scientology books and rehabilitated an old greenhouse.

If they broke a rule, if they shared frustrations, it eventually would come out in daily sec checks. In a world of constant confessing, no thought was safe inside their heads.



After six months, Wolff softened. “You kind of start feeling better about yourself and you start feeling remorse for what you did. It’s like you’ve deserted your group, and how could you do that?”

Paul Kellerhaus, of base security, sat with her at a card table and pushed Wolff for a decision, she said. He suggested Parman wanted to stay in the church. Did she really want a divorce?

“Probably up until the 11th hour I wanted to leave,” Wolff said. “I was determined. I was not going to change my mind. And then, I don’t know, (I had) those feelings of ‘Oh this could happen and it just could be bad if I leave.’ ”

She cried. Then: “Okay. I’ll stay.”

She said Kellerhaus took her decision and used it to sway Parman. He decided he would stay, too.

## **THEIR FINAL LEAVES**

In July 1991, they started new jobs at the base, Wolff a gardener and Parman an electrician. Ten months later, for a second time, they reached for a new life. They didn’t even bother to cover their tracks.

They loaded the car in the wee hours and drove to Los Angeles, to Parman’s parents’ house.

He took his wife to Disneyland for her birthday, and he got a job as a valet at a boutique hotel in Hollywood. Wolff helped her in-laws paint and take care

of other home improvement projects.

Soon a church “case supervisor” came to the house and said two auditors were standing by. The couple agreed to “route out” but said this time they would not return to the base. The church arranged for them to come to its complex in Hollywood for more auditing, more security checks and some Scientology courses.

At night, they went home to Parman’s parents house.

The routine lasted all day, every day, for about eight months, May 1992 to January 1993.

“I want to leave,” Wolff recalled thinking. “I’m not going to change my mind.”

Until she got a job she liked in the church treasury department. “I kind of ended up changing my mind.”

At the church’s urging, she talked Parman into staying.

He was back in good graces and back as a chef.

Wolff moved to a job doing research for videos shown at the church’s frequent events. She got to attend some — showy affairs with upbeat speeches and word of Scientology’s bright future. Parishioners cheered. It renewed her faith in the church.

At the same time, she and Parman were growing apart. They divorced in 1998.

Wolff ran a third time, in 1999. They found her at her sister's house, and she came back, again intending to "route out."

At the base she was assigned to live in a trailer at the Old Gilman House, joining a woman who had been there a year. They cooked on a hot plate in what Wolff described as a converted garage. She lived there more than six months.

Wolff remembers the small group outside on the night of Dec. 31, 1999, ringing in the new millenium at midnight as they looked out over the swamp. "We were like, 'Woo hoo,'" she said.

Parman, meantime, worked as Miscavige's personal chef, often traveling with the leader, who was keen on staying trim.

"I would feed him something like five different meals (a day) and they all had to be precise in percent of calories, like so many calories of protein, so many calories of carbohydrates and so many calories of fat. And they all had to taste good."

In 2001, during the fallout from the unexplained death of Scientologist Lisa McPherson, Parman was with Miscavige for an extended stay in Clearwater.

It was there, during an auditing session, Parman decided the church's promise of spiritual freedom did not

add up. A top officer from the Religious Technology Center, the arm of the church that knows Scientology inside and out, put him on an e-meter to find out how he felt about his Scientology counseling regimen.

Inside, Parman was furious, which the meter should have picked up. It didn't, and the officer determined that all was well.

Parman wondered: How could that be? The next day, between cooking lunch and dinner for Miscavige, Parman went to an auto dealer on Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard. He paid \$1,800 for a used Honda Civic and drove off. Several weeks later, at his parents' home in Los Angeles, he saw what he took to be a private investigator staking him out.

Soon after, church representatives approached him, urging him to come back. They said an auditor standing by. Parman told them he wanted to be left alone.

In 2001, he signed papers that required he remain silent about his time with the church. He was officially out.

That year, his ex-wife went to work on the line that assembled and repaired e-meters, and soon became the supervisor. Wolff's staff shrunk by half, but she was expected to maintain the same production. She said she often worked from 8:30 a.m. to 2, 3 or 4 a.m.

In October 2003, she was called to

the base mess hall, which had been set up for a group confessional. Wolff was made to stand at a microphone facing a few hundred staffers. Egged on by supervisors, the staff jeered and berated her for not meeting production targets.

For the fourth time in her 24-year Scientology career, Wolff asked to “route out.”

The church sent her to an isolated ranch called Happy Valley, where the sec checking process took almost four months.

“Had I had the guts, I would have just gotten up and gotten out of there,” Wolff said. “But you’re scared.”

She confessed everything she could think of, but the e-meter kept indicating she was holding something back. “This was a nightmare for me.”

Finally, someone said, “You’re done.”

Wolff signed a declaration, dated Jan. 12, 2004, in which she blamed herself for everything and the church for nothing. “I know that what I have done violated Church policy and caused harm,” the declaration stated. “I do not blame anyone else but myself.”

She collected \$500 severance and drove to her sister’s home in Orange County, Calif.

Wolff’s mother, Detta Groff, says the family held its breath, afraid she would

go back again. She said her daughter put up with a lot.

“But she was searching for something,” Groff said. “It was just a relief to have her back.”

When asked for comment on the couple’s departure from Scientology, the church said Wolff and Parman kept returning to the Sea Org because they wanted to. The church said Wolff messed up on her job and was dismissed. Parman is inflating his own importance by talking about famous people he cooked for.

Parman and Wolff said they signed documents confessing their faults so the church would leave them alone. They said they would not have returned to the Sea Org each time if not for the church’s repeated, unsolicited intervention.

“They make it seem like there was no pressure,” Wolff said. “They just gloss over the reality of what was going on.”

Parman pointed to the first time they left. He and Wolff were thrilled to be starting a different life, he said. They had found new jobs.

“To say we came back willingly ... Why did we go to another state? Why did we go to different places to disappear?” ■

## **SCIENTOLOGY’S RESPONSE »**



## SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE: 'THEY ARE LIARS'

Responding to written questions, church spokesman Tommy Davis sent a binder addressing issues with individual sources. Here are excerpts from his cover letter:

Tommy Davis says the *Times'* sources admitted they left Scientology because they could not meet the church's strict ethical standards. He said the *Times* is helping advance the agenda of a "lunatic fringe" of anti-Scientologists.

I am in receipt of your letter of 6 October 2009 and the laundry list of "new allegations," your sources are now concocting. Your letter reeks of naked bias. ...

The fact that the Church finds itself in the position of having to continue to respond to the false allegations of Rathbun, Rinder, Scobee, Bruce Hines, Mark Fisher and other members of your posse, is only because you, and other media to whom they are shopping their story, are providing a platform to im-

pugn the name of the ecclesiastical leader of Scientology, denigrate the religion and cause undue harm to its parishioners.

Some of these people have been gone from the Church

➤ To read the entire 10-page response, go to [tampabay.com/scientology](http://tampabay.com/scientology).



**RESPONSE** (continued)

for nearly 20 years; how they can be considered “sources” for a current news story regarding Scientology is preposterous.

You have a few petty allegations and are seeking to accuse the Church of dozens of instances of misconduct, an old tabloid trick to make it look like you have a “big story.”

In fact, all you have is a few people who left a religion after committing destructive acts and are now complaining about what they did while in the Church. Years later they are using the media to demand that the Church defend the harmful acts which they committed. Once again, your story is about Mike and Marty — they are telling you about their misdeeds.

Any claim or inference that Mr. Miscavige was involved in any way with attorney use of private investigators is false. Similarly, any claim that Mr. Miscavige ran a “blow drill,” forcibly kept staff from leaving the International Base, chased them down, asked to speak to staff who had left on the phone, or was involved in any way in acts of violence is categorically denied. These statements are false and defamatory and to include them in your publication would be further evidence of your malice.



Your choice of a story about the leader of the only major religion to have been founded in the 20th century and the fastest-growing religion on earth is to focus on the allegations of bitter ex-members who think that Mr. Miscavige is abusive and psychotic and that he engaged in a “blow drill” to detain a cook. ...

Mr. Miscavige is the driving force behind the worldwide expansion of Scientology. He works for and answers to Scientology’s millions of parishioners and serves their interests by implement-

**RESPONSE** (continued)

ing Mr. Hubbard's plans and strategies, while devoting every spare moment to the restoration of Mr. Hubbard's technology and its dissemination to the public. It is his far-reaching vision and unrelenting dedication which have brought the Church so far and so fast. He redefines the term "religious leader."

The same individuals who admitted to you they are liars: they admitted to lying under oath and lying to the media. What basis do you have to believe they are telling the truth now (which I assure you they are not)? ...

If Rinder used PIs to harass, that was his decision and was certainly not done under the direction or with the knowledge of Mr. Miscavige. He was expected to do his job correctly, and, of course, within the bounds of the law. He was dismissed for not doing so. ...

If Rinder and Rathbun used PIs to "abuse poor innocent people" they are the only ones to blame. Other Church officials were not involved in their duties.

As for the "blow drill," your real question should be to ask Rathbun and Rinder whether anyone tried to prevent them from leaving or came looking for them after they left the Sea Organization. The answer is a resounding NO! Their own personal circumstances belie these tall tales. ...

It is offensive in the extreme for you to denigrate a religious service by attempting to redefine Scientology confessionals as something used to punish. Giving an individual the opportunity to unburden himself of transgressions is as old as religion itself. In Scientology, not only can one seek and find forgiveness for past misdeeds free of the threat of punishment, but one can also take responsibility for those acts — something which your

**RESPONSE** (continued)

sources have proven they are incapable of doing.

The Church, of course, is interested in giving members who have failed in performing their duties a chance to reform and rehabilitate themselves. That is Scientology's purpose. On the other hand, the policy (and it is policy) is that the Church will not keep people on staff who want to leave.



With respect to your allegations regarding “disconnection” and breaking up of families, expulsion or excommunication is a practice as old as religion itself. The Church strongly believes that it is a fundamental right of any being to communicate.

There is no Church policy mandating that a member of the Church of Scientology must disconnect from anyone. To the contrary, it is a self-determined decision made by an individual with respect to someone who is antipathetic to them and/or their beliefs. There is a distinct difference between someone who has different religious beliefs and someone who is attacking them for his beliefs.

It is a common ploy of those attacking the Scientology religion, or any other Church for that matter, to cry foul about “disconnection” when it is, in fact, the attacker who by his or her own actions causes others to desire to sever the connection. These anti-Scientists then try to create sensational stories about the “practice” to further harm the Church. Scientology policy is no different from the practices of any faith. ...

The St. Petersburg Times has made itself the advocate for anti-Scientists on the lunatic fringe ...



## 'ALL YOU HAVE IS A FEW PEOPLE WHO LEFT A RELIGION AFTER COMMITTING DESTRUCTIVE ACTS'

The church said the *Times* is relying on sources who, before they left Scientology, admitted in sworn declarations, affidavits and confessions that all responsibility was theirs and they held the church blameless. For every person but one (Sinar Parman), Scientology spokesman Tommy Davis provided documents from church files, including confessions, ethics orders and Suppressive Person declarations.

### SINAR PARMAN AND JACKIE WOLFF



#### FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:

- The church said that after Parman and Wolff left without permission on Jan. 27, 1981, Parman **"willingly returned"** and he described leaving this way:

"Due to my own out-Ethics & overts, I caved myself in and deserted my post and the Sea Org in late January. I returned in early February and since then have undergone a very thorough correction



**SINAR PARMAN AND JACKIE WOLFF (continued)**

program which addressed any and all Ethics, Tech & Admin points which were out.”

He took off twice more. “Every time he came back ... it was because he wanted to and was welcomed. He is evidently now using the fact that he cooked for prominent people as his claim to fame.”

- Jackie Wolff **messed up on her job** in purchasing. In 1996, instead of paying the general contractor for work done on Scientol-ogy property, she paid subcontractors, costing the church more than \$240,000, which had to be recovered through litigation.

- In the four times Wolff ran, the church **never pressured her to re-turn**. “The story which she is now telling is embellished and alleges duress which never occurred; she was welcomed back in an effort to assist her to redeem herself.”

She signed a “declaration” Jan. 12, 2004: “I know that what I have done violated Church policy and caused harm. I do not blame anyone else but myself for the condition in which I now find myself.”

The document says she does not blame Scientology, “or any staff members or parishioners thereof, for any of my problems or actions. The past transgressions that I have committed were done of my own volition and for my own purposes.”

The church says Wolff was “**dismissed**” from the Sea Org.

**WHAT PARMAN AND WOLFF SAY NOW:**

- Wolff says she was **not dismissed**. She says she “routed out” and followed church procedure, as indicated in her affidavit.
- Wolff brought up the **contractor issue** in her first interview with

**SINAR PARMAN AND JACKIE WOLFF (continued)**

the *Times*. She said she was new to her post in the church's purchasing department and the experience taught her lessons on how to deal with contractors and subcontractors. She wrote the checks, but said someone else approved the expenditure.

"I never denied my accountability for it. I tried to make up for it."

- Wolff and Parman say each time they left, the church **pressured them to return**.

They said the church sent seven people to recover them the first time, including two private investigators. The church sent a recovery party after them the second time, and after Wolff when she left her third time, and after Parman when he left for good in 2001.

Both said each time they returned to the church they intended to follow protocol and "route out," but stayed after undergoing correction programs that took months.

Wolff: "What do you mean that's not pressure?"

She added: "I just wanted to be done with it; that's why I left.

"Parman: "To say that I came back willingly is a little bit of a lie."

**MARTY RATHBUN****FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:**

- Rathbun's posting on the Internet show him to be **"a card-carrying member of the lunatic fringe ...** He maligns Scientology ministers as a 'priesthood



**MARTY RATHBUN (continued)**

of Reverse Dianeticists' because they deliver Scientology religious services purely as Mr. Hubbard intended but not as Mr. Rathbun would like. He accuses the highest trained ministers in ecclesiastical management of 'warped interpretations' of Scientology, stating that he would not let them 'audit my dog.'

- "Rathbun lives for battle, **is abusive, is violent, is a liar** and, in his own words, was the cause of major catastrophes within the Church. That he is directing his attacks at Mr. Miscavige is just part of his attempt to cause the most damage to the Church."

- Rinder and Rathbun "are complaining about **a blow drill that was only conducted by them**. They are speaking of their own efforts to keep individuals on staff who were unfortunately destructive and/or suppressive. Marty admitted this was his operating basis ..."

**WHAT RATHBUN SAYS NOW:**

- **On his Internet postings:** "The only thing I would object to is Tommy Davis's characterization of the lunatic fringe. I think what I'm speaking for is the silent majority. I think that there are five to 10 times as many people who have experienced Scientology to some extent and have left and are gone and don't ever intend to come back as there are active, card-carrying members of Miscavige's clan. ... It actually ought to be characterized as a card-carrying member of the silent majority."

- On him being **an abusive, violent liar**. "They drew first blood. I never said a single word about the other executives of the church until Miscavige put them in a room and had them write 250 pages of perjured — and I mean perjured — declarations about me."

- On **him, not Miscavige, running a blow drill** to keep people on

**MARTY RATHBUN (continued)**

staff. “I wouldn’t have done a single one of the things I told you guys about — not a single one of them — had Miscavige not been in my face to get it done.”

**GARY MOREHEAD****FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:**

The church provided the 11-page affidavit Morehead signed March 31, 1997, as he “routed out” of the Sea Org. It says his Scientology career was permeated by a “thread of negligence.” The affidavit says he **never saw the church mistreat or abridge the rights of staff members.**



“I have seen others leave the Sea Organization and I have heard talk that a few have complained about the leaving process. I do not understand or believe such talk. I have seen people leave and they were free to do so. I am now doing so myself.”

- His affidavit says he lied to his supervisors and his staff about his work; fell asleep on the job; and stole a piece of jewelry that had been turned in to the security department.
- He **misdiagnosed a car accident victim** while responding for the local volunteer fire department, and he had **“premarital sexual activity”** with a woman he later married.
- The affidavit Morehead signed described him as someone of “quite junior” rank. **“I was a simple security guard.”**

## GARY MOREHEAD (continued)

## WHAT MOREHEAD SAYS NOW:

- **“I didn’t write a word of this.** Nobody does.” The church crafts such affidavits, using information from a person’s ethics files. “Someone else typed it up and it was present-ed to me.” He wanted out; he signed.

- **He disputed that Sea Org members can go when they want.** “They’re free to leave, once you adhere to their requirements. For every effort (to leave) there’s a counter effort. They just keep standing in your way and being persistent. ... If you resisted, they were on you and on you and on you.”

- Information on **his transgressions** was gleaned from confessions in which he was pressed to dig deeper for the evil intent behind his actions. Minor things became major.

For example, he was asked how long a task would take and he would say two hours but it took six. That turned into an admission of “false reporting” about his job production.

- He **did fall asleep** on the job, after days of long hours with little or no sleep.

- The **stolen jewelry** was a ring that belonged to a former Sea Org member who left it behind. He tried to reach her and couldn’t, and he and a superior agreed it was church property. He sold it to cover the cost of fixing a church-owned car he damaged.

- On **mishandling an accident victim**, another church staffer handled the patient. He questioned why the church would release a document detailing sexual information about him. “That’s something you just don’t talk about.”

**GARY MOREHEAD (continued)**

- He was **not “a simple security guard.”** The same affidavit refers to him as the “secu-rity chief” of the base. “I was in an extreme position of trust.”

He has a reference letter on church stationery signed by Heber C. Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International. Jentzsch called him a “dedicated young man” who “saved lives” as a volunteer firefighter after he left the Sea Org.

- **Scientology helped him.** He still considers it valuable.

**MIKE RINDER****FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:**

- “The Church will not keep people on staff who want to leave. Mike Rinder is the best illustration of this policy. As he well knows, **nobody attempted to bring him back.**” The church is glad he is gone.



- He should “stop whining. The real source of his bitterness is his realization, now that no one made any attempt to keep him in the Church, that **he was despised** in the Sea Organization. He is arrogant and contemptuous of everyone. ... He is not the head of the Office of Special Affairs anymore; he does not fly around the world anymore; he **does not ‘run with the big dogs** in the tall grass’ anymore; he is resentful and seeking vengeance.”

