The Road to Xenu

A narrative account of life in Scientology

by Margery Wakefield

Bob Penny, one of the founders of F.A.C.T.Net (Fight Against Coercive Tactics Network), gives this account of how *The Road to Xenu* was originally published in a dual edition with his book, *Social Control in Scientology* :

> Margery wrote the first part of the book (*The Road to Xenu*), and I wrote the second part (*Social Control in Scientology*). We decided that the two parts complemented each other, so we published them together in one volume which we first released at the 1991 Cult Awareness Network conference in Oklahoma City. The printing was done in response to demand at the nearest Kinko's or other quick printer. The volumes were bound in a thermal binding machine of mine. Both Margery's work and mine were released to the public domain in 1993, when they were offered for download on the (non-internet) F.A.C.T.Net BBS. Neither are on file with the Library of Congress unless someone else put them there. The text has been available (with no remuneration to either Margery or me) on the F.A.C.T.Net BBS and on countless Web and ftp sites for I know not how long.

The Road to Xenu is available on the World Wide Web at
`http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/Library/`
and
`http://www.demon.co.uk/castle/xenu/xenu.html`

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Chapter 1
Implant Stations in the Sky

It was a sunny, crisp day in late October as I slowly walked home to my little apartment on East Ann Street. The sky was a bright and endless blue, and little gusts of breeze stirred the leaves on the sidewalk into small whirlwinds. Fall was my favorite season. I liked the nippy bite of the air that made you want to walk faster and brought the blood to your skin and hinted of the frostier winter air to come.

As I entered the apartment, I looked around in satisfaction. I had only been in this apartment two weeks. The apartment had been decorated on my meager student budget, but I hadn't done badly at all, I thought, as I looked around me. With two small cans of paint I had transformed a few old boards into a bookshelf, using some old bricks I had found in the back yard. And an Indian print bedspread from the flea market covered the old worn sofa. Another Indian print fabric served as a tablecloth for the small table against the wall.

Anything Indian was ''in'' these days with the most ''hip'' students, the ones I worked with at the coffee house, like my friend Bob who painstakingly taught me to do horoscopes. I had spent my whole paycheck last month buying all the books and tables I needed to cast my charts. And like Tom, a philosophy major who had introduced me to books by Edgar Cayce on reincarnation and past lives.

And my friend Julie, whose brash, cynical personality contrasted sharply with my own shyness. Julie seemed to know everything about the world. Her parents were wealthy, and Julie had always had the best of everything: the best clothes, school in Europe, the most expensive summer camps, even a car. Being accepted by Julie meant you were ''in.''

I knew Julie because I had been assigned as her accompanist at the beginning of the semester. We were both in music school; she played the cello and I accompanied her on the piano. We had been busy preparing for the recital earlier today in which she played the Lalo Cello Concerto.

Everything had gone fine. Afterwards, as she packed up her cello, she asked me to meet her for dinner at the Chinese restaurant on State Street. ''Sure,'' I agreed, honored by the attention of someone as popular as Julie.

Then, mysteriously, she added, ''I have something important to tell you.''

''Like what?'' I asked curiously, but at that moment her teacher interrupted, wanting to talk to her about her performance.

''Later,'' she said with a small wave, dismissing me.

Now, relaxing on my sofa, I looked at my watch. Plenty of time to make it to the restaurant. I quickly changed into a wool skirt with a turtleneck sweater and an Indian top to wear over it. And of course, my appleseed necklace that I wore everywhere.

When I reached the restaurant, Julie was waiting. We found a small table against the wall.

''So what's the big secret?'' I teased her, after we had ordered.

''Well,'' she said, ''I want to tell you about something really important. This is the biggest thing that's ever happened to me. I have just made the most incredible discovery.''

''Well, what is it?'' I asked her.

''You remember the week I went to California to visit my brother? About a month ago? When I didn't get back on time for Monday classes?''

''Yeah,'' I replied, ''and you sure have been acting different since you got back. You're never around the dorm any more. Everyone's been asking what happened to you.''

''You won't believe this when I tell you about it. It's just too unbelievable.''

''Well, tell me.'' I was starting to feel impatient.

''Margery, you just have to find out about Scientology,'' she said intensely. ''It's the most important discovery of the century.''

''You're kidding,'' I looked at her incredulously. ''That's the weird lecture we went to. Where they had that little machine they hooked you up to. They asked if anyone wanted to try it. We laughed all the way home,'' I said remembering the night several weeks before when a group of us had gone to a free lecture on campus about Scientology.

We heard a lecture, something about the mind, and then the lecturer gave us a demonstration of a ''meter'' that was supposed to be able to read your mind. I didn't remember much of what was actually said at the lecture. I just remember how we all laughed as we walked home, mimicking the lecturer with his little brown box.

''Margery, listen,'' Julie insisted. ''This is serious. This is too important to joke about.''

''But you went to the lecture. It was silly. Being able to see into your mind with that little machine.''

''I know,'' Julie said softly. ''I thought it was silly too. But I went back the next day because they said they had a free personality test, and I thought it would be interesting to take it. They took me to a house they all live in, and I saw a movie about Scientology, and it explained about how this is a brand new science of the mind, and how they could handle problems that no one else ever could before. Margery, I really think you should find out about this,'' she looked at me seriously.

''Like what kind of problems?'' I asked a little uneasily.

''Look, this is a brand new science. They have a whole new theory about the mind. This is a thousand years more advanced than psychiatry. They really understand the mind like no one has ever done before. They can get rid of all sorts of things. Like headaches. And asthma, or colds. Anything. Even cancer. And it's 100% guaranteed. If it doesn't work, then you get your money back.''

''I wonder if it could help me with my anxiety attacks?'' I wondered out loud. I didn't know how much Julie knew about my problems.

''Sure. This is a science of the mind. If you really understand how the mind works, then you can cure anything that is psychosomatic, right? The only reason that psychiatry can't cure you is that they don't know how the mind works. If they did, then they could cure you. But they don't. And Scientology does.''

I was quiet. No one at the dorm and none of my friends at the restaurant knew the extent of my problems. Last year, my boyfriend had died in a freak car accident. I had been in too much shock to really cry at the time. I just couldn't believe that he was gone.

But shortly after his accident, I had started to have anxiety attacks in the middle of the night. I would wake up covered with sweat, and terrified. I could never remember dreaming anything just before I woke up. But I would wake up in a panic, sometimes frozen and unable to move. This had been happening at least once a week. I was scared that I was going crazy. In between these attacks, I would feel normal, although I felt a general uneasiness about something I couldn't identify.

I had woken up screaming in the dorm one night, and Julie was one of the girls who had appeared at my door, wanting to know what had happened. I was embarrassed, and just told them I had a bad dream.

But the second time it happened, the dorm mother insisted that I go see the school counselor. I had to go once a week to see this lady, who I thought was kind of strange. She would just sit there and not say anything. I didn't like going to see her but I didn't want the embarrassment of any more screaming episodes either.

And this year, other things had started to happen. Sometimes I would be walking to class, or to the music school to practice, and suddenly I would feel vaguely terrified, like something terrible was going to happen. This feeling would usually last for a couple of hours, then it would go away. But I felt uneasy. Something was not right. I was afraid of something, and I didn't know what it was.

''Do you really think that Scientology could help me?'' I looked at Julie cautiously.

''I think that if it is a problem in your mind, then Scientology can take care of it,'' she answered. ''Anyway, what have you got to lose? There's no risk. If it doesn't work, then you can go back to your counselor. But yes, I think it can really help you.''

''So how do you do it?'' I asked. ''I mean if I just wanted to try a little of it?''

''Well, first I would have to take you over to the center to get permission to audit you,'' she started to answer.

''To what?''

''Oh, to 'audit' you. That's their word for what they do. It's like counseling but it's called auditing. Audit. Because it has to do with listening.''

''Oh. OK, I guess. So how does it work?''

''Well, once I get permission to audit you, then we'll just go to your apartment and I will audit you. When I was in California I took a course, and I am now an auditor,'' she said importantly. ''I learned more in that course than I have in two whole years of college.''

''Do I have to be hooked up to that machine?''

''Oh, yeah. That's the E-meter.''

''E-meter? What's that?'' I asked.

''The E-meter. It's short for electro-psychometer. You hold onto the cans that are attached to it, and your thoughts register on the dial of the meter. I'll show you exactly how it works tomorrow. You'll see. It really works.'' We finished eating our dinner, paid the check, and Julie walked me home. She came in, and we sat in the living room until 3:00 AM talking about Scientology.

Julie told me that Scientology had been founded by an engineer named L. Ron Hubbard, that he had unravelled the secrets of the mind, that he was a wonderful person who just wanted to help mankind.

She said that the central part of the organization of

Scientology was called the ‘‘Sea Org,’’ short for ‘‘Sea Organization,’’ and that this was a group of mostly young people who lived on a fleet of ships in the Mediterranean with Hubbard, helping him to get Scientology centers started all over the world. The motto of the Sea Org is ‘‘We Come Back.’’ This, Julie explained, is because Hubbard and the Sea Org had come to earth thousands of years ago to ‘‘salvage the planet,’’ and at that time they had failed to complete their mission. So now they were back to finish what they had started, to help save this planet from disaster.

Julie explained that through auditing, everyone on earth could be ‘‘cleared’’ of their ‘‘reactive’’ minds, the destructive part of the mind that was responsible for all the suffering on earth: for sickness, insanity, war, for all of our negative experiences.

If people could get rid of their reactive minds, Julie said, then there would never be anymore sickness. No one would ever get depressed again. And everyone would get along. There would be no more fighting. No more wars. And it was Scientology that had made this impossible dream possible for the first time in history.

‘‘If you really want to help other people,’’ Julie looked at me carefully, ‘‘then you need to find out more about Scientology. As an auditor you will really be able to help people with their problems. You will see miracles right before your eyes. I know, because I have seen them.’’

‘‘What kind of miracles?’’ I wanted to know.

‘‘Well, things like fevers going away, colds going away, people being able to take off their glasses and throw them away. I’ve heard stories in California that some people with withered limbs actually had them grow back right in the auditing session.’’

‘‘There is nothing on this planet as advanced as Scientology,’’ she continued. ‘‘This is the beginning of something really incredible.’’

Julie talked on about the people she had met in Los Angeles, about how powerful they were. Some of them, she said, even had supernatural abilities to do different things. Some of them, the ones who were ‘‘Clear,’’ could travel outside their bodies at will, and could read other people’s thoughts and move objects around with their thoughts. And there were levels above Clear, called the ‘‘OT levels,’’ where even more incredible things were possible.

‘‘OT levels? What are they?’’

‘‘The OT levels are the levels above Clear.’’ She explained that ‘‘OT’’ stood for the words, ‘‘operating thetan,’’ ‘‘thetan’’ being the Scientology equivalent of the soul.

‘‘There are eight levels above Clear, and on these levels you learn the secrets of this universe. You learn the history of this universe for millions of years in the past, and you also learn all about your own past, your hundreds of lives before this one. You learn to remember all of them.’’

Talking about past lives didn’t bother me, because I had been reading Edgar Cayce books, so I was familiar with the idea of reincarnation. I could accept the idea of past lives because many of my friends believed in them. Many of the people who worked at the coffee house were into Cayce and past lives, and it seemed to make sense to me. Maybe that was why I had so much talent at the piano, I suggested to Julie. Maybe I did it in a past life.

She agreed, ‘‘That’s why playing the piano is so easy for you. What you’re really doing is just remembering it from some other life.’’

‘‘Maybe I knew Beethoven,’’ I laughed.

‘‘Who knows,’’ she answered. ‘‘Maybe you were Beethoven.’’

Julie said that we all had hundreds of past lives, going all the way back to the old space civilizations of the past history that wasn’t even recorded on this planet, but that you could remember through auditing. ‘‘I will tell you a secret,’’ she said. ‘‘And this is something I’m not even supposed to tell you at this level. But this planet is really a prison planet. Everyone here has been sent here from another planet a long time in the past. Everyone here is either a criminal or a rebel or revolutionary from somewhere else. That’s why this planet is so screwed up.’’

‘‘But if all this stuff happened to us, why can’t we remember it?’’ I asked.

‘‘Because of the implants,’’ she answered. ‘‘See, when people were sentenced to come to earth, it was like being sent into eternal oblivion. It was the worst sentence you could get. Because of implants. A long time ago, the implant stations were set up to keep us captive on earth, to keep us from ever leaving.

‘‘These implant stations are white buildings out in space. When you finish a life here on earth, you leave your body, but you are subconsciously programmed to return to the implant station. In the implant station your memory of the life you just lived is electronically erased with machines which emit high powered electronic beams, then you are programmed to go back to earth for another life. But you will always keep going back to the implant station, life after life. We have been doing this for millions of years.’’

‘‘So what’s different about now?’’

‘‘Now there is Scientology. Hubbard is the first person in all these millions of years to have figured it all out. In Scientology for the first time, you can get rid of your return commands so you don’t ever have to go back to one of the implant stations. Then you will be free to go wherever you choose.''

''Where would you go?'' I was beginning to get dizzy with all this strange information.

''Well, to another planet, or to another galaxy. There's hundreds and thousands of other worlds out there. There's no limit to what you can do. There's so much to see. It's exciting. And once you learn to 'exteriorize,' then you can go wherever you want.''

''What's 'exteriorize?''' I had to ask.

''That's when you can leave your body whenever you want to and you can travel anywhere in the universe. You just think of someplace and you are there, instantly. And you can see and hear everything you can do in your body, only better.''

I was getting tired, so Julie got up and walked toward the door. ''I'll see you tommorow about 1:00,'' she promised, ''for your first auditing session. See you then.''

''Tomorrow,'' I agreed. ''Thanks for the dinner.''

It was hard to settle down and sleep. I had endless dreams that night about space ships and strange sceneries, bizarre dreams about white buildings up in space with electron guns just waiting to pin me to the wall....

This was my introduction to Scientology. Why did I believe such bizarre stories? Why was I so gullible? Why did no small voice inside me warn about possible danger?

There is no simple answer to this question. Part of the reason had to do with my chaotic and dysfunctional home. I grew up in a family where there was chronic discord. Sometimes it seemed as if my parents were too busy battling each other to notice me. I grew up feeling abandoned and alone. I learned to take care of myself, then later to help take care of my two brothers and baby sister. But there was never a solid foundation to my world. Part of the answer has to do with the fact that I didn't have a strong religious background. I did go occasionally to Sunday school, but that was usually a fairly unexciting experience which I discontinued as soon as I was ''on my own.''

Part of the reason is that I was an adolescent, and like most adolescents I felt like I knew everything there was to know about life, while actually knowing very little. I was naive. I expected adults to be wise and to know the answers. And I expected that I could trust them. So when Julie told me that this man had discovered some new science, I did not question what she said. I had been conditioned for seventeen years by my family and by the educational system not to question adults. If they said they knew the answers, then they did.

Part of the reason is that I was vulnerable at this time. I was suffering from a form of mental illness which had been terrifying for me, the symptoms strange and frightening. The possibility of finding an answer to this and an end to the suffering was the real bait which caused me to ''bite.'' Once Julie had promised me that Scientology could give me relief, I was hooked. And part of the answer has to do with the fact that I was never warned. The word ''cult'' was not in my vocabulary. No one had ever told me to beware of strange people with strange stories, free meals, or impossible promises. I walked into the trap full of trust and hope, never suspecting that a noose was slowly being drawn tightly around my mind, trapping me unknowingly and unquestioningly in one of the most dangerous cults ever to exist.

Chapter 2
Your Needle Is Floating!

The next day I woke up wondering whether the events of the previous night had been real or just part of a bizarre and elaborate dream. My answer came in the early afternoon when Julie arrived with her E-meter in hand.

The meter was a rectangular box, a little bigger than a cigar box, with two hinges on the sides securing a removable top.

We pulled my small table into the center of the room and Julie proceeded to ‘‘set up’’ the E-meter.

She removed the top of the E-meter, using the side hinges to attach it to the back of the meter where it became a prop to keep the meter at an upright slant, facing her. On the face of the meter was a large dial under a plastic case with a thin needle resting at the left side of the dial. During the ‘‘session,’’ Julie told me, I would sit opposite her at the table, from where I would be unable to see the face of the meter.

Only the ‘‘auditor’’ is allowed to see the needle ‘‘reads’’ that would indicate which part of my mind to explore, Julie explained.

But first she wanted to give me a demonstration of the meter. As I stood beside her, she took two small juice cans from her purse and connected them to the leads attached to the meter, and told me to hold onto the cans. Then she switched the power knob on. As she turned another knob, I saw the needle float lazily to the middle of the dial, then to the far side of the dial and then back again to the left side.

‘‘Your needle is floating,’’ Julie informed me.

‘‘What does that mean?’’ I asked, watching the lazy movement of the needle.

‘‘Well, when the needle is just floating back and forth like this with no interrupted movements in either direction, it means that nothing in your reactive mind is currently being restimulated. Here, I’ll show you. Watch the dial,’’ she commanded.

Suddenly Julie reached over and quickly gave my arm a sharp pinch.

‘‘Ouch!’’ I cried. I wasn’t expecting that.

But as she pinched me, I saw the needle suddenly veer all the way to the right side of the dial. Yet I hadn’t moved.

‘‘Now,’’ said Julie loudly, ‘‘remember the pinch.’’

As I mentally focused on the pain in my arm, I saw the needle again make a smaller movement toward the right side of the dial.

‘‘See, the needle reacts to your thought,’’ Julie explained. ‘‘And the reason we use it in auditing is that it can ‘see’ below your conscious awareness. When I ask you questions, the meter will give me your reactions at a subconscious level, things you may not even be aware of.’’

‘‘So this machine can help you read my mind,’’ I laughed. ‘‘Amazing!’’ I remembered how ridiculous the whole idea of the E-meter had seemed at the lecture several weeks earlier, and how we had laughed about it on the way home. For some reason, it didn’t seem so silly now. The way Julie was explaining it, it seemed to make sense.

‘‘Are you ready to get started?’’ Julie asked, motioning me to the chair across from her. She pulled several sheets of blank white paper and some pencils out of a small portfolio she had been carrying, and set them on the table to the right of the E-meter.

‘‘Sure. What do I do?’’ I could feel that adventure lay ahead, and I was eager to get started.

‘‘Just hold the cans in your hands in your lap. Don’t move them if you can help it. I am going to ask you some questions about yourself, and we’ll just see what happens.’’

‘‘Now,’’ she gazed at me intently, glancing down every few moments at the meter dial, ‘‘Tell me more about your anxiety attacks.’’

‘‘Well, they started about a year ago, right after Bill died. I was just walking along the street one day when I began to feel this awful feeling of terror. It seemed to start in my stomach. I just had this feeling of terror, like something terrible was going to happen. I was too scared to move. I just stood there. Finally it went away. But it’s been happening more and more.... I don’t know, I seem to be afraid of something, but I don’t know what it is.’’

‘‘OK,’’ Julie said, ‘‘that’s fine.’’ She was writing rapidly on the paper as she spoke. ‘‘You had a read on the phrase ‘a feeling of terror.’ So that’s what we are going to run.’’

‘‘Run?’’ Another word used in an unfamiliar way.

''Oh, that just means that we are going to use a Dianetics technique to take this feeling of terror back to its root. Once we get to the earliest time you had this feeling, and you are able to reexperience that earliest incident, then the feeling should go away and never bother you again.''

''How do you know if it's the earliest incident?'' I wanted to know.

''I can tell by the E-meter. The needle moves in a certain way when you have reached the earliest incident. Now, let's get started.'' Julie continued to adjust the knobs on the meter.

Then she looked at me and said loudly, ''Locate an incident containing a feeling of terror.''

''All right,'' I thought back. ''Yesterday. Just before the recital. I started to experience fear. I had the feeling that something awful was going to happen.''

''OK,'' Julie responded. ''What was the date of the incident?''

''Yesterday,'' I answered.

''All right, what was the duration of the incident?''

I thought back. ''It only lasted a few minutes. About fifteen minutes.''

''OK. Close your eyes. Go to the beginning of the incident and scan through it to the end. Then tell me what happened.''

I closed my eyes and followed her instructions. I could ''see'' yesterday's events very clearly in my mind.

''All right. I'm there.'' I described the event to her.

''Now, is the incident erasing or growing more solid?'' she asked.

''It seems to be more solid,'' I said with my eyes still closed.

''All right. Now I'm going to ask you if there is an earlier incident containing a feeling of terror.''

''Well, yes. I had that feeling last week during a class.'' With my eyes still closed I began to visualize the classroom.

''OK. Now move to the beginning of that incident,'' Julie commanded. Then she asked me the same questions about the date and duration of the ''incident.'' Again, at her commands I could clearly visualize the classroom. The familiar feeling of terror started its spread from my stomach to the other parts of my body. I was beginning to have a familiar feeling of panic.

''Is it getting more solid?'' Julie inquired softly.

''I think so. I'm starting to feel really scared.''

''OK. Now think back and see if you can find the earliest time you had this feeling of terror.''

With my eyes closed, I looked into the blackness, trying to follow Julie's command.

''I don't see anything,'' I said honestly.

''OK. Just relax and see if anything comes to your mind. It doesn't have to make sense. Just anything at all. Look for the earliest time you felt terror.''

Suddenly in my mind, I saw the picture of a foot. A tiny foot. Then a hand. ''Well, I see a foot. It doesn't make any sense. I just see this little foot. And a hand. And I feel scared. I don't know what's happening.'' I looked anxiously into the darkness, wanting to see more.

''All right. Go to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there.''

''I'm there,'' I said uncertainly.

''Scan through to the end of the incident and tell me what happened.''

''Well, I see this little foot and this hand and it's pulling the foot. It's holding this baby upside down and spanking it. It's a baby that's just been born. And I feel scared. Really scared. I feel like I don't know what's happening.''

Julie looked at me expectantly, but in silence.

''That's me, isn't it? That was me in the picture. I was being born. And I was scared.'' I opened my eyes and looked across at Julie, wanting some kind of confirmation. But she just continued to look at me as if she was expecting something else. But what? I closed my eyes again.

Then I noticed that the terror inside me was subsiding, and I felt myself slipping into a state of deep relaxation. The picture started to fade away into the darkness, getting smaller and smaller. Then something unexpected started to happen. I opened my eyes and looked straight at Julie. Suddenly I started to laugh. For no reason I just started laughing as if I had just heard the world's funniest joke. The laughter seemed to come from deep inside me, and I couldn't stop it.

Julie just sat there, looking at me, with a fixed expression, unsmiling, apparently not sharing any of my mysterious mirth.

After I had sobered up, Julie continued to stare at me and then said solemnly, ''I'd like to indicate that your needle is floating. This is the end of the session. You can put down the cans.''

''That's it? That's all there is to it? You mean my anxiety attacks are cured?''

''Well, you just have to wait and see. There might be other feelings involved. Just wait and see,'' Julie answered as she turned off the meter. She folded up the sheets of paper and started packing everything away. ''Now I want to take you over to the center. Come on. You have to see the Examiner.'' We drove to an older house not far from the university. I still had a lingering feeling of elation from the mysterious session.

As we walked in the house, I was directed to a small room off to the right. A sign over the door said, ''Examiner.'' In the middle of the room was a table with an E-meter already set up in the middle of it. A young boy of about high school age was sitting at the table and he motioned for me to take the chair across from him.

''Pick up the cans,'' he commanded as he looked at the meter and adjusted the knobs. Then he looked across at me and said solemnly, ''Thank you. Your needle is floating. You can put down the cans.'' Then he smiled. ''You have to come and see the Examiner after every session,'' he explained, seeing my obvious confusion.

''Why?'' I asked.

''Because, if your needle isn't floating or if the tone arm is reading too high,'' he said pointing to one of the larger knobs on the meter, ''then you might have to go directly into a Review session. To correct what went wrong in your session. That's all. But you are fine. Your needle was floating all over the dial.''

He looked at me with satisfaction. Then he got up and I went out to rejoin Julie in the hallway. The boy handed Julie a piece of paper and quickly disappeared into another room.

''Come on. I want you to meet everyone.''

We walked into the living room where several people were sitting as if they were waiting for something. It reminded me of the reception area in a doctor's office.

Julie introduced me to an older woman who was seated at a desk piled high with papers.

''This is Rita,'' Julie said as the woman smiled at me. ''She's the director of the center.'' Then she looked over toward several people sitting on some sofas in the center of the room. They all seemed to be about my age or a little older.

''Margery just had her first session,'' Julie announced triumphantly.

''Oh, wow. That's great. Congratulations,'' several of them came over to me and hugged me and shook my hand.

''I can tell just by looking at you that it was a success,'' the older woman beamed at me as she got up and took me by the hand. ''Now come and I'll show you around the center. We'll have to get you signed up for the Communication Course.''

''The Communication Course?'' But my question was lost as she began to introduce me around. There were more hugs. I felt like an honored guest. I responded to their friendly smiles and warm congratulations. I had never seen so many apparently happy people. They could all have been on drugs, but their eyes were clear and direct, and they had a relaxed alertness that seemed to belie any drug involvement.

Julie told me that we had to get a ''C/S'' before she could audit me further.

She explained that someone called the Case Supervisor had to look over the notes she had taken during our session, and write down for Julie the instructions for our next session. This written page of instructions was called a ''C/S.''

She explained that the other people in the living room were either auditors or their ''preclears'' and that they were also waiting for a ''C/S'' before they could resume auditing.

''Look,'' Julie told me. ''I have some work I need to do. Why don't you stop back around seven tonight and we'll see what's next? I'll meet you right by the front door.''

''OK. Thanks.'' As I walked toward the front door, I saw a small poster hanging in the hall that had a picture of Earth done in crayons, and black lettering below that said, ''What would you be doing if there were only seven days left until the end of the world?''

''Strange,'' I thought, but quickly dismissed it from my mind.

As I walked home, it seemed to me that everything was a bit brighter. I seemed to be unusually alert, noticing the bright, metallic colors of the cars parked along the street, and the unusual vividness of the leaves on the trees. I had smoked marijuana a few times at parties, and this seemed curiously similar to the heightened perceptions I had when ''high'' on grass. Everything just looked more vivid.

When I got home, I went in the bathroom and looked into the mirror. Something caught my attention. Suddenly I felt a rush of euphoria as I looked at myself in the mirror. A thought was forming somewhere deep in my mind, making its way to the surface like a bubble.

''That's not me,'' the thought made me simultaneously confused and elated. My mind was racing ahead as I tried to grope for some sort of mental order. ''That's not me.'' Again I looked into the mirror, into my own eyes.

''That's my body. But it's not me. I am different. They're right. I'm not my body, I'm something else. I am different than my body.'' Then I felt an explosion all around me. It seemed as if the walls had just exploded all around me. I looked around. Nothing had moved. What was that explosion? This was wild!

I decided to go back to the house. I needed to talk to someone. Something was happening to me.

As I walked I noticed that the colors around me were still unusually bright. And I still had the feeling of euphoria. I was feeling like at any moment I could explode into a million tiny particles.

I walked up the steps and into the house. I found Rita talking to someone in the living room. She saw me, and quickly came over.

‘‘What is it?’’ She put her hand on my arm.

‘‘I’m not sure. I just had a very strange experience.’’ I told her about the colors and the brightness I had observed on the way home, and then my thoughts as I looked into the mirror and the strange explosion.

‘‘OK. You need to go in and see the Examiner again and tell him exactly what you have just told me. It’s OK,’’ she looked at me reassuringly and smiled. ‘‘Don’t worry. This has happened to other people. You’re just going a little faster than usual, that’s all.’’

She didn’t seem to be alarmed.

I was again seated at the table with the young boy, and I repeated what I had told Rita, feeling somewhat embarrassed.

He was writing down notes as I was talking. Then, after staring for a long time at the E-meter dial, he finally looked up at me and said with an expressionless face, ‘‘Your needle is floating. You can go and wait in the living room.’’

So I went and sat in a chair on the far side of the room. The other people in the room seemed to be absorbed in reading or in quiet, private conversations, so I just sat there, wondering what I was waiting for.

Half an hour later, the young boy appeared in the doorway. He held a manila folder in his hand. Then very loudly, he shouted out, ‘‘That’s it! Margery has just attained the state of keyed out Clear!’’

Suddenly the room came to life. At once, everyone was looking at me, and clapping. They were all smiling.

‘‘Speech, speech!’’ they were shouting while the clapping turned rhythmical. ‘‘Well,’’ I stammered, crimson from all the unexpected attention, ‘‘I feel really good. I’m not sure what has happened to me, but I feel great.’’

The clapping continued. Finally, Rita’s voice came from the doorway. ‘‘OK, everyone. That’s it. You can go back to your reading.’’

The clapping stopped as suddenly as it had started and everyone turned back to their activities. Julie had appeared in the room with Rita. They were both laughing as they came up to me. I must have looked very confused.

‘‘What in the world is keyed out Clear?’’ I managed to ask them.

‘‘It means,’’ Julie replied, ‘‘it means that you have just temporarily achieved the state of Clear. Sometimes the reactive mind moves out of the way temporarily and you actually feel like you would if you were Clear. I can’t believe this happened to you after just one session!’’

‘‘Margery,’’ Rita saw that I was still confused, ‘‘the only way to really get Clear is to do all the grades in Scientology that lead up to Clear.’’ She led me over to a large chart on the wall, printed in red. It was labelled in big red letters at the top, ‘‘The Bridge to Total Freedom.’’ There were rows of little boxes on the chart and I quickly understood that each level on the chart represented a different level in Scientology.

‘‘You are here,’’ Rita pointed to the lowest level, ‘‘and Clear is here,’’ pointing to a level halfway up the chart. ‘‘You must do all these levels in between to become a real Clear. However, because you have achieved the state of keyed out Clear, I’m afraid that you can only be audited from now on by someone who is Clear or above,’’ she motioned to the levels at the top of the chart.

‘‘What about Julie?’’ I looked toward Julie who was standing there silently.

‘‘She’s not Clear, so she can’t audit you here anymore. We don’t have anyone here who is Clear yet, other than myself. I’m Clear, but I’m not tech-trained, so I can’t audit you either.’’

‘‘Then what am I supposed to do?’’ I was feeling even more confused.

‘‘I’m afraid,’’ Rita looked at me smiling broadly, ‘‘you’re going to have to go to Los Angeles to continue your auditing. You have suddenly exceeded our ability to help you.’’

‘‘I can’t go to Los Angeles. I’m in school. Here.’’ I looked helplessly at both of them.

‘‘Margery,’’ Julie said slowly, ‘‘you will just have to make a decision. You really don’t know much about Scientology yet. It goes way beyond anything you can even imagine. Look at these top levels.’’ She pointed to a level just above Clear.

‘‘These are the OT levels. When you get to these levels you will achieve states of mind that before this time people have only dreamed about. And if you go to L.A. you can train to become an auditor yourself. This is just the beginning of a great adventure for you. There are no limits in this game. There is no problem that auditing can’t handle.’’

‘‘And besides,’’ she continued, ‘‘didn’t you tell me that you wanted to help people? Well, there isn’t anything you can do that will make as much of a difference as becoming an auditor. This is the most powerful stuff in the whole world, in fact, in the whole universe. Just think about it.’’

I was dizzy. Los Angeles? I thought about the life I had here in Ann Arbor. Somehow things weren’t the same. Somehow working in the coffee house and going to classes seemed pretty dull compared with the events I had experienced in the past two days. This was an adventure. What did I have to lose? If it didn’t work out I could always come back.

I made a decision. I looked up at Rita and Julie.

''OK. I'm going. I'm going to L.A.''

''All right!,'' Julie grabbed me in a big hug. ''This kid's gonna go Clear!''

''OK,'' said Rita. ''We're going to have to make some phone calls. Let's get busy.'' She looked at me proudly. ''You have a wonderful adventure ahead of you. I promise you, you will never be the same again.''

She would never know how true those words were to be.

Chapter 3
For the Next Endless Trillions of Years

I stared out the window as the plane dipped into the greenish-yellow smog bank blanketing the city below. Five minutes earlier the captain had announced our descent into Los Angeles.

I was thinking about the adventure that lay waiting for me in the city that was beginning to materialize below as we cleared the smoggy haze. I was also thinking of Julie's last words to me as we parted at the airport in Ann Arbor. ‘‘Remember,’’ she had said with a smile, ‘‘the true test of a thetan is to make things go right.’’

The past three days had been a blur of activity. I had to formally withdraw from school, leaving behind a slate of incomplete classes. My school record read simply ‘‘Withdrew for personal reasons.’’

I called my mother and asked if she could come and help me pack up my things.

‘‘I'm going to California to study Scientology,’’ I announced.

‘‘What's Scientology?’’ I could hear the suspicion in her voice.

‘‘It's a new science of the mind,’’ I informed her. ‘‘It's the psychology of the future. I am going to train to become an auditor. A new kind of counselor. I'll be able to really help people.’’

She arrived the next day, pleading with me to at least finish the semester before beginning my odyssey west.

‘‘What kind of school is this Scientology anyway,’’ she wanted to know. ‘‘I've never heard of it and neither has your father. Are you sure it's accredited?’’

‘‘Mom,’’ I remonstrated, slightly annoyed that she was not willing to share my enthusiasm, ‘‘what does it matter if it's not accredited? It's new. It's light years ahead of traditional psychotherapy’’ (I had heard that phrase at the center). ‘‘I'm going to be able to really help people. You know that's all I ever really cared about.’’

Unconvinced, but seeing that I was not to be dissuaded, she helped me load my meager belongings into the back of the station wagon. ‘‘We'll just keep everything for you in the basement until you come back.’’

As she drove off, I looked back into the empty apartment and thought, ‘‘Well, there's no turning back now. L.A., here I come.’’

The wheels of the plane made contact with the runway and I was abruptly jolted back into the present. I retrieved my one small suitcase and asked directions to a bus headed into Los Angeles. Inside my purse was a slip of paper with my destination, ‘‘820 South Burlington Street. Celebrity Center,’’ and a name, ‘‘Antonio Ferraro.’’

I probably looked like any other student in the late sixties, in my Indian print dress, leather sandals, and appleseed necklace. An hour and a crowded bus ride later, I stood outside a low wooden building on the corner of Burlington and Eighth Streets in downtown Los Angeles, in the MacArthur Park district.

The large sign on the building said ‘‘Welcome to Celebrity Center.’’ A smaller sign on the door read, ‘‘A Center for Artists. Church of Scientology.’’ I had been told that the main Scientology center, the Los Angeles ‘‘Org’’ (or organization) was located a few blocks away on Ninth Street, but that Celebrity Center was a special center which catered to artists and to celebrities in the motion picture business. Because of my musical abilities it had been decided to refer me here.

The front door was open. I walked in and was immediately greeted by a short, older woman with clear blue eyes and an eager smile.

‘‘Hello, dear,’’ she greeted me, putting her hand on my arm in a friendly gesture. ‘‘Can I help you?’’

‘‘I'm supposed to ask for Antonio. I just came from Ann Arbor.’’ I gave her Rita's name.

‘‘Oh, yes. We've been expecting you. I'm so glad you're here. Come. Let's find Antonio and get you started.’’ I followed her into a large room just behind the reception area.

The room was somewhat dark and it took me several seconds to adjust to the lighting. Then I saw several long rows of tables with about a dozen people sitting, obviously absorbed in study. Some of them seemed to be working in pairs and were quietly conversing.

I was immediately struck by how quiet the room was, like a library. The only sounds were the low murmur of voices and the sound of rustling papers. A woman in a white uniform was slowly circling the tables, observing the students. She held a clipboard in her hand. As I watched, she would occasionally write something on the clipboard, then wordlessly hand a pink sheet of paper to one of the students.

At the front of the room, an older man was seated at a desk piled with manilla folders. A sign on the desk read ‘‘Registrar.’’ The older woman, who had introduced herself as Aileen, lead me to the desk.

‘‘This is Antonio,’’ she smiled. ‘‘Antonio, this is Margery. She’s just come from Michigan to do some training with us. I know you’ll be able to get her oriented.’’ She took my hand. ‘‘We’ll talk later. The most important thing is for you to get started on course.’’ She averted her intense gaze, and looked at Antonio with a knowing smile. He nodded, then looked at me and pointed toward a chair next to his desk.

‘‘Welcome,’’ he looked at me, also smiling broadly. ‘‘Welcome to Scientology, the Road to Total Freedom.’’ It was a phrase I would hear many times in the coming years.

Antonio gestured toward the classroom. ‘‘This is our courseroom. This is where we teach the Dianetics course, and where you’ll learn to become an auditor.’’ He paused, then looked at me as if he were wondering whether or not to let me in on a secret.

‘‘Miracles happen here every day. Miracles. You’ll see.’’

I looked back at the room. Over to the side of the long tables were other students, in pairs, seated in chairs facing each other and staringly wordlessly into each other’s eyes.

‘‘What are they doing?’’ I asked Antonio.

‘‘They’re doing ‘TR zero.’ TR stands for Training Routine. It’s one of the drills on the Dianetics Course. It’s a drill to improve your eye contact, and your ‘confront’ as an auditor.’’

‘‘Confront?’’ I was puzzled, not remembering ever having heard the word used as a noun before.

‘‘That means the ability of the auditor to accept whatever the preclear says or does in the auditing session without any reaction from his own case,’’ Antonio explained.

‘‘Case?’’ Another new word.

‘‘Case, yes. Case is a word we use for the preclear’s reactive mind. It is also called a ‘bank.’ When the person’s reactive mind or bank is restimulated it means that he is ‘keyed in’ or ‘banky.’’’

I looked at him and laughed. ‘‘Did I just land on a different planet? I feel like I’m learning a whole new language.’’

‘‘That’s because Scientology is different from any other subject. We use new words so that people studying our courses don’t get Scientology ideas confused with ideas in other subjects, like psychology.’’

‘‘What are those people doing?’’ I asked, pointing to a smaller table at which two people seemed to be making small figures out of clay.

‘‘That is the clay table. In all of your courses here, you will be asked to demonstrate the concepts that you are learning in clay. You have to actually show the ideas in clay. That is to add ‘mass’ to the ‘significance’ of the written words. Hubbard found that people get sleepy when they read for long periods of time. When you add mass to their learning, by having them do practical drills or demonstrate things in clay, they are more alert, and can study for longer periods of time.’’

At another table, I noticed another student with headphones listening to a tape recording. Occasionally, the student would chuckle out loud at something he heard on the tape.

I looked back at Antonio. ‘‘This is different from any classroom I’ve ever seen before. It’s not like school at all.’’

‘‘You are in for many surprises in Scientology,’’ Antonio beamed. ‘‘Your life will never be the same again.’’

‘‘Yeah, everyone keeps saying that.’’ I looked out again at the strange classroom. ‘‘So, Antonio, what do I have to do to get started?’’

Antonio pulled out a long piece of paper printed with green ink. ‘‘This is a routing form,’’ he said as he started to fill out the form. ‘‘We’ll just get you routed onto course.’’

After several routine questions, he asked me how much money I had brought with me. ‘‘Five hundred dollars,’’ I told him honestly. ‘‘Maybe a few dollars more.’’

‘‘Well, that’s great, because that’s exactly the cost of the Dianetics Course,’’ he looked at me happily. ‘‘You’ll be able to get started right away.’’