**MIKE RINDER (continued)****WHAT RINDER SAYS NOW:**

- On policy not to keep people who don't want to be there. "That 'policy' is dis-proved by hundreds of people who can recount their experiences of what happened to them when they did want to leave.

"And the fact that they didn't try and get me or Marty back is only because they were afraid of the information that we had. And that's proven by the fact that when they heard that we were speaking to the media, they did send a delegation of five people, including Miscavige's personal lawyer, to try to keep me from breaking their code of silence."

- On him being resentful that he's no longer a "big dog." "My encapsulated response to that is: I don't want to run with those dogs in the toxic grass because they are rabid."

**BRUCE HINES****FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:**

- **He made a sexual advance** on a parishioner he was "ministering" as an auditor.

- The church included a **declaration from his ex-wife**, Mary Chris Hines, dated Oct. 15, 2009, two weeks ago. She said her ex-husband told her he "liked to look through windows at women while wandering through the city. He would go out at night to see women naked in their homes." Once in 1994, he left the bathroom door open while showering "so the other



**BRUCE HINES (continued)**

woman who shared the apartment with us could come upon him nude.”

**WHAT HINES SAYS NOW:**

- He made no **sexual advance** on a parishioner he was auditing. “That is false, it defi-nitely did not happen.” The church did not confront him with the allegation until after he left.

- **His ex-wife’s accounts:** Out of context, exaggerated and irrelevant. “It has nothing to do with the issues I’ve talked about.”

He did peer into an uncurtained window at the staff residences in the early 1980s while walking past. Years later, a woman that shared his and his wife’s apartment walked in while he was showering. He cited these incidents during his confessionals on the RPF, trying to get back in good graces. He had to find the “evil purpose” in himself, so he said he exaggerated the accounts of voyeurism and exhibitionism.

“Before I started talking to the media, **I anticipated they would bring this subject up.** ... It’s an attempt to discredit me.”



## WHY NOT JUST LEAVE?

“What I’m trying to say is: You don’t have to hit me to abuse me or cause me pain.”

BY JOE CHILDS | TIMES STAFF WRITER

**S**ixteen years later, Betsy Perkins is sobbing as she talks about the day she ran away from Scientology. • “I thought I was handing in my ticket to eternity,” she says. • Now 56, a graphic artist in Dallas, she says she is going public to offer her own “first-hand account of what happened to a person who was in there.” • She spent 17 years in Scientology’s work force, the Sea Org, moved by the church’s mantra that Scientologists held the future of the planet in their hands. • She tells of a life filled with intense repetition of Scientology’s precepts and “ethics” and a grueling lifestyle where Sea Org members constantly needed to prove their fealty to the church. If your bosses had doubts about your performance or your thoughts, you faced humiliating work and periods of sleep deprivation. • But when eternal salvation is the reward, Perkins said, you come to believe it is all worth it. Even when she decided she couldn’t take it anymore and ran from the Sea Org, she fretted she was doing something terrible. • “If anybody had come and talked to me, I would have gone (back). I would have gone willingly,” she says. “Anybody could have taken me back. Easily ... I was so scared.” • Telling her story to the *Times* by phone from her office, rattled her. “I am sitting in a conference room and I am shaking now,” she said. • It is a story that began in May 1977.



Photos courtesy Betsy Perkins

## PERKINS (continued)

Betsy was 23, a maid at Scientology's Fort Harrison Hotel in Clearwater. She had dropped out of the University of New Mexico to follow a big, blond British guy into the church. She married Chris Byrne three months after signing her billion-year Sea Org contract.

On May 7, her church told her she was evil.

During a "security check" about organizational matters, she answered a question the wrong way, causing the auditor's e-meter needle to slap erratically. A "rock slam," it meant she had a hidden evil purpose.

Her superiors assigned her to the Rehabilitation Project Force, a work detail for Sea Org members in need of reform. She and her RPF crew mates spent five hours a day in sec checks and ethics counseling.

"You are told that all of your ideals, all of your goals, all of the things you believe in are really being driven by underlying evil and that you are so evil you have to be removed from your husband, your group, your organization, everything."

She was told she was in a low ethical condition. "The only way to



Photos courtesy Betsy Perkins

**BETSY PERKINS.** Her mother, Betty Jane Wilhoit, says it wasn't easy to maintain contact during her daughter's years in Scientology. "I knew ... they were reading her mail. And I knew that if I said too much, they would cut us off or really pressure her to cut ties with her family."

get out ... is to take responsibility for your crimes. At that time, I didn't know what my crimes were, except that somehow I was suppressive toward humanity."

She identified her evil actions, such as inflating an accomplishment or committing a bad act in a prior life. In follow-up counseling, she learned to "close down counter

**PERKINS** (continued)

thoughts” and purge her evil. After 1½ years, a review panel determined her original “rock slam” reading and others were misread. She returned to her job on the housekeeping staff.

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Seven years later, the church had transferred Betsy and Chris to the church’s 500-acre base east of Los Angeles. Chris operated a backhoe; Betsy oversaw group study sessions.

During the first days of 1984, auditors sec checked them. Chris revealed disaffected thinking. Betsy confessed she knew about it — a “withhold” and a violation. They were busted to the RPF.

Her guard on the RPF, former Sea Org officer Amy Scobee, said they worked feverishly the first year to renovate a stately home being readied for when Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard returned in his next life.

This stint lasted four years; Betsy Byrne’s marriage didn’t survive.

She returned to a job in marketing at the church’s film production studios, where she met Shawn Morrison. They married in July 1990.

On Christmas Day two years later they got a break from their long

work schedules and drove to his mother’s apartment in Burbank.

Betsy’s mother drove down from Oakland. She noticed the dark circles under Betsy’s eyes. After dinner, mother and daughter stretched out on a bed and held hands.

“Mom, I may need you soon.”

“Okay. Just let me know. I’ll be there for you.”

● ● ●

Betsy Morrison recorded in a journal the hours of sleep she got the next three months. Nightly average: three.

Long days, intimidation, threats — it took its toll.

To keep production high, supervisors sprung “sec checks” on staff to see if any were at odds with the group’s mission. Betsy estimates that 100 times in her 17 years in Scientology, she was pressed into writing admissions and vowing to reverse noncompliant behavior.

“It’s like rebooting a computer, wiping out a hard drive and re-establishing it,” she said. “You are rebooting the person’s mind into a correct way of thinking.”

The process emphasizes putting

## PERKINS (continued)

the group first, over self and over a marriage, she said.

“Now, add that on to already being sleep deprived ... It perverts your way of thinking into tearing your own self down, feeling like you deserved this, and so you’ll just stand in lock and do whatever needs to be done until you are somehow accepted back onto the crew.”

● ● ●

March 29, 1993. She overslept and missed the bus to her Sea Org job. She checked for the guards usually at the front entrance of the apartments. None there.

She counted her cash, about \$200, packed a few personal items and walked away. From a convenience store she called a cab and made it to the airport in Ontario, Calif. She bought a ticket to San Francisco. Her mother was thrilled, she was anguished.

In leaving, she feared she was throwing away her eternal existence and abandoning the church’s mission to “clear the planet.” She was running out on her husband.

But she needed sleep.

“That’s the whole reason I left. It

was getting so insane. And I couldn’t physically take it anymore.”

Her mother, Betty Jane Wilhoit, met her in San Francisco and took her to a friend’s house. Wilhoit’s apartment in Oakland would be the first place a church security team would look. After a few days, Betsy flew to Dallas to stay with her father.

Weeks passed. She got a job testing software. Back in California, her mother arranged counseling. On April 15, she flew back, this time to Oakland.

Waiting in the airport terminal, Mrs. Wilhoit saw two men approach the gate agent. They asked if Betsy was on the arriving flight.

Mrs. Wilhoit hurried down the jetway and into the plane and stopped her daughter.

“Stay here. They are out there for you.”

They waited for the plane to empty. The captain came up. Mrs. Wilhoit told him about the men at the gate and that her daughter was fleeing her church.

Betsy and her mother say airport security took them out a back door and drove them to their car. ■

# LEAVING AND LEAVES



## **HUBBARD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, Sussex HCO POLICY LETTER OF 7 DECEMBER 1976**

### **LEAVING AND LEAVES**

It has occasionally happened in the past that a staff or crew member has used the fact that he or she was leaving an org to spread upset.

It is a common make-wrong in children to threaten to run away. And it is a common action of suppressives to spread upset and dissatisfaction by saying they are leaving.

There are some people who leave wherever they are obsessively and the most casual check reveals they have seldom remained anywhere; committing continual overts, they are routinely running away from any job, any post, any group and from themselves and life.

As the actual reason behind blows is overts and withholds, the excuses for leaving are usually simply justifications and are actually a third-party action of associates, usually false reports.

Therefore, informing fellow staff members and others that one is leaving is hereby properly labeled a suppressive act.

Where it is found that this is occurring and if the person concerned does not report it to the proper terminals, HAS and Staff Chaplain, departure will be followed by a declare.

If one is going to leave an org, the proper action

In the mid 1970s, L. Ron Hubbard ran his church from aboard his ship, the *Apollo*, sailing from port to port. He handwrote his notes, in red ink for a bulletin, in green ink for a policy letter. He said two things about those who want to leave: don't keep staff who don't want to be there, but don't let them go without "sec checking" them, to make sure they won't harm themselves or the religion.

## LEAVING AND LEAVES (continued)

is to report it only to the HAS and Staff Chaplain and not to fellow staff members.

Where a person is secretly planning to leave and making private preparations to do so without informing the proper terminals in an org and does leave (blow) and does not return within a reasonable length of time, an automatic declare is to be issued. Should any monies or organizational property be found to be missing in consequence, action is to be taken on criminal charges.

All persons whose contracts expire without renewal and all persons who wish to leave are to be security checked by an auditor who is qualified in Qual to make prepared lists read. This will remove the overts and withholds inevitably connected and so relieve the person and the org of the usual justifications and false reports.

### LEAVES

All persons before going on leave must be given a Security Check by an auditor qualified to make prepared lists read. Final pay before departure is to be withheld until this action has been done.

All persons returning from missions or leave must be security checked.

Any staff or crew member falsifying the reasons why a leave is needed or requesting a leave when in fact blowing is to be the subject of an automatic declare.

There is no intention of holding on to people who do not want to be where they are.

There is every intention to use our tech to prevent false reports and suppressive actions from occurring, both to the detriment of the person himself and to an organization.

There are enough lies in the world without generating more as to the “reasons” one is leaving or seeking to use the fact to damage an org or its staff.

The vast majority of staff want to be there and are NOT leaving and they don’t need third-partying SPs around. The vast majority are good guys.

### L. RON HUBBARD

Founder

Adopted as official

Church policy by

CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY  
INTERNATIONAL

# WHAT HAPPENED IN VEGAS

EX-SCIENTOLOGY LEADERS SAY THE CHURCH PAID PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS TO INFILTRATE THE WORLD OF FORMER MEMBERS.



Courtesy Mark Fisher

**In 1996, the former Scientologists moved their business into new, larger quarters. From left, Fernando and Terri Gamboa pose with Kenny Lipton, center, and Janis and Paul Grady. The five were well-known in Scientology's workforce, the Sea Org, before they left in 1990.**

BY JOE CHILDS AND THOMAS C. TOBIN,  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**hey squeezed into a two bedroom apartment, all they could afford. Two couples and a single guy had left the Church of Scientology and joined up in Las

Vegas, starting a mortgage business near the Palace Station Casino.

They were faces in the crowd.

Except that the two wives were important in Scientology history, sisters Terri and Janis Gillham. They were two of the original four “messengers”

for L. Ron Hubbard.

The founder ran his church from his ship, the *Apollo*, handwriting bulletins in red ink and policy orders in green. For eight years starting when Terri was 13 and Janis 11, they saw Hubbard most every day. As his messengers, they fetched people for private audiences and carried his handwritten notes to the Scientology world.

Their parents had opened one of Australia's first Scientology missions, in their home in Melbourne.

By 1969, the girls were aboard ship with Hubbard, and their parents were needed to help grow Scientology in the United States.

Hubbard's wife, Mary Sue, became legal guardian to Terri and Janis. Hubbard was a father figure. He looked after their studies and their well-being.

Twenty years later they had become disaffected. Still believers, the sisters and their husbands left the church. They disagreed with the direction Hubbard's successor, David



Courtesy of Rob Williamson

**JANIS GILLHAM** and LRH on the bridge of his ship, the *Apollo*. Janis was about 12.

Miscavige, was taking it, and they found him too controlling.

On their own now in Vegas, they processed mortgage applications and lounged around the pool at their apartment complex, the Polo Club.

They didn't know it, but they were being watched.

Terri and her husband, Fernando Gamboa, left the Sea Org first, in January 1990.

Eight months later, Janis and her husband, Paul Grady, took off from the





**FERNANDO GAMBOA, 54**

He joined the church in his early 20s and worked for the Sea Org as a drummer and as a sound engineer. He is a private investor.



**TERRI GILLHAM GAMBOA, 54**

A Realtor for Realty One in Las Vegas, specializing in horse properties. She and her sister Janis and brother Peter moved to England in the early 1960s and played with L. Ron Hubbard's children at his estate in Sussex.

church's 500-acre compound east of Los Angeles after a sudden, hard rain and a Miscavige tongue-lashing.

Mud washed down an arroyo and into villas the staff had spiffed up for a coming visit by Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Miscavige blamed the staff for goofing up the grading of a hillside and said they would work around the clock to clean up the mess.

Not the Gradys. They bolted for a little town north of Los Angeles.

Mark Fisher left that night, too, and made it to his sister's couch in Hollywood. A church security guard was there when he woke; his sister had turned him in.

Fisher had been Miscavige's aide de camp for nearly seven years. He and his staff woke up Miscavige and his wife, and they walked their beagles, Chesley and Chelsea. They cleaned the leader's guns after target practice and, when he was in a good mood, piled in a car and went with him to the movies.

For leaving without permission, Fisher had to pull weeds and was questioned for hours daily for a month. On Sept. 15, 1990, Fisher said goodbye to his wife in a church security office. He wrote her a check for \$8,000, half their savings, and gave her their furniture and art work. He



**JANIS GILLHAM GRADY, 53**

Owner of Home Savings Mortgage, formerly City Mortgage, in Las Vegas. She grew up in Scientology. Her parents were among the first Scientology adherents in Australia in the mid-1950s.



**PAUL GRADY, 53**

Based in Las Vegas, he is CEO of Fossil Energy, headquartered in Denver. He joined the Sea Org in his early 20s in Columbus, Ohio. He directed the team that bought the ship *Freewinds*.

took their Honda and drove off.

By year's end, opportunity knocked in Las Vegas.

A Scientology parishioner opening a mortgage office there told Janis, Terri and their husbands he would teach them the business. If they did well, they could take over. Janis contacted Fisher; he was in, too.

Janis was five months pregnant when they moved into the Polo Club. She and Paul got one bedroom. Terri and Fernando got the other. Fisher got the sofa.

After two months, their little startup, City Mortgage, needed another mortgage agent.

David Lubow answered their Help Wanted ad. He said the market was tough in the San Fernando Valley, where his wife worked and they lived with their two children. He would make the four-hour drive home on weekends. Terri hired him.

"Dave was a really friendly guy," Fisher said. "A really nice guy. Somebody you would want to have a beer with."

The Gamboas and the Gradys declined to be interviewed for this report. But Fisher and other former Scientology staffers who were hired at City Mortgage described what they saw and heard.



**MARK FISHER, 51**

**Joined Scientology:** at 14, in 1973 in Washington, D.C. Joined Sea Org in 1976.

**Left Sea Org:** September 1990

**Career highlights:** Statistics analyst, trained evaluators. Became corporate liaison to Miscavige, supervising his household, carrying out special assignments.

**Now:** Divorced his wife, a Sea Org member, after he left. A loan officer, lives in Las Vegas.

*On Lubow: "He was hustling, trying to get loans like the rest of us. ... Before I knew it, he moved into the same apartment complex as us."*

Lubow got an apartment at the Polo Club and hung around with the five from the office.

He had never played racquetball, but he played often with Fernando. He saw the five at the pool and grilled out with them. He was as thrilled as



**DAVID LUBOW**

He joined the City Mortgage staff in the spring of 1991 and stayed until early 1995, becoming good friends with many of the former Scientology staffers there. He partied and went camping with them. After he left for home in California, he returned frequently to Vegas to visit with his friends and brought along his wife and children.

they when Janis, with the help of a midwife, delivered her son in the living room.

Conversation would get around to Scientology. Terri and Janis told Lubow about their early days with Hubbard, how they watched him build the church from the ground up. They all said he should read *Dianetics*.

Lubow asked the obvious: So why did you leave?

Because of Miscavige, they said. If he were gone, they might go back.

Good talker, that Dave Lubow. His

apartment was across the tiny parking lot. From his front door, he could see theirs.

## RUNNING THE OPERATION

A short walk down Hollywood Boulevard from where tourists take pictures of sidewalk shrines to movie stars is the Hollywood Guaranty Building, 12 floors of Scientology offices. The top floor is “OSA-Intel,” the Office of Special Affairs’ intelligence unit.

That’s where David Lubow sent his

reports. Church staff routed them to Mike Rinder, the director of OSA, and Marty Rathbun, Inspector General of the Religious Technology Center, the church’s top ecclesiastical authority. Staff knew him as Miscavige’s right hand man. Rathbun said he routinely forwarded Lubow’s reports to the leader.

Rathbun worked with Rinder’s OSA team, which handled legal matters, investigations and media relations. Rinder was the church’s chief public spokesman for 20 years, nation-



Courtesy Mark Fisher

**MARK FISHER AND DAVE LUBOW** on the stairway of the Las Vegas apartment Fisher shared with two couples, the Gamboas and the Gradys. Lubow moved into the same apartment complex, the Polo Club, taking a unit in the background of this photo, across the parking lot from Fisher and the others.

ally and internationally, defending the church in countless interviews.

Rathbun left Scientology in 2004, Rinder in 2007. This past June, both spoke out about the physical abuse they said they saw Miscavige administer, assertions the church vehemently denied. Now they say Miscavige ordered spying on those he considered potentially threatening to himself and the church.

“Miscavige was intensely obsessed with that Las Vegas crowd,” Rathbun said.

Church attorneys and spokesman Tommy Davis said the church does not hire private investigators, its attorneys do. Miscavige has nothing to do with the investigators. “Any claim or inference that Mr. Miscavige was involved in any way with attorney use of private investigators is false,” Davis wrote.

Before they left Scientology, the Gillham sisters transitioned from teenaged messengers to powerful roles. Terri was executive director of Author Services Inc., the corporation Hubbard set up distinct from Scientology to control rights to his books, lectures and other intellectual property. At ASI, she worked closely with Miscavige, who was its chairman of the board.

Janis led a team in 1988 that read-

ied the church’s new cruise ship, the *Freewinds*, for its maiden voyage. From 1987 through 1990, she oversaw the church’s international management team.

They and Fisher told Lubow about how things soured. They joked about going back to the compound in the desert, maybe drive a van up to the front gate and yell out to staff: All aboard!

Rathbun and Rinder said Miscavige viewed the Las Vegas clique as potential agitators or even motivated to start an anti-Scientology crusade. Rathbun said Miscavige “ordered” him to arrange for someone to infiltrate the five in Vegas and find out what they were up to.

Rathbun said he instructed OSA-Intel chief Linda Hamel to consult a private investigator who had worked for the church for years and find someone with a high social I.Q. for the job. Lubow.

“He got deep in and became a close friend and was reporting back,” Rathbun said. “Quite frankly, the more reporting he did, the more obsessed Miscavige became. Those people all pinned their gripes about their experiences in Scientology to their personal experiences with Miscavige.

“They were consistently communicating about how they were just wait-

ing for this guy to burn out and maybe they even would go back some day.”

Instructions for Lubow: Keep the reports coming.

## **TOO MANY QUESTIONS**

Terri Gamboa fired Fisher before City Mortgage was a year old. Badly needing a commission check, Fisher had chewed out a support staffer for not processing a loan application quickly enough.

“I blew my stack. Got really angry,” Fisher said.

Lesson learned. “You deal with people a certain way in the Sea Org,” he said, “but when you come out in the real world, you can’t treat people like that.”

He moved to Houston, for a promotions job with an adult entertainment club owner he knew. Fisher was settling in when Lubow called. He was in town on a real estate deal, they should do lunch. Lubow picked Fisher up in a rented Cadillac.

“We’re driving around, I’m showing him around Houston — I’d only been there about a week or so — and he started asking me questions,” Fisher said.

What did he really think about Scientology?

What did he think about David Miscavige?

Did he really want to get rid of him? Would the five really go back if Miscavige was gone?

Enough questions that Fisher noticed. “Why would he be working on some deal in a little town out in Texas, when we were based in Las Vegas? I mean, nothing added up.”

After lunch, Fisher called Vegas. “Janis, I think Dave Lubow is a plant.”

Janis said City Mortgage didn’t send him there, it didn’t have any business in Houston.

## **OPPORTUNITY KNOCKED**

In Vegas, Fernando Gamboa took an intriguing phone call. A business contact at a bank in Los Angeles said two investors were headed their way, and Fernando and Terri should meet them.

They had dinner at Caesars Palace. The men said they were dealmakers from Hong Kong whose clients expected royal treatment. They wanted Terri and Fernando to go to Australia and find a scenic horse ranch. The dealmakers would buy the ranch and pay the Gamboas to run it and host their clients.

Terri could go home to Australia and do what she loved: Be with horses. With their living expenses covered, she and Fernando could bank most of their salaries.

They left for Melbourne. Who showed up in a matter of weeks? Lubow, on vacation with his wife. They all went to the beach.

"They (the Gamboas) thought it was bizarre he came all the way down there," Fisher said. "That's when we really started to suspect him."

Back at City Mortgage, everybody wondered: Where does Lubow get his money? They didn't pay him salary, just commission. And he'd closed only one mortgage there.

## THE AUSTRALIA MANEUVER

Rathbun and Rinder now say the church was the silent partner paying for the Gamboa's diversion to Australia.

"It definitely was a church maneuver," Rathbun said. "I was involved in that."

Lubow had filed intelligence reports for seven months when the dealmakers took the Gamboas to dinner. Many of his reports, sometimes just a long paragraph, sometimes two or three pages, highlighted Terri as especially critical of Miscavige, Rathbun said.

"I know there were reports coming out that she was considering lending assistance to people who were going after DM (David Miscavige) on the outside," he said, referring to former

church officials suing Scientology.

Rathbun said Miscavige also was concerned. Terri could undermine Scientology's settlement talks with the IRS, in 1992-93, over whether to restore the church's tax-exempt status.

Rathbun said Miscavige told him to get her far away. Rinder said the church strategy was: "Get them out of the U.S."

"We had some guy who was super well-heeled. He was out of Hong Kong," Rathbun said. "I set the thing up with Linda (Hamel, church intelligence chief). He was some British guy. He invited them down ... wine and dine (them) ... we literally were going to buy a horse ranch."

The Gamboas found a ranch in the high country north of Melbourne that the investors could rent. They stayed two years.

Rathbun and Rinder said they don't know how much the operation cost, only that the church underwrote it.

## HOW THE CHURCH DOES IT

Seeking comment from the church, the *St. Petersburg Times* posed written questions about Lubow's involvement with the five former church staff in Las Vegas. Responding in writing, the church addressed its practices but made no mention of Lubow.

Scientology spokesman Tommy Davis said neither Miscavige nor church officials hired private investigators, church attorneys did. Davis said the church directs its attorneys and their agents to conform to all laws, regulations and the highest ethical standards.

Davis gave the *Times* declarations from longtime church attorneys Elliot Abelson and Kendrick Moxon that stated it's routine for lawyers to retain PIs to acquire useful information and to disprove false allegations by potential adversaries. They said they instructed the investigators to comply with state and local laws and the rules of their profession. The attorneys said they never communicated with Miscavige about PIs or investigations.

"He is simply not involved," Abelson said.

Rinder, who oversaw intelligence efforts as OSA's director for 25 years, said it's done that way to shield the church.

"It's a protection," he said. "You can always come back and say, 'This guy is retained by a lawyer.'"

OSA's own intelligence staff vetted the investigators, Rinder said, then Abelson or Moxon hired them. The private attorneys worked as independent contractors and had offices on the 10th floor of the church building on Hollywood Boulevard.

Rinder said the attorneys worked out fee agreements with the PIs and sent them to OSA for assignment, and the church transferred funds to Abelson and Moxon to pay the PIs.

"We'd use the same people over and over," Rinder said, about 10 of them. "It was as big as it needed to be.

"If you need 10 PIs working on it, then you get 10 PIs working on it. If there was one needed, you'd have just one."

Church intelligence mostly targeted those it feared might hurt Scientology, on the streets, in court or in the media, Rinder and Rathbun said.

In the early 1980s, Miscavige, joined by Rathbun, Rinder and others, reformed the church's previous intelligence division, the Guardian's Office. Its director, Mary Sue Hubbard, and 10 other Scientologists were convicted in October 1979 on federal charges of conspiring to steal government documents or obstruct justice.

But Rathbun said Miscavige still believed it was important to anticipate the moves of potential enemies.

Prediction — "that became our watchword," Rathbun said.

"That actually was our initial justification and our initial standard. In other words, it was okay to infiltrate somebody, provided it was done solely for prediction."



If someone caused trouble, a plaintiff in a lawsuit or a reporter stirring controversy, that triggered ODC, Overt Data Collection, Rathbun said. The church's intelligence staff followed a form and culled information from public sources.

"Any character that pops up in the mix, ODC is almost automatic," Rathbun said. But if the church saw serious threat, it commissioned covert work. "Now that it's an attack, CDC."

Covert Data Collection involved informants and private investigators.

"You're looking for two things," Rinder said. "One, connections. Two, dirt, crimes, whatever it is that may be able to be used to expose the source of attack as having their own dirty laundry so ... they are not a credible source."

The church has a term for it. To "dead agent" someone is to destroy an adversary's credibility.

Lubow did not respond to an interview request.

Responding to questions about Rathbun and Rinder's accounts, the church provided the declaration of Rinder's top deputy for 20 years, Kurt Weiland. It states that Rathbun and Rinder are "omitting context" about OSA and mischaracterizing the work of "experienced legal professionals."

"The allegations are made to appear extraordinary to most readers who are

not aware that it is a common factor in litigation — pending and anticipated."

Of Rathbun and Rinder, Weiland's declaration concluded: "They are now employing the very tactic they decried in the past, complete with false claims and innuendo, and have created a web of lies and deceit about the church. Paradoxically, they are the very individuals who directed and controlled the very activities they are now saying 'the church' did wrong.

"If their claims about the 'the church' were true, which they are not, as I have made clear in this declaration, they would have to point the finger directly at each other and no one else."

## **THE NEW GUY, FERRIS**

By 1994, the original cast was back at City Mortgage. The Gradys, who had kept the business going, rehired Fisher. The Gamboas were back from Australia.

Lubow had cleaned out his desk and moved back to California. But he visited Vegas and palled around with his friends. The five ex-Scientology staffers didn't confront him about spying; they assumed the church would just send in somebody else.

"Then we'd have to figure it out all over again," Fisher said.

Four years old now, City Mortgage

had new faces. On the team were former Sea Org members Kenny Lipton and Gene Decheff.

Lipton worked there until 1998, when he died of cancer. Decheff, who lives in Spokane now, said his colleagues warned him to be leery of Lubow. "It was suspected he might be there to watch us, or get information about us, for somebody."

The office needed more support staff. Terri hired Pam Khan, who lived in Vegas with her husband.

Pam quickly made friends and told her bosses she knew someone who would make a good loan officer. Her husband, Ferris.

Pam was right. Ferris Khan wrote loans and was fun outside work.

On Sept. 7, 1996, Vegas was abuzz. Mike Tyson was fighting Bruce Seldon at the MGM Grand. The Gamboas hosted a dinner party to watch the closed circuit telecast. Khan took over the kitchen and presented a multi-course salmon feast.

"It was fantastic," Fisher said.

In 1998, Pam Khan announced she was pregnant. Her friends at City Mortgage gave her a baby shower and, when she moved home to Phoenix, a going-away party.

Khan stayed on a few more months and left to join her. He and Fisher called each other nearly every day.

Fisher said Khan told him he was starting a cell phone company and said he would pay Fisher \$7,500 to write the employee manual.

Khan asked about Scientology. By 1999, anti-Scientology sites were getting traffic on the Internet. What did Fisher know about those? And what did he know about the protest group in Clearwater inspired by the death of Lisa McPherson, the Scientologist who died in 1995 after 17 days in care of church staffers?

Fisher knew plenty about the protesters. Two of the ringleaders, Jesse Prince and Stacy Brooks, were friends, former Scientologists Fisher worked with in the '70s and '80s.

Let's go to Florida, Fisher told Khan, "It might be fun to poke my finger in DM's eye."

## **THE FISHER DIVERSION**

Miscavige was in Clearwater then, with Rathbun and Rinder, working to contain the fallout surrounding McPherson's death.

The judge in the McPherson family's wrongful death lawsuit was considering a motion that Miscavige be added as a defendant. The family's lawyer argued that he was involved in day-to-day operations of the church. Scientology lawyers said he was the ecclesiastical leader and not involved

in day-to-day operations.

On Dec. 14, 1999, the judge granted the family's motion. Miscavige was a defendant.

Soon after came an intelligence report out of Las Vegas. Mark Fisher was planning to come to Clearwater.

"Miscavige was freaked," Rathbun said. "He was certain that Fisher, having worked directly for Miscavige for a number of years, was coming down to testify about Miscavige's control of the church."

Rathbun said Miscavige summoned him and Rinder. "He said to Mike and me, 'You make sure Mark Fisher does not come to Florida.'"

Rathbun said he called Linda Hamel, the intelligence chief in California. Rathbun asked: "Hey, what happened to your guy Lubow? Can't he come up with a distraction for Mark Fisher?"

Lubow had been pulled out of Vegas for other work for the church. "But we got another guy who substituted for Lubow," Rathbun said Hamel told him.

"We worked out this whole plan, Linda and I," Rathbun said.

## PUERTO VALLARTA

Forget Clearwater, Khan told Fisher.

"He goes, 'Look it, we got to meet



**FERRIS KHAN**

Hired as a loan officer in 1996, Khan became fast friends with fellow loan officer Mark Fisher. Khan worked at City Mortgage for just two years, but stayed in almost daily contact with Fisher until recently. The two traveled often together in the United States, Mexico and Thailand.

this investor I know in Puerto Vallarta. It'll be a lot more fun.'"

The financier lived in Italy but was traveling to Puerto Vallarta the same week they were headed to Florida. Khan said they needed to meet and get his backing for the cell phone company Khan was starting.

Instead of protesting in Clearwater, Khan and Fisher spent five days at a luxury resort, parasailing, snorkeling and partying. They dined with the investor the third night, and Khan gave him the manual Fisher wrote. Then it was back to the clubs.

“We were on vacation,” Fisher said. Khan paid for everything, Fisher said, at least \$7,000.

Back in Clearwater, Hamel sent Rathbun a video of Fisher partying at a bar in Puerto Vallarta. He played it for Miscavige.

“He got a great kick out of it,” Rathbun said.

Rathbun and Rinder said they never knew the name Ferris Khan, but they knew an operative replaced Lubow and took Fisher to Mexico.

The church paid all expenses for

diverting Fisher, Rathbun said. “Every penny of it.”

### ONLY ONE PERSON KNEW

Only once did Fisher confront his friend Ferris about the possibility he lived a double life. About four years ago, in one of their many phone calls, he said:

“Hey, you know Janis thinks you are spying for Scientology,” Fisher said, half joking.

What a laugh, Khan said. Why would I do that?



Courtesy Mark Fisher

**MARK FISHER AND FERRIS KHAN.** In January 2000, Fisher and Khan planned to go to Clearwater but Khan suggested they go to Mexico to meet an investor backing his cell phone company. They toured and partied, and Khan talked Fisher into parasailing for the first time. Khan paid for everything.

Fisher dropped it. He and Khan were pals.

“Any time I had a business decision or a financial decision or if I was going to buy or sell a stock, I would call him. He seemed to have a lot of expertise in those areas. ... We were intimate in terms of my finances and anything else I was doing ...

“He was the type of person that I would call up and say, Hey, how’s it going? And we’d shoot the s--- for 20, 30 minutes. We’d talk politics ... whatever.”

Khan did not return phone messages seeking comment.

This past July, 12 years since they met, Fisher realized he had been betrayed.

Late that month, Khan called from Dubai, where he was on business. Did Fisher know anything about a story the *Times* was preparing?

No, Fisher said. How did Khan know to ask? Fisher hadn’t told anybody he had been interviewed. But he knew the *Times* had sent the church questions about the people in the story.

He had another piece of evidence, the church magazine *Freedom*, published days before the *Times* story. One paragraph jumped off the page at Fisher. It described one of the *Times*’ sources as a bankrupt taxi driver.

Fisher drove a cab for about six weeks and had filed for bankruptcy. He had told just one person: Ferris Khan.

## **JANIS GRADY’S STATEMENT**

Fisher still hasn’t told Khan that he figured him out. “I considered him my best friend. I even told him a couple of times, ‘Man, you are like a brother to me.’ ”

Khan stopped calling every day, but did check in on Aug. 29, to wish Fisher happy birthday, his 51st.

In declining to be interviewed for this report, Janis Grady said she and her sister fear speaking out would damage relationships with family members who are Scientologists. She gave this written statement:

“We were aware that Scientology officials had sent private investigators to keep an eye on us. We had nothing to hide and just wanted to get on with building our new lives.

“If the Church of Scientology officials chose to spend their money that way, that is their poor judgment. To my knowledge the PIs caused no adverse effect on our lives so they were of no concern to us. My priority was/is raising my children.” ■

## **SCIENTOLOGY’S RESPONSE »**

# THE SCIENTOLOGY RESPONSE

The church said its leader, David Miscavige, and other church officials did not hire private investigators, church attorneys did. The church directs that its attorneys and their agents follow all laws and regulations and adhere to the highest ethical standards. "If Rathbun and Rinder used PIs to 'abuse poor innocent people,' they are the only ones to blame," spokesman Tommy Davis said. The *Times* submitted written questions to the church about David Lubow and Ferris Khan's involvement with former church staff in Las Vegas. The church responded by discussing church practices but made no mention of Lubow or Khan.

» To read the entire response, go to [tampabay.com/scientology](http://tampabay.com/scientology).



## MARK FISHER

### FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:

The church says Fisher cannot be believed, describing him as a "virulent anti-Scientologist" and "an admitted sexual tourist" who has had sex with prostitutes in Thailand.

The church provided an "Ethics Order" from June 1990 that said of Fisher: "He has shown that he is a fake and a totally irresponsible one at that. ... He has demonstrated his hands are dirty and that he cannot keep them clean himself. ... He is also demoted in rank to swamper as that is what he is."

**MARK FISHER (continued)**

He was expelled from Scientology in November 1990. In the years since, he has picketed with Anonymous, which the church characterizes as a “hate group.”

The church provided a copy of Fisher's Web site, [bachelorfreedom-travel.com](http://bachelorfreedom-travel.com), in which he offers tips on how to navigate the sex scene in Thailand, including:

“Once you finish a short time with a girl, you are free to go back to another bar and pick out someone else for another short time session! You can do this as much as you want!!! The answer will never be NO!!!”

**WHAT FISHER SAYS NOW:**

His girlfriend lives in Thailand, and he travels there as often as he can. He said he did not have sex with prostitutes. He started the Web site in 2007, hoping to attract advertisers, got none and took the site down in mid-2008. Posting the Internet pages was “stupid” and “an embarrassment.”



Fisher participated in marches staged by Anonymous, in March and April 2008, but he rejected the church's characterization of him as a “virulent” church opponent.