‘‘I thought the first course was the Communication Course?’’ (In Ann Arbor I had been told that my first course would only cost fifty dollars.)

‘‘Yes, many people start with the Communication Course, but in your case, you can go directly onto the Dianetics Course. That will save you some money. And all of the materials from the Communication Course are included on the Dianetics Course, so you won’t lose anything. And I can see that you have too much awareness to need the Communication Course. You are ready for Dianetics.’’

I accepted his explanation, but there was an obvious problem. ‘‘But what will I do about a place to stay and a job. This is all the money I have.’’

‘‘That’s no problem,’’ Antonio assured me. ‘‘We will find a place next door for you to stay. Right now all you have to worry about is just being on course.

Everything will be taken care of.''

So I dug into my purse and handed Antonio my total savings. After I had signed the routing form in several places, Antonio led me over to the woman in the white uniform.

''This is the Course Supervisor,'' he informed me as he introduced me. ''She will give you your course pack. And if you have any questions, she's the person to ask. We'll have time to talk again later.''

With none of the smiling warmth of Antonio and Aileen, the Course Supervisor stared at me with an expressionless face. ''Sit over there,'' she motioned me to an empty seat. ''I'll get you your pack.''

A minute later she handed me an two-inch thick legal sized packet which was bound and printed in red ink. ''DIANETICS'', with small letters at the bottom. ''Copyright, L. Ron Hubbard.''

The first few pages of the pack were marked ''CHECKSHEET.'' Each item of the checksheet was numbered, and there were spaces after each item which were obviously to be initialed after each item was read. Some of the lines had a star before them, with the explanation that all starred items were to be ''star-rated'' by another student. I would be quizzed on these items by another student who then had to initial my sheet.

As I looked through the pack, I noticed that some of the pages of the pack were printed in green ink. At the top they were marked ''HCO POLICY LETTER.'' Further on in the pack were other sheets printed in red and marked ''HCO BULLETIN.'' At the top of all the pages were the words ''HUBBARD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE, Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, Sussex.''

I turned to the first page after the checksheet. It was a green page with the title ''The Aims of Scientology.''

''A civilization without insanity, without criminals and without war,'' the essay began,

> where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where Man is free to rise to greater heights, are the aims of Scientology.
>
> First announced to an enturbulated world fifteen years ago, these aims are well within the grasp of our technology.
>
> Non-political in nature, Scientology welcomes any individual of any creed, race or nation.
>
> We seek no revolution. We seek only evolution to higher states of being for the individual and for Society.
>
> We are achieving our aims.
>
> After endless millenia of ignorance about himself, his mind and the Universe, a breakthrough has been made for Man.
>
> Other efforts Man has made have been surpassed.
>
> The combined truths of Fifty Thousand years of thinking men, distilled and amplified by new discoveries about Man, have made for this success.
>
> We welcome you to Scientology. We only expect of you your help in achieving our aims and helping others. We expect you to be helped.
>
> Scientology is the most vital movement on Earth today.
>
> In a turbulent world, the job is not easy. But then, if it were, we wouldn't have to be doing it.
>
> We respect Man and believe he is worthy of help. We respect you and believe you, too, can help.
>
> Scientology does not owe its help. We have done nothing to cause us to propitiate. Had we done so, we would not now be bright enough to do what we are doing.
>
> Man suspects all offers of help. He has often been betrayed, his confidence shattered. Too frequently he has given his trust and been betrayed. We may err, for we build a world with broken straws. But we will never betray your faith in us so long as you are one of us.
>
> The sun never sets on Scientology.
>
> And may a new day dawn for you, for those you love and for Man.
>
> Our aims are simple, if great.
>
> And we will succeed, and are succeeding at each new revolution of the Earth.
>
> Your help is acceptable to us.
>
> Our help is yours.

And at the bottom was the signature of L. Ron Hubbard.

That sounds really great, I thought. I initialled my checksheet and turned the page.

Next I started to read a biography of Hubbard.

Hubbard, I read, was born in Nebraska in 1911 and was raised on his grandfather's cattle ranch in Montana. He could ride before he could walk. As a teenager he spent several years traveling in Asia, studying with Lama Priests and ''other warlike people.''

Later he enrolled at George Washington University, and was a member of the first course in nuclear physics. He later led an expedition into Central America to study savage cultures.

He was crippled and blinded at the end of World War II but cured himself by applying to himself his discoveries about the mind. He was twice pronounced dead, but later given a perfect bill of health.

With the publication of Dianetics, the ''Modern Science of Mental Health'' was established as a worldwide organization. ''Scientology is the most vital movement on Earth today.... Every week thousands of new people are introduced to its great benefits.''

The biography concluded, ''The long sought bridge to total freedom for Mankind was complete.''

Next, I read an essay in green ink titled, ''My Philosophy,'' by L. Ron Hubbard.

''I like to help others,'' I read,

> and count it as my greatest pleasure in life to see a person free himself of the shadows which darken his days....
>
> I have lived no cloistered life and hold in contempt the wise man who has not lived and the scholar who will not

> share....
>
> There have been many wiser men than I, but few have traveled as much road....
>
> I have seen life from the top down and the bottom up. I know how it looks both ways. And I know that there is wisdom and that there is hope....
>
> No man has any monopoly upon the wisdom of this universe. It belongs to those who can use it to help themselves and others.
>
> If things were a little better known and understood, we would all lead happier lives.
>
> And there is a way to know them and there is a way to freedom.
>
> The old must give way to the new, falsehood must be exposed by truth, and truth, though fought, always in the end prevails.

Again, on the bottom, was the signature of L. Ron Hubbard.

The next essay was called ‘‘Safeguarding Technology.’’ In it, Hubbard stated that,

> In fifty thousand years of history on this planet alone, Man never evolved a workable system. It is doubtful if, in foreseeable history, he will ever evolve another.
>
> Man is caught in a huge and complex labyrinth. To get out of it requires that he follow the closely taped path of Scientology.
>
> It has taken me a third of a century in this lifetime to tape this route out....
>
> Scientology is the only workable system Man has. It has already taken people toward higher IQ, better lives and all that. No other system has. So realize it has no competitor....
>
> Don’t let your party down. By whatever means, keep them on the route. And they’ll be free. If you don’t, they won’t.

In my mind, I could almost hear a band playing. Patriotism I never knew I possessed was stirring inside me. At last, I thought, after eighteen depressing years of frustration and failure, maybe I have finally found the winning team.

The next essay was even more intense. It hinted of danger.

> When somebody enrolls, consider he or she has joined up for the duration of the universenever permit an open-minded approach. If they’re going to quit let them quit fast. If they enrolled, they’re aboard, and if they’re aboard, they’re here on the same terms as the rest of uswin or die in the attempt.

As I read on to the end of this policy letter, I came to a paragraph that I had to read twice. Did it say what I think it said?

> We’re not playing some minor game in Scientology. It isn’t cute or something to do for lack of something better.... The whole agonized future of this planet, every Man, Woman and Child on it, and your own destiny for the next endless trillions of years depends on what you do here and now with and in Scientology.

‘‘Wow,’’ I thought. ‘‘Heavy.’’ This was more than I had expected. But then, really, what had I expected?

I looked around the room at the other students who were quietly studying. I suddenly had the feeling that I had not only arrived in a different city, but in a different world.

Whatever had been important to me before, now paled in comparison with what I was discovering on these pages. I was being led into a new world, with new ideas, new words, new people, and new priorities.

In one day my priorities had shifted from the mundane unimportances of my barren life as a college student to the profound ideals I was discovering in these pages. It was almost scary. In reading Hubbard’s words, I felt a challenge. Challenge to go beyond anything I had ever expected of myself, or imagined myself capable of. Here was a chance to be and do something heroic. How often, I wondered, does a person have a chance like this? A chance to make a universal difference in life.

Goodbye, old life, I thought. Somehow, after reading just these few pages, I knew I would not be returning to college any time soon.

Instead, I walked eagerly and trustingly into the world of Scientology, without so much as a backwards look. If this was the ship called Scientology, I was aboard.

Chapter 4
Flunk for Laughing! Start!

Just as I was finishing the last policy letter in the first section of my checksheet, the Course Supervisor called out in a loud voice, ‘‘That’s it! Afternoon break!’’ At once chairs were pushed back and study packs closed as everyone filed out the front door into the parking lot. There was a long square log bordering a small garden by the front door which served as a bench for the students during the break. Several students were lighting up cigarettes.

I noticed a girl about my own age sitting by herself.

‘‘Hi,’’ I ventured. ‘‘I’m Margery. I just started the course this afternoon.’’

‘‘Hi. Welcome. I’m Kris,’’ she reached out her hand. ‘‘So what do you think so far?’’

‘‘It’s pretty wild. This is different from anything I’ve ever done before. I guess I’m still wondering if it’s all real. Maybe I’m just having a very strange dream.’’ I laughed as I turned up the sleeves of my dress to take advantage of the hot California sun.

‘‘Oh, it’s real all right. I wondered at the beginning too. But the auditing really works. That’s what convinced me. I’ve had so many wins from auditing. Now I just want to get up the bridge and go OT. That’s where it’s at.’’ She stared abstractedly into the distance for a few seconds. ‘‘How’d you get in, anyway?’’

‘‘A friend at school. In Michigan. Everything’s happened so fast. If you had told me a week ago that I’d be dropping out of school and coming to California, I would have thought you were crazy. But here I am.’’ I shook my head as she offered me a cigarette. ‘‘How about you? I mean, how did you get in?’’

‘‘Oh, my whole family’s in. My brother got in first, then my parents. Now my parents are in the Sea Org. They’re on the ship. And my brother’s an auditor at the Org,’’ she pointed vaguely in a southwesterly direction. ‘‘I would have joined the Sea Org too. It would be cool to be on the ship with Ron. But I have a small part in a film, so I can’t leave right now.’’

‘‘Ron?’’ I looked puzzled.

‘‘Ron. Hubbard. He likes us to call him Ron. He’s neat. He really cares about everyone. Wait till you listen to his tapes. He’s funny. But he’s a genius to have figured out how the mind works. I mean, no one else for thousands of years has been able to figure it out.’’ She looked at me, her eyes sparkling.

‘‘Have you ever met him?’’ I asked her.

‘‘No, but I would give anything just to say hello to him one time. He pretty much stays on the ship. I am so jealous of my parents. They get to work with him every day. I could have gone on the ship, but I want to become a famous actress first. That’s the best way I can help the third dynamic. By getting my acting into power.’’

‘‘Third dynamic?’’ The question was just out of my mouth when I heard a stern, ‘‘That’s it. End of break. Let’s get back on course. And I want to see some stats this afternoon!’’ The uniformed Course Supervisor stood in the doorway looking very military. She had a red lanyard around her neck to which a whistle was attached. I waited for her to use it but she didn’t. The students quickly followed her into the courseroom and took their seats. As soon as everyone was seated, the Supervisor called out, ‘‘All right. Start!’’ The classroom was quiet once again.

I looked at my checksheet. The next section was called ‘‘Training Drills.’’

According to the instructions I needed a ‘‘twin’’ to do the drills. I went up the Supervisor. She looked around the classroom. ‘‘OK,’’ she said. ‘‘I think George needs to do TR’s. Go have a seat and I’ll get him,’’ she pointed to the pairs of chairs in the back of the room.

A minute later, an older man approached and stretched out his hand. ‘‘Hi,’’ he said warmly. ‘‘I’m George. I hear you need to do TR’s.’’

‘‘Yeah, I guess,’’ I hesitated. ‘‘I’ve never done them before.’’

‘‘That’s OK. Let’s read the bulletin,’’ and he opened his pack to the same page I was on.

‘‘TR 0 Confronting,’’ I read.

> Purpose: To train student to confront a preclear with auditing only or with nothing. Training Stress: Have student and coach sit facing each other, neither making any conversation or effort to be interesting. Have them sit and look at each other and say and do nothing for some hours. Student must not speak, fidget, giggle or be embarrassed....

‘‘All right,’’ George looked at me pleasantly. ‘‘I’ll be the coach. We do this for two hours. Get comfortable.''

I adjusted myself in the chair and put my hands on my lap.

''Ready?'' George sat in a similar position directly across from me. Our knees were almost touching.

I nodded.

''OK, start!'' George commanded.

I looked into George's eyes, wondering what was going to happen. He looked back at me with a flawless, unblinking stare. I blinked my eyes.

''Flunk for blinking! Start!'' George said sternly.

''You mean I can't even blink?'' I asked incredulously.

''Flunk for talking! Start!'' George said, still maintaining his perfect stare into my eyes.

I tried to return the same perfect stare he was giving me. My mouth started to quiver.

''Flunk for moving your mouth. Start!'' George was merciless. All right, I thought to myself. This is serious. Then I thought of something.

''George,'' I interrupted. ''Wait a minute. If I flunk, does that mean we have to start the two hours over again?''

''That's it,'' he said, temporarily ending the drill. He smiled at me and said, ''Right. The two hours will start over again every time I say 'Start.' When you can do TR 0 flawlessly for two hours, then we are finished with the drill.''

Before I could ask him anything else, he had resumed his staring and commanded, ''Flunk for talking! Start!'' and we were off again. I tried as hard as I could not to blink. Soon I could feel the tears welling up in my eyes. My eyes were burning from the salty liquid. But I forced myself not to blink. George continued his seemingly effortless blinkless stare.

As I stared into George's eyes, I began to see an aura of colors around his head. The colors were flowing in streams around his head. Then the colors expanded into the whole room. I watched with awe as the whole room became filled with flowing colors.

Meanwhile my pain was increasing. The tears started to run down my cheeks. Inside I was crying with pain. But stubbornness competed with the pain. ''If he can do it,'' I thought to myself determinedly, ''then I can do it too.'' I was feeling pain in my whole body. I was suddenly conscious of the chair, and it felt painful against my body. I wanted desperately to move and to ease the pain of the chair against the pressure points of my body. This was torture. The time went on. I began to have sensations of my body being contorted out of shape. The flowing colors in the room became even more vivid. I was feeling strangely dizzy. I wondered if I was going to pass out. I was feeling light-headed, almost like I had felt once at the dentist when I had been given gas before having a tooth extracted.

How much time had gone by? I continued my stare. I wanted to look down at my watch. I wondered how were we going to know when two hours had gone by. The thought of having to sit here until the Supervisor called the dinner break was not a good thought.

The time continued to pass by. The excruciating pain at the point where my hipbones met the chair seemed to be going away, and I was beginning to feel a sense of expansiveness, as if I were expanding like a balloon into the space in the classroom.

Suddenly I had a rushing feeling of euphoria. I felt as if I was floating, looking down at everyone from a thousand points all over the room. This was better than anything I had ever experienced on marijuana.

''Far out,'' I thought to myself. The pain was gone. ''I feel like I could sit here like this for a thousand years.'' I was enjoying the expansive high. The colors were gone. Instead, I saw the room with crystal clarity. I felt an unaccustomed serenity. I could just stay like this forever, I was thinking, when suddenly George reached forward and tapped my shoulder.

''That's it,'' he said quietly. ''You have just passed TR 0.''

''Wow,'' I said. ''I don't know if I can even stand up. I feel like I have been blasted out of my head.''

''Exactly,'' he looked at me and smiled. ''Congratulations. Most people don't do that well the first time. I can see that you are going to be an excellent student.''

I tried to move my head. I was still feeling like I was located at some remote point from my body, making motion difficult. I tried to stand up and stretch, but felt dizzy. I felt as if I was moving my body by remote control. George looked at his watch. ''Well, we don't really have time to do any more before dinner. Why don't we continue after dinner. That will give you some time to enjoy your win from TR 0.'' He seemed to understand that I was still trying to get back in control of my body.

''Don't worry,'' he assured me. ''You are probably just feeling a bit exterior. It takes a little getting used to. I'll see you here after dinner.'' I opened my pack, and looked at the next drill.

''TR 0 Bullbait,'' I read.

> Purpose: To train student to confront a preclear with auditing or with nothing. The whole idea is to get the student able to BE there comfortably in a position three feet in front of the preclear without being thrown off, distracted or reacting in any way to what the preclear says or does.
>
> Training Stress: After the student has passed TR 0 and he can just BE there comfortably, 'bull baiting' can

> begin. Anything added to BEING THERE is sharply flunked by the coach. The coach may say anything or do anything except leave the chair. The student's 'buttons' can be found and tromped on hard.

I read it over a second time but I still didn't understand what we were supposed to do. I decided to go up and ask the Supervisor.

''Excuse me,'' I approached her. ''I don't understand this drill. Can you explain it to me?''

She looked at me with disapproval. ''What word don't you understand?'' she asked coldly.

''What word?'' I was puzzled.

''Yes. According to the tech, if you don't understand something in the materials, then it means you have gone past a word you didn't understand. You need to find your word and look it up,'' and she handed me a dictionary that had been sitting on the table.

I felt confused, but decided to take her advice. I looked through the passage I had just read.

I looked at the word baited. Maybe that was it. I turned to the B's in the dictionary.

''Bait,'' I looked through the definitions. ''3. To tease or goad, especially so as to provoke a reaction,'' I read. That sounds right. I read the passage again. It seemed to make a little more sense.

Just then the Supervisor called the dinner break. I went over to Antonio who was still seated at his desk.

''Well, how was course?'' Antonio smiled at me. ''I heard you did TR 0 like a pro. That means you'll make an excellent auditor.'' He didn't give me a chance to reply.

''I suppose I should show you to your accomodations.'' He got up from the desk and led me to the front door. We walked around the corner to a large blue house directly behind the center.

''This is our staff house,'' he explained as we approached the house. ''You'll be staying here until we can find you permanent accomodations.''

''But how am I going to pay for it?'' I asked him. ''And what about food. I don't have any more money.''

''You can pay us back by becoming a top-notch auditor,'' he smiled. ''You'll be eating with us in the staff dining room. Come, I'll show you.'' First he took me to a small room just off the hallway in the front of the house. There were three beds in the room. ''I think this one is unoccupied,'' Antonio said, pointing to the bed just inside the door. I put my suitcase under the bed.

''Now, let's go eat.'' We walked back to the dining room where Aileen and six or seven other people were already eating. ''Take a plate and help yourself,'' I was told. The food was served family style. I hadn't eaten on the plane, so was famished by this time. And I started to feel the fatigue of the long day and the unfamiliar events.

I listened to the conversation at the table. I realized that I didn't understand much of what they were saying. It really did seem like a different language. Many of the words sounded familiar, but they seemed to be using them in ways I had never heard them used before.

''This is really an upstat dinner,'' Aileen said. ''The cook must be in power.'' ''Yeah,'' one of the others, a blond haired man in a navy blue uniform with a gold braid, laughed, ''after he got over his ARC break about three unexpected people for dinner.'' He looked at me.

''Is this a new PC?'' he asked Antonio.

''Yes,'' Antonio replied, introducing me. ''This is Margery. She's just been selected here. Julie is her FSM. Her stats are already in affluence after her first day on course.''

''Outstanding,'' the blond man looked at me approvingly. ''We need some new blood in Tech.''

I was too busy eating to ask any questions. I just tried to understand as much as I could of their unusual conversation.

After dinner, I volunteered to help with the dishes.

''No,'' Aileen answered, taking some plates from my hand, ''you're not hatted to work in the kitchen. And we have a Kitchen I/C here to take care of everything.''

''Hatted? Kitchen I/C?'' I thought I would never learn all the new words.

''I'm sorry,'' Aileen put her arm on my shoulder. ''I keep forgetting that you don't know our words yet. I guess I've just been here too long.'' She continued, ''Every job in Scientology is called a post, and for every job, no matter how menial it is, there is a pack of materials which a person studies to learn or 'be hatted' on that post. For example, Kitchen In Charge is a post, and only when a person has been hatted on that post can he take over the job.''

''Anyway,'' she looked at her watch, ''you need to be getting back on course.'' We walked back to the center together. I looked at the lush vegetation surrounding the house.

''I can't believe it's the end of October,'' I said to Aileen. ''I've never seen so many beautiful flowers. At home everything is brown this time of year.'' I admired the bottlebrush bushes lining the sidewalk.

''I guess we take it for granted,'' Aileen admitted. ''I am usually so busy that I don't take time to notice.''

''Do you ever have time off?'' I asked her.

''Well, we have personal time on Saturday morning. That's about all. But I don't mind the long hours. I feel honored to be helping Ron. We have a planet to clear, and that's a big job. And there may not be much earth time to do it in.''

I remembered the poster on the wall of the house in Ann Arbor. ''Why?'' I asked her. ''Do you think something's going to happen?''

''We are the only organization on earth that can prevent a nuclear disaster,'' Aileen replied. ''Ron says we have about seven years to clear the planet. That's all the time we have. And if we fail, then that's it. This planet will no longer exist.''

''But how can Scientology prevent a nuclear war?'' I asked her.

''By getting everyone on the planet clear. When people no longer have their reactive minds, they will no longer be interested in petty disputes over territory. There will be no more war. But unless we succeed, this world is doomed. Technology has advanced much faster than man's ability to use that technology in a sane way. That's what happened on this planet thousands of years ago. We tried to prevent a disaster once before, but we failed. We cannot afford to fail again.''

I walked silently beside her, thinking about what she said.

''So there was civilization on the earth in the past and it was destroyed by atom bombs?'' I asked her.

''Yes, thousands of years ago. Before any recorded history that people know about today. But you'll find out more about that in your auditing.''

We arrived at the center. I went in and took my seat. ''That's it,'' the Supervisor called out. ''Start of class!''

I met George over by the chairs. ''I'm not sure what is meant by bull baiting,'' I told him.

''We'll just do it and you'll see,'' he suggested.

We took the same chairs we had used that afternoon. ''Get comfortable,'' he advised.

I relaxed in the chair and put my hands in my lap.

''Start!'' George commanded.

I sat and again stared into his eyes. It seemed much easier this time. I began to relax and enjoy the same expansive sensation I had experienced earlier.

Suddenly George leaned forward.

''I see what you're up to,'' he said to me slyly. ''You're trying to seduce me aren't you? You just think I'm an easy lay.''

I stared at him, not moving, not sure what to do.

''I know you girls from Michigan,'' he continued, his voice becoming louder. Some of the students at the tables were looking in our direction.

''Your reputation has preceded you. I know what you're interested in. It's SEX,'' he said the last word very loudly, his face very close to mine. My eyes were beginning to tear.

''I know all about you. You're just interested in one thing, aren't you? And here I thought you liked me for my mind,'' he continued, disgustedly. Some of the students were beginning to smile.

''You're not interested in my mind at all, are you? You just want my body. That's it, isn't it? You just want my body?'' Now he was leaning over to me with his face next to mine.

I started to smile, losing my composure because of my embarrassment. ''Flunk for smiling! Start!'' he said loudly.

''You just want my body, don't you,'' he repeated this a few times. I tried desperately to control my muscles.

''Say, you know what, you look like a hippie. Just look at those beads.'' He reached over and took hold of my appleseed necklace.

''You must be a hippie. A trippy hippie. Come on, tell me the truth. Do you like to trip? Did you ever trip and have sex? How do you like it? Sex, I mean. Are you good in bed? I'll bet you are. You Michigan girls are always good in bed.'' My eyes were tearing and I was in excruciating pain. I blinked, and the tears flowed down my face.

''Flunk for blinking! Start!'' George said sternly.

''Yeah, I know all about you Michigan girls. Say, what kind of hairstyle is this?'' He reached over and pulled my hair.

''I've seen better hairstyles at the zoo. And those clothes. Really,'' he said with mock sarcasm. ''Couldn't you find something that fits? Or don't you want to show off your body? Say, do you mind if I look at your body?'' I was feeling humiliated. Even more tears were flowing from my unblinking eyes. My mouth started to twitch.

''Flunk for twitching! Start!''

''So you have a button on your body?'' George continued. ''Well, we'll just have to work on that. What don't you like about your body? Come on, you can tell me.'' I just continued to stare.

''You know,'' he went on, ''you could stand to lose some weight. Just a little though. I don't like girls who are too thin. But you have that country look. That wholesome look. Are you wholesome? I'll bet you are. Maybe you've never had sex. Maybe you're a virgin. Hey, I've never met a virgin before.'' I decided that what I had to do was to look at one point on his face and concentrate on that instead of on what he was saying. I chose a spot in the middle of his forehead. This seemed to make it a little easier. Suddenly he clapped his hands in front of my face. I jumped. ''Flunk for moving! Start!''

He clapped his hands again. I didn't move a muscle.

He leaned over and blew in my ear. ''Did you like that? Did you? I could do it again.'' He leaned over toward me. I followed him with my eyes, but didn't move.

''Very good, Margery, very good. You are doing very well. I think you'll make a fine auditor. That's it. You pass TR 0 bullbaited.''

I tried to relax my body. Strangely, now that I was doing TR 0, I couldn't seem to stop it. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't seem to blink. My eyes felt like they were coming out of my head. I still had the ''high'' feeling I had during TR 0. I felt like I was ''stoned.''

George clapped me on the shoulder. ''Don't take it personally,'' he advised me. ''It's just part of the drill. Now it's your turn to bullbait me.''

I looked at him in shock. ''I can't do that,'' I looked at him desperately.

''Why not?'' he smiled. ''It's just part of the drill. Everyone has to do it. It isn't anything personal.''

''I know, but I don't want to hurt your feelings.''

''That's just the thing. There isn't anything personal about it. It's just part of the training to be an auditor. You're actually doing me a favor by finding my buttons and flattening them. Go ahead. Just try it.'' ''Start!'' He sat back and resumed his TR 0.

I swallowed. ''All right, mister,'' I started in. ''You gave it to me and now I'm going to give it right back to you. Think you can take it?'' I noticed his eyebrow move.

''Flunk for moving your eyebrow. Start!'' I told him.

''Think you can take it?'' I repeated. ''What kind of man are you anyway? How could you ask me all those embarrassing questions? Those things are none of your business.'' I just sat there, unable to go on. I started to laugh. ''George,'' I told him, ''I just can't do this. I'm not used to it.''

He relaxed and smiled. ''OK, I guess we've done enough for one day. Your confront will come up. It won't be long before you will be able to bullbait anyone. But that's enough for now.''

He shook my hand. ''We'll finish the TR's tomorrow. You might like to listen to a tape of Hubbard for the rest of the class tonight.''

He showed me where the tapes were filed in a file cabinet in the back of the room. He handed me a tape. I plugged in the headphones, wound the tape leader around the take-up reel and started the tape.

I heard a booming voice.

''Welcome to the Saint Hill Special Briefing Course,'' Hubbard intoned to his invisible audience. ''What's the year?'' pause, ''A.D. what?'' Someone answers from the audience ''A.D. 15?'' (I later learned that Scientologists number their years from the date Dianetics was published. Therefore A.D. 15 to a Scientologist would be 1965.)

''OK,'' continued the mellifluous voice on the tape. ''What planet are we on? Earth? What in the world are we doing on Earth?'' Laughter came from the audience.

Hubbard's voice had a hypnotic effect. He sounded so confident, so certain of himself. Strong and confident. I continued to listen to his voice as he told spellbinding stories about different things he had done in his life. Anecdotes about his experiences in the circus, as a seaman, as a photographer, as a pilot. It seemed as if there wasn't anything he hadn't done.

After a while, I found it very difficult to follow his train of thought. Some of the sentences didn't make any sense, and I wondered what the point of the tape was. But I found myself unable to stop listening. There was something about Hubbard's voice that was compelling. Maybe just the fact that he sounded more sure of himself than anyone I had ever heard before. Even on tape he exuded the jovial confidence of a man who had life firmly under control. ''Life is just a game,'' he instructed his audience, ''not to be taken seriously. Seriousness equals mass.'' That's a new way of looking at it, I mused.

The events of the day were beginning to catch up with me. I found myself yawning. The Supervisor came over to me.

''Take off the headphones,'' she commanded with her yet expressionless face. I complied immediately.

''Find your MU,'' she said tersely.

''My MU?'' I said with a tired voice.

''Yes. Your misunderstood word. The only reason a person yawns when studying is because of a misunderstood word. So you'll have to find your word, then go back earlier in the tape and listen to it again.''

''I think I'm just tired,'' I looked up at her. ''It's been a very long day.''

''Don't Q and A,'' she sounded annoyed. ''According to the tech the only reason a person yawns while studying is because of an MU. The tech is never wrong. So find your MU. That's an order.''

''OK,'' I answered meekly. I went to find a dictionary. I also noticed a Scientology dictionary lying on the table. I looked up the expression she had used: ''Q and A.''

''Q and A,'' I read, ''means question and answer. It means one did not get an answer to his question. It also means not getting compliance with an order....''

I rewound the tape, and started it up again. Did I really have a misunderstood word? Couldn't I just be tired? I wondered about her statement, ''The tech is never wrong.'' Something bothered me about that, but I wasn't sure what it was. I went back to listening to my tape, trying to locate a word I hadn't understood.

Soon, however, it was 10:30, and I heard, ‘‘That’s it. End of class. Let’s gather around to report our wins.’’

There was the sound of chairs scraping against the floor as everyone squeezed in around one table.

‘‘All right,’’ the Supervisor stood stiffly in front of us. ‘‘Who had a win today?’’

‘‘I did,’’ one of the students volunteered. I looked over to a young, slim boy sitting across from me. ‘‘I was auditing a PC (preclear) today, and he totally keyed out. I really cognited today that this really does work, and I can actually help people. I just feel really good about the tech, and I’m grateful to Ron for giving it to us.’’

The rest of the class applauded.

‘‘Yeah,’’ another student joined in, ‘‘I did a touch assist today, and the pc’s migraine headache blew. This stuff is dynamite.’’ More applause. ‘‘My PC finally ran past lives today, and she had a big win,’’ a third student volunteered. ‘‘I can’t wait to do more sessions.’’

The supervisor interrupted. ‘‘We have a new student today. This is Margery, from Michigan. Would you like to share your wins with us tonight?’’ I realized that everyone was looking at me expectantly.

‘‘Well, everything is all so new to me. I’m not really sure. I guess you could say I keyed out when I did TR 0. I didn’t think I would be able to do it, but toward the end I felt like I could sit there forever. I felt really good at the end,’’ I volunteered, not wanting to let them down. I felt relieved as they began to applaud.

I hadn’t even had time to think about everything that had happened during the day. When did this day begin? I thought back, trying to remember. That morning in Michigan seemed like an event from the remote past.

A few other students shared their ‘‘wins,’’ then we were dismissed. I walked back to the house looking up at the bright stars in the western sky. Could it really be possible that I was still living in the same world, and these were the same stars shining that night in the faraway Michigan skies? Already that world seemed to be fading into the distant past. This was a different world entirely. And I could feel myself already starting to become a different person.

Even now, walking back to the house, I felt like I could almost touch the sky. The heady euphoria from the TR’s was still with me.

The Road to Total Freedom, I thought as I looked up at the starry sky. I wonder where that road will lead me?

If only I had known the answer to that question then, I could have saved myself a twelve-year nightmare.

Chapter 5
Do Fish Swim? Do Birds Fly?

I was in a strange city in which the buildings were all a monotone shade of grey. I stood in the middle of a wide street as hundreds of people ran past me, shouting at me and motioning for me to follow them. I sensed danger. Everyone seemed to be running toward an opening at the side of the street. It looked like the entrance to a subway station. As I ran down into the dark opening, a door closed heavily behind me.

In the darkness I saw people huddled together, some crying, some silent. I understood suddenly that this was a bomb shelter. I was in some city of the future. The faces around me mirrored the terror I was feeling inside. Suddenly I felt the impact of something hitting the ground above us with tremendous force. The earth was shaking violently. Several people near me were screaming as panic began to spread. I knew there was no hope. The earth shook crazily as all life above us was destroyed.

I opened my eyes. Sunlight was streaming through the front windows. Oh, I thought with relief, it was just a dream. Then I realized that the earth really was shaking. The pictures on the opposite wall were swaying back and forth against the wall. ‘‘What in the world?’’ I said out loud. On the other side of the room, a man with deep blue eyes and a dark suntan was watching me with obvious interest. He was dressed in a white uniform with gold braid hanging from the shoulder. He sat on his cot, putting on his shoes.

‘‘Don’t worry, it’s only a tremor.’’ He seemed oblivious to the shaking room. ‘‘We get them all the time.’’

I didn’t say anything, but lay there clutching my sheet and waiting for the shaking to stop. Finally, it did.

‘‘I’ve never felt anything like that before.’’ I was trying not to let my voice reflect the panic I was feeling. ‘‘If that’s just a tremor, I’d hate to be in a real one.’’

I looked curiously at my roommate. The room had been empty when I came back from class last night. I had fallen into an exhausted sleep, and did not remember anyone coming into the room during the night. The third bed also looked like it had been slept in.

‘‘Sea Org members must not get much sleep,’’ I commented. ‘‘I didn’t hear you come in during the night.’’

He looked over and smiled. ‘‘We can’t be thinking about sleep when there is a planet to clear,’’ he said moralistically. ‘‘We can all catch up on sleep later. Ron says that every minute of time is like a gold coin that we have to spend. And how we spend them may very well determine the fate of the earth.’’ He looked over at me challengingly, and I suddenly felt guilty for being in bed.

‘‘What time is it anyway?’’ I asked, not seeing a clock anywhere in the room. ‘‘It’s about 0800,’’ he answered, using military time. ‘‘Aren’t you supposed to be on course?’’

‘‘Oh, no, I’m late,’’ I wailed. I grabbed my clothes and ran to the bathroom down the hall. Within seconds I was sprinting toward the center. No time for coffee this morning. I just had a second to glance appreciatively at the warm morning sun, already high in the sky.

I walked into the courseroom, and looked around for George. He was busy giving a checkout to one of the other students. As I looked in his direction, trying to catch his attention, I heard a voice behind me.

‘‘Miss Wakefield, you’re late.’’ It was more accusation than observation. I turned around to look into the steely eyes of the Course Supervisor. ‘‘I’m afraid you’ll have to go to Ethics.’’ She handed me a pink sheet of paper on which she had written, ‘‘Late for class. To Ethics for handling.’’

‘‘Ethics?’’ I looked at her for an explanation.

‘‘Ethics. There in the back. You’ll see the sign on the door.’’ She pointed down the hallway to an office in the back.

Obediently, I headed down the hall and knocked on the half open door. On the door was a sign: ‘‘Ethics. Master at Arms.’’

‘‘Come in.’’ The voice sounded like that of a child.

I peered into the room and saw a young teenage boy seated at a desk behind an E-meter. ‘‘Well, what is it?’’ he looked at me coolly.

‘‘I was late for course,’’ I explained, handing him the pink sheet. ‘‘I’m afraid I overslept. I was extremely exhausted last night.’’

‘‘Do you have some counter-intention to being on course?’’ he looked at me accusingly.

‘‘Counter-intention?’’ I asked.

He handed me a Scientology dictionary. ‘‘Look it up,’’ he ordered.

I took the dictionary and turned quickly to the C’s. ‘‘Counter-intention,’’ I read. ‘‘A determination to follow a goal which is in direct conflict with those known to be the goals of the group.’’

‘‘You need to locate your counter-intention that caused you to be late for course,’’ he said matter of factly.

‘‘Well, I think it was just that no one woke me up. I don’t have an alarm clock. I would buy one but I spent all my money on the course.’’ I looked at him helplessly. Why was I feeling guilty?

‘‘I’d like to indicate that you are in a condition of Danger,’’ he looked at me coldly.

Why was I feeling so defensive around this kid, I wondered to myself. He couldn’t be older than thirteen or fourteen. Yet he had the demeanor of someone much older. He spoke with the authority of an adult accustomed to commanding others.

‘‘What is a condition of danger?’’ I was feeling more and more insecure.

‘‘Here,’’ he said, handing me a set of papers in red ink, stapled together, and titled, ‘‘Conditions.’’ ‘‘Go back in the courseroom and starrate this HCOB’’ (I guessed that HCOB stood for Hubbard Communications Office Bulletin, which was printed at the top of the first page). ‘‘When you have finished that, come back and see me. And make sure you look up your misunderstood words.’’ He looked down at his work, and I realized that I was dismissed.

I went back into the courseroom, and began to read through the bulletin he had given me.

> Conditions. A condition is an operating state, and oddly enough in the physical universe there are several formulas connected with these operating states.

Then there was a table of twelve Conditions, reading from top to bottom: Power, Power Change, Affluence, Normal Operation, Emergency, Danger, Nonexistence, Liability, Doubt, Enemy, Treason, Confusion.

For each condition there was a formula. The formulas were to be applied one step at a time, I read, until the entire formula is completed, at which time the person may apply to be upgraded to the next higher condition.

The formula for the condition of Confusion, the lowest condition, was: ‘‘FIND OUT WHERE YOU ARE.’’

‘‘I wonder what that means,’’ I thought. I looked carefully through the sentence. I understood all the words, yet it still didn’t make any sense. But I decided not to ask.

‘‘Treason,’’ I read next,

> is defined as betrayal after trust. The formula for the condition of treason is FIND OUT THAT YOU ARE.

I continued to read.

> When a person is an avowed and knowing enemy of an individual, a group, a project or organization, a condition of Enemy exists. The formula for the condition of Enemy is just one step: FIND OUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE.

The next formula was more complex.

> When one cannot make up one’s mind as to an individual, a group, organization or project a Condition of Doubt exists. The formula is:
>
> 1. Inform oneself honestly of the actual intentions and activities of that individual, group, project or organization brushing aside all bias and rumor.
> 2. Examine the statistics of the individual, group, project or organization.
> 3. Decide on the basis of ‘the greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics’ whether or not it should be attacked, harmed, suppressed or helped.

Then after one had examined the statistics of the group one currently belonged to, one would,

> Join or remain in or befriend the one which progresses toward the greatest number of dynamics and announce it publicly to both sides.

‘‘Dynamics.’’ The word was being used in a new and unfamiliar context. I picked up the Scientology dictionary.

‘‘Dynamics,’’ I quickly located the right page. ‘‘There could be said to be eight urges in life,’’ I read.

> These we call dynamics. These are motives or motivations. We call them the eight dynamics.
>
> The first dynamic is the urge toward existence as oneself. Here we have individuality expressed fully. This can be called the self dynamic.
>
> The second dynamic is the urge toward existence as a sexual or bisexual activity.

I blinked. Did I read that right? I looked again. Yes, that’s what it said.

> This dynamic actually has two divisions. Second dynamic (a) is the sexual act itself and the second dynamic (b) is the family unit, including the rearing of children. This can be called the sex dynamic.
>
> The third dynamic is the urge toward existence in groups of individuals. The school, the society, the town, the nation are each part of the third dynamic, and each one is a third dynamic. This is also called the group dynamic.
>
> The fourth dynamic is the urge toward existence as mankind. Whereas the white race would be considered a third dynamic, all the races would be considered the fourth dynamic. This can be called the mankind dynamic.
>
> The fifth dynamic is the urge toward existence of the animal kingdom. This includes all living things whether

> animal or vegetable. The fish in the sea, the beasts of the field or the forest, grass, trees, flowers, or anything directly and intimately motivated by life. This could be called the animal dynamic.
>
> The sixth dynamic is the urge toward existence as the physical universe. The physical universe is composed of matter, energy, space and time. In Scientology we take the first letter of these words and coin a word, MEST. This can be called the universe dynamic.
>
> The seventh dynamic is the urge toward existence as or of spirits. Anything spiritual, with or without identity, would come under the heading of the seventh dynamic. This could be called the spiritual dynamic.
>
> The eighth is the urge toward existence as infinity. This is also identified as the Supreme Being. It is carefully observed here that the science of Scientology does not intrude into the dynamic of the Supreme Being. This can be called the infinity or God dynamic.