“I'm not a happy person with regards to the way David Miscavige treats his staff. And the way that they practice disconnection, they basically have ripped my family apart for the last 15 years as well. My sister is still in there and tried to disconnect from me and my mom,” who is not a Scientologist. Fisher's father, who introduced him and his sister to Scientology, is dead.

# WHY DID BOB MINTON SWITCH SIDES?

BY THOMAS C. TOBIN AND JOE CHILDS | TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**R**obert S. Minton seemed to surface out of nowhere in late 1997. ● A retired investment banker and millionaire from New England, he began to show up at anti-Scientology demonstrations in Boston and Clearwater. He gave millions to groups critical of the church. ● He became the money man behind a wrongful death lawsuit by the family of Lisa McPherson, whose unexplained death at Scientology's Clearwater mecca threw the church into crisis. ● Minton quickly became the Church of Scientology's No. 1 nemesis. ● "I felt that the little guys needed some help," he once said. "I'm putting my money where my mouth is."

Much of the church's response to Minton has been documented — the legal onslaught, the skirmishes that sought to bait him, get him in trouble and torpedo his credibility.

Twice he was arrested and charged after minor scuffles with Scientologists while picketing church properties. Once, he fired a shotgun into the air after Scientologists appeared at his New Hampshire farm.

Early on, the church dispatched private investigators to talk to his son, his brother, his wife's family in England, his elderly mother in Florida.

Still, Minton wouldn't go away.

Now former church officials



Times (1999)

**BOB MINTON** pickets in Clearwater. At the time, Marty Rathbun, identified as a "top Scientology official," said this of Minton: "I worry about this guy because he's deranged."



**BOB MINTON** (continued)

Marty Rathbun and Mike Rinder reveal the other tactics they used.

Shortly after Minton burst onto the scene, the pair arranged two meetings with the million aire to introduce themselves and glean his motives. Both times they brought a tool worthy of James Bond. They set it on the table.

“It was a black briefcase with a small pinhole camera hole and a

small mic hole,” Rathbun said. “And so we recorded the entire thing without the guy’s knowledge.”

This and other accounts illustrate how far Scientology was willing to go to stop Minton, who, in a stunning reversal five years later, ended up testifying in court on the church’s behalf.

That part of the story begins with David Lubow, the same private in-



Times files (2000)

**THE LINE.** Bob Minton bought a building just 30 feet from the church’s stately property, the former Bank of Clearwater building. The city of Clearwater painted white lines in the street, where Minton was not allowed when Scientologists boarded their buses.

**BOB MINTON** (continued)

investigator the church used just a few years earlier to infiltrate a group of Scientologists in Las Vegas.

Rathbun and Rinder said they turned to Lubow in the late 1990s to look into Minton's financial affairs overseas. Lubow deployed to the capitals of Europe, dropping aliases and recruiting helpers to make Minton think he was being investigated by multiple agents, Rathbun said.

"He was very elaborate," Rathbun said of Lubow. "He's actually very good at what he does."

Rinder said the operation fit with the directives of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, who wrote that if a person accuses you of something, they themselves are guilty of those crimes.

"Minton was accusing the church of having bought off the IRS and gained false tax-exempt status," Rinder said. "So, the focus was: Find his financial crimes."

In 2001, Lubow returned from overseas with loads of information, including details on an alleged money-laundering scheme involving Minton and a Nigerian dicta-

tor that was never proved. Lubow wanted direction.

He said he had been dealing with personnel at OSA, the Office of Special Affairs, headed at the time by Rinder. The office served as the church's legal, intelligence and public affairs arm, but the people under Rinder didn't have the authority to give Lubow the freedom he needed.

Rinder and Rathbun corrected that problem, bringing Lubow to Clearwater for a meeting. They said they went to the parking lot of a bank on Cleveland Street, not wanting to risk someone spotting him entering a Scientology building. The three convened for hours in a car.

"We got the guy focused like a laser beam," Rathbun said.

Rinder said he told Lubow not to take orders from anyone else at OSA and to report only to Rathbun and him.

"Here is your order," Rinder said he told the PI. "Get the goods on Minton to shut him the f--- up."

By the spring of 2002, Scientology had painted Minton into a corner.

On the legal front, the church

**BOB MINTON** (continued)

pulled Minton into its efforts to have the lawsuit by McPherson's family dismissed.

During a memorable court hearing on April 19, 2002, Minton took the stand and made the jaw-dropping statement that the plaintiff's attorney, Ken Dandar, was a "lying thief" who was "only in this for money."

Dandar had considered Minton a strong ally for years. He couldn't believe it.

"This man I adore, he was a saint," the Tampa lawyer said at the time. "It's like stabbing me in the heart. I'm just sitting there going, 'What did they do to you?'"

Also, the millionaire now had a legal problem. He previously testified under oath that he had given \$1 million or \$1.3 million to the McPherson family's legal effort. Now he said in an affidavit it was \$2 million.

The judge in the case, Susan Schaeffer, made noises about perjury and wondered aloud if someone should read Minton his rights.

What had gone on behind the scenes to change Minton's stripes?

Rathbun and Rinder told how it was done.

In the weeks before Minton's public turnaround, they say the church met with him some 20 times to discuss dropping the McPherson case and compensating Scientology. Church officials said Minton had caused them to spend \$28 million to defend against his efforts.

At one of the meetings, Rinder said, he presented Minton with what Lubow had found about the millionaire's finances.

"There were things that, really, he was worried about and had caused problems for him in the investigation that we had done," Rinder said, declining to give more detail. "I'm just going to leave it at that."

Dandar said he can't talk about the case, citing the terms of the 2004 settlement agreement.

But he said in 2002 that Minton called him in a panic after one of his meetings with the church. Minton begged him to drop the lawsuit, Dandar said at the time.

At one of the private meetings, Rinder issued an ultimatum, saying

## BOB MINTON (continued)

the church knew he had lied under oath. He demanded that Minton come clean.

“If you are not willing to tell the truth, we are wasting our time and we’ll just keep going after you,” Rinder said he told Minton.

“And what we were going after him on was where he got and had earned his money.”

Later, in Schaeffer’s courtroom, Minton said he lied, at Dandar’s direction. In a subsequent interview, he said he feared being sent to jail for perjury.

Dandar has denied Minton’s accusation and charged that the perjury scare was a charade. The church had something serious on Minton, he said at the time.

“Here’s a man who put in six years and \$10 million and all of a sudden he’s having an about-face? All you have to do is apply common sense.”

Minton could not be reached for comment.

He had become an anti-ScIENTOLOGY crusader in the mid 1990s after learning about the church’s efforts to keep its materials from be-

ing publicized on the Internet. The more he read, he said in interviews, the more he became concerned about Scientology practices that, to him, seemed to violate its members’ civil and human rights.

But after years spent on anti-ScIENTOLOGY causes, he left the public stage as quickly as he had arrived, thoroughly subdued.

When you fought Scientology, Minton once said, “It was like the Terminator was after you.”

Rinder, who once described Minton’s actions as “despicable and disgusting,” said he now considers him a friend.

Asked to comment about the church’s use of Lubow to investigate Minton, Scientology spokesman Tommy Davis did not address the case specifically but talked about the church’s use of private investigators in general. He said in a statement that the church doesn’t hire PIs, its lawyers do, and they operate within legal and ethical bounds.

If Rinder and Rathbun abused anyone, “they are the ones to blame,” Davis wrote. “Other church officials were not involved in their duties.” ■

# EX-OFFICER SAYS SCIENTOLOGY POLICY DIDN'T MATCH DIRECTIVE

**M**arty Rathbun said he participated in a criminal act to protect the church against a possible security breach.

Longtime executive Terri Gamboa and her husband, Fernando, abandoned their posts in January 1990, setting off what Rathbun called a “seven-alert fire.”

Terri Gamboa was executive director of Author Services Inc., the independent corporation set up by founder L. Ron Hubbard to control rights to his intellectual properties.

David Miscavige, the leader of the church, wanted to know if she had access to a safe containing Hubbard's estate documents. Had she made off with anything sensitive?

Miscavige called Rathbun and other executives into the Author Services offices. Rathbun said Miscavige told him: “Marty, you have got to find out whether she got those documents.”

Rathbun flew to Nashville, where private investigators had tracked the Gamboas to a hotel. Five men accompanied Rathbun. They could



*Rathbun on the break-in:* “That’s the orders I got from Miscavige: You get into that briefcase, I don’t care what it takes.”

see Terri’s briefcase through the windows of her Pathfinder.

Said Rathbun: “The mission was this: They were going to gather into a room and give her what’s called an SRA.”

Rathbun said it’s a Miscavige term, Severe Reality Adjustment. Get in somebody’s face and scream hard enough that “you adjust their reality.”

“She would be so scared, she would never think of messing with the church,” Rathbun said.

During the SRA, Rathbun went to another room and signaled the

**MARTY RATHBUN** (continued)

PI, whose name he said he can't remember, to break into the Pathfinder and get the briefcase. As he watched from the window, Rathbun heard approaching footsteps. Terri.

"Sure enough she comes storming down the hall and toward the room," Rathbun said. "I run over to the window, I tell the guy, 'Beat it.' He runs off with the briefcase."

Rathbun said the PI ran to a lighted phone booth, found no estate documents in the briefcase and returned it to the Pathfinder.

Terri Gamboa declined an interview request.

Responding to Rathbun's account, church spokesman Tommy Davis wrote: If Rathbun used an investigator to "abuse poor innocent people," Rathbun is to blame. Other church officials were not involved.

Kurt Weiland, a top official for 20 years in the church's intelligence division, said that if Rathbun helped break into a vehicle, it was a violation of church policy. Staff and investigators working for the church must "abide by the law of the land at all times, no matter what." ■

*Joe Childs, Thomas C. Tobin*

## HAS SCIENTOLOGY BEEN WATCHING PAT BROEKER FOR TWO DECADES?

**P**at Broeker could say what no one else in Scientology could: He outranked David Miscavige.

But he left the church in 1989 and started a new life in Colorado. Still, Miscavige worried about him.

"He (Miscavige) came directly to me," Marty Rathbun recalled. "He said, 'Marty, you get on this guy. I

want to know every move he makes.'"

Broeker and his wife, Annie, assisted Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard in the months before he died in 1986. Hubbard bestowed on each of them the title "loyal officer," outranking Captain Miscavige.

Pat Broeker had something else: Hubbard's written research of Sci-

**PAT BROEKER (continued)**

entology's upper levels of counseling and training, completed in his last years. Without the papers, Broeker would be diminished. Rathbun said he and Miscavige came up with a plan.

With Miscavige and Broeker on a trip to Washington, D.C., Rathbun told the caretaker at the Broeker ranch that the FBI was about to raid the place; he needed to get in right away and get sensitive documents out of there. Rathbun said he and Miscavige put them in a church safe.

Broeker was done. He set out for the Rockies.

Miscavige wanted him watched, said Rathbun, who arranged for two private investigators to find and stay on Broeker.

One became a drinking buddy and gave Broeker a cordless phone as a Christmas gift.

In the early 1990s, before cordless phones became sophisticated, conversations could be monitored via a police scanner from a block or two away. It was a legal practice.

"Dave loved this idea," Rathbun said. "He wanted to hear as many conversations as he could with Pat. We recorded all his conversations

for probably a year. We knew everything he was up to."

Broeker relocated to Wyoming, and the PIs followed.

Rathbun said his direct involvement in the "Broeker op" ended in 1992, when he went to Washington to help Miscavige negotiate the church's tax status with the IRS.

Rathbun stayed beside Miscavige another decade before leaving Scientology. Rathbun's closest associate, Mike Rinder, left two years ago.

Last March, they reconnected at Rinder's apartment in Denver and shared stories. Rathbun recalled setting up the Broeker surveillance in 1989.

Rinder had a fresher memory. Early in 2007, Miscavige had him recommend cuts in his departmental budget, which included expenses for intelligence operations.

Rinder said he asked his staff about a line item he couldn't understand. He was told: That's for the Broeker op, and it's untouchable.

Broeker did not respond to interview requests left with his family. ■

*Joe Childs, Thomas C. Tobin*

# MAN OVERBOARD

DON JASON WAS A SCIENTOLOGY OFFICER WHO WANTED OUT. INSTEAD, HE SAYS HE WAS HELD AGAINST HIS WILL. THEN, A DARING ESCAPE.

BY THOMAS C. TOBIN,  
TIMES STAFF WRITER



ABRIAN CASSELLA | Special to the Times

**Don Jason wanted a new life outside Scientology. He said he asked repeatedly to be let off the church cruise ship. "I was not allowed to leave. I was told to do the program." He'd had enough of the program, he just wanted out.**

Parishioners from around the world flocked to Scientology's spiritual headquarters in Clearwater, bringing the church about \$1.5 million a week.

A division of some 350 people tended to their needs, providing counseling services considered to be the finest in all of Scientology. For seven years, Chief Officer Don Jason was their boss, the second in command of the "Flag Service Organization."

In a group photo in a 1996 issue of *Source*, the official magazine of "Flag," Jason stands front and center. Only Capt. Debbie Cook's dress uniform had more ribbons.

That August, a senior officer from a higher division surprised Jason with a reprimand he found absurd. It inflamed the



doubts that had nagged him for years about making a career in the church. He'd had enough.

He took off without permission, hid out for six weeks but returned to Clearwater, compelled by feelings of guilt and a desire to leave the church on good terms.

He agreed to a program of counseling and manual labor aboard the *Freewinds*, the church's cruise ship in the Caribbean. He scraped oily sludge off a collection tank under the ship's engines. For a time, his cabin was locked from the outside, and a security camera was trained on his bunk.

He repeatedly asked to leave; the answer was no. Twice, he tried to walk down the gangway. Twice, church guards blocked him.

The church's account of how Jason left the *Freewinds* says only: "On 21 November 1996, Jason changed his mind and left, ending up in Milwaukee."

Jason tells it differently.

That afternoon, right after lunch, he disappeared over the bow.

## 'WE COME BACK'

Scientologists believe that people are spiritual beings — thetans — who live for eternity and are reborn into



**SOURCE**, the magazine of Scientology's Flag Land Base in Clearwater, published this photo in 1996. Chief Officer Don Jason, third from left in the front row, was outranked by only Capt. Debbie Cook, on his left. He supervised a staff of some 350. His colleague, Mat Pesch, stands in the back row, far left.

new bodies when they die. They are encouraged to think in terms of their “whole track,” the endless succession of lifetimes they will lead.

Members of the dedicated work force, known as the Sea Org, sign bil-

lion-year contracts to serve Scientology. Their motto: “We come back.”

Jason grew up in Milwaukee, a rowdy 20-year-old with a history of drug use when his older sister got him to take a Scientology communication course.



The form is titled "Sea Organization RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT". It features a decorative header with a blue ribbon and a star. The text is as follows:

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
DO HEREBY AGREE to the religious commitment of membership in the SEA ORGANIZATION, and, dedicate myself to achieving the goal shared by Sea Org members, which is to bring about spiritual freedom of all beings through the application of LRH's technology.

Being of sound mind, I do fully realize and agree to abide by the purpose stated by Sea Org members which is to get ETHICS IN on this PLANET AND THE UNIVERSE and fully and without reservation, subscribe to Sea Organization discipline, mores and conditions and pledge to abide by them.

THEREFORE, I COMMIT MYSELF TO THE SEA ORGANIZATION FOR THE NEXT BILLION YEARS. (As per Flag Order 232).

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed

**➤ A BILLION-YEAR CONTRACT.** Those who commit themselves to service of Scientology sign a contract that symbolizes their commitment to serve in this life and the next ones. The Sea Org was developed when Scientology was mostly ship-based, hence the name and the maritime ranks.

He liked it so much he traveled to Clearwater for the next course and never left.

He worked on construction projects and his gung-ho manner got him promoted to the administrative ranks.

“I liked what I was doing. We were helping people. I was really into the cause.”

By his early 30s, Jason started looking ahead, not to his eternity but to middle-age. What if he hit 50 and decided to leave Scientology? Who would hire him? Could he survive?

“It was a seed that got planted and it just never went away. And as the years went on it just kind of festered.”

Early in his career, in the 1980s, Jason’s weekly take-home pay was about \$30; sometimes he says he was paid a fraction, or nothing. He worked seven days, typically 9 a.m. until past 11 p.m. For long stretches, the staff in Clearwater were fed only beans and rice.

Mat Pesch, who once headed the crew’s treasury department, says he saw food budgets in the 1980s that allotted less than a dollar per person, per meal. He said Sea Org members sometimes picked through ashtrays for cigarette butts or stole necessities from the canteen.

Jason says he was one of them. In the early 1980s, before his pay situation improved, he lifted soap, shampoo and food.



**MAT PESCH, 52**

**Joined Scientology:** 1977

**Left Sea Org:** 2005

**Career highlights:** Security director at the church base in California in the early 1980s; spent most of career in Clearwater, including a stint as captain of the Sea Org crew there.

**Now:** Married, lives in Clearwater. Sells used furniture.

“Somebody like Don Jason, when he takes off, you got probably 20 immediate staff members and the top of security pulled into it. ... It’s massive.”

“That’s humiliating to me. As a man, I look at that and I feel shame regarding that still today. ... But that’s on me. I should have left and didn’t.”

## DECISION TIME

In the spring of 1996, a prominent church member traveled to Clearwater for Scientology counseling called “auditing,” returned home to Los Angeles and six months later caused a flap. Someone in the church hierarchy traced the problem to Jason’s staff.

An auditor in Clearwater had missed the underlying personal flaw that caused the parishioner to create the controversy. The church hung the blame on Jason.

Near 11 p.m., the end of another marathon day, church executive Angie Trent broke the news in Jason’s office in downtown Clearwater. He would have to complete an “ethics” program requiring that he confess his crimes and vow to make it up.

“My first reaction was to basically say, ‘Are you kidding me?’ I’ve got 350 people that work under me and this is my personal screw-up that I’m now in trouble over? I was listening to it and it was just like a light bulb. ... I said, You know what? Now is the time. It wasn’t preplanned. It was just like that.”

His personal life was troubled, as well. His marriage was a mess and



**DON JASON, 45**

**Joined Scientology:** 1984

**Left Sea Org:** 1996

**Career highlights:** Chief officer of the Flag Service Organization, the church’s primary entity in Clearwater.

**Now:** Lives and works in Chicago. A single dad, works as an operations manager for a company that sells roofing products and heating and air conditioning materials.

*On how he tried to account for all variables to maximize his chance of escaping.* “I had to think it all through. Like once I get to the dock, what’s going to happen? They’re going to come down the gangway. I know they will.”

he was having an affair with a fellow church executive.

“For a variety of reasons I just got spooked.”

There were two ways to leave the Sea Org: “route out” (follow protocol, including confessionals and interrogations called “security checks” that could drag on for months). Or “blow” (bolt without permission).

Jason’s decision: Run.

## **AWAY FROM CLEARWATER**

After the next-day’s morning muster, he didn’t go to his office at Cleveland Street and S Fort Harrison Avenue. He went to his bank and withdrew \$6,000, part of a small inheritance from his father three years before. He stopped by his room to stuff clothes in a trash bag and pointed his 1991 Jeep Wrangler east.

“I didn’t even know where I was going. I was just driving and it was the opposite direction of Clearwater.”

He crossed Florida on Interstate 4, the radio off, thinking through the step he had just taken. He figured he had a three- to four-hour head start before they would realize he was gone.

He kept checking his rearview mirror. If they caught up with him, he worried they would take him back. He had seen it happen to others.

Jason left the highway at Daytona

Beach and worked his way north on smaller roads, stopping for the night in Fernandina Beach, near the Florida/Georgia border.

He parked a block from a motel, paid cash and allowed himself five hours’ sleep. He thought it best to keep moving.

## **CHOOSE SOMEPLACE RANDOM**

In Clearwater, the Sea Org crew launched its “blow drill,” a rehearsed operation to catch and return run-aways.

Pesch says church security set up a command center. They pulled 15 to 20 staff from their regular duties. Some worked the phones, calling hotels and airlines. Pesch and another staffer drove to bars and other hangouts along Clearwater Beach.

From Fernandina Beach, Jason drove north through Savannah and tried to think of how to elude his chasers. They would start in Milwaukee, his home town.

“I had to go somewhere I had no reason to be ... like throw a dart at a map.”

He drove to Atlanta and rented a room in a house so his address wouldn’t show up so easily in public records. A temp agency found him a job at Equifax, the credit reporting company.

Freedom felt good, but he didn't know a soul in Atlanta. After 13 years of life inside Scientology, life on the outside puzzled him.

"What do people talk about now when they're sitting at a bar and grill having a hamburger? What do they do? ... I'm also thinking I've got to start over here."

More important, his sister was still a Scientologist. Leaving without permission meant Jason would be de-

clared an "SP," a suppressive person. The church would push his sister and Scientology friends not to speak with him.

For that reason, Jason considered himself lucky not to have more relatives in the church.

"There are some people that are born into Scientology. Their mother, their father, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, all their friends — everything is there. You get declared



Handout photo

**THE 440-FOOT FREEWINDS.** Its home port is Curacao, and it travels throughout the Caribbean.



(an SP), it's all gone. Everything that's important to you is gone."

He also felt guilty about the way he left. He missed his colleagues.

"I felt to some degree that I had betrayed people that I had worked for years with that were my friends. ... I would have preferred to leave right, in people's good graces."

Six weeks after he fled, he decided to turn himself in. He didn't want to return to the Sea Org; he wanted to make amends, route out properly and leave.

## HELD ABOARD SHIP

In October 1996, Jason drove to Clearwater and saw the security chief, who immediately called Marty Rathbun, a top lieutenant to Scientology leader David Miscavige.

"I always liked Marty," Jason said. "He was a straight-shooter."

They met for two hours at a restaurant on Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard. Rathbun convinced Jason to return to the Sea Org instead of routing out.

Rathbun said he reported back to Miscavige, and the leader wanted Jason sent to the *Freewinds*.

The church describes the cruise ship as "a safe, aesthetic, distraction-free environment" where Scientologists receive high-level auditing "far from the crossroads of the workaday world."

Rathbun says Miscavige wanted Jason on the ship to control him.

"The idea was you do it while you neutralize him as a threat because you can't blow from the ship," Rathbun said. "You lodge your passport with the port captain, it's put in a safe and you're a virtual prisoner at that point."

Rathbun sold the idea to Jason as an opportunity to get away and get "cleaned up," get his head back to a Scientology frame of mind. It would mean auditing, some training and physical labor.

Jason was wary, but he went for it. Before he flew to the Bahamas to meet the ship, he opened a new bank account in Clearwater and got some temporary checks.

When he boarded, he surrendered his passport but secretly kept the checks and his driver's license, even slept with them at night.

He says his cabin was locked from the outside. A security camera was trained on his bed. To go to the bathroom, he waved at the camera and security guards opened the door remotely. Another camera in the hallway tracked him to the bathroom door.

It struck Jason that when he waved at the cabin camera, the guards immediately opened the door. Were they watching every second?

He asked the *Freewinds* staff to

contact Rathbun, who called back the next day. This was not what he signed up for, Jason told him. "I'm not a prisoner here."

Rathbun says he told the *Freewinds* staff to remove the lock but not the cameras. They were aboard a ship, he reminded them. Jason had nowhere to run.

Said Jason: "I'm on a ship that goes God knows where. I'm out of the country. I've got no passport. It's a little scary. You have no identity. ... That feeling of nothing's under your control is a little eerie."

For two weeks, Jason cleaned sludge from the tanks under the engines and used diesel fuel to rinse the oil off his body. Then the church made things rougher. He said he was assigned to the Rehabilitation Project Force, a church work program.

Jason knew what that meant: more hard labor, daily confessionals and humiliations like running to every as-



BRIAN CASSELLA | Special to the Times

**ROLLING PIN:** Don Jason says he was locked in his cabin and later was denied repeated requests to leave the *Freewinds*. "For probably three or four days I refused to work, sat in my room saying over and over again: 'I want to leave. I want to leave. I want to leave.' That didn't get me anywhere." From scraps around the ship, he fashioned a device like this one to escape down a mooring line.

signment and never speaking unless spoken to.

During his early years in Clearwater he had seen those on the RPF living on the third floor of the Fort Harrison Hotel parking garage. Sheets cordoned off their living area. Their clothes and linens were filthy. They ate beans, rice and oatmeal.

It always bothered him, and Jason resolved that he never would submit



to the program. When the order came that he do the RPF aboard the *Free-winds*, he said he wanted off the ship.

No, the guards said. Do the program.

“So you’re holding me against my will?”

Jason tried to walk off the ship with parishioners going on a shore excursion. The *Freewinds* guards stepped in his way. He tried a second time, but they blocked him again.

For three days he protested by refusing to work, but that only got him more restrictions. He needed a new approach.

## THE ROLLING PIN

Jason decided to act like a good soldier, the picture of compliance. Behaving got him better work assignments and more freedom to move about the ship.

He ruled out jumping overboard. The 40-foot drop was too dangerous, and the dock walls too high, with no ladders.

The thick, 30-foot cables that moor the ship to the dock seemed his best chance. He thought through the variables.

He would have to move quickly down the cable; the guards would hurry to the dock to head him off. Timing was important. Too many people on

the dock and he would create a scene. Then again, he wanted at least a few witnesses.

When the ship docked each day, he watched the cables go taut and slack with the tide. A drooping cable would leave him short of the dock. He would have to time his descent so when he reached bottom, the cable would be taut. He would have to get around the metal plate that kept rats from climbing to the ship.

He scavenged for materials to build a device that would help him quickly get down the cable.

He fashioned something like a rolling pin. Starting with a wooden dowel the thickness of a clothing rod, he sawed off a 16-inch piece. Around it he fit a 7-inch length of PVC pipe. To keep the PVC from moving side to side, he sunk drywall screws into the dowel on either end of the PVC.

For two weeks he observed and thought things through. He would have to hold his body high in case he needed to bring up his legs and slow his descent. He ate lunch on the bow every day so that when the time came, the guards wouldn’t think twice about him being there.

Three months before, Jason had a title, an office and authority over hundreds of staff in Clearwater. Now his church was treating him like a prisoner.

"I'm thinking, You know what? Once I pull a stunt like this, I'll never get off this ship on my own terms. So I'm committed. Once I start this, I have to be prepared to take it all the way.

"I'm going to do whatever I have to to get off that ship, which includes fist-fighting people, yelling my head off, whatever it takes. I'm not going back on that ship. Period."

## **NOV. 21, 1996**

He had been on the ship six weeks when he made his move. Jason can't remember if they docked in Freeport or Nassau, just that the town had a decent-sized airport.

What he does remember was hiding his rolling pin device down his shorts, working his morning shift on a maintenance project and heading to his usual spot for lunch.

The cable came taut.

He crawled over the bow and twisted himself as he had rehearsed in his mind, legs and one arm around the cable to steady himself while he pulled the rolling pin from his shorts. He positioned it over the cable and zip-lined down.

The ride was "pretty damned fast" but under control, and he could see two or three guards running for the dock as he descended. He scrambled

around the rat guard, pulled himself to the dock and ran for the road, with a lead of about 30 feet on the guards.

They caught up as he got to a cab. One yelled in his face and held the door so he couldn't get in. Another told the cabbie not to give him a ride because he wasn't allowed to leave the ship.

Jason muscled his way into the front seat, closed the door on a guard's hand and screamed at the driver: "I'm being held against my will! Take me to a g-- d--- airport!"

## **NEXT STOP, ATLANTA**

Jason got out at the airport in shorts and a dirty work shirt. He had his driver's license, the temporary checks, no passport, no luggage and \$20.

He bought a ticket from a wary airline clerk and talked his way past a custom's agent. "The whole thing was red-flag city, and I just had to will myself to just try to mentally convey to these people to do it. Just do it."

He called his mother in Milwaukee: "How about having your son over for Thanksgiving? Would that be okay?"

He told her he had a layover in Atlanta and would fly on to Milwaukee. If he didn't walk off the plane, something was wrong.

Jason was waiting at the gate in the

Bahamas when Ludwig Alpers, an executive in the church's intelligence branch, showed up with a ticket for the seat next to his. Alpers said the church was considering a call to the U.S. Embassy asserting that the *Freewinds* had the authority to keep him in the Bahamas.

Jason says Alpers backed off after he threatened to tell the world how he was held against his will. Alpers flew with him to Atlanta.

In Clearwater, Rathbun had gotten the astonishing news that Jason had escaped. It couldn't be, he thought. No one got off the *Freewinds* without permission. And the church had Jason's passport. He couldn't get out of the Bahamas; it just didn't happen.

Rathbun hustled to Tampa International Airport and caught the first flight to Atlanta. "I think I beat him by a couple of minutes," he said. "I remember running from my gate to his and him coming off."

He let Jason get settled in a smoking lounge before he approached. He told Jason he understood. If you want out, fine. Just come back to Clearwater, so you won't be declared an SP and disconnected from your sister.

Not again, Jason said.

Rathbun kept talking until the Milwaukee flight was announced and Jason headed for the gate with Rathbun trailing behind.

Rathbun said he called Miscavige, and the leader told him to put Jason on the phone. Rathbun held up his cell phone: "Dave wants to talk to you!"

Jason was about to board and called back, "I've got nothing to say."

The church says Miscavige participated in no such phone call. "Mr. Miscavige never asked to speak to Jason," the church states, adding that Rathbun did not mention a call to Miscavige in the report he filed at the time.

On the plane waiting for takeoff, Jason thumbed through a magazine. He looked up and there was Rathbun, coming down the aisle. He had bought a ticket.

"He was shocked," Rathbun says. "He thought he was done with this, that he'd bucked the last hurdle."

## CONFESSION IN MILWAUKEE

Temperatures were in the 20s in Milwaukee. Jason's mother and younger sister took him to buy something warmer than shorts.

That night Rathbun came by Jason's mother's home and got Jason to agree to come to his hotel room the next day. He presented Jason a confession to sign.

A few weeks later, in January 1997, Rathbun returned to Milwaukee to have Jason sign a "declaration." This

time, Rathbun brought a videocamera.

The document talked about Jason using drugs as a teen and said he had not taken advantage of training opportunities in Scientology. It said he had followed the stock market during work hours and lost thousands of dollars of his wife's money in bad investments. He did not measure up to Sea Org standards.

Jason describes it as "one part truth, four parts embellishment and five parts total BS."

He studied the document and told Rathbun, "Come on, man. This is not true."

Rathbun now admits: "We went overboard." He let Jason strike some wording, including a passage that said Jason never held an executive position with the church.

Rathbun turned on the video-camera and Jason signed, knowing it would be used against him if he ever spoke out.

The church produced the 12-year-old affidavit after Jason told his story to the *Times*. The document says he was under no duress when he signed it.

Jason says he was. Having just been held aboard the *Freewinds* for six weeks, he wanted his church to stop coming after him.

"What was in it for me? To be left

alone, not followed, not contacted or pursued. That is what I wanted and would have signed almost anything to get it."

Today he lives in Chicago and works as operations manager for a company that sells roofing products and heating and air conditioning materials. A single dad, his son is 10.

His older sister is no longer a practicing Scientologist.

Jason says his treatment aboard the *Freewinds* doesn't define his view of Scientology. He has seen the church help people and says it definitely helped him. He joined as a rudderless 20-year-old. In Scientology, he got his act together.

He wishes things were more clear-cut, that he could say the church was all bad. He could write it off and never think about it again.

"Twelve years later, it still sits there," he said.

"There's going to be a time where I'll look up one day and I'll go, 'You know what? I realized I haven't thought about Scientology for three years.' And that's going to be a good day for me." ■

## JASON'S LONG WAY HOME »

## SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE »

# DON JASON'S LONG WAY HOME

**1 August 1996:** Working at Scientology's Flag Service Organization in Clearwater, Don Jason is told that the church is going to discipline him for something he felt was unfair. He leaves the next day without permission and drives on I-4 to Daytona Beach. He takes back roads north to Fernandina Beach and spends the night at a motel.

**2 The next day:** He continues north through Savannah. He assumes the church will look for him in his native Milwaukee, so he randomly chooses to settle in Atlanta.

**3 After six weeks:** He gets second thoughts about how he left. He returns to Clearwater to follow the church's approved "routing out" process.

**4 October 1996:** Jason flies to the Bahamas to board Scientology's cruise ship, the *Freewinds*, where he becomes a virtual prisoner.

**5 Six weeks later:** Jason escapes over the bow of the *Freewinds* and makes it to the airport. He buys a ticket to Milwaukee, with a layover in Atlanta. A Scientology official buys the seat next to Jason on the leg to Atlanta. **The layover:** Marty Rathbun, a top Scientology executive,



intercepts Jason at the Atlanta airport. Rathbun tries to persuade him to return to Clearwater and follow proper procedure to leave the church. Jason refuses, and Rathbun flies with him to Milwaukee.

**6 In Milwaukee:** Jason's mother and a sister pick him up at the airport. The next day, he comes to Rathbun's hotel and signs confessions to his "crimes."

**7 Twelve years later:** Jason works in Chicago as an operations manager for a building supply company

## THE SCIENTOLOGY RESPONSE

The *Times* asked the church to respond to Don Jason's account that he was locked in his berth, watched 24/7 by cameras, blocked from leaving the gangway and felt his only way to escape was over the bow and down a mooring line. The church responded that Jason voluntarily went to the *Freewinds* to do the Rehabilitation Project Force program. "On 21 November 1996, Jason changed his mind and left, ending up in Milwaukee where he took a job as a truck driver."

### MAT PESCH

#### FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:

- Pesch last worked at the church base on Oct. 30, 1983. He was **found unfit to be an executive** and assigned to the Rehabilitation Project Force in Clearwater.



The information is contained in a 1983 document from the "Fitness Board" at Scientology's international base in California. As security director there he "failed to wear his hat" (do his job properly). It said he was **"heavily disaffected"** and he spread this disaffection to other members of the security force." It indicated he was in charge of some "interested parties" and "allowed them to make illegal phone calls, allowed them to not work and gave them data" they weren't supposed to have.

- The church said Pesch posts on the Internet as Mr. Peacock, "pretending knowledge" about conditions at the international base, "a property he has not seen in 26 years."

**MAT PESCH (continued)**

- The church provided a document called a **“Suppressive Person Declare”** for Pesch, dated March 2, 2005.

“Pesch has proven he has no intention of applying the technology of Scientology to himself or his dynamics,” the document states. “He has been given many opportunities while on staff to handle his situations with policy and technology, however he has chosen to continue to commit High Crimes.”

It said he “engaged in unethical sexual activities with Amy Scobee when he was her auditor ...”

**WHAT PESCH SAYS NOW:**

- The Fitness Board document refers to an incident where he was in charge of detaining about 10 people at a remote ranch called Happy Valley. “I was having trouble holding the guys and I kept being told to just handle them and keep them from leaving. Well, eventually the guys just walked down the dirt road and headed for the town a few miles away. They had had enough.”

- He and his wife, Amy Scobee, **post together on the Internet as Mr. Peacock**. He last was at the base 20 years ago, not 26. Their postings incorporate Scobee’s experiences, which were as recent as 2003.

- Regarding **“unethical sexual activities,”** he and Scobee felt the church dealt with them unfairly and they decided to leave. They were not married at the time. “In blatant defiance to the whole system we had sex. Not a big deal by most people’s standards ... a big deal by Scientology rules.”

## DON JASON

## FROM SCIENTOLOGY FILES:

- The church provided copies of **Jason's typed declaration and confession** he signed at Marty Rathbun's request in Milwaukee.



"In the years prior to my Scientology involvement," the declaration states, "**I was addicted to drugs.** I regularly stole and cheated others to support my drug habit. . . . In fact, **I robbed a number of bars** when I was a teenager."

Jason got into Scientology, "and I realized this religious philosophy could save me from certain death as a drug addict and criminal."