I finished reading the lengthy explanation. So this is a new way of categorizing and thinking about life, I thought. All right, I can handle that. And I felt relief to know that Scientology believed in God. (I was to find out much more about that later in my Scientology career.) I went back to reading about Conditions.

The next condition was Liability, for which the formula was:

1. Decide who are one's friends.
2. Deliver an effective blow to the enemies of the group one has been pretending to be part of despite personal danger.
3. Make up the damage one has done by personal contribution far beyond the ordinary demands of a group member.
4. Apply for re-entry of the group by asking the permission of each member of it to rejoin and rejoining only by majority permission.

The formula for Non-Existence was simpler:

1. Find a comm (communication) line.
2. Make yourself known.
3. Discover what is needed or wanted.
4. Do, produce and/or present it.

I wanted to yawn, but I looked warily at the Supervisor circling the tables, and decided to suppress it.

Next I read through the Danger Formula, the one which apparently applied to me. The formula read:

1. By-pass habits or normal routines.
2. Handle the situation and any danger in it.
3. Assign self a danger condition.
4. Get in your own personal ethics by finding what you are doing that is out-ethics and use self-discipline to correct it and get honest and straight.
5. Reorganize your life so that the dangerous situation is not continually happening to you.
6. Formulate and adopt firm policy that will hereafter detect and prevent the same situation from continuing to occur.

So what I have to do, I thought to myself, is simply get someone to wake me up in the morning so that this doesn't happen again. That's easy enough. I read through the Conditions bulletin again, trying to grasp the material. According to the theory, if I successfully apply the formula for the condition I am currently in, which is Danger, then I should be able to move up to the next higher condition. For me that would be Emergency. Part of the Emergency Formula had to do with changing your operating basis. ''You have got to stiffen discipline or stiffen ethics because life itself is going to discipline the individual.'' That meant that I was going to have to become very disciplined about getting to class on time, I realized. Well, that's no problem.

Once out of Emergency I would be safely in Normal Operation.

I sighed. I didn't realize that oversleeping could be so complicated. I would be sure not to do it again if I could help it.

I finished reading the policy, then went over to George and asked him to check me out. He did, and I passed easily. Now I was ready to return to the young dictator in Ethics.

He looked up as I entered. ''Did you apply the correct formula?'' he asked stiffly.

''I think so,'' I looked down at him awkwardly. ''Mostly, I just have to find someone to wake me up every morning.''

''Well make sure it doesn't happen again or you'll find yourself in Liability,'' he warned me. ''OK. You can go back to course.'' He initialed the pink sheet and handed it back to me. ''Take this back to your Course Supervisor.''

''Let me ask you a question,'' I said. ''These conditions, what do you use them for? Are they just used on the course?''

He looked at me condescendingly. ''The Ethics conditions are one of the greatest gifts we have from Ron. A Scientologist uses the conditions in every area of his life. Every area. You can apply the conditions to everything you do. If you think about it, no matter what you do, you are always in one of the conditions. The trick is to always know which one you are in and then apply the correct formula. If you do that, you can never lose.''

''Thanks,'' I offered him, grateful for such wisdom from one so young. This was a different way of looking at life. I was going to have to give it some thought. I was beginning to feel like I didn't know anything, and that I had a lot to learn. Scientology was indeed complex.

I returned to course and handed the pink sheet to the Supervisor. She nodded, and I returned to my seat.

‘‘Ready for more TR’s?’’ I looked up to see George standing beside me.

‘‘Sure,’’ I replied, eager to progress on the course.

We went back over to the chairs in the back. To my surprise he handed me a copy of the book *Alice in Wonderland*. I opened the Training Routines bulletin we had used the day before.

> Training Routine 1. Dear Alice.
>
> Purpose: To train the student to deliver a command newly and in a new unit of time to a preclear without flinching or trying to overwhelm or using a via.
>
> Commands: A phrase (with the ‘‘he saids’’ omitted) is picked out of the book *Alice in Wonderland* and read to the coach. It is repeated until the coach is satisfied it arrived where he is.

‘‘All right,’’ George looked at me brightly. ‘‘Start!’’

I opened the book and selected a phrase. Then I looked at George and said to him clearly, ‘‘Would you tell me please why you are painting those roses?’’ He was doing TR 0 again, staring intently into my eyes with his serene unblinking stare.

‘‘Good,’’ he answered. ‘‘Try another one.’’

‘‘OK.’’ I turned to another page. ‘‘It’s my opinion that you never think at all,’’ I said, returning his stare. Why did I feel like such a robot? Was this really the way I was supposed to talk to people? It didn’t feel natural.

But I decided to just do the drills and ask questions later. The problem was, later never came.

In the next drill, George read statements out of the book, and I had to acknowledge what he said. ‘‘An acknowledgement,’’ I read in the bulletin, ‘‘is a method of controlling preclear communication.’’

‘‘It wasn’t very civil of you to sit down without being invited,’’ George repeated to me.

‘‘OK,’’ I answered self consciously.

‘‘What you want to do in this drill,’’ George instructed me, ‘‘is to really duplicate what I say to you. You should be able to repeat the phrase to me verbatim. Let your acknowledgement really tell me that you heard me. Like this. Fine! All right! Thank you!’’ He modelled good acknowledgements for me. I tried it again this time with more confidence.

‘‘I never saw such a house for getting in the way,’’ he said.

‘‘All right,’’ I said firmly.

‘‘Good. Now what did I say?’’ George quizzed me.

‘‘I never saw such a house for getting in the way,’’ I repeated.

After a few more practice rounds, we went on to the next drill.

The next drill, TR 3, was supposed to teach me to ask a question, get an answer and acknowledge the answer in ‘‘one unit of time.’’ The questions to be used were: ‘‘Do fish swim?’’ and ‘‘Do birds fly?’’

‘‘Do fish swim?’’ I asked George, trying to maintain my TR 0.

‘‘Well, I’d rather talk about birds,’’ he answered.

Then, following the directions in the bulletin, I said to him gently, ‘‘I’ll repeat the auditing question. Do fish swim?’’

‘‘Oh sure, they swim all the time,’’ he answered.

‘‘Good,’’ I acknowledged, feeling successful.

We practiced this drill and also the next one, TR 4, which was the same except that in this one George was allowed to be even more disruptive.

‘‘Do birds fly?’’ I asked George. He pretended to be angry and started to get up out of his chair.

‘‘This is stupid. I’m getting out of here,’’ he said as he headed for the door.

Again, following the directions in the bulletin, I got up and physically directed him back to his chair. I had to get an answer to my question by any means. It was up to me to maintain control of the situation.

‘‘Do birds fly?’’ I asked him again.

‘‘Sure, they fly all the time,’’ he responded agreeably.

‘‘Great!’’ I delivered the acknowledgement with gusto.

‘‘All right, pass on TR 4,’’ George said approvingly. ‘‘That was fine.’’ Now I was ready for the last four TR’s which were called the ‘‘upper indoc (indoctrination) TR’s.’’ These TR’s, George told me, were to train me further to maintain control in a session.

In the first drill, I had to direct George around the room using precise commands, and acknowledging him for each action.

The commands to be used were:

> Look over at that wall. Thank you.
> Walk over to that wall. Thank you.
> Touch that wall. Thank you.
> Turn around. Thank you.

We did this drill for twenty minutes, until I was starting to feel dizzy. For some reason the repetitive commands were making me sleepy.

In the following drill, the commands were the same, but I had to physically guide George through the required motions. This one was easy, so we completed it quickly.

The next TR was called ‘‘Tone 40 on an object.’’ This was a curious drill. ‘‘Tone 40,’’ the Scientology dictionary explained, was ‘‘a positive postulate with no counter-thought expected, anticipated or anything else, that is, total control.’’

George sat beside me and put an ashtray in the chair across from me. I read the instructions in the bulletin. Taking the ashtray in my hands, I shouted in the loudest possible voice, ‘‘Stand up!’’ Then I raised the ashtray off the chair and held it in midair. ‘‘Thank you,’’ I acknowledged the ashtray. ‘‘Sit down on that chair!’’ I shouted, lowering the ashtray back to the chair. ‘‘Thank you!’’ I shouted again.

‘‘Not loud enough,’’ George looked at me. ‘‘I don’t feel your total intention. Theoretically, if you do this drill with complete Tone 40, the ashtray will rise by itself off the table. When you give the commands, you can have no other intention than the commands. You’re still somewhat self-conscious.’’

He was right about that. I couldn’t believe I was sitting here yelling at an ashtray. But if I had to do it, I was determined to do it well. So I yelled even louder. ‘‘Stand up!’’ I screamed, raising the ashtray off the table. ‘‘Sit down on that chair!’’ My voice was getting hoarse. I lowered the ashtray and looked at George triumphantly. ‘‘How was that?’’

‘‘If I had been that ashtray, I would have jumped off the chair,’’ he laughed. ‘‘OK, pass.’’

The last TR, TR 9, was called ‘‘Tone 40 on a Person,’’ and was similar to the last drill except that I was now to scream the commands at a person. I was to deliver the commands with total Tone 40, giving the other person no choice but to obey my command. I could use physical means to guide him if necessary.

‘‘Walk over to that wall!’’ I yelled at George.

He just stood there. ‘‘I didn’t feel Tone 40,’’ he said. ‘‘Try it again.’’

‘‘Walk over to that wall!’’ I screamed, my face red with effort. I guided him with my hands. He moved over to the wall.

‘‘Thank you!’’ I acknowledged him.

‘‘Turn around!’’ I screamed. I tried to channel my complete concentration into the command. He turned around.

‘‘Thank you!’’ I was getting a headache.

‘‘Sit down in that chair!’’ I screamed again, my voice getting raspy. ‘‘Thank you!’’

We continued for a few more commands, then George mercifully gave me a pass on the drill.

We were just in time for lunch.

‘‘You are making splendid progress,’’ George complimented me. ‘‘You will be auditing in no time.’’

‘‘I guess that’s what it’s all about, right?’’ I still had a headache from all the yelling. I would have asked for an aspirin, but I remember reading a list of rules on the wall that said that any medication, including aspirin, was strictly forbidden while on the course.

I headed next door for lunch. ‘‘Curiouser and curiouser,’’ I thought, remembering a line from *Alice in Wonderland*. For a moment I had the feeling that I was on as strange a journey as the Alice in the book. There was a surreal quality to the past two days.

Did I suspect, even for a minute, that the seemingly innocuous TR’s I was doing, supposedly to train me to become a better auditor, were actually a series of extremely sophisticated hypnotic and control techniques that would eventually lead me into a state of unthinking obedience and robotic response?

That I was unwittingly, drill by drill, surrendering my mind and my will to the whims of this bizarre organization, an organization to which I would become increasingly enslaved as the days and years passed by?

Is it possible that a sophisticated system of mind control, masquerading as religion, does in fact exist in this country outside the control and wisdom of the courts and the laws of the land?

Was I being lured into spiritual, physical, emotional and mental bondage without my knowledge or consent?

I had in fact, with complete innocence and trust, sold myself into a subtle slavery, slavery from which I would emerge years later raped of my mind, my emotions, my soul, my finances, and twelve years of my life. Yet no laws existed to protect my freedom. Psychological kidnapping is not illegal. Is it possible for one’s mind to be completely controlled by another?

The answer is yes.

During those sunny days in October, a part of me was dying, my mind and my soul being sucked out by the greedy vampire called Scientology. I was not to exist as myself for another twelve years.

Chapter 6
On a Clear Night You Can See Forever

I heard the familiar knock on the door. ''0700. Time to get up.'' I opened my eyes and felt a sharp pain on the top of my head. Oh, no, I thought, knowing what was coming. I pulled myself unwillingly to a sitting position, feeling the familiar nausea that swept through me as the pain in my head intensified. A migraine.

Groggily, I headed for the bathroom. Maybe a cool shower would help. But I knew from past history that I was in for a rough day.

There had been a dreamlike quality to the past few days. Saving the world, I thought, was a tough job. I had been on course for three days now. For some reason, I had taken it for granted that the center would be closed on Sunday.

I had been looking forward for a break from the intense course schedule: 8:00 AM until 10:30 PM with two short breaks and an hour for lunch. Then, invariably, at 11:00 PM, after the class muster where we shared our ''wins'', there would be an ''all hands'' called, usually to assemble a mailing, and it would last until 1:00 AM or later.

When Sunday arrived, I was surprised to hear the usual knock at my door. Sunday to Scientologists, I discovered, was just another day in the week. And to make things worse, last night there had been an unusually long all hands to mail out the monthly newsletter.

I stood over the basin, waiting for the world to stop spinning. I wonder what they do in Scientology when you get sick? I had already surmised from some of the materials on the course that medicine was frowned upon except as a last resort, and after the superior remedies in Scientology had been applied. ''Antonio,'' I held my throbbing head in both hands as I looked down at my friend seated at his desk, ''What does a Scientologist do for pain?''

''Why? What's wrong?'' he looked up, concerned.

''A migraine. I've had them before. I think it's from lack of sleep. Do you think maybe I could be excused from course for one day?''

''Well, to do that you would have to go through Ethics,'' he looked at me with narrowed eyes. ''It would probably be better to try and stay on course.''

''Ethics? Why?'' The thought of a return visit to the teenage fuehrer in the Ethics office was intimidating.

''Because in Scientology there is a saying, 'Sickness equals PTS,' '' Antonio answered seriously. ''Potential Trouble Source,'' he added seeing my confused look. ''It means you might be PTS, or connected to an SP Suppressive Person,'' he added quickly. ''Usually people only get sick when they are connected in some way to a Suppressive. And it's the job of Ethics to help you 'spot the SP.' That, and some Dianetic auditing should handle it.''

''I'll tell you what,'' he added, seeing my discouraged look, ''let me talk with the Course Supervisor and I'll see if I can give you an assist. Wait here.'' A few minutes later he was back. ''Come with me,'' he said. He led me to one of the offices in the back and closed the door. ''We'll do a touch assist and see if it helps.'' He pulled a chair into the center of the room and indicated for me to sit there.

''OK, now I'm just going to give you a command, and I want you to acknowledge me each time I repeat the command. Ready?''

''Sure,'' I answered, not knowing what to expect.

''All right. Here we go.'' He pressed his finger on my forehead. ''Feel my finger?'' he asked gently.

''Yeah,'' I responded.

Then he pressed his finger into my right temple.

''Feel my finger?''

''Um-hm,'' I answered.

Then I felt his finger on my cheek.

''Feel my finger?''

''Yes.''

He continued, exerting pressure with his finger at various locations of my body. There seemed to be a pattern to the way he was working. With each pressure he asked the same question.

This continued for at least a half an hour. I wondered what the effect of this was supposed to be. But I found myself becoming curiously relaxed, feeling little shivers of energy up and down my spine like one would feel with a good back rub.

As he continued I became more and more drowsy. At one point I actually dozed off into much needed sleep. As I jerked back awake to keep from falling, Antonio just continued the curious process.

I could feel my muscles relaxing in response to the contact from his finger. The energy was now flowing throughout my whole body. After what must have been at least an hour, he stopped suddenly and drew back. ‘‘Well, how do you feel?’’ he asked.

‘‘I don’t believe it. I feel great. The headache is gone. I can’t believe you got rid of my migraine. Usually they last for at least two days.’’ I was genuinely surprised. I could still feel the shivers all over my body.

‘‘That’s good,’’ Antonio said modestly. ‘‘I’m glad it helped. And it probably saved you an unnecessary trip to Ethics.’’ He looked at me and chuckled. ‘‘Now you need to go back on course while I write this up as a session.’’

‘‘Thanks,’’ I said gratefully as I opened the door.

I retrieved my study pack and took my usual seat. As I resumed my study I realized that the nausea and grogginess were gone. I even felt rested. ‘‘Strange,’’ I thought. ‘‘Amazing.’’

I opened my pack.

‘‘Auditors,’’ I read the green ink of the next policy letter on my checksheet,

> have since the first session of Scientology been the only individuals on this planet in this universe capable of freeing Man.
>
> At times some will forget or choose to ignore the fact that the auditor is not just another fellow or a guy who works in Scientology. An auditor is a highly trained specialist, no matter what level of auditor. He or she is the only one who can give Man the truth. An auditor is very important in clearing the planet, and this universe. All auditors are appreciated.

I knew that Antonio was a Class 8 auditor, meaning that he had done the highest training level in Scientology. At that time, being a Class 8 was similar to having a Ph.D. in any other subject.

After my experience this morning, I was more ready to believe that maybe what Hubbard was saying in this policy was true. I smiled to myself. It was reassuring to know that Antonio was my friend. From the beginning he had taken a fatherly interest in me. And we shared a common interest in the piano. Antonio, I soon discovered, was a brilliant concert pianist. I continued on in my reading.

> Scientology is a science of life. It is the first entirely Western effort to understand life. All earlier efforts came from Asia or Eastern Europe. And they failed. None of them gave greater security. None of them could change human behavior for the better. None of them and they bragged about it could change human intelligence. Scientology is something new under the sun, but young as it is, it is still the only completely and thoroughly tested and validated science of existence.
>
> Scientology can and does change human behavior for the better. Scientology can and does increase human intelligence. And Scientology can do other things. It is a science of life and it works. It adequately handles the basic rules of life and it brings order into chaos.

On another page I read,

> In all the broad universe there is no other hope for Man than ourselves.

I kept reading.

> Let us face the reality of this thing. The world confronts several crises. Man’s inhumanity to man is gaining monuments daily. The time to bring a chaos under control is before it is well begun. We’re slightly late as it is. Brutally, there is no other organization on Earth that can slow these down. Factually there is no other know-how on Earth that can plumb the problems of Man. So if we don’t want all of us to be sitting amongst the charred embers, we had better get busy.
>
> This is no alarmist statement you know. We are the people who can confront it. Past civilizations have vanished, you see. The Chaldean, Babylonian, Egyptian, Chinese, Hindu, Greek, Roman, European they did vanish. Those little beaten down peasants you see in France were once the proud Romans. Those small brown men who sell their sisters on the streets of Cairo were once the mighty Egyptians. And it was when those societies looked richest that they had already started down. Like this one.
>
> They all failed because they had no know-how about Man. Wisdom, real wisdom, could have salvaged any one of them. Wisdom can salvage this one. Scientology can smooth the way. But Scientology hasn’t a chance unless we get groups going. You ... can do this.

I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was another girl on the course named Ellie. ‘‘I need someone to do TR 0,’’ she looked at me hopefully. ‘‘Do you have time to do it?’’

‘‘Sure,’’ I agreed. ‘‘It’s not like I’m going anywhere.’’

We spent the rest of the morning staring blissfully into each other’s eyes. I experienced the same sensations as I had the first time I did TR 0 with George. When the Supervisor called lunch break, I was again feeling the expansive serenity and blissed-out timelessness I had before. And by the looks of it, so was Ellie.

‘‘That’s it! Lunch break!’’

I reluctantly came back to earth and shook myself back into more-or-less normal consciousness. As I walked back to the house for lunch, I noticed that the colors once again looked unusually bright. I felt a soaring hopefulness inside. ‘‘Oh, Aileen,’’ I enthused, as I took my place at the table, ‘‘I’m so happy to be in Scientology. I just want everyone to know about it. Do you know what I mean?’’

‘‘Yes, dear,’’ Aileen gazed at me fondly. ‘‘And I’ve been meaning to talk to you. Antonio and I have been talking and we’d like you to consider joining us in the Sea Org. That’s the most effective way to make a difference in this world. We'll talk about it later.'' She and Antonio traded glances.

''The Sea Org,'' I thought excitedly. I had heard many stories in the past few days about the adventures to be had as a part of the most elite group in Scientology. I had noticed a poster on the wall at the center. There was the picture of a large ship with many smiling faces waving from the deck. ''Be the elite of planet Earth, the cream of the cream. Join the Sea Org.'' Why not? I thought, as I served myself some vegetables. What do I have to lose? It would be an adventure.

I was still lost in fantasy when the Supervisor called ''That's it!'' to start the afternoon session. I turned back to my study pack and determined to keep my mind on what I was reading.

> We are the only people and the only organization on Earth which have the technology and the ambition to attempt a clarification of situations which in other hands are considered entirely out of control, to wit, the atomic bomb and the decay and confusion of societies.

I turned another page.

> Scientology is today around the world, represented on every continent on Earth. As you read this, this very book is being translated into many non-English tongues and is being distributed to nations whose thronging multi-millions have never before been touched by Anglo-American thought.
>
> The use or neglect of this material may well determine the use or neglect of the atomic bomb by Man. Scientology is already winning in this field. In the same period in history, two of the most sweeping forces Man has known have come to fruition: a knowledge of himself and others with Scientology, and a means of destroying himself and all others by atomic fission. Which force wins depends in a large measure on your use of Scientology.
>
> There is not much Earth time. We must work.
>
> The mission of Scientology is not conquest it is civilization. It is a war upon stupidity, the stupidity which leads us toward the Last War of All.
>
> With Scientology man can prevent insanity, criminality and war. It is for man to use. It is for the betterment of man. The primary race of Earth is not between one nation and another today. The only race that matters at this moment is the one being run between Scientology and the atomic bomb. The history of man, as has been said by well-known authorities, may well depend upon which one wins.

I turned another page and continued to read.

> Where Earth pursues her gentle way in her orbit about the sun today there will be a black orb seared, scorched and defaced with ruin, its air polluted with radiation, its surface gouged by pocks, the skeletons of its cities standing black and ruined against a sun which was allowed to set upon the Anglo-American civilization. Perhaps there are other planets, perhaps there will be other times, but here we are right now, our urgings and our strivings ought to carry forward the civilization which we have about us. Perhaps it would be better to start all over and make another one. I do not happen to think so. I think that we can and will continue to create this civilization and continue to bring Man through despite his folly. We know how and we can do it. It is up to us. It is up to you and only then we can say with honesty that it is up to Man.
>
> Later on, if we make it, what will be your answer to this question: ''Did you help?''

I sat there for a few minutes, lost in thought. I thought back to my life at the university. What was I doing, I wondered. Where was I going? Was there any purpose to my life? The answer was no. Here was something important that I could do to make a difference in the world. What was my dream before? Becoming a music teacher? But here I could help save the world from a possible nuclear disaster. Which was more important?

The answer was already in my mind. It was not a choice. Music could wait. The decision was made. I would join the Sea Org!

I couldn't wait for the break so I could tell Antonio and Aileen. I knew they would be happy. For me it would almost be like having a family. Antonio and Aileen were already closer to me than my real parents had been. They were my spiritual parents. I felt happy and secure. Joining the Sea Org would be like joining a family. Signing the papers would just be a formality. Because the reality was, that in my soul, I already was a part of the family. I belonged.

''That's it! Break! Fifteen minutes!'' The usual sounds of chairs scraping the floor as everyone headed outside.

''Antonio,'' I approached him with a smile. ''I've decided. I'm joining the Sea Org!''

''That's wonderful,'' he was sincere. ''Let's go share the good news with Aileen.'' We headed toward the office in the back.

Aileen looked up with surprise. ''Aileen,'' I said breathlessly, ''I'm joining. I want to join the Sea Org. I want to help.''

Aileen clapped her hands and came over and hugged me. ''My dear, that's wonderful,'' she said warmly. ''And I guarantee that you will never be sorry. You have made a very good decision. And we're delighted to have you. Antonio and I were both hoping that you would come to this decision, but we didn't think it would be so soon! Congratulations!''

''So what do I have to do to join?'' I asked eagerly.

''Well, there are just a few things we have to take care of.'' Aileen pulled some papers from her desk. ''We have to go over this questionnaire just to make sure that you don't have any incomplete cycles anywhere out in the world.'' And she started asking me questions.

Did I have any debts? No, I answered truthfully.

Any legal problems? No.

Would anyone in my family oppose my decision? I thought about my parents. They might not be happy about this latest turn of events, but I knew they would never try to prevent me from doing something I really wanted to do. No, I said to Aileen.

Did I own any property? Did I have children? No. No.

Was there anything at all that would interfere with me becoming a full time Scientology staff person? No, none whatever, I said, brimming with eagerness. ''Well, all right, everything seems to be fine.'' Aileen signed the questionnaire and pulled out another paper from her desk.

''Are you ready to sign your contract?'' she smiled at me proudly as she handed me the official looking form printed on white bond legal paper. At the top was the Sea Org symbol of two olive branches surrounding a star, printed in gold. Then in very large letters: ''Flag Service Org, SEA ORGANIZATION, Contract of Employment.''

Beneath that were two seahorses printed in gold flanking a paragraph which read:

> I, __________________, DO HEREBY AGREE to enter into employment with the SEA ORGANIZATION and, being of sound mind, do fully realize and agree to abide by its purpose which is to get ETHICS IN on this PLANET AND UNIVERSE and, fully and without reservation, subscribe to the discipline, mores and conditions of this group and pledge to abide by them.
>
> THEREFORE, I CONTRACT MYSELF TO THE SEA ORGANIZATION FOR THE NEXT BILLION YEARS.

Then there were lines for signatures.

I looked at it again. I wasn't seeing things. I looked up at Antonio and Aileen, perplexed.

''A billion years?'' I asked. ''Why a billion years?''

Antonio looked across at Aileen. ''That's because Ron thinks it will take at least that long to clear the entire universe. After this planet is clear, there are hundreds of thousands of other planets to clear as well. He just wants to be sure that your loyalty is certain. If you're not ready to commit to a billion years, then you're probably not ready to join the Sea Org,'' he looked at me seriously.

''I think what it is also,'' Aileen interrupted, ''is that being a Sea Org member is not an easy life. There can be some tough times. If you're not with us 100%, if you're not ready to make a life and death commitment, then you won't succeed as a Sea Org member. This is a big decision.''

I swallowed. I thought again about Michigan and school. I thought about my family.

''Well,'' I said, starting to laugh, ''I've never thought this far into the future before. I'm not used to thinking in terms of a billion years. You don't have any shorter contracts? Like maybe just a few thousand years for a start?''

Neither Antonio nor Aileen smiled. ''At the regular Orgs,'' Antonio explained, ''like the L.A. Org, there are shorter contracts. You can sign up for either two and a half or five years. But in the Sea Org there's just one contract. This is it.''

I sat silently for a minute, then slowly picked up the pen on the desk. ''Well, here goes,'' I signed on the blue line. I tried to comprehend a billion years, but my mind got lost after the first few million. ''I'm in.''

''Splendid,'' Aileen signed her name on the line below. Then Antonio signed as the second witness.

''It's official,'' Aileen gave a satisfied sigh. ''Welcome to the Sea Org, dear. We're glad to have you aboard.'' Antonio shook my hand. ''Let's all go have lunch,'' he suggested. ''At a real restaurant. To celebrate.''

It was hard to think clearly that afternoon, my mind trying to comprehend the enormity of the contract I had just signed. A week ago, I realized with a shock of surprise, I was sitting in class in Ann Arbor worried about my grades. For a minute I wondered if maybe I had died and progressed to an entirely new life. That couldn't possibly be any stranger than my life now. Aileen had given me a packet of materials to read, to begin the indoctrination process into the Sea Org. I turned to the page on top.

''YOUR POST,'' it was titled.

> A post in a Scientology organization isn't a job. It's a trust and a crusade.
>
> We're free men and women probably the last free men and women on Earth. Remember, we'll have to come back to Earth some day no matter what happens to us.
>
> If we don't do a good job now we may never get another chance.
>
> Yes, I'm sure that's the way it is.
>
> So we have an organization, we have a field we must support, we have a chance.
>
> That's more than we had last time night's curtain began to fall on freedom.
>
> So we're using that chance.
>
> An organization such as ours is our best chance to get the most done. So we're doing it!!
>
> Signed, L. Ron Hubbard.

Just before dinner break, there was a surprise announcement by the Supervisor. ''There will be no class tonight,'' she said, giving no explanation. ''Class dismissed.''

Antonio came up to me as I was packing up my things. ''Why don't you come over for dinner,'' he invited. ''We have a surprise for you tonight.''

''And you're not going to tell me what it is, right?'' I looked at him mischieviously.

''I'm afraid you're just going to have to wait,'' his eyes were twinkling. I walked across Alvarado Park with Antonio and Aileen. I was appalled to find that the beautiful park was populated by hundreds of alcoholics, many sleeping on benches or sprawled on the ground.

Antonio and Aileen shared a small apartment on the other side of the park. As we entered I was surprised to see a concert size grand piano in the living room. ''Oh, Antonio,'' I begged, ''play something.''

''Just for a few minutes,'' Antonio obliged. ''We have plans tonight and we don't want to be late.'' He sat down and began to play a Scarlatti sonata. I had never heard Scarlatti played so lightly and effervescently.

''That's wonderful,'' I enthused when he had finished. ''It sparkles. Please, play some more.''

Antonio started into a piece that I wasn't familiar with. It sounded like Liszt, but it was a piece I hadn't heard before. It sounded like a dance, I thought, as Antonio played effortlessly through the complex and brilliant passages. ''Oh, that was wonderful.'' I was enthralled by his playing. ''I just want to stay and listen to you play all night. We don't have to go out,'' I pleaded.

''Oh, yes, we do,'' Antonio laughed. ''By the way, anytime you want to come over here in your free time and use the piano you're welcome to. Julie told us that you're a very accomplished pianist yourself. Next time you come over, when we have more time, we'll listen to you play too.''

''It can wait,'' I laughed. ''There's no way I would play now after what I just heard.''

We had a pleasant dinner in the tiny kitchen. Antonio was entertaining, and told funny stories about recent happenings at the center. After dinner I helped Aileen with the dishes and asked her about her life before she joined Scientology.

It turned out that Aileen was from Australia where she had been a schoolteacher before being introduced to Scientology by a friend. She had joined the Sea Org immediately, ''almost the way you have,'' she said, as she looked at me fondly. She spent several years with ''Ron'' on the ship, serving as one of his closest assistants.

''What is he really like?'' I asked her eagerly.

''Oh, he's just the most wonderful man you could imagine,'' she looked at me wistfully. ''I hope you have a chance to meet him someday. He is very powerful. When you are near him, you can just feel the power he exudes. And he is so caring. He really cares about all of us. It was his idea to start Celebrity Center. He believes that artists are special, and that they should have their own center. A protected place where they can create in a safe space.''

I was about to ask her another question when Antonio interrupted. ''Time to be off,'' he announced.

Then we headed back through the park.

We reached Celebrity Center just as it was beginning to get dark. A crowd of people was thronging outside the center, slowly making their way inside. ''CLEAR NIGHT,'' I read the sign on the door. ''ONLY CLEARS AND ABOVE CAN ENTER.''

I looked at Antonio questioningly. ''You're with us,'' he assured me. ''No one will ask any questions. Just act as if you belong.''

Aileen had already disappeared into the crowd. Antonio maneuvered over to the far wall where there was more space. There was a ledge against the wall. I quickly climbed up. I would have a good view of the stage.

The curtain behind the classroom had been pulled back to reveal a wide stage and a large open area in which chairs had been set up. Most of the chairs were already filled. A large picture of Hubbard hung on the curtain behind the stage.

I looked around the room. Most of the people seemed to be young, in their twenties or thirties. Many of them were wearing unconventional clothing, colorful and ''artsy.'' There was a feeling of subdued excitement in the air. There was a murmur of voices as people made their way to their seats and exchanged greetings with friends.

The air was warm and close in the room. There was the humid sensation of too many bodies in the room. I wiped beads of perspiration from my forehead. Suddenly Aileen appeared on the stage. She was greeted with riotous applause. Her popularity was very evident. The clapping went on for a long time. Finally the noise died down.

''Welcome to Clear Night,'' Aileen greeted the audience. ''We have some exciting surprises for you tonight which I know you will enjoy. I am so delighted to see you all and so happy that each one of you could be with us tonight. This is going to be a very special night.

''Now the first thing we are going to do tonight is to introduce our new Clears, everyone who has gone Clear since our last Clear night. And here to introduce them is our special guest, John McMaster!''

There were gasps in the audience. John McMaster was the revered saint of Scientology, the first Clear. His name was well known to everyone in Scientology.

As he entered, a slim figure in a white turtleneck sweater and dark suit, complimenting his clear complexion and pearly white hair, the audience stood of one accord to their feet and began a rhythmical applause. Shouts rose from the audience.

Again, it took minutes for the applause to die down.

John McMaster began to speak in a soft and gentle, yet compelling voice. Everyone strained to hear each word. He greeted everyone, then began to speak about the ship where Ron was, where he had just come from. ‘‘Ron sends all his love and his best postulates to all of you,’’ he said. ‘‘He wants you to know that he is very proud of what you are all doing to expedite the spread of Scientology across the globe. As artists you each have a vital function in this work, and as artists you have many unique opportunities to share this wonderful knowledge with those in the world who are ready to receive it. And Ron wants you to know that he appreciates what each and every one of you is doing to make this world a better place for everyone, and a safe space in which all men, including artists, can be free to live and to create. And he wanted me to tell you that he loves you all.’’

As he paused, a cheer went up from the audience. Then there was more applause.

McMaster continued with stories about life aboard the ship, and with recent ‘‘wins’’ that Scientology was having all over the world. ‘‘It is only a matter of time until we will achieve a Clear planet, on which to create our New Civilization. Then the aims which Hubbard laid out at the beginning of this great journey will be achieved for all mankind. A world free of illness, insanity, and war. A brave New Civilization where man is free to achieve his dreams. A world which we can proudly pass on to our children, knowing that the nightmares of the past will be dreamt no more.’’

He paused again for applause.

‘‘And now,’’ he continued, ‘‘what you have all been waiting for. We have the list of all those who have become Clear in the past month. Aileen and I will read them off one by one, and they can come forward to receive their certificates. Here we go.’’

Aileen came up to the mike. ‘‘And the first Clear is,’’ she paused for effect, ‘‘Michael Ryan.’’

A young man in the first row bounded up on the stage. Aileen handed him his certificate and hugged him. She handed him the microphone.

‘‘Wow, you guys,’’ he addressed the audience. ‘‘I’m telling you, you have all got to do this. This is the most far out experience you can imagine. I knew it would be good, but it’s even more than I ever imagined. I am so keyed-out. I feel like I am sitting on top of this planet. And I know that nothing, nothing is going to get me at effect ever again.’’ He turned to the picture of Hubbard.

‘‘Thanks, Ron, for this incredible gift.’’ He handed the mike back to Aileen and bounded back into the audience. The audience greeted him with cheers and more rhythmic applause.

John McMaster read off the name of the next new Clear, ‘‘Nancy Stephenson.’’ A young girl walked gracefully up to him to receive her certificate. She took the mike from him and looked shyly at the audience.

‘‘I have been in Scientology for almost a decade,’’ she said softly in a European accent. ‘‘It has been my privilege to work with Ron at Saint Hill and also on the ship. I knew when I found Scientology that I had found my new family. And I have seen miracles through the tech like you all have. I can’t really express how it feels to be Clear. I guess if you were to imagine the best that you ever felt in your life, then you would have to imagine something ten times that good and you would have an idea of Clear. Now that I’m Clear I just want to work to bring this miraculous tech to the rest of the planet.’’

More applause.

Several more Clear completions made their way to the stage to get their certificates. The speeches became increasingly more fantastic. One man, who looked to be in his thirties, told of the experiences he was having with exteriorization.

‘‘You won’t believe this,’’ he told the spellbound audience, ‘‘but after I put the body to bed at night, I let the body go to sleep, then I slip out and I can go anywhere on the planet I want to. Last night I dove through the waves in the Bahamas. I went over to London and amused myself for awhile. Then I took off into space and travelled to several planets far from earth. You won’t believe it until you do this for yourself. All I can tell you is that the tech is there. Ron has laid it all out for us. All we have to do is walk the road he has given us. This really is the road to total freedom.’’ He retired to the sound of wild applause.

There were more incredible stories. One man spoke of leaving his body at night and of preventing a murder in a nearby room. He was able to telepathically disarm the killer and frighten him from the scene. Another person told about moving the clouds and making changes in the weather over the city.

And yet another Clear reported that he was able to bring about a triple expansion in his business by using the power of his ‘‘postulates.’’ At the end of the speeches Aileen came to the stage.

‘‘And now,’’ she turned to the large portrait of Hubbard on the curtain serving as a backdrop to the stage, ‘‘let’s give honor to the man who has made this all possible, L. Ron Hubbard.’’

Instantly, everyone in the audience rose to their feet.

‘‘Hip, hip, hooray!’’ they shouted, raising their right arms into the air on the last syllable.

‘‘Hip, hip, hooray!’’ saluting the larger than lifesized picture of Ron.

‘‘Hip, hip, hooray!’’ they shouted again, then broke into wild applause.

I looked back at Antonio. ‘‘Is this for real?’’ I asked him.

‘‘Yes,’’ he smiled, ‘‘it’s for real.’’

Aileen was signalling for quiet.

‘‘Now,’’ she smiled serenely at the audience, ‘‘we are going to have some group processing. And after that, a special surprise. Antonio is going to entertain us with some special music.’’

The crowd was quieting down.

‘‘Now, we’re going to start with some havingness processing.’’

I turned around to Antonio, about to ask him a question, but he motioned for me to be silent.

‘‘OK,’’ Aileen began, ‘‘Spot a spot in the room.’’ Silence.

Spot a spot? I wondered if I was missing something. Just spot a spot? How do you do that?

Everyone in the audience was silent. I guess, I thought, you just pick a place in the space in the room and concentrate on it. So I tried it. Nothing happened.

‘‘Now,’’ Aileen gave the next command, ‘‘spot another spot in the room.’’ More silence.

‘‘Now spot a spot on the floor.’’ Heads looked down at the floor.

‘‘Spot a spot on the front wall.’’ More silence.

She continued to give commands. The audience was silent, obeying her commands.

‘‘Now, without turning around, spot a spot on the back wall.’’

‘‘Now, spot a spot in your body.’’

‘‘Spot another spot in your body.’’

‘‘Spot another spot in the room.’’

This went on for several minutes. There was no sound from the audience. Then Aileen changed the commands.

‘‘Now we are going to take a tour of the universe,’’ she announced. ‘‘Here are your commands.’’

‘‘First, be near the Earth.’’ As before, the audience silently followed her commands.

‘‘OK, now be near the moon.’’ Several seconds of silence.

‘‘Be near the sun.’’ Silence.

‘‘Be near the moon.’’ Silence.

‘‘Now find a rock.’’ Silence.

‘‘Be inside of it.’’ Silence.

‘‘Be outside of it.’’ The commands continued.

‘‘Be in the center of the earth.’’

‘‘Be near Mars.’’

‘‘Be at the center of Mars.’’

‘‘Be on the surface of Mars.’’

She gave similar commands with other planets.

‘‘Now,’’ she continued, in a voice that was having a hypnotic effect on the audience, ‘‘close your eyes and locate an upper corner of the room behind you.’’ There was silence.

‘‘Now locate the other upper corner behind you.’’

‘‘All right, hold on to these two corners and don’t think.’’

‘‘Now find the third corner behind you.’’

‘‘Now find the fourth back corner.’’

‘‘Now hold on to all eight corners of the room. Sit back and don’t think.’’ There was a long period of silence. I was trying to follow the commands, concentrating mentally on the corners of the room. I wanted to ask someone some questions about what we were doing, but I knew this wasn’t the time to ask.

‘‘Now,’’ Aileen’s voice sounded brighter, ‘‘find someone near you and tell them something about themselves that you like.’’

There was noise in the room as everyone followed the command.

I looked at Antonio. ‘‘I really like your piano playing,’’ I told him.

‘‘And I like your enthusiasm,’’ he smiled back at me.

‘‘Now, find someone else in the room and tell them something that you like about them.’’

More noise as the audience complied.

‘‘Stay here,’’ Antonio commanded me. ‘‘I have to go up front.’’ He disappeared into the crowd in the back of the room.

The air in the room was stifling, I thought. I’m glad I’m not claustrophobic. The humidity was intense and the temperature was rising from the closeness of so many bodies packed into the room.

Aileen ended the group processing and called Antonio up onto the stage. He was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

He sat down at the piano. He played a few Scarlatti pieces, obviously I thought, a specialty of his. Then he played some Chopin pieces, some preludes and a Mazurka.

Then he stopped, and waited for silence from the audience.

He turned to the audience. ‘‘Space music,’’ he announced with a smile. He looked back at me and winked.

Then he started to improvise. I just sat back and enjoyed the music. It was music that was unlike any I had ever heard before. It was pure sound. It was easy to let my mind wander and visualize scenes in distant space, mysterious planets, the milky hazy of galaxies, shooting stars hurtling through space. I listened admiringly to the impressionistic sounds he was getting from the piano, wondering how he was able to create such effects. Far too soon, the music was over.

The audience jumped to their feet, calling Antonio back for several curtain calls.

Aileen came back out on stage with Antonio and once more she turned to the picture of Ron on the back wall. The audience was once more clapping rhythmically.

‘‘Hip, hip, hooray!’’ they shouted once more with wild applause.

‘‘Hip, hip, hooray!’’

‘‘Hip, hip, hooray!’’

The clapping went on for a long, long time. I glanced down at my watch. It was nearly midnight.

Antonio reappeared at my side.

‘‘Well,’’ he teased me, ‘‘how did you like it?’’

‘‘Oh, Antonio, this was really great. I loved your playing. Especially the space music. I wanted to listen to you all night.’’

People were beginning to filter out the narrow doorway.

I said goodbye to Antonio and walked back to the house.

Whatever the priorities had been in my life just hours ago, they were now replaced with a single driving ambition against which all other goals dwarfed in importance.

I looked up at the stars in the bright western sky.

Only one thing was important now.

I wanted to be a Clear!

Chapter 7
The Date of the Incident Is 520 B.C.

‘‘Miss Wakefield.’’

I was startled. I looked up from the policy letter I had been engrossed in to find the Course Supervisor standing beside me. At her side was a slim girl with thick red hair.

‘‘This is Kim. She is looking for a PC (preclear). I’ve looked in your folder and you are eligible for Dianetic auditing.’’

‘‘Great!’’ I was anxious to get started on the road to Clear. Part of being a student on the Dianetics course meant that in addition to auditing others (3 successful sessions were required to complete the course), the student would also receive auditing from another student. This was my chance! We walked to Kim’s small apartment several blocks away, exchanging small talk on the way.

At the apartment, Kim’s E-meter was already set up at a table in the living room.

‘‘Have a seat,’’ Kim offered. She sat down and began to adjust the E-meter in preparation for the session.

‘‘Pick up the cans, please,’’ she instructed, as she continued to adjust the meter.

‘‘First we’re going to check your rudiments,’’ she informed me. I looked at her blankly.

‘‘Here,’’ she handed me the Scientology dictionary.

‘‘A rudiment,’’ I read, ‘‘is that which is used to get the PC in shape to be audited.’’ Rudiments, the dictionary explained, consisted of ARC breaks, PTP’s, or W/H’s.

I groaned. ‘‘Why is it,’’ I complained to her, ‘‘that when I read these definitions I end up even more confused?’’

‘‘Which word don’t you understand?’’ Kim asked patiently.

‘‘ARC breaks.’’ I started to look it up in the dictionary without being told. ‘‘ARC. A word from the initial letters of Affinity, Reality, and Communication which together equate to Understanding. It is pronounced by stating its letters, A-R-C.’’

‘‘Now look up ARC break,’’ Kim suggested.

I looked over to the next page. ‘‘ARC break. A sudden drop or cutting of one’s affinity, reality, or communication with someone or something.’’

‘‘I had the idea,’’ I was thinking out loud, ‘‘from listening to people talk around the center that an ARC break meant that you were upset with someone.’’

‘‘Exactly. If you are in ARC with someone, then you have high affinity with them, in other words you like them a lot. You have high reality with them in that you both have a high level of agreement about most things. And you are able to communicate well because of your shared affinity and reality.’’

‘‘Look, think of ARC as a triangle with three points for affinity, reality and communication. All three together add up into understanding. Now if any point of the triangle becomes affected, it will in turn affect the other two points.’’

‘‘So,’’ I was beginning to understand, ‘‘if you disagree with someone about something, which would be a lowering of the reality part of the triangle, then there would be less affinity between you and it would be more difficult to communicate.’’

‘‘Exactly,’’ Kim said. ‘‘And as a result there would be less overall understanding between you. That’s exactly how it works.’’

‘‘And if you decided to stop talking to someone, then you would have less affinity for them and there would be less shared reality between you. And if you had less affinity for someone, say maybe they moved away to a different town, then there would be less communication between you and there would be less shared reality. OK, I think I’ve got it!’’ I felt triumphant.

‘‘Now, are there any other words in the definition that you didn’t understand?’’ Kim asked.

‘‘Yes,’’ I looked back at the definition, ‘‘PTP’s.’’ I turned to the P’s in the dictionary.

> Present Time Problem. A special problem that exists in the physical universe now, on which the PC has his attention fixed.

I looked up at Kim. ‘‘So it’s just a problem, right, something going on in my life right now?’’

‘‘That’s right,’’ Kim replied. ‘‘That’s all there is to it. Now what about W/H’s?’’ (She pronounced it ‘‘withholds.’’)

‘‘I was afraid you were going to ask me that,’’ I laughed, turning to the W’s.

Withhold. A withhold is something that the PC did that he isn't talking about; an unspoken, unannounced transgression against a moral code.

''In other words,'' I paraphrased, ''something bad that I did that I haven't told anyone about. That's easy enough! Now can we audit?''

''Sure, let me just clear your rudiments.'' Kim picked up her pen and began to write on the paper next to her E-meter.

''Do you have an ARC break?'' she looked at me intensely with what I now recognized as TR 0.

''If that means being upset with anyone, no, I'm not upset with anyone. Everyone has been very nice,'' I smiled at her.

''That's clean,'' she said, checking the meter.

''Now, do you have a present time problem?'' she looked again at the meter. ''That reads,'' she looked over at me. ''Is there a problem in your life right now?''

''Yes, I guess the fact that I don't have any money. There are some things I need to buy, but I spent all my money on the course. I guess I could call my dad and ask him to send me a small spending allowance. That would solve the problem,'' I looked over at Kim.

''That's clean,'' she replied, looking down at the meter.

''Now, do you have any withholds? I get a big read on that. Can you tell me about that?''

''Yeah, I know exactly what it is. I haven't told my parents about my joining the Sea Org. I just don't know how to explain it to them. I mean how do you tell your parents that you just signed up for a billion years in someone's private navy?'' I laughed. I thought for a minute. ''Maybe I could just tell them that I am working out here for Celebrity Center and just not mention the billion years right away. They wouldn't understand it anyway.'' I was suddenly aware of how much my thinking had changed in one short week. Things that were important a week ago were much different than the things which were important now.

I sighed. ''How do you explain something like Scientology to your parents? Or for that matter to anyone who doesn't know anything about it? It's not exactly easy to explain.''

''OK,'' Kim replied, keeping her TR's in. I knew that according to the TR's, she wasn't allowed to do anything other than just acknowledge what I had originated.

''Well, I'd like to indicate that you had charge on 'telling your parents about joining the Sea Org,''' Kim looked down at the meter. ''Your needle is floating. We can now begin Dianetics.''

''I'm ready!'' I looked over at her brightly.

''OK, according to your last session, which was a touch assist you had with Antonio, you complained of a migraine headache. Are there any feelings connected with that?''

I knew by now that in Dianetics, you could only ''run'' actual feelings. ''Migraine headache'' was too broad a concept to run as a Dianetic item. ''Yes, the feeling is a pain on the top front of my head,'' I responded. ''OK, yes, you got a big read on that. We will run the item, 'a pain on the top front of my head,''' Kim announced.

''Now, locate an incident containing 'a pain on the top front of your head,''' she commanded.

''Yesterday,'' I volunteered.

''All right. How long did it last?'' she asked.

''Just a couple of hours. It went away while Antonio was doing the touch assist.''

''OK, move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there,'' came the next command.

''I'm there,'' I said obediently.

''Thank you. What do you see?''

''I see me waking up in the morning with this pain in my head,'' I responded, my eyes closed, concentrating on the memory.

''All right. Scan through to the end of the incident and tell me what happened.''

''Well, I got up, took a shower, and went over to the center to find Antonio. He gave me a touch assist and the headache went away,'' I told her, the image growing more and more vivid in my mind.

''Is the incident erasing or going more solid?'' she asked.

''It's definitely more solid,'' I replied.

''All right. Locate an earlier incident containing a pain in the top front of your head.''

Another picture came to my mind. ''OK,'' I said, my eyes still closed. ''This happened a long time ago.''

''When was it?'' Kim asked softly.

''It was when I was about four.'' Strange, I thought, I can visualize this picture as clearly as if it happened yesterday.

''OK. How long did it last?''

''A few hours. I had to have some stitches in my forehead,'' I answered her.

''Move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there.''

''OK, I'm there,'' the picture was getting more vivid.

''Scan through to the end of the incident and tell me what happened,'' she commanded gently.

''Well, I was four and I was playing with my brother when he hit me in the head with a toy shovel. He hit me really hard. I had to have several stitches in my forehead.'' I continued to look at the colorful image in my mind.

''Is the incident erasing or going more solid?'' she asked.

''Well, I guess it's more solid. I can see it quite vividly,'' I answered her, my eyes still closed.

''All right. Locate an earlier incident containing a pain in the top front of your head.''

I looked into the darkness. ''There's nothing there,'' I told her.

''OK,'' she answered. ''Just keep looking. Just tell me if anything comes to your mind.''

I continued to peer into the darkness. ''I just don't see anything at all,'' I told her honestly.

''All right. Let's go back to the incident with your brother. Is that incident erasing or going more solid?'' she asked.

''Well, I can still see that one quite clearly,'' I replied.

''OK, then just see if anything comes to your mind,'' she said, repeating the last command.

''Well, I just see blackness. I can't see anything. Nothing is coming to my mind.'' I opened my eyes and blinked at Kim.

''All right,'' she smiled at me. ''We're going to take a break so that I can get some instructions from the C/S.''

''Did I do something wrong?'' I had the feeling that things hadn't gone the way they should have.

''No,'' she said as she started to pack up her things. ''Sometimes people have trouble at first seeing their past lives. You might have to go for a Review.''

''Review?'' I asked.

''Yes, there are some special remedies for people who have trouble seeing their past lives. But it doesn't take long, and then I can take you back into session.''

We walked back to the center, not talking much on the way back. I had the nagging feeling that I had failed and that Kim was disappointed in me, although she didn't say anything to lead me to that belief.

Back on course, I opened up my study pack to where I had left off. I was just beginning the last section of the course which was called Dianetic Theory. There was a short book to read called *Dianetics, Evolution of a Science*, by Hubbard. In it, he defines some of the basic Dianetic concepts.

The analytical mind, he writes, functions much like a computer. It has color-visio, tone-audio, odor, tactile and organic memory recall. ''It should be able to recall any perception, even the trivial, asleep and awake from the beginning of life to death.''

The mind, he says, is actually composed of the memory banks, filed by time. These banks ''contain a complete color-video record of a person's whole life. Every perception observed in a lifetime is to be found in the banks.''

Then why can't we remember everything?

The answer, according to Hubbard, is the existence of the reactive mind, the record of all painful experiences from a lifetime. Each picture in the reactive mind has as its content pain and/or unconsciousness. It is this mind which keeps the analytical mind from functioning at an optimal level. But, he says, through auditing the reactive mind can be erased.

The memories in the reactive mind are called ''engrams'' in Dianetics. They can be restimulated later in life by events with similar content.

For example, if two-year-old Mary is knocked over and bitten on the arm by a black dog, seeing a black dog thirty years later might restimulate a mysterious pain in the arm.

According to Dianetic theory, when the person, through auditing, makes the connection between the pain in the arm and the earlier memory and is able to relive the earlier memory, the pain will go away.

According to Hubbard, 90% of all illnesses are psychosomatic in nature, and all will submit to the Dianetic technique. At least, that is the promise of Dianetics.

At the end of the book I found a familiar sounding passage. ''Man's efforts'' writes Hubbard,

> to free man by enslaving him in social and personal aberrations was the wrong equation. The road to nowhere. In the ages past the hold of this slavery of aberration has been broken by the opening up of new lands and the appearance of new races.
>
> But now we've got a science to break it and a technology to be applied.
>
> Up there are the stars. Down in the arsenal is an atom bomb.
>
> Which one is it going to be?

Next I began to read the book *Dianetics: Modern Science of Mental Health*, by Hubbard. On the inside flap of the book jacket I read,

> Dianetic therapy is a new science which works with the invariability of physical science in the field of the human mind. DIANETICS will help the reader to eliminate any psychosomatic illness. DIANETICS will help the reader to achieve up to one third more efficiency than present capacity. DIANETICS is the most advanced and the most clearly presented method of psychotherapy and self-improvement ever discovered.
>
> Psychosomatic ills such as arthritis, migraine, ulcers, allergies, asthma, coronary difficulties (psychosomatic about one third of all heart trouble cases), tendonitis, bursitis, hysterical paralysis, eye trouble have all responded as intended by the therapist, without failure in any case.

In the introduction to the book, the promises continue.

> The creation of Dianetics is a milestone for Man com-

> parable to his discovery of fire and superior to his inventions of the wheel and the arch.
>
> Dianetics, (from the Greek dianoua, meaning thought), is the science of the mind. Far simpler than physics or chemistry, it compares with them in the exactness of its axioms and is on a considerably higher echelon of usefulness. The hidden source of all psychosomatic ills and human aberration has been discovered and skills have been developed for their invariable cure.
>
> Dianetics is an adventure. It is an exploration into terra incognita, the human mind, that vast and hitherto unknown region half an inch back of our foreheads.
>
> The discoveries and developments which made the formulation of Dianetics possible occupied many years of exact research and careful testing. The trail is blazed, the routes are sufficiently mapped for you to voyage in safety into your own mind and recover there your full inherent potential, which is not, we now know, low but very, very high.
>
> You are beginning an adventure. Treat it as an adventure. And may you never be the same again.

The goal of Dianetics is the Clear, described in the book as follows:

> A CLEAR can be tested for any and all psychoses, neuroses, compulsions and repressions (all aberrations) and can be examined for any autogenetic (self-generated) diseases referred to as psychosomatic ills. These tests confirm the CLEAR to be entirely without such ills or aberrations. Additional tests of his intelligence indicate it to be high above the current norm. Observation of his activity demonstrates that he pursues existence with vigor and satisfaction.

The only Clears I knew were Antonio and Aileen, and they certainly seemed to have no problems, I thought.

At lunch, I told Antonio about my session.

''Antonio, I'm confused about past lives. Are there some people in Scientology who just can't remember their past lives?'' I asked, thinking of myself.

''Well, sooner or later it is my experience that everyone will remember their past lives,'' Antonio said. ''For some people it just takes more time.'' When we got back to the center he handed me a book. ''Maybe this will help,'' he said kindly.

I took the book back to my seat. *Have You Lived Before This Life?* the cover read. I opened it to the introduction.

''In the past,'' I started to read,

> the term reincarnation has mystified Man. The definition has been corrupted. The word has been taken to mean to be born again in different life forms, whereas its actual definition is to be born again into the flesh or into another body. In order that there can be rebirth, something must enter in. This is the being, the person himself. It is YOU.
>
> The existence of past lives is proven in Scientology.
>
> An adventure awaits you. It is a journey through restored consciousness of ages past. Once regained, your own natural memory of past experiences can never be blotted from your recollection again. Your journey is completely uninhibited by synthetic experiences, drugs or hypnosis of any form, for it is the process of awakeness or awareness, of restored knowledge and clarity of being.
>
> With Scientology you are the judge of your own certainty in your past experiences, because you will know for yourself without reservation what they are. After all, you were there!
>
> The concept of reincarnation and Man's belief in the past and future continuum is as old as Man himself. It can be traced to the beginnings of thirty-one primitive cultures and has dominated almost every religion through history as a pivotal belief.
>
> The Egyptians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jainists, Sikhists, Brahmans, NeoPlatonists, Christians, Romans, Jews and Gnostics all believed in reincarnation and the rebirth cycle.
>
> It was a fundamental belief in the Roman Catholic Church until 553 AD when a company of four monks held the Synod of Constantinople, (without the Pope present) and decided the belief could not exist. They condemned the teachings of reincarnation as heresy and it was at this time that references to it were expunged from the Bible.
>
> Without reference to the subject as the written word, the belief fell to the mystics and spiritualists of the middle ages. These too, were defeated, but the belief persisted and again was rediscovered in the 19th century in the beginnings of psychology.
>
> Freud and Jung acknowledged Man's belief in his own immortality and reincarnation. Their mistake was only in assigning this basic truth to imagination or fantasy.
>
> Today in Scientology, the stigma of the subject has been erased and verification of the existence of past lives is fact.
>
> Through reading this book it is hoped that you will rediscover for yourself the verity of your own existence, no matter how long ago forgotten.
>
> To some these facts may come as a surprise. To others it may be as casual as looking at an old photo album. But to everyone it will be a unique and enlightening adventure into the past, all in the course of discovering a brighter future.

The book consisted of forty two case histories, all of which had been resolved by the remembering of past lives.

I read through some of the case histories.

In one account of a man who complained of chronic fatigue, the problem was resolved when the person remembered having been a coolie in 19th century China.

Another case history reported,

> This takes place nine galaxy periods ago. I was a male, born of space parents. At the age of five I was already on the lookout for brothels. At nine years of age I asked my father if I could join the space academy. However, this does not occur until I am fourteen. When I am sixteen I kill my father while fighting on the planet and I join a space ship. I learn all about space ship drills, take-offs, etc. There is homosexuality, as only officers are allowed women.

In another case, the engram ‘‘started on a planet of perfection 1,600 years ago. By that I mean everything was orderly and routine. My part on this planet was a sort of engineer in a big power house that supplied the energy by means of beams to feed the machines that were in use for the welfare of the people.’’ The person is eventually killed with a space pistol.

In yet another history, ‘‘The incident was located on the E-meter and has happened 3,225 years ago. I was positioned in North Africa near the coast. I was the leader of that sector of the Roman Army. There were only five such sectors in existence, reaching around the coast to Europe.’’ The person later died a mysterious death by inhaling a powder emitted by a white circular object in a cave.

In another report the person said that the incident was ‘‘55,000,000,000,000,000,000 years ago. I was in the sea and had thoughts only for Manta rays....’’

Another history took place in Italian Somaliland in South Africa in the 17th or 18th century. Another one was in Tibet in 1500 AD. Another took place in 11th century Norway. Another was a monk in England in 1703. Another one experienced a death 2,000,000,000 years ago when he landed by mistake on a planet which had been taken over by ‘‘black magic operators.’’ When break was called, I went out and sat by myself at the end of the community log. Kris came over to me.

‘‘You're awfully quiet today. What's up?’’ She sat down next to me.

‘‘It's all this past life stuff,’’ I shook my head. ‘‘I just can't seem to see them. I had a session this morning. When the auditor told me to find an earlier incident, all I could see was darkness. I don't know. I'm not sure whether to believe in this stuff or not.’’ I looked at her with a troubled expression.

‘‘Well, I had trouble at first,’’ Kris admitted. ‘‘But after a while I just started seeing them. Once you get used to it it isn't hard at all. But it isn't anything to worry about. I just had the attitude that, well, if I saw anything fine, if I didn't, fine. The only way to know for sure whether they exist for you is just wait and see what happens. No one else can tell you what to believe. Ron even says, ‘‘What's true for you is true for you.’’ Just because something is true for me doesn't mean it will be true for you.’’

‘‘Thanks, I guess.’’ I stared thoughtfully at the sky. ‘‘If they're really there, then I want to see them. If I really did live before, then I want to know who I was.’’

‘‘Don't worry, it'll come,’’ she encouraged me. ‘‘I think almost everyone here had the same problem at first, but you get over it.’’

Just then, I heard my name called from inside the center.

‘‘You are to have a review session,’’ the Supervisor said to me as I approached her desk. ‘‘Down the hall, second room to your right.’’

I followed her directions.

The door was open and a man in his twenties sat with his back to me at a table with an E-meter in the middle of it. I knocked and he looked around. ‘‘Hi,’’ he welcomed me. ‘‘I'm Brad. I'm going to be giving you a review session. Close the door, please.’’ He indicated for me to sit in the chair opposite him.

‘‘You can pick up the cans. We're just going to start where your auditor left off this morning.

‘‘First we'll fly your ruds,’’ he began, then, seeing that I didn't understand, he laughed and said, ‘‘Oh, I'm sorry. That just means I'm going to check your rudiments like your auditor did this morning. ARC break, present time problem, withholds. Remember?’’

‘‘Oh, yeah, I remember. I think everything's OK,’’ I told him.

‘‘Well, we'll just check. Do you have an ARC break? You had a read on that. Any idea what it might be?’’ He looked at me with the now familiar TR 0.

‘‘Well, maybe just that I'm upset that I can't remember my past lives. I've been reading about it all day. Maybe I'm not like everyone else. Maybe I just can't remember,’’ I felt discouraged.

‘‘That's all right. We'll just see what happens. There's nothing to worry about.’’ He seemed unconcerned.

‘‘OK, the feeling you were running was ‘a pain on the top front of your head,’ right? And you remembered an incident when you were four and had stitches in your forehead. Do you remember that incident?’’ he asked me.

‘‘Oh, sure,’’ I replied, closing my eyes. ‘‘I can see it clearly.’’

‘‘OK, is it erasing or becoming more solid?’’ he asked.

‘‘It's very clear, I guess it's getting more solid,’’ I answered, concentrating on the mental image.

‘‘That's good,’’ Brad was reassuring. ‘‘Now locate an earlier incident containing a pain at the top front of your head. Just take your time and tell me about anything that comes to your mind. Anything at all. Even if it seems silly. Just take your time.’’ I was feeling almost hypnotized by his calm, soothing voice.

‘‘That's it,’’ he continued. ‘‘Even if it's just a word that comes to your mind, let me know when you see or think of anything.’’

‘‘All I see is blackness,’’ I said slowly. ‘‘It's black, kind of reddish black. And my head is hurting.’’

‘‘All right,’’ Brad continued gently. ‘‘When was it?’’

‘‘I feel like it might be when I was being born,’’ I answered.

''Good,'' he encouraged me. ''Now how long did it last?''

''I don't know, maybe a couple of hours,'' I guessed.

''OK, now move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there,'' he commanded gently.

''All right, I guess I'm there,'' I answered uncertainly.

''OK, what do you see?'' he asked.

''Well, I just see this reddish blackness, and it seems like I'm inside of something. I feel like something is pressing all over me. And my head is hurting. It feels like something is squeezing me. It's like I'm being born,'' I answered.

''Excellent,'' Brad sounded pleased. ''Now move through the incident to a point two hours later and tell me what happened.''

I visualized a birth scene. ''OK. I just feel this pressure and pain on my head. Then I see this baby being born, and held by the doctor. I see it like I am looking from across the room, but I think it is me that is being born,'' I continued to look at the image in my mind.

''All right!'' Brad sounded genuinely happy. ''Now is the incident erasing or going more solid?''

''More solid, I guess. I can see it pretty clearly,'' I answered him as honestly as I could.

''All right. You're doing fine. Now locate an earlier incident that contains a pain at the top front of your head,'' he commanded firmly.

I looked again into the darkness. I wondered if it was this hard for everyone. I still didn't see anything.

''Nothing. I don't see anything. I'm trying but I don't see anything at all. Just blackness.'' I felt like a failure.

''That's OK,'' Brad encouraged. ''Just keep your eyes closed and tell me anything that comes into your mind. Anything at all. An image, or a word, it can be anything at all. Don't try to force it, let it come up naturally.''

I peered into the darkness in my mind. Then I thought of something. ''A horse. It's a horse. I see a horse,'' I looked at the developing image in my mind.

''OK,'' Brad answered cautiously, ''can you see anything also?''

''I just see this horse. I am riding on it, galloping across a field.''

''Good. That's good,'' Brad said confidently. ''Now, when was it?''

''I don't known. I guess sometime in the eighteenth century,'' I gave the first thing that came into my mind.

''OK, how long did it last?'' Brad asked.

''Not long, I think just a few minutes,'' again, saying the first thing that came to my mind.

''All right. Now move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there.''

I tried to follow his command.

''What do you see?'' he asked me.

''Well, I see myself in this stable. I think it's in England. There is a big stone castle. This man is helping me onto a horse. I think it's my father. I feel like he loves me very much. It seems like he is warning me about something. To be careful. He knows I am still very inexperienced at riding and he is telling me to be careful and not to try to go too fast,'' the picture is developing before my eyes as I speak.

''All right,'' Brad continues quietly, ''now scan through to the end of the incident.''

I sit in silence trying to see the scene before my eyes.

''OK.'' I look up at Brad.

''Tell me what happened.''

I close my eyes again. ''Well, I get on this horse and I am riding across these fields. I am feeling really wonderful. I love the feeling of freedom I have as I ride through the beautiful countryside. We are coming to a brook. I kick the horse, spurring him on to jump over the brook. I lose control. The horse is galloping really fast, and I lose control of the reins. The next thing I know I am falling into the brook, and I hit my head on a rock. I feel the cold water across my face, but then I lose consciousness. I think I died.'' I open my eyes and look up at Brad.

''Do you think that really happened?'' I ask him. ''It's not just my imagination?''

''I am not allowed to evaluate for you,'' Brad says matter of factly. ''That would be a violation of the Auditor's Code. All I can tell you is that what is true for you is true for you. And I am also not allowed to invalidate you. The test of it will be whether your migraines disappear. There may, however, be other somatics involved in your migraines. You will have to audit them one at a time,'' he looked across the table at me and smiled.

''Is the last picture erasing or going more solid?'' he continued with the process.

''I think it's erasing.'' The picture was getting smaller and smaller. I started to laugh. ''One summer my parents took me on vacation to a ranch in Texas. We rode horses every day. I was miserable through that whole vacation. Come to think of it, I had a migraine on that trip. Now I understand why!''

''I would like to indicate that your needle is floating,'' Brad informed me. He continued to smile at me.

''OK, end of session!'' he said in a loud voice.

''You can put down the cans.'' He reached for the cans and turned off his meter.

''Let's go find the examiner,'' he said as he followed me out of the room. At the end of the hall there was a very small room, a closet actually, with the Examiner sign above the door.

I heard a voice, ‘‘Just a minute!’’ and looked back to see a young girl running toward me.

‘‘You first,’’ she pointed me into the room. I sat down and picked up the cans. ‘‘Your needle is floating,’’ she informed me with a smile. ‘‘That’s it,’’ she said and I put down the cans. ‘‘You can go back to class now.’’

I sat down and thought about the session I’d just had. I thought about the girl riding through the English countryside. It seemed real enough, I thought. Is it possible? I remembered how we used to sit and read Edgar Cayce books back at the coffee house. I can’t wait to tell them about this, I thought. I can go back and tell them there is a way they can remember their own past lives. They’ll love it!

After my ‘‘review’’ with Brad, I had no more trouble with past lives.

The next morning I once again followed Kim to her apartment. After we were situated and she had done the required rudiments check, she looked at me earnestly.

‘‘Are there any other feelings associated with having a migraine?’’ she asked.

‘‘Yes,’’ I replied immediately. I get this awful feeling of nausea in my stomach.’’

‘‘That reads,’’ she looked at me triumphantly. ‘‘We’re going to run ‘a feeling of nausea in your stomach.’ ’’

Again we went through the Dianetics procedure, command by command. I was able to recall several times during this lifetime when I had had the nausea. Then she asked for an earlier incident.

‘‘Yeah, I see something. I’m in another city and I’m in a room underground. I’m a prisoner and I’m dying,’’ I answered her.

‘‘When was it?’’ Kim asked.

‘‘I think it was around 520 BC,’’ I answered.

‘‘OK. How long did it last?’’

‘‘It lasted for a couple of hours,’’ I answered, again seeing a picture develop before my eyes.

‘‘Move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there.’’

‘‘OK, I’m there.’’

‘‘All right, scan through to the end of the incident.’’

A few minutes of quiet. ‘‘OK, I’m at the end.’’

‘‘What happened?’’

‘‘I was a prisoner. In Greece. They gave me some poison to drink. It made me really sick to my stomach. Finally I die.’’

‘‘OK, is the incident erasing or going more solid?’’

‘‘More solid.’’

‘‘OK. Locate an earlier incident containing a feeling of nausea in your stomach.’’

I looked into the darkness. This time the picture came right away. It was getting easier and easier.

‘‘I am in some kind of implant station.’’

‘‘All right. What is the date of the incident?’’

‘‘About 35,000 BC.’’

‘‘Good. How long did it last?’’

‘‘Not long. It all happened really fast. A few seconds.’’

‘‘OK. Move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there.’’

‘‘I’m there,’’ I cooperated.

‘‘Good. Now scan through to the end of the incident and tell me what happened.’’

‘‘OK. Well, I am in this implant station. It’s all grey inside. I feel like I am spinning around and around. While I am spinning around I am being shown all these pictures. The spinning gets faster and faster and then I am unconscious. That’s all there is. It’s an implant.’’

The picture is erasing. I open my eyes and look at Kim. ‘‘I guess that’s why I never like carnival rides that go around like that. They make me sick to my stomach.’’

Kim ends the session and we head for the examiner. After one more successful session she will graduate from the course. She is happy.

That was how we did Dianetics. That is how people in Scientology are doing Dianetics today. At different times during my career in Scientology I ‘‘relived’’ a birth in 1896, I served in the French Resistance during the Second World War, I was a soldier in the Roman army in 200 AD, I studied medicine in Egypt, I lived as a caveman in the jungle, I died of the plague in the Middle Ages, I was a prehistoric animal in 14027050, I survived a whole series of interesting implants, I lived many lives and died many deaths on other planets and in other times. I was a villain, a nun, an Indian, an artist, a particle out in space, and many other things. In one life, I learned to my amusement, I did know Beethoven. I filed that away to tell Julie when I saw her again. So that was how we did Dianetics.

That is how 40,000 people in this country and approximately 100,000 people in other countries are doing Dianetics today. ‘‘May you never be the same again,’’ Hubbard hoped for us all. I probably never was.

As the time passed for me in the sheltered and protective womb of Scientology, and as I had more and more auditing, the reality of the ‘‘outside world’’ ceased to exist for me and the only reality I knew or cared about was that contained within Scientology.

The lines between this strange reality and mere fantasy became increasingly blurred over the years as I was subjected to more and more auditing and more and more of the propaganda of Scientology. I eventually regressed to a state of mind that was, for all practical purposes, psychotica psychosis which had its roots in the psychologically destructive, mind numbing and reality-blurring practice of Dianetic auditing that I received during my very first days in Scientology.

Scientology was, for me, truly the road to nowhere.

Chapter 8
Star Trek for Real

Los Angeles, I decided, was a city of contrasts. On my breaks from course, I would frequently wander down to Alvarado Street, to buy a twenty-five cent ice cream from the Jewish delicatessen on the corner of Alvarado and Eighth Streets, or to browse in one of the seedy discount stores on the streets bordering the park. The oppressive squalor of MacArthur Park was a revelation to me. Having been brought up in well scrubbed midwest suburbs, I had never been exposed to the legitimate poverty I was now seeing for the first time.

What irony, I would think each time I walked through the park on my frequent visits to have lunch or dinner with Antonio and Aileen in their small apartment on Lafayette Park Place. The park itself had a pristine quality, with bright flowering bushes in all shades of reds, oranges and yellows blooming unashamedly even in these winter months. Small ponds were laced with white bridges and the grass was a deep and healthy shade of green. But the park and the streets surrounding the park had become the skid row of Los Angeles. Hundreds of alcoholics wandered aimlessly on the streets, begging for the money to satisfy the demonic thirst possessing them. Bag ladies dressed in layers of ragged clothes passed by, pulling their shopping carts and carrying on monologues with invisible companions. The beauty of the small park was endlessly dotted with the figures of drunks who sprawled on the many benches of the park or who were lying on the ground sleeping off the effects of the previous night's binge.

Los Angeles, I later discovered, was most beautiful in the winter months when the smog was not as oppressive as in the late summer and fall. I loved the mountain ridges visible on the distant horizon which seemed to provide a protective presence over the city. I could see the ragged hills to the west with tiny homes nestled into the cliffs. When there was no smog, the city stretched clearly visible for miles in all directions, a seemingly infinite carpet of human habitation.

For the first few months of my adventure in Scientology, my world consisted only of the center, the park, and the apartment on Lafayette Park Place. Yet gradually, my universe began to expand. Occasionally Aileen would grant me welcome absences from course to run errands for her to the other nearby Scientology centers. Sometimes there were envelopes or messages to deliver to the executives at the L.A. ''Org,'' the center on nearby Ninth Street where the Scientology ''lower levels'' were delivered to non-celebrities. The curriculum at the Org was similar to that offered at Celebrity Center: the lower levels of Scientology including Dianetics and the Levels 0 through Level 4. An auditor trained to deliver these levels was known in Scientology as a ''Class 4 auditor.''

In the lobby of the Org was a huge picture of Hubbard in his nautical gear, gazing out benevolently at all who entered the room. Sometimes as I passed through the room I would gaze back in reverence at the portrait, looking into the eyes that seemed to stare right through me. The portrait seemed so lifelike that I often wondered as looked up at my guru if he could read my thoughts or see into my mind as I passed. Did he, like God, know everything about me? I could feel a hundred withholds stirring in my subconscious mind as I passed by the all-seeing visage of Hubbard.

On other errands, I would be sent to the smaller but equally well kept building owned by Scientology on the diagonal corner from the L.A. Org. This was known as the Advanced Org, or ''AO.'' It was in this building that the advanced ''OT levels'' of Scientology were administered. I was only allowed in the lobby of the building. Only those who were on the secret upper levels were allowed access to the rooms further inside the building. In the lobby, the ''OT's'' (people on the OT levels) sat silently, waiting for their next ''C/S,'' instructions for their next auditing session. Everything in the AO was carried on in hushed tones that seemed to imply the presence of activities of extreme significance and secrecy. The staff at the AO were all uniformed Sea Org members. They saluted each other constantly, walked and talked with great briskness, and seemed to be filled with the great importance of their mission.

In contrast was the American Saint Hill Organization, or ''ASHO,'' located several blocks to the north on Temple Street. In comparison to the AO, ASHO seemed somewhat disorganized. It was a much larger building in which Scientologists polished up their auditing skills on the weighty ‘‘Saint Hill Special Briefing Course,’’ which had been developed by Hubbard at his mansion in England called Saint Hill. This course consisted of all the materials of levels 0 through 4 with the addition of hundreds of tape recorded messages from Hubbard. It was rumored that to pass the Briefing Course, a student would have to listen to 600 tape recorded messages of Hubbard each 60 to 90 minutes in length. A person completing the Briefing Course was known in Scientology as a ‘‘Class 6 auditor.’’

At ASHO two important courses were given, Power and Solo, which were the last levels to be done before a person could become Clear.

One day as I was doing an errand for Aileen at ASHO, as I sat in the lobby waiting for a message to deliver back to Aileen, I observed a curious event. Just off the lobby to the right was a door. I saw a uniformed Sea Org member walk up to the door carrying a glass of water and a small plate of what appeared to be bread crusts. The Sea Org member took out a ring of keys from his pocket, unlocked the door, and passed the bread and water to an unknown person on the other side of the door. Then he relocked the door and walked away.

I looked questioningly at the Receptionist who was sitting just across from me.

‘‘Who was that?’’ I asked her.

‘‘Oh, that was the MAA,’’ she responded (which I knew to mean the Master at Arms, or the Ethics Officer).

‘‘Who’s in the closet?’’ I asked curiously.

‘‘It’s just someone writing up his O/W’s,’’ she replied in an unconcerned tone of voice. ‘‘He’s been in there for three days and nights.’’

‘‘Why would it take someone three days and nights to write up his overts and withholds?’’ I asked her. ‘‘How can someone have done that many things wrong?’’

‘‘Because he has to write up his whole track O/W’s,’’ she replied, beginning to be annoyed at my questions. ‘‘He has to write up all the overts and withholds he has had in all his lifetimes. Sometimes that can take days. He can’t come out until the MAA is satisfied that he is totally clean. But it’s worth it, because when he comes out, you will see a totally different person.’’

‘‘I’ll bet,’’ I thought to myself, stunned by this practice. ‘‘What else do they do in the name of Ethics?’’ (Eventually, I was to know the answer to this question.)

Later I asked Antonio about this strange disciplinary procedure.

‘‘Yes,’’ he admitted, ‘‘sometimes it is necessary to be really rough on people. But the tech won’t work on a person unless his ethics are in. If that’s what it takes to get his ethics in, then that’s what it takes. In the long run, it is really doing him a favor. When he comes out of the closet, he will thank the Ethics Officer for helping him get his ethics in.’’

I had to be satisfied with that explanation.

Whenever I went back to ASHO on an errand, I would always glance at the closet and wonder if anyone was inside writing up his O/W’s.

Occasionally Aileen would excuse me from class to go next door to help prepare the lunch or dinner for the fifty or so people who ate at the house on Burlington Street. Unfortunately, that experience was to take away my appetite for many future meals. One of my tasks was to strain the milk for maggots. Another time I went through heads of lettuce that were filled with worms trying to salvage enough usable pieces for a salad.

On another day, Aileen called me into her office and said, ‘‘I want you to go help out at the nursery. They are short staffed.’’

I followed her directions as I walked the twenty or so blocks to a small windowless building on Franklin Street. So this is where they keep the children, I thought to myself, suddenly realizing that I had seen no young children in the weeks I had been in Scientology, even though I knew many of the staff were married. As I passed the fenced back yard, I saw a dozen toddlers wandering around in the dirt, clothed only in diapers. There was no grass in the yard, just several large trees surrounded by dirt. The children had no toys, and were playing with each other or using their hands to draw pictures in the dirt.

I went to the door on the far side of the building on which was a small blue and white sign printed ‘‘Cadet Org, Church of Scientology.’’