- Scientology helped him, but he **failed Scientology**, his declaration states. He stole \$4,000 worth of church property, he lost \$25,000 of his wife's money through bad investments, he stole \$2,500 from her and he had an extramarital affair.

"The Sea Org is a group that I recognize as an ethical group beyond compare and based on my actions and prior lifestyle, I did not fit these high standards."

The church **denied that David Miscavige wanted to speak to Jason** the day he flew to Milwaukee by way of Atlanta. The church said that when Rathbun was debriefed immediately after his trip, he made no mention of Miscavige wanting to get on the phone with Jason.

## WHAT JASON SAYS NOW:

- The **section about his youth is exaggerated.**

"The truth: I was a 15- to 17-year-old teenager who lived in a nice



**DON JASON (continued)**

suburb with my mom and dad. My friends and I smoked pot, snuck out of the house, drank booze when possible and were involved in other petty mischief. . . . We were not exactly reinventing the wheel with this behavior.”

He had after-school and summer jobs. “Not exactly the strung out, dangerous criminal junkie they try to portray.”

- The \$4,000 in stolen items from the church was an **exaggerated**, ballpark figure. Some weeks he stole \$10 to \$15 worth of personal hygiene items, food and cigarettes from the staff commissary early in his Sea Org career. It was a three-year period when the church sometimes didn’t pay staff their \$30 weekly stipend, or paid a fraction of it.

“Twenty years have passed and this (stealing) still bothers me. But the truth is the truth, and there it is.”

- The bad investments were the result of he and his wife being taken by a **crooked broker**. “This was no secret nor did I get in any trouble for it.”

- The \$2,500 he “stole” from his wife was in the category of buying things like clothing without first consulting her. The amount covers their seven years of marriage.

- He has a clear memory of Rathbun at the Atlanta airport, holding a cell phone over his head and saying **Miscavige wanted to talk to him**.

- He noted that the **church does not deny he had to escape** the *Freewinds*.

## DON JASON (continued)

I declare under the penalty of perjury, under the laws of the United States of America, that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 11th day of January, 1997 at 1/11/97,

Milwaukee

Don Jason  
DON JASON

The Sea Org is a group that I recognize as an ethical group beyond compare and based on my actions and prior life I did not fit these high standards.

To my regret I have harmed its members. This statement of truth is my attempt to now be honest with myself and others.

Don Jason

Witness: Marty Rathbun

➤ **DECLARATION AND CONFESSION.** “One part truth, four parts embellishment and five parts total BS.” That’s how Don Jason describes the nine-page declaration, top. Below it are the final two paragraphs of his two-page “Handwritten confession — typed version.” He says he never wrote a confession; everything he signed was written by someone else and handed to him.

# CHANGE OF PLANS

ANNIE TIDMAN WAS A TOP SCIENTOLOGY FIGURE.  
HOW THE CHURCH AND A MAN FOUGHT FOR HER AFFECTION.



Photo courtesy Jim Logan

**JUNE 22, 1990.** After a two-year courtship, Jim Logan and Annie Tidman marry. “She was the love of my life,” he says.

BY THOMAS C. TOBIN AND JOE CHILDS,  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**he subject of this story, Annie Tidman, denied through her attorney that the following events happened. The attorney would not make Tidman available to be interviewed. This account comes from interviews with her ex-husband and four former Church of Scientology staff members.

• • •

The morning of Nov. 17, 1992, Annie Logan left the Church of Scientology’s California base without permission.

She took a cab to nearby Ontario International Airport. Her husband, Jim Logan, had prepaid for a ticket to Boston, but the airline couldn’t find her name on the passenger list. She called Logan at his parent’s house in Nova Scotia, nervous, figuring church staffers were likely in pursuit.

“She was definitely anxious because every moment that is lost, they have time to catch up,” he said.

Jim and Annie had a plan: She would fly to Boston, change planes and fly to Portland, Maine, where he would be waiting. They would drive to Nova Scotia and start a new life and family together. They would remain Scientologists, but no longer as members of the church's work force, the Sea Org.

He told her the name he used in buying the ticket, and she called back a few minutes later, more relaxed. She had made it through security. "You better be at the airport," she told him.

Jim Logan drove through a snowstorm that night to be at the gate in Portland. But his wife never arrived. They have not spoken since.

Marty Rathbun got the word during his morning workout at the Scientology base in Southern California.

Annie Logan was gone.

"This was a five-alarm fire," the former church official recalled. "I knew this was a crying catastrophe."

Starting as a young teenager and all through her 20s, Annie Tidman was a trusted aide to Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. She was one of his four original "messengers." She ran errands, summoned staff and carried his correspondence.

She married Pat Broeker and the couple became close aides to Hubbard in his final years. She was with the founder to the end, one of a hand-

ful who could expand on Scientology's closely scripted narrative surrounding his 1986 death, his finances and his intentions regarding the church's future leadership.

With Hubbard's blessing, Annie Broeker became a top Scientology executive. But she was edged aside by David Miscavige, an intense young officer who grabbed the reins of the church after the founder died.

This is the story of how she left and came back, and another example of the church controlling staff who might reveal Scientology's inner workings.

The morning she took off, Scientology's security team quickly found her flight information and Rathbun was on his way.

A longtime top lieutenant of Miscavige, Rathbun often went after Sea Org members who left or "blew," especially high-profile ones.

"I literally just grabbed the wallet, a cell phone, threw them in my pockets, jumped in the car, and told my secretary, 'Get me on the soonest flight to Boston' ... And I just started heading down the road 100 miles an hour toward Ontario."

Rathbun's mission: intercept Annie Logan before she reached her husband and bring her back to the Sea Org. He said his plane landed in Boston about 20 minutes behind hers.

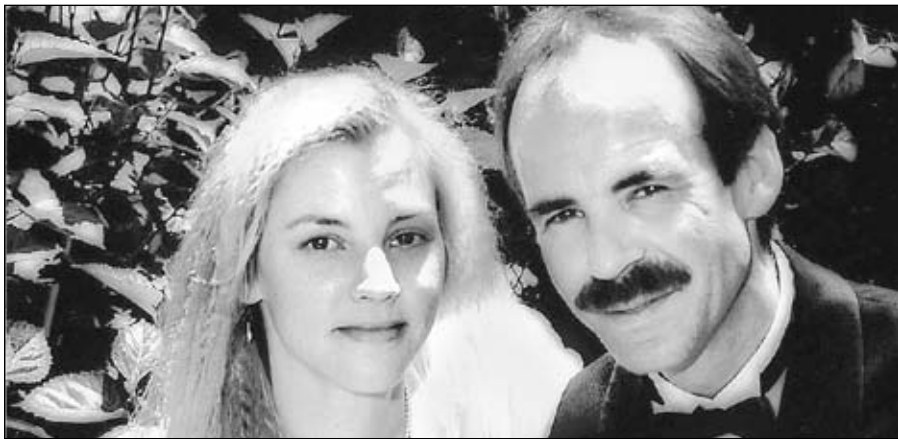


Photo courtesy Jim Logan (1990)

**ANNIE M. TIDMAN, 53**

Joined Scientology as a child with her parents in 1965. As a young teen, became a “messenger” for church founder L. Ron Hubbard aboard the ship the *Apollo*. With first husband, Pat Broeker, she was a close aide to Hubbard until the founder died in 1986. Rose to a top executive post but was deposed by David Miscavige. Married Jim Logan in 1990, divorced in August 1993. She is still in Scientology.

**JAMES A. LOGAN, 53**

Joined Scientology in 1975 in Toronto, where he oversaw church course rooms. Transferred to the church’s international base near Los Angeles. He was a “cramming officer,” responsible for correcting mistakes in training and counseling. He also became a drummer for the Golden Era Musicians and performed at Scientology events and on sound tracks. Removed from the Sea Org in 1992 but says he remains a Scientologist.

Rathbun said he hurried to where her connecting flight to Portland was about to board, went down some stairs and came within shouting distance of the passengers as they walked toward the plane.

“Annie!”

She swung around.

“And literally when she saw me, she kind of was startled and her shoulders just drooped,” Rathbun said. “She was defeated. I didn’t even have an argu-

ment with her. I didn't have to go to persuasion. She was just so shocked."

She went back to the terminal with Rathbun, who said he played on her loyalty to Hubbard. He told her that running away could damage the church's chance of gaining tax-exempt status, which was close at hand after a 40-year battle with the IRS.

Enemies would be at her door wanting inside information on Hubbard, his estate and church finances, Rathbun warned.

She agreed to come back to California, Rathbun said. He said he called Miscavige to tell him they would be on the first plane back in the morning.

But Rathbun said Miscavige already had arranged for them to be flown back that night on one of John Travolta's planes, to make sure Annie Logan did not have another chance to run.

She was back in the fold.

Travolta's publicist referred all questions regarding Scientology to the church, which described this account as "utterly ridiculous."

## **AN 'OUTRAGEOUS INTRUSION'**

She is 53 now, and goes by her maiden name, Annie Tidman.

Her lawyer, Richelle Kemler, declined to make her available for an interview. She said the *St. Petersburg Times* is relying on biased, ill-informed

and discredited sources.

"All of the statements attributed to her and all of the actions involving her that were described in (the *Times'* questions) are false," Kemler wrote.

In another letter, Kemler described the story as "an outrageous intrusion into her privacy."

Church spokesman Tommy Davis decried this story and previous *Times* coverage as "tabloid journalism."

"Your newest low is your recent obsession with Annie Tidman, who has been a close and dear friend of Mr. Miscavige for over 30 years. You have already proven you do not let mere facts get in the way of the story you want to create, but the hypocrisy and sheer illogic of your latest invention is astounding."

Davis criticized the *Times'* "blind reliance" on Jim Logan, who he said was dismissed from the Sea Org and from Scientology "for conduct inconsistent with the tenets of the religion."

## **THE BOOT, THEN A PLAN**

Pat Broeker left the church, and he and Annie divorced. On June 22, 1990, she remarried.

Her new husband, Jim Logan, didn't hesitate to speak his mind when he saw what he believed were departures from Hubbard policy. He wrote reports critical of Miscavige and other executives.

“He used to take a stand,” former base security chief Gary Morehead said of Logan. “If he had an opinion, he’d let his voice be heard. ... Certain things he just wouldn’t let go of.”

The hierarchy responded in July 1992 with a “non enturbulation order” intended to stop Logan from causing disturbances or agitating colleagues.

In early October, they determined Logan violated the order, and he was declared a “suppressive person,” an SP, someone who deals only in bad news, can’t get things done, won’t own up to his crimes, is destructive to others and must be separated from the group.

Morehead was among the staff who escorted Logan to the Old Gilman House, an isolated corner of the 500-acre base reserved for SPs and other troubled staffers. He said they acted on orders from Miscavige.

A few days later, the process began to kick him out of the Sea Org. Logan said he was allowed to see his wife. “She said, ‘They can’t make me divorce you,’” Logan recalled.

He said they spoke cryptically as they mapped their future. He would try to rehabilitate himself with Scientology and she would begin the formal process of leaving the Sea Org. In six months or so they could reunite and start over together in Nova Scotia.

On Oct. 8, 1992, Logan’s last day in

the Sea Org, he said church executives showed the couple a Hubbard policy indicating she should “disconnect” from him. Logan said they were being told to divorce.

That same day, according to court records, Annie Logan filed for divorce in Riverside County, Calif. At 8:30 that night, a church executive served Jim Logan with the papers. He was driven to a bus station in Los Angeles and given a ticket to Bangor, Maine.

In the five weeks that followed, he said he and his wife spoke secretly about a dozen times.

Initially, he said, they discussed her plan to follow procedure to leave the Sea Org, but she became impatient to start a new life. “We wanted to have babies; we wanted to have a family,” he said.

They talked about voiding the divorce action they had started in the presence of Scientology officials at the base. Logan said he told her she would have to initiate the dismissal because she was the petitioner.

## **DEAR JIM . . .**

When his wife didn’t show in Portland, Jim Logan said he called the Boston airport and was told her flight from California had been delayed in Denver and that there was another delay in Boston for her connecting flight. May-

be she would be on the morning flight to Portland.

He waited until morning. No Annie.

“It just came crashing down on me. I thought, ‘Oh my God. She went back.’ I didn’t know what happened.”

He flew to Boston to find out more. The airlines could tell him only that she got off there but didn’t get on for Portland.

He called security at the Scientology base in Southern California and was told she was there. She had returned to the Sea Org.

“This was incredibly devastating,” Logan said.

A few days later, he said, an envelope arrived in Nova Scotia that contained a letter addressed to the Riverside County court, signed “Annie Logan.”

“My marriage has reconciled and this proceeding is not needed and I wish to terminate the divorce request,” the letter said.

It said she had moved to Nova Scotia and asked the court to send to her new address papers that would allow her to rescind the divorce.

Jim Logan said it was apparent to him that she mailed the letter before she left for Boston and meant for him to send it along to Riverside officials. She included an envelope addressed to his home in Nova Scotia and two quarters to cover the postage.

Years later, Jim Logan views the letter as clear evidence of his wife’s intent to join him, a plan that Rathbun managed to short circuit.

That Christmas, Logan sent his wife flowers. She wrote him back in February:

“Dear Jim, I wanted to personally let you know that after much consideration, I have decided to remain in the Sea Org simply because my goals and purposes in life are the same as this group’s and can only really be accomplished by this group.”

She signed it with a standard Scientology salutation: “ML (much love), Annie.”

He said they’ve not communicated in the 17 years since.

## **HAPPY VALLEY**

When Annie Logan returned to California, Rathbun said Miscavige directed that she be sent to live in a house on a remote ranch called “Happy Valley,” a 20-minute drive from the international base.

Rathbun said Miscavige sometimes gave him updates on her stay there.

Rathbun, Morehead and another former Sea Org member say she lived there for about two years, during which her divorce became final and she went back to her maiden name, Annie Tidman.

A fourth former staffer, Jim Mortland, said he remembers her being



there about a year. Mortland, who headed the “estates” division, which oversaw maintenance and construction at Scientology properties in the area, said “it was no secret” Tidman was at Happy Valley.

Morehead, the security chief at the base for most of the 1990s, said he prepared the house for Tidman to live in and part of his daily routine was driving a Scientology “auditor” there to conduct daily counseling sessions.

Security staff kept track of Tidman, Morehead said, one inside the house, another outside. “They had to be within arm’s reach of her at all times,” he said. “If she took off, all hell would break loose.”

Morehead said the staff understood that if Tidman was to try to leave, there would be no physical restraint. They simply would have walked with her until help arrived to persuade her to stay.

In any case, the nearest town, Hemet, was three hours away by foot and the house was surrounded by dense wilderness.

Amy Scobee said she worked alongside Tidman in the late 1990s and again around 2000. In the church’s cinema department, they often worked late into the night, Scobee said. “We would talk and drink coffee and laugh our a--- off.”

Scobee said Tidman talked a lot about her time at Happy Valley. She

said Tidman initially regretted coming back and forsaking Logan — “She was in love with him.” — and balked at being at Happy Valley. “It took her a long time to change her mind.”

Scobee said Tidman reread Hubbard’s books and, over time, decided to keep working in the Sea Org. She said Tidman told her she had decided to never marry again.

“Ultimately, she felt like she was a changed person,” Scobee said.

Davis, the church spokesman, did not address specific questions about the accounts of Jim Logan, Rathbun, Morehead and the others. He said the lack of response should not be interpreted “as an admission of any truth whatsoever to these insane stories.”

Kemler, Tidman’s lawyer, wrote that Tidman “has never been held under guard or otherwise held against her will by the church at any time.”

She stated Tidman is adamant she did not see or speak with Morehead at the time and did not make the statements attributed to her by Scobee.

On Aug. 26, 1993, Annie and Jim Logan were officially divorced. ■

## THE PAPER TRAIL »

## SCIENTOLOGY’S RESPONSE »

# CALIFORNIA TO CANADA AND BACK: THE PAPER TRAIL

AT OR BY PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name and Address) Annie Logan, 129625 Highway 79, Gilman Hot Springs, CA 92583 In Pro Per TELEPHONE NO. 714-654-5770		FOR COURT USE ONLY  <b>FILED</b> RIVERSIDE COUNTY  OCT 8 - 1992 <i>cal</i>  By <i>Arthur A. Sisk, Clerk</i> Arthur A. Sisk, Clerk D. Sisk Clerk
ATTORNEY FOR (Name) SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF STREET ADDRESS: 4164 Brockton Ave. MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 431 CITY AND ZIP CODE: Riverside, CA 92502 BRANCH NAME: Superior Court of Riverside		
MARRIAGE OF PETITIONER: Annie Marie Logan RESPONDENT: James Adam Logan		
PETITION FOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dissolution of Marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Separation <input type="checkbox"/> Nullity of Marriage <input type="checkbox"/> And Declaration Under Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act		CASE NUMBER <b>124876</b> <i>HMT</i>

1. RESIDENCE (Dissolution only) ☒ Petitioner ☒ Respondent has been a resident of this state for at least six months and of this county for at least three months immediately preceding the filing of this Petition for Dissolution of Marriage.

≈ **OCT. 1992**

According to Jim Logan, the couple was made to divorce because he was declared a “suppressive person” and kicked out of the Sea Org. Records from Riverside County, Calif., show Annie Logan petitioned for a divorce on Oct. 8, 1992.

Dear Sirs,

Please send me the REQUEST FOR DISMISSAL forms for a dismissal of divorce proceedings filed on 8 Oct 92 at Riverside County, Superior Court of California. The case number or file number is D 124816.

My marriage has reconciled and this proceeding is not needed and I wish to terminate the divorce request.

My husband and I have moved to his family's home in Nova Scotia Canada so I have included our new address for the mailing of the forms and for further correspondence.

Mr. and Mrs. James Logan  
RR #2  
Pictou, Nova Scotia, Canada  
B0K 1H0

I appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



➤ **NOV. 1992** About five weeks after the divorce petition, Jim Logan received this letter in the mail. Logan said he and Annie had talked by phone about nullifying the divorce. He said it appeared she wanted him to forward the letter to the court, asking for dismissal papers. He never got the chance to discuss the letter with her.