I was let in the building, and as I looked around I was greeted by a dismal sight. The walls of the rooms and the hallway surrounding me were painted stark white. The floors were a dull grey and dirty linoleum. There were no pictures on the walls, no decorations of any kind. Wandering in the hallways and in the two rooms I could see several dozen children dressed only in diapers and t-shirts. Most looked as if they had not been bathed recently. Several carried bottles, but most were just wandering in the hallway or sleeping on the bare floor. The rooms were bare of furniture and there were no toys, books, or any of the normal and familiar signs of childhood. I could smell urine in the room, and I heard many small voices crying plaintively. A young girl in a Sea Org uniform came up to me and greeted me. She was one of two staff members in charge of all these children.

''Where do you keep their toys and books?'' I asked the young girl, whose name was Colleen.

''They don't have any,'' she answered in an expressionless voice. ''Children are down statistics, and you don't reward down statistics. That's in the tech.''

''But what do they do all day?'' I asked her noticing that many of the children had a forlorn look about them. I had a sudden instinct to grab as many children as I could and run out the door.

''We just watch them. They play in the back yard. If their parents' stats (statistics) are up, they can come and see their children for a hour or so after dinner.''

''Do they sleep here?'' I asked her.

''Yes, most of them do.'' She showed me a room further down the hallway. In the room were rows of cribs, side by side, about a dozen in all in the small room. ''Some of the Sea Org children stay here, and some are sent to a ranch in Mexico if their parents are going to be on a mission for a long time,'' she explained.

''But don't the parents miss their children?'' I asked.

''Remember,'' she told me severely, ''children are part of the second dynamic. The third dynamic (the group) is more important than the second dynamic. The rule in Scientology is 'the greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics.' Our main purpose in Scientology is to clear the planet. Don't ever forget that. Until the children can begin to work for the group, they are downstats, and they can't be rewarded. Besides, Hubbard says that children are just thetans in small bodies. They are just as responsible as adults. We have to get their ethics in. So we don't reward them until they can produce.''

At that, she led me into a back room in which there was a solitary playpen. In the playpen was a tiny baby, female and horribly deformed. Her face was grotesque and distorted and her body twisted. One leg was shorter than the other, and her arms were abnormally short and not properly formed. ''This is Lisa,'' Colleen informed me. ''Her mother is on staff. She took LSD when she was pregnant.'' She bent over the edge of the pen and stroked the baby's head. The baby seemed to be having trouble breathing and her eyes looked clouded.

''She's blind, but she can hear you. We just talk to her and hold her. But I don't think she's going to live very long.'' Colleen reached down and picked up the poor creature and handed her to me. I spent the rest of the day holding and walking with baby Lisa. I walked around and tried to make contact with some of the other children. They crowded around me, desperate for attention.

At the end of the day, I left the building and walked home, numb with the shock of what I had seen during the day. From that day, whenever I received any money from home, or had any money left from my meager Sea Org pay, I would walk over to the drugstore on Alvarado Street and buy cheap children's books or crayons for the children of the Cadet Org.

I returned to the Cadet Org several days later for another babysitting shift and was told that baby Lisa had died two days earlier.

Another interesting experience in Scientology was my first payday. In Scientology there is the practice known as ''graphing one's stats.'' For every post in Scientology there is an assigned statistic. For example, the statistic, or stat, for an Ethics Officer might be number of ethics ''cycles'' handled hourly. The statistic for a ''letter registrar,'' the person who writes letters to the public, might be the number of letters written per hour. The stat for a student might be number of points on course per hour (each activity on every Scientology course is awarded a certain number of points). Scientologists graph their stats by the hour, the day and the week. Each Thursday, promptly at 2:00 PM, every Scientology staff member has to turn in his or her stats for the week to the division of the organization known as Inspection and Reports, or ''I & R.'' Then each staff member is assigned a ''condition'' for that week. The staff member must then apply the appropriate formula during the following week to move up to a higher condition and better his stats. Theoretically, a staff member in Scientology is expected each week to better his stats from the previous week. If he does not, he will be assigned a ''lower condition'' which he then must ''work out of'' by performing even more work, sometimes of a menial and demeaning nature.

On Friday, after all the stats for the week have been tabulated, staff members who are not in a lower condition for the week receive their pay. The pay is calculated is as follows. First, the gross income for the week for that particular org is computed. Ten percent of the G.I. is then siphoned off the top to be paid to ''World Wide,'' the international headquarters of Scientology in Europe (at least this was the practice during the years I was in Scientology). Then the expenses of the organization for that week are paid. The remaining money is allocated to payroll and is paid out according to a ''units system.''

Each job, or post, in Scientology is allocated a certain number of points, or units, executive positions earning more points and the more menial jobs, such a switchboard operator, less points. The net income for the org is then allocated to the staff in that org in proportion to the units for each post. In my post as a Dianetics auditor in training (my unofficial post as an aide to Aileen not being recognized for the purposes of pay) I had a fairly minimal number of units.

On payday, Friday, we all lined up outside the center and waited for the Director of Finance to show up with our pay. A mobile canteen unit had drawn up into the parking lot, I noticed, to take advantage of our weekly affluence. I waited in anticipation for my first Scientology pay. Having been without income for some time, I had a list of priorities to satisfy with my pay, ranging from toothpaste to an unaccustomed dinner out at a local diner with fellow staff members.

Finally the finance person appeared with a box of small brown envelopes. The names were called one by one. I waited eagerly. I had worked hard my first week in the Sea Org, an average of sixteen to eighteen hours a day for seven days, with two and a half hours off on Saturday for ''personal time.'' Finally my name was called. I reached for my envelope. I opened it up and found a receipt and money enclosed for exactly two dollars and eleven cents. I stared in disbelief. Maybe there had been a mistake? I went up to the finance officer.

''I only got two dollars and eleven cents,'' I stammered to the uniformed officer. He took the receipt from me and looked at the figures. ''No, that's right,'' he assured me. ''It was a slow week. But according to your units, that is the correct pay. Maybe next week will be better.'' He handed me back the receipt.

I walked away feeling deflated. My plans for shopping, for dinner with friends, faded into the sunset. I looked over at the canteen. I walked over, selected a sandwich and a can of soda. ''Two dollars.'' The canteen owner reached out his hand toward me for the money. Oh well, I thought, handing him the money. So much for payday.

In the several years that I was to work for Scientology, the highest pay I ever remember receiving was eleven dollars and twenty cents. ''How do you survive?'' I asked another girl who was on staff. She looked at me and laughed. ''Some of us work as topless dancers,'' she told me. ''At night, after hours. It's the only way to get along on this pay.''

I was suddenly conscious of my chronically somewhat overweight body. I sighed. I would have to find another way to survive economically. For the moment, though, I went to the phone and placed a collect call to my father. Maybe he could increase the small allowance he had been sending me to help with my ''studies.''

During the weeks that followed, I would occasionally receive small checks from my father which I could cash in the finance office. With these small windfalls, I could occasionally afford to go with the executives and more highly paid staff members to have dinner at the small diner right behind the L.A. Org. It was always a treat to enjoy the comraderie of friends and the luxury of dining away from the staff house.

Mounted on the wall in the diner was a small black and white television. We usually arrived at the diner just a few minutes after six o'clock, just as the new science fiction program, Star Trek, was being broadcast. However, I soon discovered that Scientologists watched this program from an entirely different perspective than did ''wogs.'' (''Wog'' is the Scientology term for non- Scientologists, taken from an old English expression, an acronym for ''worthy oriental gentleman,'' a derogatory term used to refer to the non-English natives of the British colonies).

''It's just old space opera,'' one staff member joked as we watched an episode. ''They don't know it, but they're really just running their own track (time track).'' What he meant was that the events on the program were actually real events that had happened long ago. The Star Trek writers were just ''remembering'' events in their own distant past. Events which were common to us all. To a Scientologist, this program had a special relevance. To us, this program was our history.

The days in the Sea Org became weeks. Christmas came and went. To me it seemed a surreal experience to have warm weather on the day of this traditionally winter holiday. I discovered that Christmas was just another day in the week to Scientologists. As a Christian holiday it had only token significance. We did have a special dinner served in the center buffet style. There were some cheeses in the center of the table that we were told had been sent expressly by Hubbard, to reward us for our dedication and loyalty as staff members. I felt grateful.

After the dinner, we returned to course. The rest of the day was just another day in the Sea Org.

One day, not long after Christmas, Aileen asked the Course Supervisor to excuse me from course. I followed her into her office. There sat a familiar figure.

''Dad!'' I exclaimed in surprise, ''what are you doing here?'' He shook my hand awkwardly. We were not given to displays of affection in our family. He was on business, he explained, and decided to come and see my ''school.'' I noticed that he was carrying his briefcase.

''Well, do you like it?'' I asked him expectantly.

''Everyone is certainly friendly,'' he answered, glancing uncertainly at Aileen. ''I was hoping I could take you out to dinner.''

I looked at Aileen. ''Of course, dear. Go with your father and have a good time. I'll get you excused from course.''

I took my dad to the diner, not knowing any other place nearby to eat. He looked worried.

''Your mother and I have been reading about this Scientology,'' he told me. He took some newspaper clippings from his briefcase. ''Here. I want you to read these.''

I picked up one of the clippings. It was from Time Magazine. The writer was obviously biased against Scientology. In the article Scientology was called a cult.

''Scientology's not a cult,'' I informed my father. ''It's just a group of people trying to make a difference in the world. This writer obviously didn't talk to anyone in Scientology or he wouldn't have written these things.'' I handed the article back to him.

''Well, there are other articles,'' he handed me several other articles. I looked through them. The orientation of the writers was obvious.

''Dad, this is just entheta,'' I told him, remembering what Hubbard had taught about this kind of journalism on one of his tapes. ''That means it is against theta, or goodness. We're not supposed to read this stuff,'' I told him coldly, pushing the articles back to his side of the table.

''But just read some of them,'' he pleaded with me.

''I don't need to read them. I know what they say without reading them. They are written by the suppressive press. These writers are paid by their bosses to write this stuff. They want to destroy Scientology because it works. There are vested interests in this country who don't want to see Scientology expand. It is a threat to them because they want to enslave people and Scientology is in the business of freeing people.'' Out of my mouth were coming the phrases I had heard over and over on Hubbard's training tapes.

''You are in a dangerous cult,'' my father argued with me. ''We want you to quit this foolishness and come home. That's why I am here. I have come to get you and to take you home.''

I looked at my dad with disbelief. He was beginning to sound like a Suppressive Person. A very unpleasant thought began to form in my mind. Could it be possible that my dad was an SP?

''How does Mom feel about this?'' I asked him.

''She totally agrees. We both want you home. You can go back to the university. If you come back now, you can still enroll for the spring semester.'' He was looking at me hopefully.

''I don't want to come back. I don't want to go back to school. This is where I belong. I have a job here. I am helping to Clear the planet. There is nothing on this whole planet more important than Scientology. These writers are wrong about Scientology. Scientology is the only hope on this planet that any of us have.'' I was beginning to get desperate. Could my father force me to go back with him?

''No, you are wrong,'' my father said, beginning to sound angry. ''This Scientology is nonsense. You are in a cult. And I am going to take you home. I want you to get your things and come with me. I have a ticket for you to come back with me to Michigan.'' He pulled the ticket from his pocket. It was made out in my name.

I started to cry. ''Dad, I can't come back with you. I don't care what you think about Scientology, you just don't understand. You can't tell me what to do anymore. I'm eighteen. Scientology is my life. I've signed a contract to work here and I'm not leaving.''

''What kind of contract?'' he asked suspiciously.

''A Sea Org contract. I signed a contract to work for the Sea Org for a billion years. We're going to clear the planet. Then we're going to clear all the other planets in the universe. Scientology is the first chance in millions of years for us to be free. And I'm not going to mess it up. There's nothing in the world out there that I want to do. How could I go back to music school when I have a chance here to help with something really important?''

He looked at me with a combination of exasperation and disbelief. ''How can I get you to see the truth about what you are involved in?'' he asked me. ''Can't you see the absurdity of what you are saying? A billion year contract? Clearing the planet? This is nonsense. You need to come to your senses.'' Now he was really sounding angry.

''Dad, I'm not coming back with you. I'll have dinner with you and talk to you, but I'm not coming back to Michigan. And you can't make me.'' I was not about to give in.

He stared helplessly out the window. Then he turned to me and started speaking in a kinder, less angry voice.

''Look, I know we have never shown much affection in our family. But you know that we love you. We care about you. Why do you think I came all the way out here to see you? We all care. Your brothers and sister miss you too. We all want you back home.''

''And what will you do if I don't come?'' I asked him.

''We'll try something to get you back. Legally. We'll fight. We'll sue this cult if we have to. We're not going to give you up to some harebrained cult,'' he threatened.

Now I knew the truth. My father was an SP. Hubbard had made it clear. I had read all the teachings on the Suppressive Person on the course. The basic crime of Suppressive Persons was to attack Scientology, the only force for good and reason on the planet.

I had read about this in the Ethics book. The Suppressive Person was also called the ''anti-social personality,'' or the ''anti-Scientologist.'' ''There are certain characteristics and mental attitudes which cause about 20% of a race to oppose violently any betterment activity or group,'' Hubbard had written. Such people, he said, cause untold trouble for betterment groups such as Scientology. ''The anti-social personality supports only destructive groups and rages against and attacks any constructive or betterment group.'' Of course, I thought. My father works for the government. According to Hubbard, the government is completely suppressive. I had listened to tapes where he had told us all about the suppressive agencies in the federal government: the IRS, the FDA, the FBI, the National Institute for Mental Health. The government, explained Hubbard, was a suppressive organization that controlled this country. But the real truth was that behind this government was an invisible government that most people didn't know about. It consisted of a secret group of twelve extremely powerful men who were the real source of power in the world. They were particularly connected with the World Health Organization in Europe. And they pulled the strings that ran this country. And the people who worked for the government, like my father, were just minor suppressives that were attracted to this kind of work because it was consistent with their real inner evil natures.

I stared at my father with amazement. My eyes were being opened. Now I understood why there had been so much trouble in our family. My father was, as Hubbard put it, a ''blazing SP.''

''Look, I'm not coming home. And I don't want you to cause any trouble for Scientology. That would just get us both in trouble.'' I looked at him coldly. I got up from the table. ''I'm going back to the center. I can't stay here with you. I'm sorry you wasted your trip but you did that on your own determinism, and I can't take responsibility for it (more Scientology-talk).''

I walked out the door, not looking back at him.

I ran back to the center, and burst into Aileen's office. ''Aileen, my dad is threatening to sue Scientology. He says it's a cult. He wanted me to go back home with him,'' I said, obviously upset.

She looked at me, concerned. ''Why? What happened? Tell me exactly what happened and what he said.''

I related the whole event to her. She looked troubled.

''I'm afraid I'll have to write up a knowledge report about this,'' she told me. ''It seems that your father could be a source of trouble for us. You'll have to work this out with Ethics. And until it's handled, I'm afraid you won't be able to go back on course. But the first thing that you need to do is to go and report everything that has happened to the MAA.''

She pulled a routing form out of her top drawer. At the top it said, ''Ethics Routing Form.''

Several minutes later, I sat in the chair opposite the teenage Ethics Officer, telling him the same story I had told Aileen.

''I would like to indicate that your father is a Suppressive Person,'' he looked across the desk at me as if I were infected with a deadly virus, ''and the policy on suppressives is very clear.'' He handed me a policy letter written by Hubbard. I read through it carefully. The policy on suppressives, according to Hubbard, was to ''handle'' or ''disconnect.''

''What does that mean?'' I asked the young boy sitting across from me. Wrong question. ''What word don't you understand?'' he looked at me with emotionless eyes.

''I understand the words. I just don't understand what I'm supposed to do,'' I said.

''Very simple. Either you handle your father. That means to the point where he is willing that you continue in the Sea Org, or you will have to disconnect from him. You will have to send him a disconnect letter.''

''Disconnect letter?'' It sounded ominous.

''Yes. I can help you write it. You will tell him that you want no contact with him or with the rest of your family now or at any point in the future. You will formally disconnect from your suppressive family. And until you handle the situation in one way or the other, you won't be allowed back on course. That's policy. I'm going to give you twenty four hours to make your decision. You are to report back to me at this same time tomorrow.'' The policy, I realized, was black and white. Like everything else in Scientology. There was no room for feeling. Not that I minded the lack of emotion with which this and similar situations were handled in Scientology. I had already done enough TR 0 bullbaited to not feel much about anything. But to tell your parents goodbye forever.... I squirmed inwardly at the thought. Yet I believed in the policy. I was already conditioned to believe that if Hubbard said it, it must be right. I knew that Hubbard's way would always be the best and most rational solution because he was ''Source.'' In just a few short weeks, Hubbard had already assumed occupancy of the place in my mind allocated to Father, or Dad. He loved me, I believed, even more than my own father did. He was father to us all.

I walked back to the house, having been barred from the course until this problem was resolved. I thought of my dad. He'll be home in a couple of hours, I thought. I'll call him and maybe he'll be more reasonable. Maybe he can be ''handled.''

But in my mind the decision had already been made. My father had taken on the color of the enemy. I no longer thought of him as father. All these years, I thought, I had been living with an SP and not known it. This explained all the conflict in my family. And by virtue of being married to an SP, my mother was by (Scientology) definition a ''PTS,'' or Potential Trouble Source. And both of them were now endangering my Scientology career.

If they didn't agree to back off, I thought, I will have to disconnect. I have to get back on course. Already my stats for the week are crashed, I thought dismally, wondering what ethics condition I would be assigned for the week.

I lay on my bed, thinking back over all the years with my father. I thought of the twelve characteristics Hubbard lists in the Ethics book as being characteristic of an SP.

''1. He or she speaks only in broad generalities.'' Yeah, I thought, my dad is always talking about ''they this'' and ''they that.

''2. Such a person deals mainly in bad news, critical remarks, invalidation and general suppression.'' Bullseye, I thought. My father had a definite tendency to be critical. I thought of all the times he came home complaining about his co-workers, criticizing what they had done during the day.

''3. The anti-social personality alters, to worsen communication ... passes on 'bad news.''' Again I thought of times when my dad told us less than flattering stories about the ''imbeciles'' he worked with.

''4. He does not respond to treatment or psychotherapy.'' Once, I remembered, my mother had tried to get my dad into counseling to work on their marriage and he refused to go.

''5. Surrounding such a personality we find cowed or ill associates or friends who, when not driven actually insane, are yet behaving in a crippled manner in life, failing, not succeeding.'' My mother is always sick, I thought, and what about my problems. And my sister is always having trouble in school.

I didn't need to read any further. There was no doubt in my mind. My dad was an SP. And now he was trying to interfere with me trying to help Scientology clear the planet. I began to feel angry. I'm not going to let him do this to me, I thought. I'm going to get ethics in on my family. If I have to disconnect, then that's what I'll do.

I waited for the hours to pass. I was dreading the call. Finally I walked down to the convenience store a couple of blocks away and placed the call. My mother answered the phone. She sounded cheerful. ''Hi, dear. We were just thinking about you.''

''Is Dad there?'' I asked her coldly. I knew what I was up against. My mother had no idea of the situation she was in, that she was PTS to a deadly SP.

''Yes, he just got in. I'm so disappointed that you didn't come back with him. But you need to know that we love you and we'll always be here for you.''

''Could I just talk to Dad?''

He came on the line. ''Margery, we're not going to give up without a fight. You tell Scientology that they will hear from my lawyer. I'm not going to stand for this nonsense.''

''OK, Dad. I'm sorry you feel that way. Tell Mom goodbye for me,'' I said, then quickly hung up the phone.

There's no going back now, I thought. I went back to the house and spent a sleepless night tossing to and fro, my sleep haunted with nightmares about my father. In one dream, he had a gun and was standing outside the center shooting through the windows.

The next morning I walked over to center and went directly to the Ethics office.

''I need to disconnect from my family,'' I stated calmly. ''There's no hope of ever dealing rationally with my father. He's insane on the subject of Scientology. Hubbard was sure right about SP's. They hate what we are doing to save this planet.''

''So what do I have to do?'' I looked across at the teenage Master at Arms.

''Here's what you have to write,'' he replied, handing me a blank sheet of paper and a pen. He began to dictate. ''I am writing to notify you that I hereby disconnect from you.'' He paused as I wrote. ''I want no further contact with you at any time or under any circumstances. This decision is irrevocable.'' I wrote down exactly what he said.

''Now sign it,'' he commanded. Then he handed me an envelope. ''You can make this out and we will mail it for you.''

I addressed the envelope.

''That's all there is to it,'' he said matter of factly. ''I will give you a form to get you back on course. You're going to have to push to get your stats back up.''

''I know,'' I answered. ''But I'll do it. Thursday is still three days away.'' I walked back to the courseroom. Just like that, I thought. I tried to comprehend the fact that I would never see or write to my parents ever again. Somehow, it didn't seem real. I couldn't quite imagine life without mom and dad to fall back on.

''Well, I guess I'm on my own now,'' I thought. ''I know I did the right thing. I just wish I felt better about it.''

For a moment I had a fleeting thought to run back up the street to the store to call my dad and ask him for the ticket back home.

But I quickly pushed the thought from my mind. ''Family,'' I thought to myself, ''is the second dynamic. The Sea Org is the third dynamic.'' Then I repeated to myself the phrase I was to hear many times in the coming years. ''The greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics,'' I thought. ''Scientology must survive. My relationship with my family is not important. All that is important is clearing the planet.''

I can't think about them any more, I told myself as I approached the center. They are no longer my family. Scientology is my family. And this is my real home.

I walked resolutely into the courseroom. I was more determined than ever to do well in Scientology.

I didn't think about my family again for a long time. I read the letters from my mother that would arrive periodically at the center, but I would throw them in the trash, feeling no emotion whatsoever.

I had passed my first initiation.

I was now a real Scientologist.

Chapter 9
Death on the Titanic

No sooner had I gone to sleep than I heard the early morning knock on my door. ‘‘0700, time to get up.’’

Unwillingly, I forced my eyes open. ‘‘Get up,’’ I thought, ‘‘or you’ll fall back asleep.’’ I closed my eyes and snuggled down under the thin blanket I had been given to keep out the chill of the California winter nights. Just two minutes, I bargained. For two minutes the overwhelming temptation to sleep battled with the fear of Ethics. Finally, fear won out. Last night had been an unusually late night. Two missionaires from the ship had arrived yesterday at the center, dressed in starched ‘‘dress whites’’ with gold braided ropes hanging from their shoulders. At eleven PM, after the last of the ‘‘public’’ students had drifted out the door following the customary sharing of our ‘‘wins’’ after class, the twenty or so staff members from the center gathered in the front of the auditorium for a briefing by the missionaires.

‘‘The tech is going in,’’ they told us. ‘‘We are winning on every continent. The stats world wide are in Affluence (a high Ethics condition). We are getting Command Intention (what Ron wants) ‘in’ all over the globe. Clearing this planet becomes more a reality with each passing day.’’

Two new centers had been established in South America in the past month, we were told. A new center in Germany, and an ‘‘Org’’ in Italy. The stats for ‘‘raw meat PC’s’’ (new people into Scientology) was almost double what it had been at this same time last year.

They told stories about ‘‘Ron’’ and life aboard the ship. Hubbard was doing his research on the upper ‘‘OT levels,’’ we were told. Although it had been a strenuous experience for him it was rumored that research into these levels was extremely hazardous, and that anyone venturing into these areas prior to Hubbard had met with death. He had come through it shaken up, but alive.

There were all the customary rituals, the cheers to Ron as we saluted his picture, the long ovations at each announcement of success, and the usual hard line to all of us to push our stats even higher during the coming months. Stationery was handed out for each of us to write a personal letter to ‘‘Ron,’’ telling him about our wins and thanking him for his contributions to the survival of mankind.

It was 1:30 AM before the briefing was dismissed and I walked wearily back to the house. I had no memory of going to bed.

Fatigue was a fact of life, a small sacrifice made by each of us daily to the exalted goal of planetary salvation. I didn’t seem to dream any more, I realized one morning. Sleep had become an experience in pure unconsciousness, much like the experience of being anesthetized for an operation. There was no longer any awareness of elapsed time between the act of falling asleep and the event of waking up in the morning.

An unfamiliar sound drifted into my consciousness. A soft and rhythmic tapping against the window. Rain. It hadn’t rained for weeks. I looked out at the somber sky which perfectly reflected my mood.

Fear permeated the outer limits of awareness. Ethics. I had already had two warnings placed in my student file for being late to class, and the third one, I knew, would mean certain disciplinary action.

I reached for my sweater and made my way down the hall to the bathroom. The door was locked and two people stood ahead of me in line. Just my luck. I accepted fate and took my place behind a man I hadn’t seen before. No one was speaking. I assumed that everyone was too tired to attempt a morning greeting. Besides, I had noticed, Scientologists tended not to waste words. Communication was restricted to the functional, without the luxury of bourgeoisie social niceties. And under the circumstances, I thought, somehow ‘‘good morning’’ seemed hypocritical.

House rules alloted us a strict three minute limit on morning bathroom time. Showers had to be taken at breaks or during a time of less critical bathroom demand. I splashed cold water on my face in an attempt to stimulate myself into consciousness.

The usual breakfast madness was in progress in the small kitchen as an assorted two dozen or so inhabitants of the house scurried to make it to post or course before the strict eight o’clock deadline.

‘‘Just coffee, please,’’ I instructed Glenda, who was currently serving as Kitchen I/C (in charge). ‘‘I managed to oversleep again. I’m starving, but I’ll be late to course.''

''Here,'' she handed me a slightly stale store-bought cinnamon roll. ''You've still got a few minutes. Everyone's late this morning. Hubbard must have discovered a substitute for sleep. The missionaires were down here at seven AM asking for breakfast. When I told them they'd have to wait, they put me in a condition of Liability. I already had too much to do today as it was,'' she grumbled resentfully.

''Yeah, but you don't argue with a missionaire from the ship,'' Gerry looked up at his wife. ''Unless you're asking for trouble. I heard that they put the whole staff at the L.A. Org on beans and rice until they get their stats up. And they handed out 72-hour amends projects to five of the execs. I saw them out in back of the Org yesterday with grey rags around their arms, painting the annex. Circles under their eyes, beards. Three days with no sleep. It must be rough. They were a sorry lot,'' he chuckled.

I liked this couple. Gerry was a part time character actor in Hollywood and Glenda had managed somehow to finagle the kitchen job so that she could care for her two month old son herself. Two months ago she had delivered the baby in the front room across the hall from me, assisted only by Gerry and a midwife. I had never witnessed a home birth before, and was full of awe for Glenda.

''I wouldn't be on the ship for anything,'' remarked Jon, a quiet, uniformed twenty year old from Denmark. He was a Class 8 Auditor, the highest trained person in the house and therefore respected. ''I've heard they've been throwing people overboard every morning. Part of a new Ethics crackdown. And putting people down in the bilges for a week at a time. I'm just glad I'm here,'' he said gratefully.

''Why would they throw people overboard?'' I asked him incredulously. ''That sounds dangerous.''

''I guess they throw them a life preserver once they're in,'' he answered as he gulped down the last of his coffee. ''But it's dangerous for sure. If you hit the strake on the side of the ship as you go under you might as well kiss this life goodbye. I'd rather take my chances with the good old L.A. smog.'' He deposited his cup in the sink and saluted as he headed out the door. ''Later, everyone.''

''Yeah, me too,'' I swallowed the last of the stale roll with a gulp of coffee. ''I've got exactly thirty seconds to get my body into a chair next door. Thanks for the coffee, Glenda.'' I sprinted out the door and around the corner to the center.

Just in time. I made it into my seat just as the Supervisor called her customary, ''That's it. Start of course.'' She gave me a warning look. ''That's cutting it close, Wakefield. Better get your ethics in.'' I nodded in acknowledgement and quickly immersed myself in my checksheet. Just a little more reading, then I'll be able to audit, I looked in satisfaction at the pages I had filled with my initials as I completed the items.

Aileen and Antonio had gone away on a mission together. They were rumored to be helping to set up a new Celebrity Center in Canada. I felt abandoned when they left, but at least I would be able to make lots of progress on the course while they were gone.

I turned to the next item on my checksheet. It was an essay called ''The Evolution of Man.''

''Man,'' Hubbard began,

> evidently began as a monocell, without intercellular relation problems. He developed by counter-efforts to a degree which banded together many cells with one central control center. He joined then with a second control center and, dual, evolved organically into Man.
>
> The problems of the monocell by itself were strenuous but uncomplicated, having relationship only with the environment in its grossest form: pure MEST. These problems included such phenomena as the explosion of cosmic rays.

How is it, I wondered, that I can simultaneously understand and not understand everything that Hubbard writes. I had learned not to ask questions. That would only result in a ''word clearing session'' in which I would have to look up every word in the bulletin while hooked up to the E-meter, a very tedious affair. Better to struggle in silence, I had learned by experience.

''The problems of a cellular colony,'' Hubbard continued,

> under one control center were yet similar to those of the monocell. The protagonist had but one personality and one antagonist, MEST. Vegetable and invertebrate problems are found in this period.
>
> Interpersonal relations, when in difficulty, have their root in the elementary problems of the dual control problems wherein the current control center confuses its ancient problems with its partner center with the problems the organism may have with other individuals in the environment.
>
> The evolution of Man presents many fascinating aspects but all have basic simplicities. There are, essentially, only two sets of problems: The problems between the control center of the mind and the elements; the problem of the control center of the mind with its alternate control center.
>
> An auditor need only resolve, in any case, the essential basic confusions of the pre-clear in each of these two sets.

I wanted desperately to yawn, but suppressed it. I read back through the section again, looking up the word ''protagonist.'' ''Well,'' I thought, ''it kind of makes sense, I guess.'' I initialled the appropriate space indicating that I had read the essay.

I looked surreptitiously around the classroom. Two students were doing TR 0 in the far end of the room, while two others had started their bullbaiting. One was pretending an English accent.

‘‘I say, old chap,’’ he said, clapping his partner on the shoulder, ‘‘do y’know where I could git a bit o’ arse? It’s been a bloody long time.’’ His partner smiled. ‘‘Flunk for smiling. Start!’’ he said sternly. ‘‘I say, old chap,’’ he began again.

My friend Kris was absorbed in an elaborate clay demo. Two other students were listening to tapes. There were another dozen and a half people studying silently at the two long tables where I was sitting.

I began to fantasize about being in bed, snug under my blanket, and of being able to sleep just for once for as long as I wanted. I was remembering rainy mornings at school when my earliest class was at ten AM and I had been able to sleep in until nine. As I thought back, it seemed an unbelievable luxury. My head jerked back. I had actually started to fall asleep. I dug my fingernails into my palms, trying to will myself into consciousness. I turned the page in my checksheet.

History of Man. A book by Hubbard. I turned to the Foreword and began to read.

> This is a cold-blooded and factual account of your last sixty trillion years.

I blinked and looked again. Yes, that’s what it said. I continued to read.

> The test of any knowledge is its usefulness. Does it make one happier and more able? By it and with it, can he better achieve his goals?
>
> This is useful knowledge. With it the blind again see, the lame walk, the ill recover, the insane become sane and the sane become saner. By its use the thousand abilities man has sought to recover become his once more.
>
> Gravestones, ancient vital statistics, old diplomas and medals will verify in every detail the validity of ‘‘many lifetimes.’’ Your E-meter will tell you.

The book, I discovered as I read, was divided between a description of the events in the past ‘‘track’’ of the ‘‘genetic entity’’, and the events in the past track of the thetan, or soul. The genetic entity referred to those incidents which were supposedly recorded at a cellular level in the person’s body. The events of the ‘‘theta being’’ were the memories of the person himself, as a soul.

Some of the past events that are common, according to Hubbard, to all of us on a cellular level are:

1. The Atom. The very first state of being of physical life, described by Hubbard as ‘‘a condition of motion, with the preclear in the center, with rings of motion traveling around him.’’

2. The Cosmic Impact, in which ‘‘cosmic rays enter the body in large numbers and occasionally explode in the body.’’

3. The Photon Converter, in which we, as algae and plankton begin ‘‘taking their living from photons from the sun and minerals in the sea.’’

4. The Helper, which is ‘‘mitosis, or cell splitting,’’ in which one half of the split cell tries to help the other half to survive.

5. The Clam. Which when restimulated in a person may cause problems in the opening and closing of the jaw.

6. The Weeper. A bivalve, and the first creature to use the land. An important stage in our evolution. The Weeper later develops into the eyes of a person, and the pumping out of salt water in the Weeper is the basic reason why we cry.

Further stages in our evolutionary past include the Birds, Being Eaten, the Sloth, the Ape, Piltdown Man, and the Caveman.

In contrast, are the past events in the history of the theta being. They include:

1. The Jack-in-the-Box. ‘‘An invader trick, a method of trapping thetans.’’ The thetan is given a box of pictures and ‘‘when he replaces the lid, the box explodes violently.’’ People with this incident in restimulation, says Hubbard, tend to be very curious about cereal boxes.

2. The Halver. ‘‘A half-light, half-black gun which shot out a wave. Half of this wave, usually the black, hit the right side of the victim’s body; the other half, in the same explosion, usually the light side, hit the left side of the victim.

   ‘‘The Halver was rigged up with religious symbols and it truly lays in religion.’’

3. Facsimile One. An incident in everyone’s ‘‘bank’’, or reactive mind. Originally laid down in this galaxy about one million years ago. In it, ‘‘a push-pull wave is played over him (the preclear), first on his left side, then on his right and back and forth from side to side, laying in a bone deep somatic. When this treatment is done, the preclear is dumped in scalding water, then immediately in ice water. Then the preclear is put in a chair and whirled around.’’

   When this incident is ‘‘run’’, or audited out, Hubbard claims, it will eradicate ‘‘such things as asthma, sinus trouble, chronic chills and a host of other ills.’’

4. Before Earth. An incident in which the thetan is ‘‘summoned before a council, is frowned upon, and then sent elsewhere than where he is.’’ The effect is to make the person a ‘‘more obedient colonist.’’

5. The Joiner, in which ‘‘a person is ‘‘packed in’’

with other souls by electronics..''

6. The Ice Cube, in which ''the being is packed in ice, taken to a new area and is usually dumped in the ocean.'' When this incident is in restimulation, the person may suffer from chronically cold hands and feet.

7. Between Lives. The familiar between lives implants. In this incident, the person '''reports in,' is given a strong forgetter implant and is then shot down to a body just before it is born.''

   About these implants, Hubbard writes, ''The report station for most has been Mars. Some women report to stations elsewhere in the solar system. There are occasional incidents about Earth report stations. The report stations are protected by screens. The last Martian report station was established in the Pyrenees.''

8. The Emanator. ''This is a large, glowing body of radioactive material which hangs magically in thin air, a sort of god, an all-knower. Its outpulse puts one into a trance.''

I was getting a headache. I looked up from the book and around at the class. I wanted to ask someone about what I was reading, but I would have to wait for break, when I was safely outside the ever-present scrutiny of the Supervisor.

The other incidents on the theta track, I continued to read, were the Double Body, Theta Traps, the Body Builder, the Jiggler, the Whirler, the Bouncer, the Spinner, the Rocker, the Boxer, the Faller, the Education, and the Fly Trap. Of this last, Hubbard wrote:

> It was of a gummy material. The thetan who got into it punched and fought at this material until he was psychotic enough to react to the physical universe laws of responding to motions. He was taken out of this trap by a crew of do-gooders who had caught him for his own good and who trained him in religious sweetness and syrup until they considered him fit to be part of their group.

I closed the book and looked around the room. Kris was sitting across from me at the table. The Supervisor was at her desk occupied with paperwork. I knew that we weren't allowed to talk on course unless we were doing a checkout. To be caught talking might mean a pink sheet to Ethics.

I reached over and tapped Kris's study pack. She looked up. I held up *History of Man* so she could see the title.

''Did you read this?'' I whispered.

''Yeah,'' she whispered back.

''What did you think of it? Is he for real?''

She nodded her head. ''Yeah, I guess. I thought it was pretty weird too. I figure it's probably just some kind of analogy or symbolism or something.''

''But what if he's really serious about this stuff? I mean, I knew we were supposed to come from apes, but I have trouble believing I was once a clam.''

''It might have something to do with the upper levels,'' she looked around furtively for the Supervisor.

''It's OK, she's doing some paperwork at her desk,'' I assured her. ''I just feel confused. I know Hubbard is Source. And I believe what he says is true. But this stuff is wild.''

''Maybe there's some reason he had for writing it that we don't know about. Anyway, I decided, the only thing that's important is the auditing. The tech works. When you start auditing, you'll see.''

The Supervisor looked up from her desk and surveyed the class. I quickly looked down at my pack and signalled to Kris not to talk.

I wish Antonio were here, I thought wistfully. I know he could explain this to me. He always knows the answers to everything. I made a mental note to ask him about the book as soon as he returned to the center.

The next few days on the course were spent in learning to use the E-meter. Since I didn't have a meter of my own, I had already arranged with Antonio to use his while he was gone. Eventually, I would have to somehow come up with the money to buy my own meter.

On the E-meter drills, I learned how to keep the needle on the dial by moving the Tone Arm to compensate for the needle swings off the dial. I learned how to correctly set the sensitivity knob for each person I was auditing, as different people might have different sensitivities to the meter. People who didn't ''read'' well on the meter required a higher sensitivity setting than those who did read well.

Another part of my E-meter training consisted of learning to differentiate among the various different types of ''reads.'' When the needle swung sharply to the right, it was known as a ''fall.'' This was a sign that (electrical) ''charge'' was ''coming off the PC's case'', in other words that they were discharging unwanted mental tension.

A very long fall to the right was known as ''a long fall blowdown.'' Other falls could be either ''short falls'' or ''long falls.'' The difference in the reads were significant to the auditor. Locating items the preclear needed to ''run'' was often determined by the length of the fall of the needle on the dial of the meter.

When the needle swung to the left, it was called a ''rise.'' A rise meant that the person being audited was actually ''keying in'' or accumulating mental mass. His ''case'' was becoming more solid. If a person's ''TA'' or Tone Arm setting was too high at the start of the session, that meant that he or she had something in restimulation, and might need to go through a ''review session'' before being audited on the current action, to find out what he was upset about.

Other reads of the needle included a ‘‘theta bop,’’ which was a very rapid back and forth motion of the needle; a ‘‘rock slam,’’ a distinct read which usually indicated that the person being audited had ‘‘evil purposes’’ or was an SP; and a ‘‘dirty needle,’’ a jagged, irregular motion of the needle that usually meant the preclear had ‘‘withholds’’, that he was withholding something from the auditor.

I practiced with the E-meter for several days, running make-believe sessions with a large doll propped in the chair across from me until I was completely comfortable with using the very precise Dianetic commands, while simultaneously handling the E-meter.

Finally, I was ready to audit my first preclear.

I was assigned to audit Tommy, another student on the course. He was an artist who wrote poetry illustrated by detailed and intricate line drawings done in a very fine black pen. He was very popular at the center and I felt honored to be his auditor.

We walked back to the house where I had reserved one of the two small rooms upstairs used for auditing. I already had the table set up with the E-meter ready in the middle of the table. On my side of the table were the paper and pens I would be using to keep a running log of the session to be submitted to the ‘‘C/S’’ (Case Supervisor) after the session.