8 Feb 1993

Dear Jim,

I wanted to personally let you know that after much consideration, I have decided to remain in the Sea Org simply because my goals and purposes in life are the same as this group's and can only really be accomplished by this group.

ML,  
Kwinn

**➤ FEB. 1993** Jim Logan received this one-sentence letter 12 weeks after his wife flew across the country to try and reunite. She informs him that she has decided to remain in the Sea Org. The "ML" before her signature stands for "much love," a routine signoff when Scientologists exchange correspondence.

## SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE:

The *Times* sent the Church of Scientology written questions about Annie Tidman and twice requested an interview. Those requests were denied. "All of the statements attributed to her and all of the actions involving her that were described in your October 19 letter are false," wrote attorney Richelle L. Kemler. In a second letter, Kemler said the *Times*' story was "an extraordinary intrusion into (Annie Tidman's) privacy." Scientology spokesman Tommy Davis said in a three-page letter that Tidman and church leader David Miscavige were friends of 30 years and denounced the *Times* for writing a story. Davis also:

- accused the newspaper of reaching its "newest low" in tabloid journalism and has accepted "as gospel statements from anyone who speaks ill of Scientology."
- said the newspaper was relying on the word of ex-husband Jim Logan, who was dismissed "from the Sea Org and from church membership for conduct inconsistent with the tenets of the religion." Davis asked why Logan stayed silent 17 years and only now is telling "his tale of woe?"
- accused the newspaper of a double standard in featuring Logan's words but giving far less prominence to the words of the ex-wives of church defectors Marty Rathbun, Mike Rinder and Tom De Vocht. "The unifying principle here is all too clear: the only information from ex-spouses that is relevant is data that advances your story line."
- said it defies common sense that an adult woman stayed in the Sea Org 17 years if she did not want to be there.

**RESPONSE (continued)**

- said not to assume “that an absence of response to each and every one of your utterly ridiculous allegations serves as an admission of any truth whatsoever to these insane stories.”

- said the *Times* has ignored the church’s “unprecedented expansion,” including the opening of new facilities in Rome and Washington.

**WHAT JIM LOGAN SAYS NOW:**

- “I have never said anything negative about Scientology. Ever. I am a Scientologist. I study the subject daily. It’s changed my life.” He said church staff called him this month to update his contact information and wanted to sell him books known as “the basics.”

- He did not engage in “conduct inconsistent with the tenets of the religion” and was unjustly removed.

- He decided to talk publicly after 17 years when it became apparent last year that the church was not going to restore him to good standing, in violation of Hubbard policy. He said he completed the necessary steps but the church was unresponsive. “That’s why I am speaking now.”

- Davis “seems to be able to discern and determine the validity of a relationship (with Annie Tidman) he knows virtually nothing about and imply that it wasn’t important. This is absurd as well as repugnant.”



**GO TO [TAMPABAY.COM/SCIENTOLOGY](http://TAMPABAY.COM/SCIENTOLOGY)** to read the complete text of letters from Annie Tidman’s lawyer, and a letter and press releases from church spokesman Tommy Davis.

# OT VIII

THEY WERE PART OF AN ELITE CLUB WHO REACHED THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCIENTOLOGY. BUT THEIR FAITH WAS SHAKEN, NOT BY CHURCH DOCTRINE, BUT BY ITS LEADERS.



BY THOMAS C. TOBIN AND JOE CHILDS,  
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

**T**hey advanced to the Church of Scientology's highest spiritual level, to "Operating Thetan VIII," a vaunted realm said to endow extraordinary powers of perception and force of will.

But Geir Isene of Norway and Americans Mary Jo Leavitt and Sherry Katz recently announced they were leaving the church, citing strong disagreements with its management practices.

Isene left first, a decision that emboldened Leavitt, who inspired Katz. Such departures are rare among the

church's elite group of OT VIIIs, who are held up as role models in Scientology. The three each told the *St. Petersburg Times* that they had spent decades and hundreds of thousands of dollars to reach the church's spiritual pinnacle.

All three stressed their ongoing belief in Scientology and say they remain grateful for how it helped them. Yet they took to the Internet — an act strongly discouraged by church leaders, who decry public airing of problems — to share their reasons for leaving. They said they hoped it would resonate within the Scientology community.

It did for Jack Airey of Palm Harbor, a Scientologist for the past 41 years. Just last year, the church selected Airey as the keynote speaker at a Scientology graduation and featured the 67-year-old in an infomercial that urged parishioners over 55 to become more active. Prompted by the public statements of Leavitt and Katz, Airey announced his decision to leave as well.

Marty Rathbun, Mike Rinder and other former executives went public this summer with allegations of abuse in Scientology's management ranks. Now the disengagement by the three OT VIIIs and Airey offers a look inside Scientology from the seldom-shared perspective of parishioners.

Responding for the church, Los Angeles lawyer Anthony Michael Glassman said it's "astonishing" the *Times* is giving "a public platform for the views of disgruntled and biased former members. ...

"All major religions, be they Catholic, Mormon, Jewish, etc., suffer the defection, on a regular basis, of once orthodox members."

The *Times* submitted nine questions to the church on Dec. 22 relating to statements made by the former parishioners. Glassman said the newspaper gave the church "inadequate" time to respond. "We will not be responding separately to each allegation contained in your letter, other than to unequivocally deny them."

Church spokesman Tommy Davis criticized the *Times* for singling out departures by Scientologists, which he called "textbook discriminatory coverage. ...

"That being said, the Church of Scientology wishes any parishioner well in their pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. The same most assuredly applies to your sources."

The three OT VIIIs said they want reform of leadership. They pointed to the revelations by Rinder, Rathbun and others who told the *Times* that church leader David Miscavige resorted to violence to control and discipline



key managers, assertions the church strongly denied.

“I want to stop the abuses,” said Isene, who owns an Oslo-based software company. “I want the Human Rights Watch ... breathing down their neck.”

## GEIR ISENE

Isene was a self-described nerdy introvert until Scientology changed his life. As a kid his world was physics and chemistry. He avoided class parties. Once, reading aloud to classmates, he hyperventilated.

He joined Scientology at 18 and developed communication skills and the confidence to host a popular radio show. He learned to structure his time, curing his chronic problem with punctuality, and he found his creative side, writing poetry and short fiction.

He is 43 now. FreeCode International, the company he started with his wife, Katrina, in 2004, has 50 employees and clients in Norway, Russia and two African countries.

Fluent in English, Isene (pronounced EASE-neh) traveled often to Clearwater, Scientology's worldwide spiritual headquarters, for training and auditing, the church's core counseling practice.

He says he spent about \$200,000 progressing up the church's Bridge to Total Freedom and reached OT VIII in



**GEIR ISENE, 43**

**Joined Scientology:** 1984

**Left the church:** 2009

**After leaving:** About 25 Scientologist friends have “disconnected” from him, cutting all communication, he says. Before that, however, some indicated they agreed with his reasons for leaving.

“I am not leaving Scientology, only the church. ... The present management is not practicing its teachings.”

2006 aboard the church's cruise ship, the *Freewinds*. OT VIII training is offered only aboard the ship, which the church describes as “a safe, aesthetic, distraction free environment approx-

pritate for ministration of this profoundly spiritual level of auditing.”

When Isene returned to Norway with his new rank — the country’s only OT VIII — the Oslo church featured him in rallies and speeches. He said there are about 1,100 OT VIIIs worldwide.

Progressing to the top of the Bridge, OT VIIIs become masters of Scientology “tech,” gaining special abilities to put “cause over life” — essentially, to will things to happen. They are revered as eminently trustworthy, virtuous and ethical.

For three of this elite group to break ranks and publicly criticize the church poses a dilemma, Isene said.

“Either the tech is not correct,” he said, “and you have flawed beings. Or the tech is correct and church management is broken. Either way, something is broken.”

For years, he had been troubled by what he considered heavy-handed practices by managers at the church facility in Oslo and at European headquarters in Copenhagen.

A top church leader screamed at him in 2004, he said, wanting to know why he and his wife walked out of a meeting the previous night when church officials were chiding Oslo parishioners for not contributing enough time and money. Isene said he explained that their young children were restless.

At the time, he chalked up the outburst to stress. But after meeting Miscavige for the first time two years later, he said he felt differently.

It was June 2006, two weeks after he completed OT VIII. Isene was to have a commemorative photo taken with Miscavige. Isene found him arrogant.

“I was coming into the room,” he recalled. “I heard a voice that said, ‘Where is the guy from Oslo?’ I said, ‘Here sir.’ “

Miscavige extended his hand, saying: “So you are the next ED (executive director) of Oslo Org. Congratulations.”

“I said, ‘No, sir, I’m not.’ “

Isene was taken aback by Miscavige’s impetuosity. They had just met and the leader was ready to throw out the current director and put Isene in charge on the spot.

Isene ran a recruitment company from 1990 to 2000, and he says that was no way to do business.

Miscavige persisted, Isene said. “In the middle of the conversation, when he thought this was not going anywhere, he just turned around and just went out of the room. And I was like, ‘Where is the hidden camera?’ “

In 2007, the church’s investigations division asked him to search the Internet for Norwegian journalists alleging that Miscavige physically abused staff.

The request was unusual because the church directs members to steer clear of “nattering” on the Net and media coverage critical of Scientology.

Isene reported back that his search identified no such journalists in Norway. But he kept searching the Internet and was stunned to read the many allegations about Miscavige hitting staffers.

He researched for two years, for an average of 1½ hours a day, about 1,000 hours in all. He shared what he found with his wife, a Scientologist since 1993. Last year they decided it wasn't safe anymore for them to go to auditing sessions, which can be like confessionals. They had read too much.

In June, Isene read the *St. Petersburg Times* report, “The Truth Run-down.”

“That was like, okay, now it's time to not sit and research anymore,” he said. “Now it's time to really take this to a decision.”

To further research allegations he read on the Internet, Isene worked up 50 questions that he hoped to pose to former Scientologists who worked for the church at its international base outside Los Angeles, where most of the abuses were said to have occurred.

As it happened, four former base staffers were to be vacationing in Copenhagen and renewing old ties. They

met with Isene at a private home there, and Isene started down his list.

*When was the first time you saw somebody hit someone?*

*Do you think reform is possible?*

*What must change?*

Isene would not share their answers. But after four hours of conversation, “I came to the conclusion that, ‘Okay, that's it.’”

On vacation in Turkey with his wife and three children, he wrote a lengthy statement and posted it on his personal Web site early in August:

*“I have had an enormous amount of spiritual gain from my 25 years in Scientology. ... After two years of extensive research I have decided to leave the Church of Scientology. I am not leaving Scientology, only the church.”*

*“In fact, I consider that the present management is not practicing its teachings, and that for me to continue practicing Scientology, I need to leave the church and its suppressive management.”*

## MARY JO LEAVITT

Leavitt read Isene's post from her home in Glendale, Calif. An OT VIII with 26 years in Scientology, she had grown weary of what she considered the church's push for money.

Her concerns dated to 2006, when she started as a volunteer “OT ambas-

sador.” She spent 25 to 30 hours a week advising church parishioners in Latin American countries, rallying the scattered Scientology communities there.

For 2½ years, the bilingual Leavitt and her team pushed the church’s message by distributing L. Ron Hubbard’s *Way to Happiness*, his study technology and other works.

“That to me is what Scientology was,” she said. “It was a series of tools that you could learn and apply in your life.”

She came to the United States in 1981 after five years studying archaeology in England. She settled in New York, produced TV commercials for companies in her native Colombia and used drugs — until a friend turned her on to Scientology.

She paid \$50 for an introductory course — The Ups and Downs of Life. She liked it and signed up for the Purification Rundown, which included a nutritional regimen and sauna treatments.

“I stopped using drugs right away, like, no problem,” she said.

She married a Scientologist and with their 3-week-old daughter moved to L.A. She started training to become an auditor, thinking it would make her a better parent, and she kept taking church courses. She completed OT VIII training in August 2007.



MARY JO LEAVITT, 51

**Joined Scientology:** 1983

**Left the church:** 2009

**After leaving:** A friend from the church’s Office of Special Affairs visited and asked how she could ever attack Scientology. After that, Leavitt said, about 25 friends and associates in Scientology were told about the Internet post she wrote, declaring she left the church. Many of them have cut communication with her, some still talk to her secretly, one has refused to disconnect.

“The curtain is beginning to open. There is the Wizard of Oz behind the curtain. (The church) is beginning to show its true copper in terms of what it really is. ... It isn’t the glitzy video advertisement.”

In her years in Scientology, she said, she brought hundreds of recruits into the church. “You know, I was like the most, as they say, gung ho — one of the most gung ho Scientologists on the planet.”

As she continued her long distance volunteer work with parishioners in Mexico, Central America and South America, she started hearing of problems. She said they told her that management pressed them to sell books and materials and to stage fund drives for new buildings, limiting their time to promote Hubbard’s works and message.

Leavitt brought the complaints to the attention of top management by writing memos called “Knowledge Reports.”

The practices she objected to were “away from actually helping people. It was really all about making money. And money to the degree it was hurting the person you were taking the money from.”

Parishioners told her, for example, the down economy hit them especially hard, some even saying they heeded the church’s call for more contributions by taking out second mortgages.

In June 2008, Leavitt joined about 250 other high-level parishioners aboard the *Freewinds* for the church’s annual cruise commemorating the ship’s maiden voyage as a religious

retreat. She thought the Scientology staffers manning the ship looked gaunt, weary. “To me, it was like a human abuse point ... and that was a breaking point for me.”

Home in California, she wrote more reports to higher ups, and she read “The Truth Rundown.” One August evening, she noticed two men in her yard who looked to her like they were casing her house. She told them they were trespassing and they left.

About two weeks later a church staffer showed up with an “ethics summons.” She was to report to church headquarters in Hollywood.

She didn’t want to go but worried that if she didn’t, the church might declare her a suppressive person, a designation that would prompt other Scientologists to shun her.

For an hour, an ethics officer posed questions while she held the metal cans of an e-meter, the electronic device used in auditing sessions.

*Who are your friends?*

*How are your finances?*

*Do you have any money offshore?*

“I’m sitting there trying to keep really calm and cool, and I’m going, ‘This has gone completely *gestapo*.’”

She watched a two-hour video about the International Association of Scientologists, which raises money for church expansion efforts and sat three

more hours with four church executives who she said pressed her to donate to the IAS.

“I kept telling them, ‘I’m not putting money on a credit card.’ “

She said she was told: You’re not with the program. You’re not keeping Scientology working.

No, she told them, I guess I’m not. “I just walked out.”

Her 25-year-old son and 23-year-old daughter, exposed to Scientology their entire lives, waited nervously for her return. She told them: “I’m done.”

Days later, she read Isene’s announcement and contacted him to offer support. On Oct. 12, on an Internet site critical of the church, she announced that she was leaving. She posted an eight-page report that she had sent to top church officials, reporting that managers were redirecting staff in the field to do fundraising at the expense of other religious work.

She considered the activities counter to Hubbard’s policies for expanding Scientology. “They are actually causing a contraction,” she said. (The church disputes any notion it’s losing members. “The last decade has been the most expansive in Scientology’s history,” church spokesman Davis said in an e-mail Wednesday [Dec. 23].)

As exit strategies go, Leavitt’s was a bold one. “It was the only box I could

stand on to scream ‘fire’ loud enough. ... I wanted to create a shock. I wanted to create an effect of people looking at it.

“And, also for me, to have my own integrity. And, also, so they would leave me alone.”

Leavitt, who is divorced, owns and runs a company that translates corporate documents into 16 languages. She said her children also consider themselves out of the church.

## **SHERRY KATZ**

Katz was “nervous as heck” the day in the summer of 2008 when she typed “Scientology” into the search engine of her home computer. She knew it was taboo, but she was stressed out by recent sour experiences with the church.

*Enter.*

“It was really a huge step,” said Katz. “You read that first thing ... and once you start looking, you can’t stop.”

She explored ExScientologyKids.com, and remembers thinking to herself, *Oh, my God, I know her.* Amy Allen had described difficulties she encountered as a teenager serving the church. Intrigued, Katz looked elsewhere.

“I just looked at things from people I knew, court cases and stuff, and I came across a number of things that I had never been able to get the truthful information about. It was very eye-opening.”

A Scientology for 36 years, Katz estimates she spent at least \$300,000 on church services and materials and donated an additional \$120,000 to the IAS.

"I don't know how in the world I did it," she said. "I'm not in any way rich and never was. I just made it happen."

Scientology had taught her effective communication skills and to be comfortable in front of people. Advancing up the Bridge buoyed her feelings of accomplishment.

She completed OT VIII training in summer 2003. Wanting to be even more involved, she joined the staff of the church in Pasadena in January 2007.

The next 18 months she struggled to balance the demands of running an art studio and working at a gallery with her nights and weekends working as a paid church executive. By summer 2008, she said, she was dealing with church staffing shortages, incomplete projects and directives for new projects she viewed as unattainable.

Things got worse. Scientology had launched its push to sell the re-released, 14-volume sets of Hubbard's basic teachings, plus four additional texts and hundreds of hours of recorded lectures. The cost: \$3,000.

"It was absolutely insane," Katz said. "You had staff members calling



**SHERRY KATZ, 58**

**Joined Scientology:** 1973

**Left the church:** 2009

**After leaving:** A fellow Scientologist approached her friends in the Los Angeles area, plus those on Facebook, and urged them to disconnect from her, Katz says. Some friends complied and no longer speak to her; others said they supported her but couldn't do so publicly because of problems it would cause in their lives.

"I wish people would open their eyes a little bit more and take a look at what has been said by people who have been right there. ... I want the criminal and human rights abuses that are prevalent within the church to stop."



(parishioners) at 1 o'clock in the morning and 2 o'clock in the morning. Staff not getting any sleep. It was complete insanity. And it went on month, after month, after month, after month."

Katz said some parishioners changed their phone numbers to avoid the sales calls, which caused her problems when she couldn't reach them to schedule their auditing.

She said she wrote dozens of reports asking upper management to fix problems and told her supervisor at the Pasadena church that she couldn't go on. She said she told the supervisor, "I can't support this ... I consider it to be a squirrel organization," church-speak for a group improperly applying Scientology practices.