We sat down across from each other. Tommy reached for the small V-8 cans connected to the leads attached to the meter. He looked at me smiling.

‘‘Have you had plenty of rest?’’ I asked him. It was always necessary to make sure that the preclear had plenty of rest and wasn’t hungry before actually starting the session.

He nodded.

‘‘Are you hungry?’’

‘‘Nope.’’

‘‘All right. This is the session,’’ I announced. I wrote down the starting time of the session on my worksheet.

The beginning of the session was easy. I had to ask him a series of questions from a sheet printed in green called appropriately a ‘‘Green Form.’’ The answers of the preclear to the questions on this form would determine what to ‘‘run’’ in the session.

As we completed the form, Tommy revealed that he had recently suffered from headaches in which he would feel a sharp pain behind his eyes. This turned out to be the correct item to run.

I looked at Tommy with my very best TR 0. ‘‘Locate an incident containing a sharp pain behind your eyes,’’ I commanded. He closed his eyes. ‘‘OK,’’ he answered.

‘‘Good. When was it?’’

‘‘Yesterday. On course. I had a headache.’’

‘‘All right. How long did it last?’’

‘‘About three hours. Most of the afternoon. I was feeling nauseous, too.’’

‘‘OK. Move to the beginning of the incident and tell me when you are there.’’

‘‘Yeah, I’m there,’’ he responded, his eyes still closed.

‘‘OK. Now scan through to the end of the incident,’’ I dictated the next command.

‘‘OK,’’ he said after a long silence.

‘‘All right. Now tell me what happened.’’

‘‘Well, I was just sitting in class and I started to get this same kind of headache I’ve been having lately. It just feels like a shooting pain in back of my eyes. I was having trouble seeing right. And I was sick to my stomach.’’

I had him visualize the incident again, then asked him if the picture was erasing or becoming more solid.

‘‘Solid,’’ he replied.

‘‘OK. Is there an earlier similar incident containing a sharp pain behind the eyes?’’ I waited while he mentally searched for another picture. After a couple of minutes, he recalled another headache several days earlier. We ran this according to the same exact procedure.

All auditing must be very precisely done. Any deviations from the exact procedures written down by Hubbard are known as ‘‘squirreling’’ and are an Ethics offense. Continued squirreling could result in expulsion from Scientology and in one’s being declared a Suppressive Person.

After going through several similar memories Tommy had of headaches in this lifetime, I asked him for yet another earlier incident.

He was silent for a long time.

‘‘Well, I don’t know. I seem to be looking at a picture of a grassy field.’’

‘‘All right,’’ I acknowledged him. ‘‘When was it?’’

‘‘About sixteen hundred years ago,’’ he said, opening his eyes.

‘‘How long did it last?’’ I asked.

‘‘Not long. About half an hour,’’ he closed his eyes again.

The incident turned out to be a time when he was a monk in ancient Italy. He had had his eyes put out for heretical beliefs.

After going through this incident I asked if there was an earlier incident. I was beginning to wonder when we were going to reach the end of the session. It was rumored that sessions sometimes lasted for eight to ten hours or longer.

Tommy located an earlier incident. It was a time several million years ago when, in an implant, he had had a metal band put around his head which was then slowly squeezed tighter and tighter causing a sharp pain in his head. Finally, at the end of this incident, Tommy opened his eyes and began to smile at me.

''Maybe that's why I've been getting all these headaches,'' he said hopefully. ''All this reading about all these implants must have been keying in my headaches. That's really neat. Maybe now they'll stop.''

''Great,'' I smiled back at him. ''I'd like to indicate to you that your needle is floating. End of session.''

He put down the cans and stretched.

''That felt good,'' he said, yawning. ''Thanks a lot.''

I turned off the meter, and told Tommy he could go over to the Examiner as I had to write up a final report of the session. It was necessary for the preclear to visit the Examiner after each session. The Examiner would check his ''TA'' (tone arm position) and needle action after the session to make sure that he had a floating needle and that the session had gone well. The Examiner's report was part of the paperwork that had to be submitted to the C/S.

I ''wrote up'' the session. I filled out a session cover sheet, carefully noting down the Tone Arm position at the end of the session and the ending time of the session.

I walked over to the center to pick up the exam report and to turn my folder in to the C/S. What a relief, I thought. Everything went just the way it was supposed to. I was happily anticipating the ''Very Well Done'' I would get from the C/S (all sessions were graded in this manner).

I returned to class and gave Kris a thumbs up sign. ''It was easy,'' I told her.

''See. I told you. Wait 'til you do more. It's a blast,'' she whispered. We both returned to our reading.

On the next day I audited Tommy on his ''feeling of nausea.'' The ''basic'' incident on this ''chain'' turned out to be another implant millions of years ago when he was being spun around in some kind of device while subjected to electronic beams. I turned this session in and received my second ''Very Well Done.'' I was feeling proud.

I reported to the center for my third and, hopefully, last auditing session. If this session was successful, I would be able to graduate from the course. I would then be a full-fledged Hubbard Standard Dianetic Auditor, able to audit ''paying PC's'' and help make money for the center.

I walked over to the Supervisor's desk for my next assigned preclear. There was a young boy sitting in a chair next to her desk.

''This is David, your preclear,'' the Supervisor announced, not looking up. The boy stood up and looked at me shyly.

''My parents brought me here,'' he said. ''They are in the Sea Org. I have a problem with wetting my bed. They said that you were going to help me.'' I was surprised, but I managed to smile at him. ''How old are you David?'' I asked him.

''Eight,'' he replied.

I looked at the Supervisor uncertainly. ''How can I audit someone who's only eight years old?'' I asked her.

''Where in the tech did it say that you couldn't audit someone that age?'' she responded icily.

''Nowhere, I guess,'' I faltered, ''but...''

''I suggest you get your ethics in,'' she said sternly, ''and take your preclear into session.''

I looked down at David. ''Well, OK. C'mon David. Let's go see what happens.'' He walked silently beside me on the way to the house.

''David, how long have your parents been in the Sea Org?'' I asked.

''As long as I can remember. I think since I was a baby. My older sister is in the Commodore's Messenger Org on the ship. She sends me post cards.''

I had heard about the group of teenage girls and boys who served as Hubbard's own personal aides on the ships. According to the rumors, they were being groomed for executive positions in the organization.

''How about you, David? Do you go to school?''

''I go to the Scientology school. We learn TR's and all sorts of other things. In four more years I'll be old enough to join the Sea Org too,'' he answered. ''I'm going to work on the ship and be a famous auditor. I'll get to travel all over the world.'' He kicked a stone on the sidewalk.

''Do you get to see your parents a lot?''

''Sometimes. When they're here. A lot of the time they're gone. Mostly I stay with the other kids in a house by the AO. That's where my parents work when they're here,'' he answered.

He looked up at me. ''Is it OK for you to audit me?'' he asked anxiously.

''Yes, I guess so. Have you had auditing before?''

''Oh, yes. Lots of times. Sometimes my dad audits me. Whenever I get sick I get a session. Or when I have to get my ethics in,'' he said matter-of-factly.

We reached the house. As I hung the ''In Session. Do Not Disturb'' sign on the outside and closed the door, David took his seat at the table and picked up the cans. He sat patiently and waited for me to start the session.

I asked him the preliminary questions about sleep and food. ''OK, David,'' I said, adjusting the meter. ''This is the session.''

I did an assessment to see what ‘‘somatics’’ were associated with his wetting the bed. ‘‘A wet feeling’’ turned out to be the largest reading item.

‘‘Locate an incident containing a wet feeling,’’ I told him gently.

He closed his eyes. He’s done this before, I realized.

In response to my questions, he remembered several times in the past when he had wet the bed, each one happening earlier in time.

I asked him for an even earlier incident. He had his eyes closed and appeared to be concentrating.

‘‘I see a ship,’’ he said. ‘‘People are running all over. They’re screaming.’’

‘‘When was it?’’ I asked him calmly.

‘‘A long time ago,’’ he answered. ‘‘It was before I was born. About fifty years ago, I guess.’’

‘‘How long did it last?’’

‘‘It lasted a couple of hours. The ship is sinking. Everyone’s running around and screaming.’’

I took him through the incident using the exact commands I had been taught. ‘‘Tell me what happened,’’ I said, as he sat with his eyes still closed.

‘‘I’m in this little room. I’m in a crib. There’s water coming up around me. I’m getting wet. I hear all these people screaming in the halls. I wonder where my parents are. Pretty soon the water comes all the way up over my head.’’ He opened his eyes and looked at me sadly.

‘‘I was a little baby on the ship and I drowned,’’ he said. ‘‘I think it was the Titanic.’’

‘‘All right,’’ I acknowledged him. I asked him if there was an earlier incident.

‘‘No, just that one,’’ he said decisively. ‘‘I was a baby on the Titanic and I drowned.’’ I took him through the incident again.

‘‘That’s all there is. It was me. My parents went away and left me in this room on the Titanic and I drowned.’’

Never invalidate the preclear’s data, was one of the inviolable rules of the Auditor’s Code.

So I ended the session. David was smiling at me.

‘‘Does this mean I won’t ever wet my bed again?’’ he asked me.

‘‘I guess we’ll just have to wait and see,’’ I said. I didn’t want him to sense the doubts I was having in my own mind.

‘‘Let’s just go back to the center and you can see the Examiner.’’

A few minutes later, David sat in the chair near the Supervisor and waited for one of the teenage aides at the Org to come and walk him back home. I took my seat on the course and watched as he left, holding the hand of the young aide. I was feeling vaguely uneasy about something, but I didn’t know what it was. I waited for the ‘‘C/S’’ to come back on my session.

Half an hour later, the Supervisor called out in a loud voice, ‘‘That’s it everyone. Margery has just passed the Dianetics Course. She is now a Hubbard Standard Dianetic Auditor!’’

Immediately there was applause from the class. I stood up. I knew I would have to make the obligatory speech.

‘‘It was a lot easier than I thought it would be,’’ I said, trying to say something positive, and not express the misgivings I was feeling inside. ‘‘I know I have a lot of exciting sessions ahead. I’m looking forward to being an auditor, to helping Clear the planet.’’ More applause. I sat down.

The Supervisor came over. ‘‘Your next step is Success,’’ she said, handing me a pink sheet on which she had printed my name and the words: Routing Form to Success.

I made my way up the hall to a door with a sign printed ‘‘Success and Certificates.’’

I knocked. Beverly, a very large woman and one of the staff workers at the center, handed me a piece of paper with a picture at the top of a dove flying through clouds. On the top of the paper were the words in large blue script: ‘‘SUCCESS STORY’’.

‘‘Fill this out,’’ Beverly instructed me. ‘‘You have to do this after you finish each course.’’

‘‘What happens if someone doesn’t want to fill it out?’’ I asked her curiously.

‘‘Then they have to go back on course to see what it was that they didn’t understand,’’ she answered. ‘‘If they’re not happy with the course, it means they had a M/U (misunderstood word) somewhere on the course. They can’t graduate until they find it.’’

‘‘Oh. I just wondered.’’ I looked down at the paper.

‘‘I had some wins on this course,’’ I wrote. ‘‘The auditing was easier than I thought. I feel good knowing I can help people with their problems.’’ I handed the paper to Beverly.

‘‘OK. You’re all finished here. You can come and pick up your certificate later this afternoon. Now you’ll be ready to route onto your next course. I’ll take you down to the Registrar.’’ With some difficulty she got up out of her chair.

Within ten minutes, I was signed up and given my study pack for the next course, ‘‘Level 0’’.

I was on my way. At this rate I thought optimistically, I could probably make Class 6 within a year. I went back to my chair. No one looked up.

Later that afternoon I went back to Success to retrieve my certificate. It looked very impressive. My name had been printed in gold script. There was an official looking seal which had been stamped and printed with the date. I looked with satisfaction at the tangible proof of my first achievement as a Scientologist.

Many years later, back home in Michigan, I would spread all my hard won Scientology certificates out on the bed. They looked so official. Unfortunately, as I was to learn on that cold February day twelve years later, in the ‘‘wog world’’ my certificates had absolutely no value.

One night, I took all the certificates, and burned them one by one in a fire my dad had built in the living room fireplace.

It was a hard lesson in relative cultural values.

I never did see young David again.

I would think of him from time to time. ‘‘I wonder if he still wets his bed?’’ I never did find out.

Chapter 10
Find Out Who You Really Are

Hours became days, the days weeks, and the weeks evolved inevitably into months. Scientology in Los Angeles, in stark contrast to the seediness of its surroundings, was prospering. Each week new celebrities from Hollywood were lured into the life at Celebrity Center. Studios for the artists were sectioned off in the front part of the building. The auditorium on Monday and Thursday evenings became the setting for the popular ''Poetry and Coffee by Candlelight'' talent shows. The stats, we were informed at the weekly Monday morning staff briefings, were rising steadily week after week. I suffered through and survived my first hot and smoggy L.A. summer. Noxious poisons mixed into the morning mists hung in the air, becoming more concentrated as the day wore on, turning the simple act of breathing into a difficult and disagreeable experience.

Antonio and Aileen had since returned to the center, and my family life was once again complete. Nestled in the comfortable womb of Scientology, surrounded by the extended family of the staff at the center, I happily enjoyed the moratorium from maturity and reality which cult life provided.

A few things changed. Because of an influx of new staff members, I was required to move to a different staff house on nearby Beacon Street, a house in which the general standard of living was greatly inferior to anything I had ever experienced. I was allocated a lumpy mattress on the floor in the large front room, with a raggedy blanket for covering. A network of clotheslines had been strung throughout the room to separate the quarters for the married couples in the back of the room from those of us who were single in the front. The house was infested with roaches, and I would find them crawling on the walls of the shower when I would go to bathe in the evening. Yet the hardships of life served only to add nobility to the cause. The Sea Org, Hubbard told us over and over in his tapes, was the elite of planet Earth. One day soon we would come into our rightful inheritance of true honor and recognition and material reward.

Sometime in the early 1970's, Scientology became a Church.

''A church?'' I asked a friend who worked in the Guardian's Office, the notorious private CIA-like branch of Scientology. ''Why?''

''It's just a tax matter,'' he reassured me. ''It won't really change the way anything works. It's just a way to deal with the suppressive government.'' I was satisfied with the explanation. It was consistent with a policy from ''Ron'' which came out soon afterward in which he said, ''Scientology 1970 is being planned on a religious organization basis throughout the world. ''This will not upset in any way the usual activities of any organization. It is entirely a matter for accountants and solicitors.''

Everyone on staff was required to become a minister in the Church of Scientology, and we were given exactly one week to do so. The list of qualifications to become a minister of Scientology was given in an early policy by Hubbard:

1. Must have a validated certificate in Scientology.
2. Must know the Church Creed verbatim.
3. Must be capable of giving the various ceremonies.
4. Must be able to pass an examination on the great religions. [I was given a book to read titled *Great Religions of the World*.]
5. Must have a knowledge of St. John.
6. Must be of good moral character.
7. Must be able to conduct a Sunday service for the Church.
8. Must have moral and ethical codes by which he can live and abide.

I had seen Antonio perform the Scientology christening ceremony many times at the center. It was very informal. Hubbard gave a sample of a christening ceremony at one of his early congresses. It went something like this:

> [Hubbard] ''O.K. The parents of the child will bring him front and center.''
>
> [To the audience] ''This is John and Anne Smith. And James and Suzy Baker have decided to become godparents.''
>
> [To the child] ''Here we go. How are you? All right. Now your name is Zachary Smith. You got that? Good. There you are. Did that upset you?

> Now do you realize that you're a member of the HASI [Hubbard Association of Scientologists International]? Pretty good, huh?
>
> ''All right. Now I want to introduce you to your father. This is Mr. Smith. And here's your mother.
>
> ''And now, in case you get into trouble and want to borrow some quarters, here's Mr. Baker. See him? He's your godfather. Now, take a look at him. That's right. And here's Suzy Baker in case you want a real good auditor. Got it?
>
> ''Now you are suitably christened. Don't worry about it, it could be worse. OK. Thank you very much. They'll treat you all right.''
>
> End of christening.

Antonio did his christenings pretty much like this. So on the minister's course, I didn't have much trouble reciting this or the other ''church'' ceremonies. I passed the course easily within a week, became a full fledged minister, and promptly forgot about the whole thing.

Whatever convictions I had previously held about religion were quickly overturned in Scientology. In his tapes and bulletins, Hubbard took frequent digs at Christianity. And, like all Scientologists, I believed Hubbard to be an incarnation of Buddha. Didn't he tell us this in his long poem, *The Hymn of Asia* :

> *Everywhere you are*
> *I can be addressed*
> *But in your temples best*
> *Address me and you address*
> *Lord Buddha*
> *Address Lord Buddha.*
> *And you then address*
> *Meitreya.*

On the tapes he frequently told us that 2500 years ago in the Vedas, Buddha had predicted that in 2500 years he would come again to earth as a red haired religious leader. Who else, concluded Hubbard, could it be?

Much later, on one of the advanced courses, I learned the ''truth'' about Jesus Christ. Hubbard was talking about implants:

''Somebody on this planet,'' Hubbard wrote,

> about 600 B.C. found some pieces of ''R6'' [an implant].
>
> I don't know how they found it; either by watching madmen or something. But since that time they have used it. And it became what is known as Christianity.
>
> The man on the cross. There was no Christ!
>
> The Roman Catholic Church, through watching the dramatizations of people picked up some little fragments of R6.

And in another bulletin, Hubbard announces that he has been to Heaven three times. Heaven, of course, is just another implant:

> For a long while, some people have been cross with me for my lack of cooperation in believing in a Christian Heaven, God and Christ. I have never said I didn't disbelieve in a Big Thetan, but there was something very corny about Heaven et al. Now I have to apologize. There was a Heaven. Not too unlike, in cruel betrayal, the heaven of the Assassins in the 12th Century who, like everyone else, dramatized the whole track implants....
>
> Yes, I've been to Heaven. And so have you. And you have the pattern of its implants in the HCO Bulletin Line Plots [Hubbard's diagrams of implants]. It was complete with gates, angels and plaster saints — and electronic implantation equipment. So there was a Heaven after all, which is why you are on this planet and were condemned never to be free again until Scientology.

The only difference that I noticed in the center after we became a religion was that someone tacked up a small sign over the back room in the center that read: ''CHAPEL.'' On Sunday evenings, one of the staff members who was designated the center Chaplain would hold a short service in the chapel. The sermon usually centered on some aspect of Scientology that was helpful to mankind.

One day I complained to Aileen that it had been many months since I had been given any auditing, although I did the TR's routinely with other staff members.

Aileen, as usual, quickly remedied this.

''Margery?''

I was relaxing on the log in the parking lot on my mid-morning break. I looked up to see one of the students on the course, a tall slim Spanish boy named Louis. Like most of the other students, he was an aspiring actor. I squinted up at him.

''Yeah?''

''How would you like to get audited on your grades?''

''Really?'' I was immediately interested.

''Yes. Come with me.''

He lead me into the courseroom and took me to the back of the room where a large chart printed in red hung on the wall. The chart read in big letters: THE BRIDGE TO TOTAL FREEDOM. It was, I knew, the map to all the levels in Scientology.

''You are here.'' He pointed to a level near the bottom that read ''Dianetics Completion.''

''And I'm going to audit you up to here.'' He ran his hand about a third of the way up the chart.

I moved forward to read the tiny letters on the chart. The first level read, GRADE 0. Under the ''Ability Gained'' column it said: ABILITY TO COMMUNI-

CATE FREELY WITH ANYONE ON ANY SUBJECT.

''Oh, I don't think I could ever do that.'' I looked at Louis in discouragement. ''I've never been very good at talking to people. I just never know what to say.''

''Don't worry,'' he assured me. ''You will get there, I promise you. That is, if you want to try.''

''Sure,'' I looked at him eagerly. ''When do we start?''

''How about right now?'' he looked at me smiling.

We walked to his tiny apartment, a few blocks away. His meter was already set up in the middle of the table.

I sat down and picked up the cans. He asked if I was tired or hungry. ''No. I'm fine.''

''All right. I'm going to audit you on Grade zero, or Communication.'' He looked across at me with shining dark black eyes and perfect TR 0. ''OK. Who are you willing to talk to?''

I looked at him. ''Who?'' He didn't answer. ''You mean just anyone? Anyone I could talk to?''

He didn't blink. ''I'll repeat the auditing question,'' he said gently. ''Who are you willing to talk to?''

I sat back in my chair and thought.

''Well, I guess I can talk to my mother.'' I looked up at him. ''Good. Now, who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Who else?''

I paused. ''My father.''

''OK. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Antonio.''

''Good. And who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Aileen.''

''OK. And who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Kris.''

''Good. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Beverly. I can talk to Beverly.''

''Good. Who else are you willing to talk to?'' Louis still hadn't moved or blinked in the whole time he had been asking me the question.

''I don't know. I guess anyone in the center.''

''OK. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Well, I guess I'd be willing to talk to you.'' I looked across at him. What am I supposed to do here? I wondered. I was getting the idea that I was supposed to come to some kind of realization.

''All right. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''The mailman.'' I liked the friendly older man who delivered the mail at the center every morning.

''Good. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

I was beginning to feel annoyed. I was just supposed to sit here and answer this question over and over again?

''Louis,'' I wanted to take a time out, ''am I supposed to think of something different here? I don't understand the point of this.''

''OK,'' he answered. ''I'll repeat the auditing question. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''OK,'' I thought to myself. ''This is what he wants to do, I'll show him I can hold out as long as he can.

''The Course Supervisor.''

''Good. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''The Ethics Officer.''

''OK. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''The Mayor of Los Angeles.''

''Good. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''The Queen of England.'' I was being hostile.

''OK. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''The President of the United States.''

''All right. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Jesus Christ.''

''OK. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Mickey Mouse.''

''OK. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Donald Duck.''

''Good. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

I was starting to get really mad.

''Louis,'' I pleaded. ''Could we stop this? I don't know what to tell you. I don't know what you want. I am getting frustrated.''

He looked at me with his melting eyes, but no change in his expression. ''I'll repeat the auditing question. Who else are you willing to talk to?''

''Oh, I don't know. I can talk to anyone. Anyone. What else can I tell you. Clark Gable, Betty Davis, Marilyn Monroe, Robin Hood, Zorro, Bugs Bunny, my sister, L. Ron Hubbard. Anyone. I can talk to anyone.''

Louis didn't say anything. He just watched me.

''That's it, isn't it?'' I started laughing. ''That's what I'm supposed to say. Well, it's true. I can talk to anyone. I just never realized it before.''

He looked at the meter. ''I'd like to indicate that your needle is floating,'' he informed me, smiling.

We walked back to the Examiner. ''This is wild, Louis. Just by asking a question over and over you can get someone to realize things? I can't wait for the rest of the Levels.''

Within half an hour we were back in session. He started the process.

''What are you willing to talk to me about?'' he asked.

''To you? I guess I could talk to you about Scientology.''

''OK. What else are you willing to talk to me about?''

''About your mother. And your father.''

''Good. What else are you willing to talk to me about?''

''The weather.''

''OK. What else are you willing to talk to me about?''

''Louis, I get it. I know what the answer is. I can talk to you about anything,'' I told him excitedly, realizing that I believed what I was saying. ''Good.'' He looked down at the meter.

''Don't tell me. I already know. My needle is floating.'' I looked over at him and laughed.

He turned off the meter, and we went back to the center. He told me to wait in a chair in the courseroom.

Fifteen minutes later, the Supervisor called out, ''That's it! Margery has just become a Grade Zero Release!''

''It was funny,'' I said in my speech. ''It wasn't what I expected, but it worked.''

I was given an Attestation of Release form to sign. On the form it said ''GRADE 0. COMMUNICATION. I have achieved in auditing the ability to communicate freely with anyone on any subject.''

There was a line for me to sign and date. Now I could receive my certificate. During the following days, Louis audited me on the rest of the Grades. Now that I knew how the system worked, I passed each Grade quickly.

On Grade 1, by answering commands such as ''Invent a problem you could have with another,'' and ''Get the idea of solving a problem with that person,'' I finally realized that I could solve all my own problems. I signed the GRADE 1 attestation form that said ''Through processing I have made to vanish current problems in life and have the ability to recognize the source of problems and make them vanish.''

The rest of the grades were similar. Grade 2, called RELIEF, had to do with guilt. At the end of Grade 2 I realized that I didn't have to feel guilty about anything in the past.

Grade 3 had to do with upsets with people, and Grade 4 had to do with fixed and destructive patterns of behavior. I learned that I often used my own imagined intellectual superiority to feel better than the people around me. I posted my five signed and sealed certificates on the tiny space of wall above my mattress. I gazed at them with intense satisfaction. Now I was halfway to Clear!

One day shortly after that, Aileen called me into her office. ''The L.A. Org is on a crash program to get new people into the building and on course,'' she peered over her glasses at me. ''I have been ordered to send a staff person over there on a temporary basis to work in Div (Division) 6. You are the only one I have who is available to go.''

I knew that Div 6 had to do with getting new people into Scientology. All Scientology centers at the time were set up on the same basis: six divisions, each containing three subdivisions:

Division 1, called HCO (Hubbard Communications Office), was divided into three subsections which were in charge of the training of staff, communications, and Ethics, respectively.

Division 2, called Dissem (for Dissemination), controlled the distribution of promo, supplying books and other publications, and the routine flooding of mail to all possible candidates for Org services.

Division 3, Organization, contained the branches in charge of income, disbursements, and property.

Division 4, Tech (for Technical), contained three departments which served to register incoming preclears and deliver training and auditing to the public.

Division 5, Qualifications, contained the department of Examinations (the Examiner), the department of Review (for people who were having problems in auditing or training), and the department of Certificates and Awards.

Division 6, Distrib (for Distribution), handled public activities, training of FSM's (field staff members), and the collection of Success Stories. This is the division to which I was assigned.

I walked over to the Org and reported in to the Distribution Secretary, a tall, lean and very good looking man named Jim. He introduced me to his assistant, a bubbly short blonde named Martha. She was in charge of giving all the lectures, which she was particularly qualified to do by virtue of the fact that she spoke fluent Spanish. She would be in charge of my training. First, I had to take a short course which would teach me to effectively disseminate Scientology. Before long I found myself in a classroom with a study pack in my hands.

Once again, I found myself studying the sage words of Hubbard:

> Scientology is the science of knowing how to know answers. It is an organized system of Axioms and Processes which resolve the problems of existence.
>
> This science is formed in the tradition of ten thousand years of religious philosophy and considers itself a culmination of the searches which began with the Veda, the Tao, Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions. Scientology is a gnostic faith in that it knows it knows.

Gnostic? I looked the word up in the New World Dictionary. The definition seemed a bit circular.

> Gnostic. Of the Gnostics or Gnosticism.

I looked down to the next definition.

> Gnosticism. A system of belief combining ideas derived from Greek philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and ultimately, Christianity, and stressing salvation through gnosis.

All right, I thought. So what is ‘‘gnosis?’’

> Gnosis. Positive, intuitive knowledge in spiritual matters, such as the Gnostics claimed to have.

Exasperation. I needed an encyclopedia. But Scientology didn’t have encyclopedias, only dictionaries. I made a mental note. Ask Antonio later. I continued to read:

> Scientology can demonstrate that it can attain the goals set for man by Christ, which are: Wisdom, Good Health, and Immortality.

On lecturing to the public, Hubbard taught:

> In addressing the general public at large, a Scientologist has a responsibility to give to the public.... information acceptable to them, which can be understood by them, and which will send them away with the impression that the Scientologist who addressed them knew definitely what he was talking about and that Scientology is an unconfused, clear-cut subject.
>
> A Scientologist, when addressing public groups, would never under any circumstances confuse his communication line by engaging in a debate from the floor anyone who would care to heckle him. By simply ignoring such people, one continues to talk to the bulk of the people who are themselves very interested. When anyone causes an unseemly upset, it is rarely difficult to have the person removed from the group. In other words, either ignore him or remove him. Don’t engage in a debate with him.

The most important thing I learned in this new class was how to get new people into Scientology. It was simple, really. You used a simple, four-step drill devised by Hubbard called the Dissemination Drill. The four steps of the drill were:

1. CONTACT the individual. This is plain and simple. It just means making a personal contact with someone, whether you approach them or they approach you.
2. HANDLE. Handle is to handle any attacks, antagonism challenge or hostility that the individual might express towards you and/or Scientology.
3. SALVAGE. Definition of salvage: ‘‘to save from ruin.’’ Before you can save someone from ruin, you must find out what their own personal ruin is.
4. BRING TO UNDERSTANDING. Once the person is aware of the ruin, you bring about an understanding that Scientology can handle the condition found in step 3.

The Supervisor assigned me to ‘‘twin’’ on this course with a tall middle-aged man with curly, dark hair named Charlie.

‘‘I don’t understand how to do this drill,’’ I complained to Charlie.

‘‘OK. Watch. It’s simple. I’ll show you how to do it,’’ he offered. ‘‘Let’s set up the situation. I’ll be a Scientologist and let’s say we’re both on an airplane together and you are sitting next to me. My object is to get you interested in Scientology and ready to sign up for a course. Ready?’’

I nodded.

He came over and pulled up a chair beside me. He pretended to be reading a book. I looked over at him. He looked up and smiled.

‘‘Hi. I’m Charlie. I noticed you were studying. You must be a student,’’ he continued to smile at me.

‘‘Yeah. I’m in college. I have a big psychology exam tomorrow.’’ I looked back at my imaginary book, trying to ignore him.

‘‘Oh, really. Are you interested in people?’’ he turned toward me.

‘‘Yeah. I guess so. I like to try to understand why people act the way they do.’’

‘‘That’s very interesting. What did you say your name was?’’

‘‘I didn’t. But it’s Margery. I’m on my way to Los Angeles.’’

‘‘Say. If you’re interested in people, you might be interested in this book I’m reading. It’s a book about Scientology.’’ He turned the book over so I could see the cover.

‘‘What’s Scientology?’’ I asked. ‘‘I’ve never heard of it.’’

‘‘Oh, it’s a wonderful new science about people. Similar to psychology but actually more advanced. You’d probably really like it. They have a new type of counseling, called auditing. By learning to be an auditor you can really help people with their problems.’’

‘‘Are you sure it’s not some kind of weird cult?’’ I asked him suspiciously.

‘‘Oh, no. It’s a science. Everything in it has been fully and scientifically validated. Let me ask you a question. Did you ever have a problem? I mean, something you just couldn’t seem to find an answer to?’’

‘‘Sure, everyone’s got problems. You can’t be alive and not have a problem,’’ I answered non-commitally.

‘‘Well, just give me an example of something in your life that has been a real problem to you,’’ he pursued.

‘‘Well, I guess just talking to people,’’ I answered. ‘‘I’ve always had trouble just talking to people. Lots of times I just can’t think of the right thing to say. Especially to guys,’’ I confided.

‘‘What if I told you that there was a course you could take which would enable you to be able to talk to any person freely on any subject. Money back guaranteed.’’

‘‘You’re kidding,’’ I looked at him. Then I started to laugh.

‘‘OK, you got me. That was too easy. Let’s do it again and this time I’ll be tougher,’’ I challenged him.

‘‘Fine.’’

So we repeated the drill. This time I pretended to be antagonistic. ''Oh, yeah, I've heard of that Scientology. They're just a bunch of kooks. I read all about it in Time Magazine. They're crazies.'' I waved my hand in disgust.

''Well,'' Charlie said in a diplomatic and soothing tone of voice, ''have you ever really talked to someone who was in Scientology?''

''No, I have to admit I haven't.''

''Do you think you can believe everything you read in magazines or newspapers?''

''No, I guess you have a point there,'' I admitted.

''Well, I'm a Scientologist and I'd just like to tell you a little about my experiences in Scientology. Maybe I can prove to you that not every Scientologist is a flake.''

''Well, all right,'' I said reluctantly, and Charlie launched into a convincing testimonial.

''You're really good at this,'' I said admiringly.

''You will be too, with a few days of drilling. Now it's your turn.'' And for the rest of the day Charlie drilled me until I knew the four steps of the dissemination drill cold. During the following days I twinned up with various people on the course until I had become proficient in locating the person's ruin and telling them about Scientology.

''Now you're ready to do it for real,'' the Supervisor signed off my checksheet and sent me back to Martha and Jim.

I was given the job going out on the street near the Org and procuring people to come into the building for a beginning lecture on Scientology.

''Here's the system,'' Martha confided to me. ''You just get the bodies in the shop. Then it's up to Jim and me to get them signed up for a course.''

''How do you do that?'' I asked her.

''Easy. First I give them a short lecture, then I send them to Jim who signs them up for a course or to buy a book.''

She sent me out to round up some people for the three o'clock lecture.

I wandered around the center. There was no one in sight. Finally I walked over to Alvarado Street but there were just a few drunks walking or staggering along the street in the simmering afternoon heat.

I went back to the Org.

''Martha. There's no one to bring in. Just a few drunks. How am I supposed to bring anyone in in this area? This isn't exactly Beverly Hills.''

''Flunk for having considerations. Just go out and bring in some people. That's an order.''

''You mean even drunks?'' I asked her.

''I mean anyone. We need bodies in the shop. We need stats. What makes you think that an alcoholic doesn't need what we have to offer? Just go and bring back some people.''

I walked obediently back onto the street. I spotted an elderly couple walking frailly toward me.

''Hi,'' I greeted them. ''I would like to invite you to a lecture on Scientology. It's free.''

They said something to me in Spanish. I soon realized they didn't speak English. I motioned for them to follow me. If I could just get them to Martha, she could take over. I walked with them toward the Org, gesturing wildly toward the building. I took them by the arm and lead them up the steps.

''Martha,'' I quickly located her. ''I don't speak Spanish. Here,'' I brought her together with my two bewildered captives.

She smiled and began speaking to them in fluent Spanish. She lead them toward the lecture room. ''Now go and get some more,'' she commanded me.

I walked out and wandered around for awhile in the area. Pretty soon, I found a young man sitting on the grass near the park.

''Would you like to come to a free lecture?'' I asked him.

He looked up at me with glazed eyes. It was clear what his ruin was. His arms were covered with needle marks. He didn't seem to be able to speak. I gestured toward him. I told him to come with me. Eventually, he managed to get up off the grass and lurched in my direction. I figured that he probably was hoping that I was offering him drugs, or worse.

I led him back to the center. Martha took him to a seat in the front row. The Spanish people, I noticed, were sitting at Jim's desk while he was asking them for money.

''Jim, they don't speak English,'' I told him.

''I know that,'' he waved me away. He was almost yelling at the people, telling them that he needed some money, even just a quarter and that they had to sign the form on his desk. I watched as eventually, in confusion, they finally understood that he wanted money, and they gave him a quarter. Then they signed the form and left.

''But what good does it do when they didn't even understand what they were doing?'' I asked Jim. ''I don't think they're going to come back.''

''It doesn't matter,'' he looked at me emphatically. ''As long as they give me some money I can count it as a stat. It's up to the Registrar to contact them and get them in on course.''

Martha came up leading the drug addict and sat him down by Jim. The man looked completely dazed. I watched in wonder as Jim managed to extract a few pennies from him and got him to sign a very wobbly signature on the registration form.

For the rest of the week I continued to bring ''bodies into the shop.'' Sometimes I was given a stack of paperback Dianetics books to take out to the street to sell for $5 each. I was not to come back to the Org, Martha instructed, until all the books were sold. When the end of the day came and I had made hardly any sales, I was reduced to begging people to buy my books, and to my surprise, some did.

When 2:00 on Thursday came, we turned in our stats to HCO. It looked as if we had had a good week. Yet only two people had been registered for a course. As the weeks continued, I worked desperately to get people into the Org. I was becoming more and more exhausted and less and less able to convince people to come with me for the free lecture. The truth was that I didn't exactly want to go back there myself. What bothered me was that I had also seen Jim and Martha inflate the statistics they reported every week. I would count the number of people I brought back to the center, yet their stats were consistently 100% above the number of people I was bringing in. This was, in the strict order of things in Scientology, illegal. And I knew what I had to do.

I wrote up a ''Knowledge Report'' and sent it with my stats the following Thursday to the Sea Org headquarters at Saint Hill, where each week the statistics for all the organizations world wide were tabulated and analyzed. I knew that my report would cause what was known in Scientology as a ''flap.'' In other words, trouble. And I was right.

One day I was summoned into the office of the Ethics Officer at the Org. Unlike the Ethics Officer at Celebrity Center, he wasn't in uniform. He was a young man in his twenties who wore the nondescript clothes of a long-time staff member, a white shirt and faded and worn dark pants.

''Did you write this?'' he held a copy of the report I had mailed out the week before.

''Yes,'' I admitted. ''Publics is sending in false stats every week.''

''And why didn't you come to see me before you sent this up to World Wide,'' he demanded angrily. ''Do you realize that you have managed to get me in a lot of trouble?''

''I didn't mean to,'' I apologized to him. ''I just thought if it concerned the stats it had to go to the people who collect the stats.''

''You have caused a serious flap for the Org, when this is something that could very easily have been handled internally. There is a two man mission coming here tomorrow from the ship to investigate this whole thing. And I don't have to tell you what that means. Some heads are going to roll, thanks to you.'' He slammed his fist down on the table.

Fear crept up my spine.

''You are hereby declared to be in a Condition of Enemy to this organization,'' he said menacingly. ''And until this whole thing is resolved, you will be working with Estates and sleeping here in the Org.''

He came over to me with a piece of grey rag in his hand. I knew only too well what it was for. He tied the rag around my upper arm.

''I am instructing Estates to give you the hardest labor they can find while you work yourself out of your condition,'' he said darkly.

''What do I have to do?'' I felt like crying. I knew the humiliation I would feel when I walked out of his office with the dreaded rag tied conspicuously to my arm. It meant, among other things, that no one was allowed to speak to me.

''Look it up,'' he handed me the Ethics book.

''Condition of Enemy,'' I located the paragraph Hubbard had written:

> When a person is an avowed and knowing enemy of an individual, a group, project or organization, a Condition of Enemy exists. The formula for the Condition of Enemy is just one step: ''FIND OUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE.''

''How am I supposed to do that?'' I asked the Ethics officer, feeling slightly defiant.

''That's your problem,'' he answered coldly. ''You'll just have to figure it out.'' And he held the door open, obviously wanting me to leave.

I walked out the room, not knowing where to go. I walked up to the Receptionist in the lobby.

''Where is Estates?'' I asked.

She looked at the rag. A look of fear crossed her face. She said nothing, but motioned for me to follow her. She wasn't allowed to speak to me, I realized, even to give me directions. We walked to the north side of the building and she pointed me toward a low white shed behind the annex. I turned to thank her, but she had already turned to walk back to the Org. I located the Estates I/C (In Charge). He was a very old man in a blue worksuit.

''Got yourself in trouble, eh?'' Apparently he didn't know the rule about talking.

''Yeah, I guess,'' I answered him, glad at least to be able to talk to someone. ''What do I have to do?''

''Well, I guess you'll be needing to do some cleaning.'' I noticed that he had a slight Scottish accent. He handed me a giant bucket and some rags. ''Just take these. You might as well start by washing up the latrines. Here's some soap.'' He handed me a bottle of golden liquid. ''You just need a little bit in each bucketful of water. Go easy or it'll eat up your hands.''