"I was in very bad shape, extremely stressed out," she said. "I was at the lowest point I had ever been at in my life from all the stress and everything that had been going on for the last year and a half, between staff and working two jobs to support everything."

Katz said: "I can say, honestly, I was pretty suicidal. I don't know if I would have actually carried it out. But I was really at that point where I felt like I had nothing to live for and I would be much better off dead."

How could this be? The church's OT VIIIs, Katz said, are purported to be "completely able to make whatever

they want to have happen in life." She acknowledged the seeming inconsistency of feeling so lost after having attained the highest spiritual level in Scientology.

She said that away from the church, she felt in control, she felt like an OT VIII. But with anything that had to do with the "church agenda," she felt a loss of control. "It was like having two different lives."

She said it took her 13 years to complete the OT VII level, traveling to Clearwater every six months, often spending \$7,865 for intensive auditing sessions.

As an OT VIII, she said she spent \$16,385 for one 12½ hour, intensive auditing program. "And it didn't resolve the issue, which I was promised it was going to," she said.

In August 2008, she confronted another dilemma: She had a ticket to fly to the Caribbean and cruise aboard the *Freewinds*. Should she go?

She knew she would be stuck on board because the ship's crew routinely holds the passports of the cruising Scientologists.

"You can't just say, 'I've had enough, I'm going home.' You have to go on a routing form and you have to have everything in order, and you need to be given an okay to leave. I was at that point in such a poor mental state that I



thought, this might not be a good idea.”

She paid a surprise visit to her former sister-in-law, Nancy Many, a former Scientologist who published a book critical of the church this year. They talked for hours.

“I decided, after that, I’m not going to go,” Katz recalled. “I’m not going to get on that plane tomorrow.”

Katz, 58, is separated from her husband, also a Scientologist. She moved to Portland, Ore., and opened an art studio in her home. On Oct. 13, the day after Leavitt posted her statement, Katz followed with a post of her own, which said:

*“I feel it is my duty to make it known that I cannot, in good conscience, any longer support the current management of the Church of Scientology.”*

The next day, she and Leavitt, old friends, talked for the first time in three years.

## JACK AIREY

More than 40 years ago, a friend got Airey to read Hubbard’s bestseller *Dianetics*. Intrigued, Airey visited church facilities in downtown L.A. and asked to be audited. He’ll never forget what happened minutes after he left one of his first sessions.

“I actually went exterior to the body,” he said. “I was walking across this parking lot and I had a newspaper



**JACK AIREY, 67**

**Joined Scientology:** 1975

**Left the church:** 2009

**After leaving:** He wrote a “knowledge report” critical of the church and sent it to 12 Scientologists he knows, and he says 11 won’t talk to him anymore.

“In October, I’d had enough, I’d read enough. I realized this whole church had been totally taken over by some mad people. They had really screwed it up.”

and I was walking and reading, and all of a sudden I was about 9 feet above, looking at the top of my head, looking down at this newspaper. You go, *Whoa!*”

He was righted after a few steps — “Bam, you’re right back in your body” — but he was different.

“My whole universe, my perception of life had changed. My God, you can get out of your body. My God, we are spiritual beings.”

Airey married, had three children and built a business selling copiers. He was a sporadic church participant through the 1970s and '80s. In 1988 he got into a billing dispute over \$30,000 of auditing sessions. The church denied him more until he settled up. He never did.

To be near family, Airey moved to the Clearwater area in 2001. In June 2007, he joined other Scientologists at Ruth Eckerd Hall for the big announcement that Hubbard's basic teachings were being re-released after intensive editing. Airey said he signed up and studied two nights a week for 18 months.

Course presenters soon heard his stories of his early gains in Scientology, and they featured him in a promotional video targeting older people.

In the video, Airey said he had answered the church's call to try out the newly published volumes, and it made him a new man: "Now, after three books, I'm going to tell you folks, you better get down here right away because it'll change your life, it really will."

Home in Palm Harbor last summer, Airey read the *Times'* investigative reports and watched videos on the newspaper's Web site of former church staffers Marty Rathbun, Gary Morehead and Amy Scobee recounting incidents of staff being physically assaulted.

"What Marty talked about, what Morehead talked about, what Scobee talked about, these are things none of us had any inclination were going on," Airey said.

He investigated further. He read Internet blogs and posts he hadn't known existed. Then he found the posts from Isene, Leavitt and Katz.

"I said, I got to do something for these people. This is not right," Airey said. "I need to make a statement. I need to stand, I need to say something. Maybe I can ring a bell and help somebody."

Rathbun, who was Miscavige's right-hand man for years, left the church in 2004 and runs a blog for "Independent Scientologists." In October, Airey posted an item announcing that he was joining the defecting parishioners:

*"This is my last day as a church Scientologist and I have no regrets. Tomorrow I join the world wide group called, 'Independent Scientologists' where honest, on source, LRH technology and exposing the out tech of current Church of Scientology management is the order of the day.*

*"This is true.*

*"Jack Airey."* ■

## CLIMBING THE BRIDGE »

## SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE »

# CLIMBING THE BRIDGE: A JOURNEY TO 'OPERATING THETAN'

People practice Scientology by moving up the “Grade Chart,” officially known as the “Classification Gradation and Awareness Chart of Levels and Certificates.” It outlines a series of steps one must take in sequence to reach the highest levels of awareness. The progression also is referred to as “the Bridge,” short for “the Bridge to Total Freedom.”

- Parishioners move up two sides of the Bridge. On one side they receive counseling called “auditing” from “auditors,” who ask questions of a person while measuring his emotional reactions using an elec-

tronic device called an “e-meter.” On the other side of the Bridge, Scientologists learn how to become auditors. ● At the top of the bridge are the “Operating Thetan” or OT levels. In Scientology, an OT is a being who no longer is dependent on his body or the physical world around him and is fully aware of his immortality as he passes through an endless succession of lifetimes in other bodies. Reaching the high-

The diagram is a large, rectangular chart titled "THE BRIDGE TO TOTAL FREEDOM" at the top. Below the title, it says "Scientology's Classification Gradation and Awareness Chart of Levels and Certificates". The chart is divided into two main vertical sections: "TRAINING" on the left and "PROCESSING" on the right. Each section contains a grid of levels and certificates. The "TRAINING" section starts with "Grade 1" at the bottom and goes up to "Grade 18" at the top. The "PROCESSING" section starts with "Grade 1" at the bottom and goes up to "Grade 18" at the top. In the center, between the two main sections, is a vertical column labeled "CLEAR". At the very top of the chart, there are two small diagrams: a pyramid on the left and a triangle on the right. The entire chart is framed by a decorative border.

## BRIDGE (continued)

est level — OT VIII — usually requires a Scientologist to spend years and tens of thousands of dollars on courses, counseling, books, lectures and other materials. ● Though often criticized for charging for its services, Scientology says the nature of its counseling demands that people pay for it. The church explains that it takes a team of staffers to deliver counseling to each Scientologist, in contrast to denominations where one pastor, priest or rabbi can minister to hundreds.

To climb the Bridge, Scientologists start with introductory services and work their way up. Some highlights, from the bottom up:

**7 OT levels:** No longer limited by his “reactive mind,” the parishioner who becomes “clear” is ready for the next level of abilities — that of the OT. According to the church, an OT can operate independently of his body. “He’s now himself, he’s not dependent on the universe around him.” Scientologists in these levels often speak of having the ability to control their lives completely and being able to “go exterior” of their bodies. There are 15 OT levels listed on the bridge chart, but the church currently offers only eight levels. Reaching the first six levels can cost \$60,000 or more. Reaching levels seven and eight can cost tens of thousands of dollars more, depending on the pace of a person’s counseling progress.

**6 Preparations for OT:** Courses and advanced counseling sessions that prepare people for the OT levels, which compose the upper echelons of Scientology. Parishioners are taught the skill of auditing themselves. They also undergo “security checks” to ensure they can be trusted not to divulge OT specifics to others. The total costs for these preparations can be in the \$20,000 range.

**5 Clear:** A Scientologist reaches this state when he has worked his way through the grades and New Era Dianetics and is said to be permanently freed from his “reactive mind.” According to Hubbard, the reactive mind

## BRIDGE (continued)

is the part of the mind that stores “engrams” or images of past traumas that can cause fears, pain and psychosomatic illnesses. The church says, “Clears are self-confident, happy and generally successful in both careers and interpersonal relationships.”

**4 The grades and New Era Dianetics:** Counseling sessions that parishioners must progress through to reach the state of “Clear.” Scientologists say the sessions help “rehabilitate or strengthen specific spiritual abilities” such as solving problems, repairing relationships and addressing personal traumas, including fear of heights or public speaking. Multiple sessions, which probe a person’s past through prescribed lists of questions, can total as much as \$40,000 to \$60,000.

**3 Training routines and objective processing:** Courses and drills that ready a person for further auditing. The church says they teach people to concentrate on the present, communicate better and be in control.

**2 Purification Rundown:** The church says people must undergo the “Purif” before lasting spiritual gains can occur. It’s a detoxification program of exercise, vitamins, nutrition and sauna use. Scientologists say it rids the body of drug residues and other toxins by dislodging them from fatty tissues. The process lasts five hours a day for two to four weeks. The cost can vary. Most reported costs are in the \$1,500 to \$2,500 range.

**1 Introductory services:** Courses, books, films, CDs and introductory auditing that offer a grounding in Scientology. Parishioners become familiar with *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, the 1950 book by the late Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. They can listen to recorded Hubbard lectures, take a personality test, a communication course or a “life improvement” course on subjects such as how to be a better parent. Costs range from \$15 for a copy of *Dianetics* to several hundred or several thousand dollars for a lecture series or course.

# SCIENTOLOGY'S RESPONSE

Church of Scientology International

December 23, 2009

VIA: ELECTRONIC MAIL & FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mr. Joe Childs and Mr. Tom Tobin

St. Petersburg Times

490 First Ave South

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

Dear Mr. Childs and Mr. Tobin:

Scientology, like all religions, cannot meet everyone's spiritual needs all the time. It is certainly unfortunate to see anyone turn their back on their faith, let alone choose to publicly attack it. This is not a phenomena exclusive to the Scientology religion, however.

One can certainly find former Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and members of all other religions who have chosen to leave their faith only to turn around and attack it. The internet is rife with websites, blogs and testimonials attesting to this phenomenon. The St. Petersburg Times ascribes all manner of occurrences, albeit sometimes unfortunate or tragic, to Scientology that are not exclusive to my religion — yet The Times does so to the exclusion of all other groups and religions. This is textbook discriminatory coverage in violation of fundamental journalistic ethics.

Your biased approach to stories regarding my religion is by now well documented. You, Joe Childs in particular, actively seek out only those individuals who have something negative to say about the Church; if they do not fit your agenda then you attempt to coach them and coax them into doing so by “educating” them about Scientology until you have “adjusted” their viewpoint accordingly and when that does not work you simply put words in their mouth. This is your pattern, which was unknown to the Church until recently, and has been your modus operandi for the better part of two decades.

**RESPONSE** (continued)

This represents years of you, and the publication that employs you, ignoring all the reasons millions of Scientologists around the world are not only more than happy with their religion, but steadfastly maintain an abiding trust in Church leadership and management — a trust that has never been stronger than it is today.

As you yourself said it to me in May of this year, “Scientology isn’t peeping in mainstream, it’s in mainstream America.” This has never been truer than today and for good reason. Through years of dedicated work by individual Scientologists in helping their fellow man, Scientology has truly become a globally recognized force for positive change through the many social betterment programs we sponsor. In fact, as just a sampling:

- Through the anti-drug and drug abuse education programs we sponsor, every 15 seconds someone pledges to be drug free.
- Through the human rights education programs we support, every second of every day, 26 people learn about their human rights.
- And across all of our sponsored programs, every 25 seconds someone volunteers in their community.

Because our programs are non-discriminatory, 60% of those active in them are from faiths other than Scientology. Working with thousands of schools, churches, governments, businesses, law enforcement agencies and others in 150 countries, last year individuals working through Scientology sponsored programs volunteered more than 4.8 million hours to their communities — tutoring kids, rehabilitating inmates, delivering drug education lectures, promoting human rights and more.

As a result, the Church can proudly say it sponsors the single largest drug education initiative on earth, with fully developed educational materials including 16 award-winning public service announcements and an hour and half documentary educating kids about the dangers of drugs, as well as the world’s largest non-governmental residential drug rehabilitation network. We also sponsor the single most proactive human

**RESPONSE** (continued)

rights group on Earth which also includes freely provided educational materials with 30 public service announcements educating kids and adults alike on the subject of human rights.

These are just a few of the programs we are proud to support and make Scientology one of the most active and contributive social betterment forces on earth:

- 17,700,000 received drug education lectures;
- 3,400,000 people took a Drug Free Pledge;
- 32,000 criminals and juveniles rehabilitated, 80% have never returned to jail;
- 183,111 signatures collected in support of human rights;
- 2,750,000 reached weekly with human rights message;
- and in the last year 1.1 million tutoring hours volunteered with 36,000 students receiving one-on-one tutoring resulting in 45% academic improvements in tests.

While the above is just a sampling, all told over a half billion people have been reached by these programs.

This is what you and your sources are attacking. This is what you refuse to report on. You know it, your sources know it and the entirety of the Tampa Bay community knows it.

That being said, the Church of Scientology wishes any former parishioner well in their pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. The same most assuredly applies to your sources.

Sincerely,

Tommy Davis  
Church of Scientology  
International

cc: George Rahdert, Esq.  
Paul Tash



# SCIENTOLOGY GLOSSARY

SCIENTOLOGY HAS A LANGUAGE OF ITS OWN. HERE ARE SOME TERMS USED IN THESE STORIES.

**Auditing:** Counseling that “helps an individual look at his own existence and improves his ability to confront what he is and where he is.” The auditor uses an E-meter, a device that measures the subject’s reaction to questions, helping the auditor locate areas of distress. From the Latin, *audire*, to hear or listen.

**Blow:** To leave suddenly; a staffer who leaves the Sea Org without following procedure.

**COB:** Staff often refer to Miscavige as COB. He is Chairman of the Board for the Religious Technology Center, the trademark-holding body of Scientology.

**Conditions, do conditions:** A set of formulas to be applied to one’s life. If you’re doing well, you would apply the steps in the condition of “affluence”. If you’ve done something bad, the group might require you to do a “treason” condition.

The conditions, from worst to best: Confusion, Treason, Enemy, Doubt, Liability, Non-Existence, Danger, Emergency, Normal, Affluence, Power Change and Power. Lower conditions (those below “normal”) are often used as punishment.

**Counter intention:** Resistance to authority, disobedience. Often refers to refusal to do as ordered.

**Covert Data Collection/CDC:** Information gathered undercover, via informant, private investigator, surveillance.

**Dead agent:** To undermine the credibility of a church critic, often by thoroughly disproving or claiming to disprove something they have said.

**Disconnection:** Policy that prohibits family and friends from communicating or associating with anyone the church considers a suppressive person or enemy.

**DM:** David Miscavige, The ecclesiastical leader of Scientology since 1987.

**E-meter:** Short for Electropsychometer, the device auditors use to help identify areas of spiritual distress. The device does not diagnose or cure anything; it helps identify areas that need to be addressed.

**Knowledge Report:** A write-up of a Scientologist's destructive or off-policy actions. Staff — even husbands and wives — are to report each other's transgressions, or they are an accessory to the same misdeed. L. Ron Hubbard said groups flourish only when members discipline themselves; they should report when members let down the group.

**List One:** A list of questions an auditor asks about L. Ron Hubbard, Scientology, auditing and more.

**Natter:** Make snide comments or hyper-critical remarks.

**ODC:** Overt Data Collection. Information gathered from the public record.

**OSA:** Office of Special Affairs. The church intelligence unit; also handles legal and media matters.

**Out-ethics:** When an individual acts contrary to the group's best interest or contrary to the group's mores.

**Overt:** A sin or a crime. An act against the agreed-upon moral code of a group. An overt can be intentional or unintentional.

**O/Ws:** Overts and Withholds. Your sins and secrets.

**Pig's berthing:** Nickname for sub-standard housing for those who wanted to leave the Sea Org.

**Rock slam:** The crazy, irregular left and right slashing motion of an E-meter needle. It means the subject being audited has a hidden evil intention.

**Route out:** To leave the Sea Org the proper way, following protocol.

**RPF:** Rehabilitation Project Force. Scientology describes it as a "second chance" program that offers Sea Org members who have committed offenses "redemption rather than dismissal." Some former church members say it's hard labor that's used to break the will of a malcontent.

**Sea Org:** Sea Organization, a religious order for people who have dedicated their lives to service of Scientology. They are paid \$75 a week plus meals, lodging and medical care. Sea Org members sign a billion-year contract, to symbolize their commitment to serve in this life and the next ones. The Sea Org was developed when Scientology was based mostly on ships, hence the name and the maritime ranks.

**Security check:** a confessional given while on the e-meter. The goal is to discover if the person has done something or has intentions to harm the group.

**Security particle:** Someone who tried to run or poses a security risk to the church. He is considered infectious.

**SP:** Suppressive Person. An evil person. If someone is found to be an SP, he is "Declared," meaning he cannot have any contact with any Scientologist whatsoever. An SP "works to upset, continuously undermine, spread bad news and denigrate other people and their activities." The tag is often placed on those the church says have spoken ill of Scientology.

**SRA:** Severe Reality Adjustment. Screaming into someone's face, often by a superior, to get the person to do what you want.

**Whole track:** "The moment to moment record of a person's existence in this universe in picture and impression form."

**Withhold:** A destructive thought or something you've done wrong that you haven't told anyone about.

**Wog:** A non-Scientologist, a run-of-the-mill human. (derogatory for Worthy Oriental Gentleman)

**Sources:** *Dianetics and Scientology Technical Dictionary*, by L. Ron Hubbard; *What is Scientology?*, based on the works of L. Ron Hubbard; [exscientologykids.com](http://exscientologykids.com); former Sea Org members.