I walked slowly back to the Org. Several people stared at me, noticing the symbol of humiliation on my arm.

Alone in the mercifully deserted women's bathroom, I was hit with the full impact of my situation.

I've let everyone down, I thought miserably, as my tears fell, mixing with the soapy water I had poured on the floor. What will Aileen think when she finds out about this? And Antonio? I thought of all my friends at the center and I knew that I had betrayed them all. But worst of all, I had disappointed the one person I now respected above all others in the world, in the universe. ''Ron. Dad. I've disappointed you again,'' I cried as old pain from the past fused with pain from the present.

My world fell into a thousand shattered pieces around me as I sat on the dirty tiled bathroom floor. I felt more completely alone in that moment than I have ever felt before or since Scientology. In that moment I had come face to face with the terror and finality of my own wretched inadequacy as a human being. The formula is right after all, I thought.

''Find out who you really are.''

I knew the answer.

I am a Scientologist. Nothing else matters.

And I will never fail my group again.

Chapter 11
Welcome to the RPF

I fished the rag out of the dirty, grey water in the pail, then squeezed it to drip water on the filthy tiles. Taking the brush I had been given by the Gus (earlier I had learned the name of the old man in charge of Estates), I scrubbed the last section of tile in the room.

Before I started, the floor had appeared to be a dirty grey, but as I cleaned, an intricate pattern of blue and white tiles in an Indian design began to emerge from the filth. ‘‘How long has it been since they cleaned this bathroom?’’ I wondered, as I looked in satisfaction at my finished work. I stood up to stretch my arms and back. ‘‘I'm going to feel this tomorrow,’’ I thought ruefully. This was the sixth bathroom I had cleaned since beginning my penance several hours earlier. It was now dark outside.

I undid the latches of the window and forced it halfway open. A cool evening breeze floated into the room. I wiped a trickle of sweat from my forehead with my arm, and looked with dismay at my hands. He wasn't kidding about this soap, I thought, as I tried to dry the raw skin on my slacks.

I looked below me at the courtyard where clusters of students were gathered, and listened to the sounds of laughter and conversation as they drifted up to my window. It must be nine o'clock, I thought. Break time. I longed to be part of the happy scene below. ‘‘Instead here I am,’’ I thought, ‘‘the Cinderella of Scientology.’’

I closed the window and gathered my cleaning supplies together and headed back to Estates. I desperately wanted to take a shower. A hot shower, with or without roaches, suddenly seemed an incredible luxury, a luxury I had previously taken for granted.

Gus saw me coming. ‘‘Over here,’’ I heard him calling me. I looked over and saw him standing near the door to the annex.

‘‘Come and help me move these mattresses,’’ he motioned for me to follow him. Behind the annex was a large shed, in ramshackle condition and looking as if at any moment it might collapse. I followed Gus into the shed and let my eyes adjust to the dim lighting from a street lamp coming through a small window at the far end of the room.

I could make out what looked like stacks of thin mattresses piled against the wall. Gus switched on a small lamp in the corner. ‘‘Here, give me a hand with these,’’ he said as he started to pull the top mat from the pile. ‘‘Just put them on the floor, about six inches apart,’’ he instructed. ‘‘I guess this's where you'll be sleeping tonight, with the rest of the RPF'ers.’’

‘‘RPF'ers?’’ I repeated the unfamiliar word.

‘‘Yeah, the rest of the folks in the RPF. Rehabilitation Project Force. Didn't you know that's what you were in?’’

‘‘No, I never even heard of it before. What is the Rehabilitation Project Force?’’

‘‘Well, it's a new idea. Came from Hubbard, I guess. I hear it started on the ship. It's for people who get themselves into trouble in the Org. If they mess up. Or if their stats are too low. Quite a few people've come through here in the past month or so. But you probably won't be here for long,’’ he looked at me optimistically. ‘‘Most folks don't stay here very long.’’

‘‘So what do people do who are in the RPF?’’ I asked him, almost too tired to care.

‘‘Well, work, mostly,’’ Gus answered as he pulled the last mat into place. ‘‘There. All set for the night.’’

I was silent as he continued to talk about the RPF. ‘‘We just take care of the property, painting, cleaning, things like that. I'm glad to have the help, believe me. Before the RPF, I had to try to manage everything myself. Right now, most of the men are working to renovate the Cedars Complex down on Berendo.’’

I had heard about the huge complex of buildings that Scientology had just purchased for five million dollars in cash. It was a labyrinthine complex of buildings that had previously been a hospital. According to rumors, it was to be the future home of Scientology in Los Angeles.

‘‘They should be back before too long,’’ Gus continued. ‘‘Then you'll be eating your dinner.’’

‘‘Isn't it kind of late for dinner?’’ I asked him.

‘‘Yeah, in the beginning I tried to do something about that, but I was told not to interfere. I tried to change a lot of things around here, but I was politely told to butt out and keep my ideas to myself. Around here, it doesn't pay to argue,’’ he lamented.

''So why do you stay, Gus? If you're unhappy, why stay?'' I asked him.

He didn't say anything for a few minutes.

''I guess because I believe in the Old Man,'' he answered slowly. ''Hubbard. I was with him from the beginning, more than twenty years ago. Left my family and everything. Thought we were going to change the world. Turn it upside down,'' he looked at me sadly.

''I can't say it was a mistake, exactly. It just didn't turn out like I thought it would. Anyway, where would I go now?'' he reflected. ''I don't even know where my family is. No, I plan to stick it out. One of these days I'll probably drop the old body. Then it won't matter any more.''

We were both silent for awhile. I was thinking about what he had said. I wanted to say something wise or comforting, but I couldn't think of anything to say. Gus' life was a tragedy, but to feel sympathy was wrong, according to Hubbard, because sympathy was an emotion very low on the Tone Scale (Hubbard's chart of emotions, arranged in a hierarchy, from Serenity of Beingness (+40.0) to Total Failure (-40.0)).

A knock on the door interrupted the uncomfortable silence. The door opened and a dozen unbelievably dirty men, some looking very young, filtered into the room. I noticed that they were all wearing the same dark blue worksuits that Gus had on.

''I guess I'll be going over and getting your food,'' Gus said, sounding relieved to have something to do to distract him from painful memories. He headed out the door toward the Org.

''Welcome to the RPF,'' one of the older of the men looked at me curiously. ''So what did you do to earn yourself a place in the RPF? Mess up a PC?''

''Not exactly,'' I said regretfully. ''More like made the mistake of minding someone else's business. Stuck my nose in where it didn't belong. I wrote up a Knowledge Report that got some people in trouble, including Ethics.''

''Well, I guess you'll be here for a while,'' he chuckled. ''Might as well make the best of it.''

''There's no such thing as the best of it,'' grumbled the youngest looking of the group. He was barely a teenager, I thought. ''This place is the pits. If I had any money I'd be on the first bus out of here.''

Some of the others grunted their agreement.

''Can't you leave? I mean if you really wanted to leave? Who would stop you?'' I asked.

''And go where?'' the young boy looked up at me. ''With no money? Where'm I gonna go?''

''Where is your family? Your parents?'' I questioned him. ''Don't you have a family to go back to?''

''No, they're all in Scientology. On the ship. My grandparents are dead. There's nowhere for me to go.'' He punched his fist into the palm of his other hand. ''I'm stuck here, and for a billion years,'' he said sarcastically. ''Scientology is all a bunch of crap, the whole thing,'' he looked at me bitterly. ''Hubbard's nothing but a con artist. This whole thing is nothing but a money-making racket.'' He hit his fist angrily against the wall.

''Come on, Joey,'' one of the other boys said, trying to cajole him. ''We told you, if you keep talking like that, you'll never get out of here. They're just going to keep you in the RPF forever.''

''I don't care. That's what I think. And nothing they do to me is going to make me change my mind. I just can't believe my parents fell for all this crap. Everything was fine before they got into Scientology. We had a house, car, everything. Now, nothing. They sold everything and gave all the money to 'Ron.''' He said the name sarcastically.

I was shocked by his heresies. ''Haven't you had auditing?'' I asked him.

''No. I don't believe in it. I'm not going to waste my time. Yeah, if I go along with the program, I can get out of the RPF. Big deal. But what for? I just don't agree with any of it. So I'll just stick it out here. I'll just stay in the RPF for a billion years. I don't care, anyway.'' He rubbed the knuckles he had just slammed into the wall.

Nobody said a word. The sound of footsteps outside the door interrupted the silence. Gus came in, carrying two pails and a box containing plates and spoons.

I looked in the pails. I couldn't identify the contents.

''Beans and rice,'' Gus answered my unspoken question. ''Better get used to it. In the RPF, you'll be having it a lot.''

I took a plate with everyone else and spooned some of the unappetizing mixture onto my plate.

''What's in the other bucket?'' I asked.

''Bread crusts,'' Joey volunteered. ''Help yourself.''

I reached into the pail and pulled out a crust of bread. On one side of the bread there was a bite sized indentation. ''What in the world,'' I stared disbelievingly.

''You guessed it,'' Joey laughed in spite of himself at my chagrin. ''Sometimes we get scraps of bread left over from other people's plates.''

Disgusted, I threw the crust back into the pail. My appetite was gone. I ate a few spoonfuls of the rice and beans mixture and threw the rest into the trash.

Now what, I wondered. I looked around. As everyone finished eating, they began to lie down on the mats.

''Don't we get a shower?'' I asked the first man who had spoken to me. ‘‘I’m filthy. I can’t sleep like this.’’

‘‘We only get showers every other day,’’ he answered. ‘‘And we had them yesterday. We don’t get one again until tomorrow night.’’ He reached over and switched off the lamp.

I was too exhausted to argue. I lay down on one of the mats. It was completely dark in the room except for the dim light from the street. I wanted to think, but I was just too tired. I finally fell into a fitful sleep, dreaming that I was on a large ship on an angry, rolling sea. I was on a never-ending voyage into unreality, on a ship that threatened to capsize at any moment, spilling us all into the infinite, anonymous waters of the sea.

‘‘Wake up.’’ Someone was shaking me. ‘‘Come on, or you’ll miss breakfast.’’ I opened my eyes. It was still dark in the room. ‘‘Come on, hurry.’’

In confusion, I stumbled to my feet and followed the one who had woken me up. Outside, I looked up at the sky. It was only beginning to show the first hopeful rays of the morning sun.

‘‘What time is it?’’ I asked groggily, rubbing my eyes with grimy fists.

‘‘6:30,’’ the voice answered. It was one of the men I had met last night. I followed him sleepily into the back door of the Org. We walked back into a tiny kitchen. I was handed a plate of toast, bacon, and something that looked vaguely like oatmeal. I tasted it. It was cold. And it had no taste.

‘‘You’ll want to eat it,’’ a voice behind me advised.

I turned around. It was the older man from last night.

‘‘I’m sorry I didn’t introduce myself last night,’’ I held out my hand to him. ‘‘I was too exhausted to think. I’m Margery.’’

‘‘Larry,’’ he answered amiably, shaking my hand.

He led me outside to the steps outside the back door. The others were already sitting and eating the unsavory meal.

‘‘You have to learn to eat the food,’’ Larry said, as he swallowed some oatmeal. ‘‘Otherwise you’ll get weak. Just visualize something you really like. And swallow it fast. After a while you’ll get hungry enough that anything will taste good to you.’’

I took a bite of the oatmeal and tried to swallow it quickly. I thought of the delicious hot cereal my mother used to make with butter and maple syrup on it. It didn’t help.

By seven, the sun was emerging in earnest. Rays of pink and orange thrust into the greyness above us. A surge of optimism welled in me as sleepiness gave way to the energy of a new day. In spite of sore muscles from the work of the day before, I was ready to live again.

‘‘Scientology, you can’t break me,’’ I thought. ‘‘I am a survivor. I can overcome this temporary setback. I’m going to prove that I can be a valuable member of the group.’’

A truck had pulled up to transport the men to the Cedars complex, where they would be working.

‘‘What about me?’’ I asked the driver. ‘‘I don’t know if I’m supposed to go or not.’’

‘‘I think you’re supposed to help the Registrars,’’ he answered. ‘‘Go up to the second floor and try the third door on your right. I think they’re expecting you.’’

I followed his directions. A girl about my own age with thick dark hair was seated at a desk surrounded by tall stacks of manilla folders. ‘‘Oh, good,’’ she said as I entered. ‘‘Are you Margery?’’

I nodded.

‘‘I’m Audrey. I’m so glad you’re here. We’re way behind on our stats.’’ She pulled up a chair to a small desk across from hers, also piled with folders. She cleared a small space amid the jungle of folders. ‘‘All you have to do is take a folder. Go through it quickly and look at the recent correspondence. Then all you have to do is write a short letter to the person. Urging them to come in for their next service. That’s all there is to it. Our quota for Normal Operation (an Ethics condition) is twenty letters an hour. Here’s some paper. And pens. Envelopes are in that box over there.’’ She brought me a handful of envelopes.

I opened one of the folders. Inside was a stack of unanswered letters. The person had apparently ignored all of them.

‘‘Audrey.’’ She looked up from her work. ‘‘This person has been sent over twenty letters and hasn’t answered any of them.’’ I showed her the folder.

‘‘It doesn’t matter. We just keep on writing. You’d be surprised. Sometimes we’ll write fifty letters to a person with no answer, and then after the fiftieth letter, suddenly we get a response. Anyway, each letter you write counts as a stat, and that’s all that really matters,’’ she answered, then quickly went back to her writing.

I began to write. ‘‘Dear Stephanie, I hope you will come in soon for your free personality test. Did you enjoy the Dianetics book?’’ I signed the letter and stuffed it into the envelope. That was easy enough, I thought.

Soon I was in production. The room was totally quiet. Several hours passed. This is almost relaxing, I was thinking.

Suddenly there was a sound of someone yelling in the hallway. A short, bent figure of a woman burst into the room. She had white hair and her face was very red.

‘‘Audrey, where are my things?’’ she cried hysterically. ‘‘All my things are missing from my room. What have they done with my things?’’ Just then, the Ethics Officer appeared right behind her.

‘‘Ruby,’’ he said sternly, ‘‘you have been ‘declared’ and are not to be on these premises. I told you that you were not to come back into this house.’’

‘‘But where are my things?’’ she wailed.

‘‘Out there. Out in front. Now you must leave or I will have to call the police.’’

He took Ruby by the arm, and led her, still crying hysterically, down the stairs.

Audrey got up and went to the front window. I followed her.

There, on the pavement below, were two large heavy-duty black trash bags, stuffed with what appeared to be clothes and other personal items.

‘‘Poor Ruby,’’ Audrey said under her breath.

‘‘What happened to her?’’ I asked.

Audrey sat down on the window ledge and cupped her hands over her eyes. ‘‘I feel so sorry for her,’’ Audrey said softly. She looked up at me. ‘‘Ruby just got too old. She worked here for sixteen years. But lately she just started messing up. Losing folders, writing letters that didn’t make any sense. She started talking funny too. They finally held a Comm Ev (Committee of Evidence, the Scientology equivalent of a jury trial) on her. She was declared SP and they decided to ‘offload’ her.’’

‘‘Offload?’’ I had never heard the term.

‘‘Yes. That’s when they send you away with orders that you are not allowed to come back into Scientology. If a person becomes a problem to the Org, they will usually be offloaded. When Ethics just wants to get rid of them. But Ruby,’’ she didn’t say anything for a while, then she looked up. ‘‘Ruby didn’t deserve this.’’

‘‘Where will she go?’’ I looked out the door. I saw Ruby struggling to lift one of the bags. ‘‘Why didn’t they call her family? Or get her help?’’

‘‘How long have you been around?’’ she asked me, her tone of voice suddenly changing. ‘‘Don’t you know that when you get old, or sick, it’s your own responsibility? That’s what Hubbard says. We are all responsible for our own condition. No matter what happens. Nobody can be responsible for you except yourself. The same with Ruby. She has to be responsible for herself. And she will. She’s a strong thetan.’’ Audrey turned away from the window. ‘‘Let’s get back to work. The stats have been down since Ruby left, and we are really going to have to work to get them back up again.’’

I took my seat at my desk. I wanted to go down and help Ruby. But what could I do? Something about the situation bothered me, but when I tried to think about it, I just felt more confused.

‘‘Ron knows best,’’ I told myself. ‘‘The greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics. That’s the rule we have to follow or we’ll never get the job done. There’s no time to be sorry for someone like Ruby.’’ Just the same, I thought of her frequently for many days. I remembered the fear I had seen in her eyes, the fear of a terrified animal.

We sat and silently wrote letters for the rest of the day. I was given a decent lunch and dinner. I stayed at my task until eleven o’clock at night, then made my way back to the shack behind the annex. My fellow RPF’ers were already asleep. I wanted to take a shower, but didn’t want to wake anyone to ask them where it was.

The next morning, we again were awakened in the misty dawn. We had a breakfast much like the day before. Larry was right. With hunger, it was beginning to taste better.

The driver pulled up in his truck.

‘‘Climb aboard,’’ he told me. ‘‘I have orders to take you over with me to the G.O. to help with some filing.’’ He looked down at the paper in his hand. ‘‘Is your name Margery?’’

‘‘That’s me,’’ I answered, getting into the truck. I caught a glance at myself in the rear view mirror and grimaced. I looked terrible. My hair was matted and there were smudges of dirt all over my face. My clothes were soiled and wrinkled. I was glad no one at the center could see me.

The Cedars was a short drive away. I followed the driver into the building and he led me to an elevator. Inside, he punched the button for the third floor. I noticed a sign near the elevator button. THIRD FLOOR. GUARDIAN’S OFFICE. AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.

The door opened. I looked around curiously. I didn’t know much about the Guardian’s Office, just what Hubbard had told us, that they had the job of making the world safe for Scientology to expand into.

A receptionist sat at a desk blocking the long hallway.

‘‘The RPF. For filing,’’ the driver said brusquely, then turned and caught the elevator just as the door was closing.

‘‘Have a seat,’’ the receptionist eyed me with distaste. I took the seat farthest from the desk.

Minutes later, a woman in a navy blue uniform came out and motioned for me to follow her. She led me down the hall to a small room filled with filing cabinets.

‘‘We’ve got a real backlog right now with our filing,’’ she said, surveying the room. ‘‘Ethics has ordered you to help us out. Here’s a pile to start with.’’

She selected a stack of papers from a table on which hundreds of pieces of paper were piled precariously. ‘‘Just find the person’s folder and file this inside. Here’s a punch. Just punch holes and file it on the top left side of the folder. The folders are all in these cabinets in alphabetical order.’’ She handed me a hole punch and left me to work alone in the room.

A short time later I was surprised to see the Ethics Officer in the doorway. Wordlessly, he stood over me. ‘‘Have you started to work out of your Condition?’’ he asked coldly.

‘‘You mean Enemy?’’ I asked. He didn’t answer. ‘‘Yes, in fact, I have. I thought about it the night I was cleaning the bathrooms. And I know for sure now who I am. And where I belong. And I’m not going to harm the group again,’’ I said to him sincerely.

‘‘Here’s some paper,’’ he handed me a sheet of paper. ‘‘Write it up and submit it to me later today. Perhaps I can upgrade you to Doubt.’’

I was about to thank him, but he had already turned and was walking from the room.

I took the sheet of paper. I printed my name, then wrote ‘‘Condition of Enemy.’’ I underlined it. Underneath, I wrote:

> I was in a Condition of Enemy because I betrayed two members of my group. I got them and the Org into trouble by writing a Knowledge Report and sending it to World Wide instead of just going to see Ethics. I will never again do anything to harm my group. I know now who I am. I am a Scientologist. And Scientology is my group. And I just want to be a good member of the group. I wish to be upgraded to a Condition of Doubt.

I printed my name below, and then signed underneath it. I folded the paper and went up to the receptionist.

‘‘How can I get this to the Ethics Officer?’’ I asked her.

‘‘Here, give it to me,’’ she answered, taking the paper from me. ‘‘I’ll see that he gets it.’’

I walked back to my filing.

Later that afternoon, the receptionist walked back to my room. ‘‘Here,’’ she said, handing me another folded paper. ‘‘The Ethics Officer says you are to work out of Doubt.’’

‘‘Do you have an Ethics book?’’ I asked her. She nodded, then left the room. A few minutes later she handed me a copy of the book. I sat down and looked up the Doubt Formula.

I was to evaluate the group I belonged to as an Enemy (of Scientology) and also the group of Scientology. The formula read:

> Join or remain in the one which progresses toward the greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics and announce the fact publicly to both sides.
>
> Do everything possible to improve the actions and statistics of the person, group, project, or organization one has remained in or joined.
>
> Suffer on up through the conditions of the group one has remained in if wavering from it has lowered one’s status.

I opened the blank sheet I had been given. I wrote my name on the top and the words ‘‘Condition of Doubt.’’

‘‘Until I did this formula,’’ I wrote, ‘‘I didn’t realize how important the group of Scientology was to me. Now I know for sure that Scientology is my group. It is the group which is doing the most for this planet. I will never betray my group again. From now on, I only want to do what I can to help my group. Because to help the group is to help the planet. I am no longer in Doubt.’’ And I signed it.

I sent it to the Ethics Officer.

I went back to the Org to eat dinner. Thankfully, Gus showed me where the shower was and I enjoyed the luxury of a hot shower. Never again would I take a shower for granted.

I returned to the annex, shaking my hair out to dry in the warm evening air. Gus met me at the door.

‘‘You’re to report back to the G.O.,’’ he announced. ‘‘He said to tell you to report at once as soon as you got back. I can give you a ride over there.’’

‘‘Thanks,’’ I told him. ‘‘Do you know what it’s about?’’ I asked him.

‘‘No, and I don’t want to know,’’ he said somewhat under his breath.

‘‘Why? What could it be?’’ I begged him.

‘‘You’ll find out soon enough,’’ he answered, as we climbed into his truck.

I walked up to find a different person at the reception desk. She led me back to the small room where I had been filing.

‘‘You have been upgraded to Liability,’’ she looked at me with an expressionless face. ‘‘Do you know the formula?’’

‘‘I’d have to look at the book,’’ I confessed. The Ethics book I had used earlier was still on my desk. She nodded and I quickly turned to the appropriate page.

‘‘Condition of Liability,’’ I read.

1. Decide who are one’s friends.
2. Deliver an effective blow to the enemies of the group one has been pretending to be part of despite personal danger.
3. Make up the damage one has done by personal contribution far beyond the ordinary demands of a group member.

4. Apply for re-entry to the group by asking the permission of each member of it to rejoin and rejoining only by majority permission....

''OK,'' I looked up at the uniformed woman. ''I know who my friends are. Scientologists are my friends. Scientologists in good standing. Scientology is my group. So how can I deliver an effective blow to the enemies of the group?''

''Are you willing to do that step even if it means some danger to yourself?'' she asked, her eyes intense.

''Sure,'' I answered. ''But how could I be in danger?''

''Just wait here,'' she answered, and walked out.

Several minutes later, she reappeared in the doorway, with a tall, blond man in a dark Sea Org uniform. He also didn't waste time on preliminaries or introductions. I never did learn his name.

''We have a job for you to do,'' he said abruptly. ''Something that will satisfy your Liability Formula.'' He paused.

''A few blocks from here there is a psychiatrist's office,'' he said. ''A man who has been causing us some problems with the American Psychiatric Association. It's not important for you to know what those problems are.'' He stopped and cleared his throat.

''What we want you to do is to get into his office. Pretend to be a patient or do whatever you want. Somewhere on his bookshelf there should be a directory of all the psychiatrists in the United States. We need that directory. Also anything else you can get us. Financial information. Names of some of his clients. That's all. Think you can handle it?''

I drew in a breath. I looked back at the formula. I knew that Hubbard said that psychiatry was evil, a holdover from nineteenth century German behavioral therapy. According to Hubbard, psychiatrists were our chief enemies on the planet. They used barbaric methods to treat people with psychiatric problems. Like lobotomies and electroshock treatment. It was up to Scientology to put an end to these barbaric forms of treatment. And now I could help.

''OK,'' I looked up at the Sea Org member. ''So where is the office? And you don't care how I get in there?''

''No, we don't care how you do it, we just want those records. And, I probably don't have to tell you, if there is any trouble you are under no circumstances to implicate the Org or Scientology. Do you understand what I am saying?''

''Yeah, I understand,'' I answered. ''But I won't get caught. You'll see.'' I was confident that I could do what he wanted me to do.

He handed me a slip of paper with the address on it. ''You'll need some fresh clothes,'' he said, appraising my wrinkled apparel. Then he abruptly saluted the receptionist and left the room.

''Wow,'' I said to myself. ''I don't believe this. I get to be a spy.'' The knowledge that I was going to perform an illegal act was offset by the knowledge that I would be doing a great service to my group. And it would get me out of Liability at the same time. I couldn't wait to get started. I walked back to the house on Beacon street which was deserted. At least tonight I would get to sleep in my own bed, I thought with satisfaction. I selected some clean slacks and the nicest blouse I had and went into the kitchen to iron them.

Shortly afterward, I fell into a deep and dreamless sleep. I woke up to an empty house.

I went into the kitchen to find a clock. Nine thirty. I had really overslept. I took a quick shower and put on the clean clothes. I rummaged through the kitchen for a grocery bag, which I folded up and put in my purse. Then I set out to find the address on the slip of paper I had been given the night before.

I stood outside a low building. A sign above the door read ''Habana Professional Building.'' I quickly located the building directory, encased in glass in the lobby.

I looked up the name I had been given for the troublesome psychiatrist. Second floor, Room 203. I climbed the stairs. I opened the door to the waiting room. A secretary behind a glass window looked at me pleasantly. ''Can I help you?''

''Yes, I wanted to make an appointment with the doctor,'' I told her. ''A friend referred me to him. Is he here?''

''No, he's not here now but I'm expecting him in about 1:00 this afternoon,'' she said. She opened a small black book on her desk.

''How about 4:00 on Thursday?'' she asked.

''I'm afraid it's a bit of an emergency.'' I tried to look and sound desperate. ''Does he have anything sooner?''

''Well, it just happens that he might have a cancellation at 1:00 today. Would you like to call back around noon?''

''Would you mind if I just waited here?'' I pleaded with her. ''I live quite a way from here. There wouldn't be time for me to go all the way home and then come back. I'll just sit out here and read.''

''Well, all right,'' she sounded a little reluctant. ''Just make yourself comfortable. I should know in about an hour about the cancellation.'' She smiled at me, then turned back to her work.

I took a chair in the waiting room, and pretended to read a recent issue of Time Magazine that was lying on a table. Out of the corner of my eye, I was watching everything that was going on behind the glass window.

An hour later, the receptionist called out to me, ‘‘You’re in luck. The other patient just cancelled. The doctor will see you at one o’clock.’’ She stood up and came out into the waiting room with her purse. ‘‘I’m just going to pick up some lunch,’’ she announced. ‘‘I should be back in just a few minutes. If you need anything, the bookkeeper is in the back room.’’

Just what I had hoped for. As soon as she was gone, I quietly opened the door to the receptionist’s area. I looked at the books on her desk. Not much except the doctor’s appointment book. Safer to get that on the way out, I thought. I looked toward the back. I could hear the bookkeeper talking on the phone.

Noiselessly, I opened the door to the doctor’s office. If I was caught, I decided, I could just say that I was looking for something interesting to read.

Bookshelves. I quickly scanned through the titles of the books. Then I found it. APA Directory. I pulled the book off the shelf and opened it.

‘‘Perfect,’’ I thought, as I looked at the neat rows of names and addresses. I looked quickly at the other books on the shelf. Nothing very interesting. Mostly old copies of journals, bound into notebooks.

I stealthily opened the door and listened. I could hear the voice in the back room still talking on the phone. Great. I quietly closed the door and crept over to the secretary’s desk. I snapped up the appointment book and thrust both books into the bag I had brought with me for just that purpose.

I walked nonchalantly out of the building and started down the street. A block away I started to run.

‘‘That was too easy,’’ I thought triumphantly. ‘‘That was just way too easy.’’ My heart was pounding.

I didn’t bother to go back to the house. I went straight to the Cedars complex and found the secretary on the second floor.

‘‘It worked,’’ I gasped, out of breath from running. ‘‘I was able to get everything you asked for. Well, almost everything. I couldn’t find any financial records.’’ I turned the two books over to her.

She looked through the two books. ‘‘Wait here,’’ she pointed to the chair by her desk.

Several minutes later, the man in the Sea Org uniform came out to the lobby. ‘‘I will let the Ethics Officer know that you have performed this errand satisfactorily.’’ He held the two books. ‘‘In fact I am impressed with the speed with which you carried out this mission. As Ron says, ‘Speed of particle flow equals power.’ You may go back to the Org and report to Ethics. And I don’t want you to mention this to anyone. Ever. Do you understand?’’

‘‘Perfectly.’’ I felt like saluting. I was glowing with the praise he had given me. I started out on the long walk back to the Org.

‘‘Are you ready to complete the formula?’’ the Ethics Officer asked me. He didn’t say anything to me about the events earlier in the day.

‘‘I have to make up the damage by extraordinary personal contribution,’’ I remembered out loud. ‘‘How can I do that?’’

‘‘Well, normally, we would have you do some work for 72 hours to get out of Liability. But since you have apparently done an excellent job for the Guardian’s Office, I am going to reduce it to 48 hours,’’ he said magnanimously. He took me back down to the Registrar’s Office.

‘‘Excuse me,’’ the Ethics Officer addressed Audrey, who was sitting at her desk writing letters. He pointed to me. ‘‘She has to do forty eight hours of amends. Please arrange for someone to supervise her on the night shift.’’ He disappeared from the room.

Audrey smiled at me. ‘‘Don’t worry,’’ she said to me in a low voice. ‘‘It won’t be as bad as you think.’’

I sat down and took a pile of folders. I spent the next two days and two nights writing letters. I was too excited about my successful spy caper to sleep much the first night anyway. And to Audrey’s credit, when I did doze off during the second day, she ignored it unless she heard someone approaching the office, in which case she would call out my name, rousing me from sleep. During the second night I was too sleepy to remember much at all. The night watchman, who luckily for me was a kindly older man, came about every half hour to make sure I was busy writing letters. I got so that I could doze off just after he had left the room, and program myself to wake up a short time later. He caught me napping a couple of times, but he just woke me up and went off with a chuckle.

Finally I was allowed to go back to the Org to sleep. I collapsed on a mat on the floor of the annex. I slept from noon until the next morning. Walking back to the Org the next day, I was thinking of Hubbard’s words in the Ethics book:

> All that Ethics is for — the totality of the reason for its existence and operation — is simply that additional tool necessary to make it possible to apply the technology of Scientology.
>
> We are factually only here helping people to help themselves to better their conditions and the conditions of life. That is our total action.
>
> As that additional tool for making it all possible, the Ethics system of Scientology is tremendously successful.

‘‘I guess it’s successful,’’ I laughed to myself. ‘‘I never want to get into a lower condition again.

‘‘From now on, I’m going to keep my ethics in!’’

Chapter 12
Have You Ever Enslaved a Population?

''I am a Scientologist. I know now that my true friends are other Scientologists in good standing. I will never harm my group again. I want only to do those things which will contribute to the survival of my group, and therefore, to the survival of the planet. I have delivered a blow to the enemies of the group. I have performed forty-eight hours of amends. I hereby petition to rejoin staff at the L.A. Org.''

For two days I had carried my petition from person to person at the Org, begging each person to allow me to rejoin the group. Finally, I had the required signatures. I ran up the stairs to the Ethics office.

''Here you are, sir. I got everyone to sign.''

The Ethics Officer took the clipboard from me and glanced through the signatures.

''Very well done,'' he congratulated me. ''I hope you've learned something from this.''

''Oh, yes, sir, I have,'' I said eagerly. ''Mostly I learned something about being a part of a group. How you have to work with people and not against them. From now on I want to stay out of trouble. With Ethics, I mean. I'd rather not have to go through all this again.''

''Hm,'' he opened the drawer of his desk and pulled out a manila file. To my surprise, I saw my name on the file label followed by the words ''Ethics File.'' ''I see here that this is your first major Ethics offense,'' he observed, as he flipped through the contents of the file. ''And let's hope it's the last. ''All right. You can return to your post.''

''Great.'' I bounded up out of my chair. I looked back at him. ''Thank you, sir,'' I said gratefully as I moved toward the door.

''Aren't you forgetting something?'' He pointed to my arm.

''Oh, yeah, I almost forgot. I guess I was getting used to it.'' I walked over and held out my arm as he undid the unsightly rag. ''I'm glad to be rid of that.''

For the next few months, I worked in the Public Division, selling books on the street and bringing people in for the free lecture or the free personality test. The personality test, I discovered, was just another way of finding the person's ruin. After we graded the test, we would point out the lowest score to the person, getting them to agree that they did need help in this area. Then we would sell them a course or some auditing to remedy the identified deficit. It worked like a charm.

I initiated a program to take the paperback Dianetics books to the campuses of UCLA and USC and to sell them to students. With continued drilling on the Dissem Formula, it wasn't hard at all to get students signed up for the Communication Course. We even started a Scientology group on the campus and had regular meetings. I soon learned to spot the students who would make the best targets: the ones who were alone and looked ''down.'' They were the easiest ones to get into Scientology because they were so hungry for friendship and affiliation.

It was decided that I would remain on staff at the Org instead of Celebrity Center, because the Org was in more desperate need of help. And since the Org and the center were so close, I could always visit the center on my breaks. Because of my success with the ''psychiatrist spy caper,'' I was occasionally summoned back to the G.O. (Guardian's Office) to help out on special projects. Many of these projects were enjoyable, especially the ones which were designed to improve the public image of Scientology in Los Angeles. We had a big Easter egg hunt for local children on the lawn of the Org. Each G.O. project was always given a unique and meaningful name. The Easter egg hunt was known to us as ''Operation Bunny Hop.''

''Operation Clean Sweep'' was a Saturday all hands project to clean up the trash in Alvarado Park. In ''Operation Granny,'' teams of Scientology ''ministers'' were sent to bring cheer to the elderly in nearby nursing homes. And a project to get Scientologists into the schools to give lectures against drug use was named ''Operation Chalk Dust.''

The point of all these projects was not so much to clean up the park, improve the life of the elderly, and educate children about drugs as it was to improve the image of Scientology and, whenever possible, get someone new into Scientology. This is, in fact, the actual agenda behind any apparent agenda of a Scientologist. To get new people into Scientology. And to Clear the Planet.

In the 1970's, Scientology, and the Guardian's Office in particular, had two major problems named, respectively, Paulette Cooper and Michael Meisner. Paulette Cooper, in 1971, had written a book critical of Scientology called *The Scandal of Scientology*. Repeated attempts to silence Cooper, including attempts to frame her by getting her fingerprints on a piece of paper that was later used to send a death threat to Henry Kissinger, and by telephoning the Arab Consulate in New York and saying that Cooper was talking about bombing them, had resulted in only minimal success. A more permanent solution was needed.

Michael Meisner was involved in a complicated Scientology plot in the mid '70's to illegally photocopy and steal thousands of government documents from FBI and IRS offices in Washington, D.C. He had been caught by the FBI, however, and although he was back in Scientology custody, he was threatening to turn state's evidence for the FBI and incriminate Scientology in a host of related criminal actions.

I had been given the sensitive task, as a G.O. volunteer, of going through all of Michael Meisner's (supposedly confidential) preclear and ethics folders and locating any information which could now be used to blackmail him. I was told to be particularly alert for information regarding sexual deviance or criminal behavior. I had to circle anything I found in red ink and tab the page.

Because of the project to launder and steal government documents, known in the G.O. as ''Operation Snow White,'' Scientology was involved in a complex court case with the government. (The name ''Snow White'' had nothing to do with the fairy tale of the same name; the operation was given this name because Hubbard considered that once the ''Church'' had finished cleaning the files of these agencies, they would be ''snow white.'')

Scientology had assigned private detectives to investigate the backgrounds of the Justice Department attorneys assigned to the case. My job was to take all the information assembled by the detectives on each attorney, and to summarize this information in a series of reports to be used by Scientology attorneys during litigation. It occurred to me that the reports could also be used for blackmail purposes.

One day, as I was working on the floor, assembling the ''time line'' (all the events in the life of a person arranged in chronological order) for one particular Justice Department attorney named Raymond Banoun, I was called into the next room for a meeting.

Dick, who was my project leader in the G.O., was leading the meeting. ''We have a problem,'' he said seriously, as he looked around the room at the dozen or so people assembled for the meeting.

''Meisner is threatening to leak this whole project to the FBI. And not only this project but many other G.O. projects that he knows about.

''We can't afford a serious leak of this nature when we are already having major problems with the suppressive government in this country.

''We need a permanent solution to this problem. Does anyone have any suggestions?''

The room was silent. No one said a word.

Finally, someone asked, ''Where is Meisner now, sir?''

''We have him in custody,'' Dick said. After a few seconds he elaborated, ''As a matter of fact he is being kept in a motel room not far from here. I believe he has been handcuffed to a bed.''

''Do you have a plan?'' someone else asked.

''What would you suggest?'' Dick challenged the person who had asked the question.

There was no answer, only an awkward and uncomfortable silence.

''Remember,'' Dick said slowly, his eyes circling the group of us gathered in the room, ''Scientology is the only hope for this planet. If we make it, then this planet makes it. If we don't make it, this planet is doomed. Destroyed. Reduced to a pile of atomic rubble.

''And this one man has the potential, if he does what he is threatening to do, to destroy it all. Everything that Hubbard has worked for. Everything that you and I have worked for. This one man has the ability to destroy everything.''

''So what can we do?'' he looked to us for an answer. ''What's the solution? Any ideas?''

''Well, he can't be allowed to escape. You can't let him get to the agency to testify. That's all there is to it.'' A tall woman in the back of the room spoke up.

''Yeah, right,'' another one said. ''The greatest good for the number of dynamics. That's what Ron says.''

A man to my left spoke up. ''What you're saying, Dick, is that it's a no-win situation. Either one person goes, or millions of innocent men, women and children go. That's the choice, right? Either way, someone has to lose. Isn't that what you're saying?''

We all looked at Dick.

''I'm afraid you've hit the nail on the head,'' he replied. ''That is precisely what we're faced with.''

An older man in the back with an English accent spoke up. ''I say you should take him and dump him overboard at sea. With weights. Deep-six the bastard.''

''Yeah,'' someone else joined in, ''Get rid of him once and for all.''

''Any other suggestions?'' Dick looked around the circle of grim faces. No one answered.

''Very well,'' Dick continued. ''What I can tell you is that the situation will be handled by this time tomorrow. We just didn't want any of you to be surprised. If anyone has a problem with this, I expect you to speak up now.'' Silence.

''All right. There is one other matter. We have a continuing problem with Paulette Cooper. She is continuing her campaign to put an end to Scientology. She is the most deadly Suppressive that we have at the moment. She's a real danger.

''I can tell you that Ron is losing patience with all this. He expects us to handle these things.

''We simply cannot continue to allow one insane person to endanger the survival of everyone else on the planet. She will have to be handled. The job of the Guardian's Office is to get Ethics in on the planet so that Scientology can expand. Handling these situations is simply part of the job.

''Any questions?''

I looked around. No one spoke up. Nobody said anything for a long time. Finally, Dick broke the silence. ''All right, everyone. Back to work. We're on a tight schedule. Thanks for your time.''

I went back to my project in the next room. Something about the meeting bothered me, but I pushed the troublesome thoughts from my mind.

''The greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics,'' I sighed. If it has to be done, it has to be done. And I tried to forget about the whole thing. Later I heard that Michael Meisner, who had in fact been held prisoner, managed to gain the confidence of his guards and to escape from the motel. He did go to the FBI with his information, information which resulted in an FBI raid on the ''Church'' of Scientology a month later. As a result of this raid, eleven Scientologists were indicted and imprisoned, including Hubbard's wife, Mary Sue.

Paulette Cooper was never killed. Regarding Paulette, however, there is an interesting and macabre story. Apparently, Paulette had moved, and her cousin, similar to her in appearance, had taken over her apartment. One day a man came to deliver flowers. When the cousin opened the door, he held a gun to her head and cocked it. When, for unknown reasons, it did not fire, he tried to choke her. She was able to scream, and he fled.

Paulette later reached an out-of-court settlement with the ''Church.''

And so, in this way, the years passed. I continued to work for the organization in a variety of capacities. I learned calligraphy so that I could help with the inscribing of certificates when needed. For a period of time I served as the ARC Break Registrar, which meant that my job was to contact people who were upset with Scientology and offer them free sessions to get them ''back on lines''. Predictably, I soon burned out from that job, and was transferred to another post where I was put in charge of special events. The only contact I had with my parents was occasional letters from them updating me with family news. My brother's marriage and first child, my other brother's graduation from college and teaching position in Europe, my father's heart surgery, my first brother's second child, his third child, my sister's marriage in Vermont, etc. Some letters I threw away without opening, others I would open and read quickly, not allowing myself to feel any emotion.

One day early in 1979, I received a letter from my father telling me that my grandmother, his mother, had just died. It's just as well, I thought callously. In a session on the PTS/SP ''Rundown,'' I had identified my grandmother as the main Suppressive on my dad's side of the family. Since she was a thoroughly evil person, I reasoned, it was unnecessary to waste any grief on her death.

I received a second letter from my father containing an airline ticket. Would I consider, he wanted to know, coming back to Michigan for my grandmother's funeral? Everyone else in the family would be there.

Something about the idea of a family reunion struck a chord in me. Memories of happy days with my aunts and uncles at the summer cottage shared by our large extended family must have stirred some nearly extinct subconscious feelings. I did a very strange thing.

I arranged to take a long weekend away from my post, using the excuse of my grandmother's funeral. It was permissible to get leave from post for pressing family matters. It was justified as a means of keeping families from becoming openly antagonistic to Scientology.

I made a reservation on a direct flight to Michigan, and arrived at the airport well ahead of the time required to board the plane. I was one of the first people on the plane and I took a seat in the very last row. Sitting there as the other passengers were boarding the plane, I was suddenly seized by an overwhelming panic, a feeling of terror.

The flight attendants were just beginning to close the door to the plane when I called out from the back, ''Wait, don't close the door!'' I fought my way through the passengers still standing in the aisles to the front of the plane as everyone in the plane watched in stunned silence.

''I have to get off. I'm going to be sick,'' I told the attendant nearest the door. ''Please,'' I begged. ''Let me off the plane.''

The attendant looked forward to the captain. He nodded his head. She opened the door and I walked back up the boarding ramp, flooded with relief.

The ''wog world'' had become for me a place of danger, a sinister world of enemies and suppressives. The hundreds of hours of listening to Hubbard's ravings on the tapes had done their job. I was now a captive of Scientology. I would never again venture out voluntarily into the evil ''wog world.''

I mailed the ticket back to my father with an apology. ''I can't come right now. I can't take time off from my post,'' I lied. ''Just tell everyone I said hello.''

A month or so later I received another letter from my father. Perhaps out of guilt I opened it, not throwing it away as I had so many other letters from home.

Inside the envelope was a certified check made out to me in the amount of twenty thousand dollars. ''Enclosed is your inheritance from your grandmother,'' I read in my father's scrawling script. I was stunned. I stared at the check in disbelief. Then a wonderful idea took form in my mind: the OT levels. This money would be my passage to the realm of OT. I did a dance of joy in front of my startled co-workers.

Later I learned that my parents had reasoned that perhaps, with the money to make a fresh start, I would return home. They greatly underestimated, as many parents do, the power of the mind control and hypnosis ritualistically enforced over the years by the continual repetition of TR's, drills, auditing, propaganda, and the dynamics of group reinforcement in Scientology.

I quickly wrote up a CSW (''Completed Staff Work''), a petition to my seniors asking for a leave of absence from my post to do the OT levels. I was quite sure the petition would be approved, especially when it became known that I had received a substantial inheritance.

I was right. Within a week I was sitting in a chair at the desk of the Registrar at the AO (Advanced Org).

I had always been awed by the hushed air of excitement at the AO. I thought of the many times I had come into this building to deliver messages or courier packages, always dreaming of the day when I would be here ''for real,'' for my ''upper levels.'' And now it was really going to happen. On the way back to the Registrar's Office I glanced at the ''pre-OT's'' sitting quietly in the lobby, waiting for the C/S for their next session.

What did they know, I wondered. Did some of them actually know the mysterious secret of OT 3? It was well known in Scientology that on this third upper level, Hubbard revealed the great secret of ''this sector of the universe'' which would explain, we were told, all human behavior in the world today. The thought that I, too, would soon learn this secret was almost impossible to comprehend. Once I was through ''the wall of fire,'' the name given by Hubbard to this dangerous and esoteric level, I would become a ''thetan exterior,'' free from any type of overwhelm for the indefinite and infinite future, and able to travel at will outside my body. From there, the possibilities were endless.

''So, you are ready to do the OT levels, yes?'' the Registrar, who had a Spanish accent, asked as he pulled out his desk drawer and retrieved a folder.

''Yes,'' I replied, too excited to talk.

''Very good, very good indeed,'' he smiled at me.

''Now the last level that you have done is your Grade 4, am I correct?'' he looked through my advanced payment folder. I had made regular small payments through the years into my ''AP'' (Advanced Payment) account at the AO. I was surprised to find out that my credit now stood at more than two thousand dollars.

''So, first you need to do your 'Power,''' he said as he started to write on a pad of paper on his desk, ''which because you are on staff is half price. That will be six hundred dollars.'' He wrote down the amount.

I watched as the column of numbers started to take form on his pad.

''And your 'Solo,' which will train you to become a Solo auditor in preparation for the OT levels,'' he continued, ''also six hundred dollars.''

''And, of course, you want to go Clear, right?'' he looked at me expectantly.

I nodded. ''Of course.''

''OK. Clear. Eight hundred dollars.''

I thought of the speeches I had heard at Clear Night. Soon I would be making a speech of my own. I shivered at the thought.

''Well, that exhausts your AP account. Now, you have received how much from your grandmother's estate?'' He looked at me.

I took the check from my shirt pocket. I carefully straightened it out and laid it on the desk, facing him.

''So. Twenty thousand dollars. Well, that should get you right on up the chart, I would think.'' He didn't seem very impressed by the check. ''He probably gets a dozen checks like this every day,'' I thought, somewhat disappointed by his lack of enthusiasm.

''All right, let's do some figuring.'' He took out his calculator and started adding and subtracting figures as I watched.

''OT 1. That's a short level. You'll probably be able to do it in a day. Three hundred twenty dollars.'' He punched the number into his calculator. ''OT 2. Five hundred.

''And OT 3. Right?'' He looked at me for confirmation.

‘‘Right,’’ I answered, determined to match his stoic approach to the whole thing. I tried to act like spending twenty thousand dollars was something I did every day.

‘‘OK. Three thousand dollars. That’s a big level. As you know,’’ he looked up at me, grinning conspiratorially. I grinned back, feeling like I had just pulled the fabled sword from the stone.

‘‘Now, as for the rest,’’ he kept writing on his pad, ‘‘you’ll need to have something on account in case you need a review. And the balance you will probably want to leave on account for your remaining levels. Assuming, of course, that you plan to continue on up The Bridge.’’ He picked up the check and examined it closely.

‘‘I guess,’’ I said uncertainly. ‘‘How much will I have left?’’

‘‘Well, after OT 3, that should leave you about sixteen thousand dollars. Enough to do whatever is C/Sed for you after OT 3. That will give the C/S something to work with.

‘‘And you,’’ he said to me confidingly, ‘‘are about to begin on the adventure of a lifetime. Are you ready?’’

‘‘Yeah. I’m ready. I’ve been waiting for this for ten years,’’ I replied. ‘‘When can I start?’’

‘‘Well, you can start by first signing this check,’’ he turned the check over and handed me a pen. ‘‘And then, we’re going to get you scheduled for your Ethics Clearance right away. Maybe even today.’’ He reached for the check I had just signed.

‘‘You’ll never regret this,’’ he clapped me on the shoulder. ‘‘You have just traded this money,’’ he held up the check, ‘‘for the secrets of the universe. Not a bad exchange.’’

‘‘Wait,’’ I said suspiciously. ‘‘What is an Ethics Clearance?’’ He had just thrown me a curve.

‘‘Oh, it’s just routine. Everyone going onto the OT levels has to be cleared by Ethics. Just to make sure you have no outstanding Ethics cycles.’’

‘‘But I haven’t had any trouble with Ethics for years,’’ I protested.

‘‘It’s just a routine check,’’ he said soothingly. ‘‘Look. The OT levels are powerful stuff. If someone tried to do them with out-ethics, they could get into a lot of trouble. Maybe even die. Really, it’s for your own good.’’

All right, I decided. I’ll go along with the program. No Ethics Officer is going to stand between me and OT 3.

Soon I was sitting opposite the AO Ethics Officer. I handed him my Power Routing Form.

‘‘Going up the Bridge?’’ he was pleasant but businesslike.

I nodded.

‘‘Very well done.’’ He turned on his meter.

‘‘Now we’re going to do a couple of Security checks. Just routine, to make sure everything is clean before you go onto your OT levels.’’ He pulled some plain white 8 1/2 by 14 inch paper from his drawer and tested his pen. ‘‘I’m going to ask you a series of questions. You don’t have to answer them. The meter will pick up any reaction you might have to an item. If I get a read, I’ll ask you for your considerations. OK?’’

‘‘Sure,’’ I replied.

‘‘First, I’m going to ask a few null questions to determine your reaction pattern. Ready?’’

‘‘Ready,’’ I replied, feeling like an astronaut in a space capsule waiting for the launch.

‘‘We will now begin.

‘‘Are you sitting in a chair?’’ he looked at me.

I didn’t answer. He adjusted the meter.

‘‘Are you on the moon?’’ Pause.

‘‘Have you ever drunk water?’’

‘‘Am I an elephant?’’

‘‘Are you a table?’’

‘‘Good.’’ He looked over at me. ‘‘You’re reading just fine. Now we’ll begin the process.’’ I relaxed.

‘‘Have you ever lived or worked under an assumed name?’’ No read. ‘‘That’s clean,’’ he said.

‘‘Are you here for a different purpose than you say?’’ No read. ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Have you ever done any shoplifting?’’ ‘‘That reads,’’ he looked up at me. ‘‘Do you have any considerations on that?’’

‘‘Yeah,’’ I thought back. ‘‘Yeah, when I was in college. I stole some cigarettes a couple of times from a drug store. And some other things. Pantyhose. Maybe twice. I was just being rebellious. Actually I felt guilty afterward and mailed the store some money.’’

‘‘OK, that’s clean,’’ he said, adjusting the meter.

‘‘Have you ever been blackmailed?’’ ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Have you ever been in prison?’’ ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Are you guilty of anything?’’ ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Have you ever embezzled money?’’ ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Have you ever been court martialed?’’ ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Have you ever had anything to do with pornography?’’ ‘‘That’s clean.’’

‘‘Have you ever peddled dope?’’ ‘‘That reads. What about that, have you ever peddled dope?’’ He looked up.

‘‘Well, not exactly. But I had a boyfriend once who sold marijuana and sometimes people would give me money to give to him. So I didn't really, but I was involved. That's all.'' I waited for him to clear the question.

''That's clean.''

''Have you ever raped anyone or been raped?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever practiced homosexuality?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever had intercourse with a member of your family?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever had anything to do with Communism or been a Communist?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever practiced sex with children?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever taken money for giving anyone sexual intercourse?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever killed or crippled animals for pleasure?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever committed a misdemeanor?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever committed a felony?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever done anything your mother would be ashamed to find out?'' ''That reads.'' He looked up at me.

''I'm not sure what it is. I've certainly done things she wouldn't be happy about if she knew about them.'' I hesitated.

''Like what?'' he prodded.

''Well, like the affair I had in college. She didn't know about that. And I used to smoke marijuana before I got into Scientology.''

I closed my eyes and tried to think. ''I had a party in our house once when my parents were both away. And some relationships I've had in Scientology. She probably wouldn't approve. That's about all.'' I yawned.

He asked the question again. ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever practiced sex with animals?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever murdered anyone?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever stolen anything from a Scientology organization?'' ''That's clean.''

''Do you know any Communists personally?'' ''That's clean.''

He asked many other questions. An hour and a half had gone by, I noticed, looking at the clock.

''Is there much more?'' I asked.

''No, we're almost finished with this check,'' he answered. ''Just try to be patient.'' He continued with his questions.

''Have you ever had any unkind thoughts about Scientologists?'' ''That reads. What about it?'' He looked up.

''Yeah, the Ethics officer at the Org. And a couple of people on staff. I did have some unkind thoughts. But doesn't everybody?''

He checked the question again. ''I still get a read,'' he persisted. ''What do you think it could be?''

''Well, I had an unkind thought about Diana Hubbard once. I didn't like her piano playing. And at Christmas I thought it was pretty stingy of Hubbard to just send us some cheese. And sometimes I resented that the execs at the Org made so much more money than I did.'' I thought some more. ''Once I refused to eat the food at the Org. I had unkind thoughts about the cook. And I had unkind thoughts about another girl on staff who was going with someone I had a crush on. I had unkind thoughts about him, too. That's about all I can think of.''

''I'll check the question again,'' he said. He reread the question. ''That's clean.''

''What unkind thoughts have you had while I was doing this check?'' ''That reads,'' he said. ''Anything?''

''No, I just don't like this check. I'm not sure why you have to ask all these things just for me to do the OT levels,'' I complained.

''OK,'' he acknowledged.

''Are you upset about this Security Check?'' ''That reads. Are you upset?''

''No, not really. It's just that I didn't know about it and I had thought maybe I could start Power today. So I was a little upset, but not really.'' He asked the question again.

''OK, that's clean.''

''All right. That's the end of this check. We have one more check to do but we'll do it after lunch. OK?''

''Fine.'' I got up and stretched. I wasn't really hungry so I decided to just take a walk. It was a beautiful fall day with almost no smog, a rarity in L.A.

After lunch, we resumed the session.

''OK, now we're going to do the Whole Track Sec Check. Do you know what that means?''

''Well,'' I guessed, ''whole track is all your past lives so this must be a sec check of your past lives.''

''Good,'' he answered. ''We'll begin.

''Have you ever enslaved a population?''

I blinked. ''What?'' I asked incredulously.

''I'll repeat the question,'' he said with no reaction. ''Have you ever enslaved a population?''

I didn't say anything.

''That's clean.''

''Have you ever ordered, or yourself committed, genocide?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever annihilated a population?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever upset an ecology?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever practiced terrorism?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever bred bodies for degrading purposes?'' ''That's clean.''

''Did you come to Earth for evil purposes?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever made a planet, or nation, radioactive?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever caused a planet to disappear?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever torn out someone's tongue?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever blinded anyone?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever smothered a baby?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever participated in a sexual relationship between a doll body and a human body?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever made love to a dead body?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever tortured another with electrical, or electronic devices?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever been a professional executioner?'' ''Clean.''

''A brutal jailer?'' ''Clean.''

''A corrupt judge?'' ''Clean.''

''An ungrateful child?'' ''Clean.''

''A wicked mother?'' ''Clean.''

''A bad father?'' ''Clean.''

''An abortionist?'' ''Clean.''

''Have you ever abandoned your sick, or dead, to the enemy?'' ''That's clean.''

''Have you ever failed to rescue your leader?'' ''That's clean.''

After over three hundred such questions, we finished the check.

''Clean as a whistle,'' commented the Ethics Officer. ''You're ready to start your Power. Good luck,'' he said as he initialed my Power Routing Form.

I got up. ''Well, I feel better,'' I told him. He looked up.

''I guess I never knew there were so many things I didn't do,'' I reflected. ''Sort of makes me feel good.''

I walked out of his office, glad to be finished with the strange questions. Conditioned as I was to the bizarre and the unusual from my very first day in Scientology, I dismissed the events of the day as just another step forward on the Yellow Brick Road to Total Freedom.

I felt like clicking my heels.

Soon I would be in Oz!

Chapter 13
We Are All Many

I took my seat in the lobby of the AO to wait for my first session on the level called Power. Three or four other ‘‘pre-OT’s’’ were also silently waiting for sessions. For some reason there was never much conversation in the waiting room of the AO. I looked around at the room. The carpets throughout the building were a deep royal blue, and the walls a stark white. The Sea Org colors, I realized, blue and white. A bronze life-sized bust of L. Ron Hubbard was mounted on a pedestal facing the entrance, keeping a silent vigil over all who entered below.

The windows were open and a breeze, unusually fresh and clean for L.A., billowed the curtains flapping in the windows and playfully scattered pieces of paper from the desk of Tech Services onto the floor. I reached over to retrieve several slips of paper just as my name was called by the Tech Page. I followed the young boy who was acting as Page down the long hallway to a closet-sized auditing room about halfway around the building. My auditor’s name was Sandy, a short red-haired woman wearing a Sea Org uniform.

‘‘Pick up the cans please,’’ she said, wasting no time.

After the usual preliminaries, she began the Power process.

‘‘Tell me a source,’’ she commanded.

‘‘A source,’’ I paused, thinking. ‘‘Well, the sun. The sun is a source.’’

‘‘Good,’’ she continued. ‘‘Tell me about it.’’

‘‘Well, it gives off heat and light. It provides life energy to the Earth.’’

‘‘OK. Tell me a no source.’’

‘‘A rock is a no source. It doesn’t give off anything.’’

‘‘All right. Tell me a source.’’

I already knew the answer.

‘‘Me. I’m a source. I have the ability to think, to make postulates, and to carry out those postulates.’’

‘‘Your needle is floating,’’ Sandy confirmed. ‘‘End of process.’’

‘‘That’s it? That’s all there is to Power?’’ I was stunned.

So three minutes and six hundred dollars after we had started, I was on my way to the Examiner to attest to completing my Power.

Soon I was ‘‘routed’’ onto the Solo Course, where I would be trained as a ‘‘solo’’ auditor. On the lower levels of Scientology, one is always audited by another person, but on the upper levels one audits oneself. Instead of holding the cans in both hands, on the Solo levels one holds two cans soldered together in one hand while using the other hand to operate the meter and write the session notes.

The theory section of the Solo Course was mystifying. The Course began with as essay by Hubbard titled, ‘‘The Inner Structure of the Mind.’’

‘‘We are going to delineate for you the inner structure of the reactive mind,’’ Hubbard writes in this essay.

> The core of the reactive mind is the R6 (Routine 6) bank. It is surrounded by engrams and secondaries which must be wiped out to get at the core itself. And what does the R6 bank consist of? You may be surprised to learn it is groups of words called GPM’s (Goals-Problems-Mass) which serve to confuse a thetan. They are the cause of aberration. The contents of the R6 bank are aberrated stable data.

According to Hubbard, the reactive mind in each person on Earth is the legacy of millenia of implanting. In the implants, the thetan, between lives, is pinned to a wall with electronic beams and then programmed with opposing pairs of words, called ‘‘terms’’ and ‘‘opp-terms,’’ while simultaneously being zapped with powerful electronic beams. The result is a permanently crippled and confused thetan who is then sent back to Earth to ‘‘pick up a new body’’ and start another lifetime in captivity.

On the Solo Course, one learns to audit these pairs of words, thus becoming freed from the devastating effects of the hypothetical implants. The most interesting skill learned on the Solo Course is called the Dating Drill. In this drill one partner picks out a fictitious date, while the other partner, using the E-meter, has to discover the exact date. The date will typically run into the billions or trillions of years.

For example, if my partner were to pick out a date of 260 billion, 376 million, 492 thousand, 790 years, the dating drill process would go something like this: ‘‘Is the date tens of years, hundreds of years, thousands of years, tens of thousands of years, hundreds of thousands of years, millions of years, tens of millions of years, hundreds of millions of years, billions of years, tens of billions of years, hundreds of billions of years?''

Theoretically, I would get a small tick on the needle of the meter, registering my partner's ''charge'' on the correct item, ''hundreds of billions of years''. Once this has been confirmed, then I will narrow down the years even further.

''Is the date more than 500 billions of years?''

There should be no tick.

''Is the date less than 500 billions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 300 billions of years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 300 billions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 200 billions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 250 billions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 275 billions of years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 275 billions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billions of years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billions of years?'' No tick.

''Is the date 260 billions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 500 millions of years?'' No Tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 500 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 250 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 300 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 400 millions of years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 400 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 350 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 375 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 380 millions of years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 380 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date 260 billion 376 millions of years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 500 thousand years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 376 million 500 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 250 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 400 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 450 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 475 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 480 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 490 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 495 thousand years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 376 million 495 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date 260 billion 376 million 491 thousand years?'' No tick.

''Is the date 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 500 years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 750 years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 800 years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 800 years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 775 years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 780 years?'' Tick.

''Is the date more than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 790 years?'' No tick.

''Is the date less than 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 790 years?'' No tick.

''Is the date 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 790 years?'' Tick.

''I would like to indicate that the date is 260 billion 376 million 492 thousand 790 years.''

End of drill!

While studying the ''Theory'' section of the Solo Course, I was told that I would need a lockable briefcase and a dog leash for the upper levels. So I went to J.C. Penney's with the charge card my father had given me to use for limited purchases, and bought an inexpensive briefcase. Then I went to the nearest 7-Eleven store to buy a dog leash.

When carrying the secret upper level materials, it was required that they be locked inside the briefcase, and the briefcase attached to one's arm with the dog leash. This was a security precaution to prevent the theft or loss of the greatly valued and confidential upper level materials.

To do the Solo auditing, I locked myself into a room at the house, set up my meter, and began to ''run'' the process.

''What am I dramatizing?'' I asked myself.

Then I had to locate one-half of the word pair that I had been implanted with. For example, I might use the word ''Smart.'' Then I had to find the antonym. ''Dumb.''

Then I would read this pair of words aloud until there was no reaction on the E-meter.

> Lazy. Industrious.
> Fat. Thin.
> Quiet. Loud.
> Careful. Careless.
> Isolating. Gregarious.
> Neat. Sloppy.
> Friendly. Unfriendly.
> Etc.

When there were no more words to find, then I was finished with Solo. And theoretically, I had a picture of the exact implant structure of my mind.

The Clearing Course was a bizarre course containing lists of objects that I had to ''spot'' in my ''space.'' Some of these objects were:

> Hollow triangles going away and coming in.
> Hollow circles going away and coming in.
> Hollow squares going away and coming in.
> Hollow ellipses going away and coming in.
> Hollow cubes going away and coming in.
> Hollow prisms going away and coming in.
> Hollow cylinders going away and coming in.
> [And so on with a number of other shapes.]

There were a number of other bizarre practices.

It may be difficult to understand why approximately 40,000 people in this country and 60,000 people overseas would willingly subject themselves to such insane procedures. The only explanation I can offer is that it is quite possible to hypnotize a person to believe anything, or to perform any action, no matter how ridiculous, without question. The cognitive function of the person's mind is completely disengaged. Can a person's mind be controlled? The answer is yes.

After finishing the Clearing Course I gave my Clear speech. Something to the effect that ''I was happy to finally be At Cause in my life without the burden of the reactive mind that I have been carrying around for thousands of years.'' OT 1 consisted of one command. ''Spot a person.'' I went to a local mall and spotted people for several hours until I came to a ''cognition'' and realized that I was different than any other person in the world. At which point I finished OT 1.

OT 2 was another bizarre level on which I had to audit some curious things. Including The Arrow, The Woman, The White Black Sphere, Hot Cold, Laughter-Calm, Dance Mob, and the Double Rod. I soon finished and attested to being an OT 2 Completion. I gave my success speech to cheers in the lobby of the AO.

Now I was ready for the great leap into the Unknown. I was ready for OT 3, on which I would learn the secret of the universe which had eluded Man for millions of years.

I had a friend, an older man named Les, who volunteered to come with me during my first day on OT 3 and coach me on the materials. We drove together to the AO.

''Nervous?'' he asked, lighting a cigarette.

''Yeah, a little. I've only been waiting ten years to do this level,'' I answered.

''Well, just think, in another hour or so, you will know the great secret. You will be one of us.'' He winked at me.

At the AO, I first had to find the locked room where the materials for OT 3 were kept, a small closet just across from the OT 3 course-room.

I knocked on the door. A slim Sea Org member unlocked the door to let me in, then quickly locked the door behind me. I had to unlock my briefcase and show him that it was empty. He then handed me a brown envelope containing the OT 3 materials. I locked this envelope in the briefcase which was leashed to my arm. He checked to make sure that the briefcase was actually locked. Then he let me out of that room, and locked the door behind me.

He escorted me across the hall and I knocked on the door of the OT 3 classroom. The door was unlocked to let me in, then locked again behind me. I am quite sure that not even the Pentagon has better security than Scientology.

Les was saving me a seat in the classroom. I sat down, unlocked my briefcase and pulled out the treasured envelope. Smiling at Les, I opened the envelope and pulled out several pages which were copies of pages handwritten by Hubbard. I began to read.

> The head of the Galactic Federation (76 planets around larger stars visible from here) (founded 95,000,000 years ago, very space opera) solved overpopulation (250 billion or so per planet, 178 billion on average) by mass implanting. He caused people to be brought to Teegeeack (Earth) and put an H-bomb on the principal volcanos (Incident II) and then the Pacific area ones were taken in boxes to Hawaii and the Atlantic ones to Las Palmas and there ''packaged.''
>
> His name was Xenu. He used renegades. Various misleading data by means of circuits etc. was placed in the implants.
>
> When through with his crime loyal officers (to the people) captured him after six years of battle and put him in an electronic mountain trap where he still is. ''They'' are gone. The place (Confederation) has since been a desert. The length and brutality of it all was such that this Confederation never recovered. The implant is calculated to kill (by pneumonia etc) anyone who attempts to solve it. This liability has been dispensed with

> by my tech development.
>
> One can freewheel through the implant and die unless it is approached as precisely outlined. The ''freewheel'' (auto-running on and on) lasts too long, denies sleep etc. and one dies. So be careful to do only Incidents I and II as given and not plow around and fail to complete one thetan at a time.
>
> In December 1967 I knew someone had to take the plunge. I did and emerged very knocked out, but alive. Probably the only one ever to do so in 75,000,000 years. I have all the data now, but only that given here is needful.
>
> One's body is a mass of individual thetans stuck to oneself or to the body.
>
> One has to clean them off by running Incident II and Incident I. It is a long job, requiring care, patience and good auditing. You are running beings. They respond like any preclear. Some large, some small.
>
> Thetans believed they were one. This is the primary error. Good luck.

The remaining pages in the packet I had been given elaborated the detailed procedures to be used in auditing out one's ''body thetans.''

Break came, and I was feeling very perplexed as I followed Les out of the building.

''Well, what do you think?'' he asked eagerly.

I was feeling very strange. I had been programmed under hypnosis for ten years to accept as gospel everything said or written by Hubbard. I had paid thousands of dollars to gain access to the privileged OT 3 material. I was programmed to believe. But the materials were too absurd to be believed. The result was that my mind, like a computer which has come upon data impossible to analyze, simply refused to compute. I felt as if my mind had been completely shut down. I had an eerie sensation of mental ''floating,'' of being mentally suspended in time and space.

Hubbard had jammed my mind. And from that point I became a total pawn. Not able to think, I was a completely programmable stimulus-response machine. I had become a robot. Or, to use the phrase now popular among ex-Scientologists, a ''Rondroid.''

''I feel sort of strange,'' I said to Les. ''I feel like I'm floating. And I'm not sure I understood what I just read.''

''What didn't you understand?''

''Well, is he saying that because this guy Xenu, millions of years ago, blew up thousands of thetans and caused them to become clustered together, that now everyone on Earth is some kind of multiple personality? And that what we have to do now is audit all these other thetans stuck to us so that they can leave and go get their own bodies?''

''Exactly,'' Les looked at me proudly. ''You understand it just fine. You see, everything in Scientology has been leading up to this level. The purpose of your lower grades was to erase some of the lighter charge from your mind. And Power enabled the dominant being in the ''cluster'' to separate out so that it you could audit the rest of the guys.''

''You mean that everyone on the upper levels is just auditing to get rid of their 'body thetans?' '' I was still incredulous.

''Well, you have to do it to appreciate what it will do for you. You won't believe how good and clean you will feel after a few hours of OT 3.'' He put his arm around my shoulder.

''It kind of reminds me of a dog getting rid of its fleas,'' I remarked. ''Somehow, it's just not what I had expected.''

During the remaining days on the course, I learned how to locate and ''run'' my ''body thetans.'' You had to close your eyes and locate a feeling of pressure somewhere on your body. Then telepathically audit the body thetan. You would first audit the thetan through Incident II, which was done by asking the thetan to visualize:

1. The area of the atomic explosion (Hawaii or Las Palmas).
2. The H-bomb dropped on the volcano.
3. The explosion.
4. Terrific winds.
5. The thetan carried over the peak of the volcano.
6. An electronic ribbon coming up.
7. The thetan sticking to the electronic ribbon.
8. The ribbon pulled down and the thetan implanted.
9. A picture of a pilot saying that he is ''mocking it up.''
10. Implant pictures, including God, devil, etc.
11. The thetan ''cognites'' and leaves.

And if the body thetan does not leave (if you did not get a ''floating needle''), then you have to run the body thetan on Incident I, which is described as follows:

> 1. Loud snap.
> 2. Waves of light.
> 3. Chariot comes out, turns right and left.
> 4. Cherub comes out.
> 5. Blows horn, comes close.
> 6. Shattering series of snaps.
> 7. Cherub fades back (retreats).
> 8. Blackness dumped on thetan.

This ''implant,'' according to Hubbard, happened four quadrillion years ago. I dutifully completed the ''theory section'' of the course, then took my E-meter back to the house and began to audit OT 3.

I held the Solo cans in my right hand, leaving my left hand free to work the meter and write my session notes.

I closed my eyes.

Soon I felt a pressure on my head (or imagined I did). There was a flicker on the meter.

I concentrated on making telepathic contact with the disembodied being. ‘‘Was it Hawaii or Las Palmas?’’ I asked the invisible thetan, watching my meter for a reaction.

‘‘Las Palmas. Good’’ I acknowledged him.

Then I had him visualize Incident II. If I got a floating needle, it meant that the body thetan had left me. If the needle didn’t float, then I had to audit the thetan on Incident I. I tried to do my best at this procedure, but I was soon in trouble.

‘‘You’re going to need a review,’’ the ‘‘Tech Sec’’ (Technical Secretary) looked at me seriously.

I walked glumly from the AO back to my house. I was scheduled for a Review tomorrow. I was still experiencing the strange floating feeling. My mind was still suspended. I could not think.

Lately I had been having strange nightmares. I was feeling more and more peculiar. And it was getting worse.

In my Review, it was found that I had ‘‘overrun’’ the last body thetan I was auditing. This was corrected and I was sent back to my house to continue the auditing. After several more sessions, I managed to obtain a dial-wide floating needle, and was declared to be an OT 3 Completion.

But where were my gains? Why wasn’t I able to leave my body at will, as had been advertised? Where were my psychic abilities?

I began to have an alarming array of physical problems. There was an outbreak of hepatitis at the house. A health department nurse came to innoculate everyone living in the house, but I had already begun to run a high fever. I was audited to spot the suppressive I was connected to. Nothing came up. I continued to have nightmares. On two occasions I woke up in the dark, screaming, thoroughly alarming the other people sleeping in the room.

I started to have migraine headaches severe enough to keep me in bed for the whole day. And even though I was taking the antibiotics mandated by the health department, my fever persisted.

Finally, I was called into Tech Services. I felt more dead than alive.

‘‘I’m afraid you are going to need some more advanced auditing than OT 3,’’ I was informed by the Tech Sec. ‘‘Some people resolve most of their ‘‘case’’ on OT 3, but others require an additional auditing procedure.’’

The auditing that I needed, I was told, was a new level just developed by Hubbard called New Era Dianetics for OT’s, or NED for OT’s. The cost: $8,000 per 25 hour ‘‘intensive.’’ Unfortunately, I would not be accepted by the AO for this auditing unless I bought at least two intensives of NED for OT’s. In addition, I would have to fly to the more advanced AO in Clearwater, Florida to do this new level.

I was routed back to the Registrar. At this point I was beyond caring about the cost. I signed over the balance in my account, $16,000, to the AO. It was all or nothing. I flew to Florida.

In November of 1979, I arrived at ‘‘Flag,’’ the new ‘‘Flag Land Base’’ established when Hubbard had brought the floating Sea Org ashore several years before. I was given a room with two other ‘‘OT’s’’ in the Scientology hotel.

In my first NED session, I was told that there were additional body thetans stuck to me that needed to be audited. These ‘‘BT’s’’ had not responded to OT 3 because they were ‘‘unconscious’’ or ‘‘asleep.’’ Before they could be audited, they had to be awakened.

The sessions continued in the bizarre fashion of the OT 3 sessions. First I had to close my eyes and locate a ‘‘ridge’’ of sleeping ‘‘BT’s.’’ I had to close my eyes, visualize the ridge of dormant ‘‘BT’s’’ and flow energy at them until they woke up. Then they could be audited on OT 3.

Finally, ten years too late, I balked.

‘‘No way. This is ridiculous. I can’t do this. This isn’t what I expected.’’ From the day I started NED for OT’s, my life became a constant Review session. I was becoming more and more desperate. I panicked as the money and the time in my intensives dwindled. I was getting no results.

‘‘This isn’t working,’’ I complained to the Examiner. ‘‘You have to find out what’s wrong.’’

I started to complain to other students who were on the same level. ‘‘It’s not working for me. Is it working for you?’’

‘‘Yes,’’ they would answer. ‘‘It’s incredible. I’m having incredible wins.’’

In the warped logic of a Scientologist, it was forbidden to think that there might be something wrong with the ‘‘tech.’’ In other words, it was forbidden to think or say that the ‘‘Emperor had no clothes.’’

Therefore there must be something wrong with me. But what?

One night I had an especially bad nightmare and my screaming woke half the building. I was sent for another review.

The next day, I woke up to find a Sea Org member stationed outside my room. ‘‘What’s going on?’’ I asked her.

‘‘I’ve been posted here,’’ she answered. ‘‘You’ve been ordered to stay in your room. Your meals are going to be brought up here.’’

‘‘But why?’’ I asked.

‘‘Until your case has been straightened out,’’ she answered tersely.

I went back in the room and sat down on the bed.

''Maybe,'' I thought excitedly, ''maybe they're going to send me ''over the rainbow'' (the Scientology code words to refer to the location, unknown to anyone except a very few select Sea Org members, where Hubbard was in hiding). At four o'clock in the afternoon, my female guard was replaced by another Sea Org member, this one a stocky male.

The day went by, two days, a week, then three weeks. I paced in the room and slept to pass the time.

One night, I looked outside the door where the guard was posted and found, to my surprise, that my guard for the evening, a young man in uniform, was sound asleep. It was after twelve o'clock and the building was quiet. I crept past the sleeping guard and went out the side door of the building. I walked nonchalantly past the night watchman.

A block away, I realized that I was free. But where to go? I couldn't go the the suppressive police. I had no money. And it was nearly one o'clock in the morning.

I couldn't think. I walked a few blocks to a small deck on the bay belonging to a nearby condominium complex. I took off my shoes and sat on the edge of the deck, dangling my bare feet in the cool water.

I looked out over the bay at the twinkling night lights. The water lapped rhythmically onto the shore. The sky was cloudless and starry. It was a picture of complete peace, a soothing contrast to the chaos churning inside me.

I sat there for an hour, two hours. I tried to think, but thinking didn't produce any new options. After a while, I began to feel chilled. Slowly, feeling defeated, I made my way back to the hotel.

I went back up to my room, slipped past the still sleeping guard, and lay down on my bed.

My prison did not have locked doors. They were not needed. My prison consisted of the locked doors in my mind.

One night, shortly after my midnight venture, I was given the order to pack my things. The next morning I was shuffled into a waiting van. Three guards rode with me in the back of the van.

''Where are we going?'' I asked curiously.

''To the airport,'' was the curt reply.

We disembarked at Tampa International airport. I was escorted to the waiting area for Northwest Airlines. I noticed the destination marked behind the ticket check-in counter: Detroit, Michigan.

''What?'' I looked at my guards in confusion.

''We located your parents,'' one of the guards said to me in an emotionless voice.

''You are to go back to Michigan. Here are your instructions.'' I was handed a thick packet of materials.

The plane was boarding. One of the guards put his hand around my arm and directed me toward the waiting plane. The two other guards disappeared. I flew with my guard to Michigan, where my father was waiting for me at the airport. The guard immediately booked a return flight to Florida.

I rode silently beside my father on the forty minute drive to Lansing, where my family was now living.

I opened up the packet I had been given at the airport. It was a list of instructions, about thirty pages long.

I was to pay back Scientology $30,000 for all services I had taken as a staff member. I was to read a long list of books and write reviews of each one. I was to run, take vitamins and write a new list of all my overts, both in this lifetime and in my past lives.

Then I was to retrain on all my levels in Scientology. I was to start over as a preclear from Dianetics upward. Once I had trained up to Class 4 and demonstrated that I could again become a valuable member of the group, my petition to rejoin the group would be considered.

I stared in disbelief at the document.

Suddenly the truth exploded in my mind.

I had been exiled from Scientology.

I had been offloaded.

Chapter 14
Back in the Wog World

I sat in the living room of my parents' comfortable house in Michigan working on a jigsaw puzzle of the Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria. The remains of a burning log were spitting in the fireplace. Outside the large picture window behind me, snow was falling softly in the fairyland white world of the Michigan winter.

The first few days back in the wog world were the hardest. The shock of my sudden excommunication from the only world I had known for the past twelve years, as well as the already tenuous condition of my mind after months of the bizarre upper level practices of Scientology, combined to create a certain alienation from reality.

The English language, devoid of the liberally sprinkled Scientology words and phrases I was accustomed to, sounded strange to my ears. I had the peculiar feeling, when watching television, that I was somehow listening to a foreign language. Yet I knew all the words.

I did not know how to deal with the fact that I was back in the wog world after an absence of twelve years. One night, I gathered all my Scientology certificates that I had brought with me on the plane and lay them out on my bed. Realizing that they had nothing to do with the vocational currency of the wog world, I impulsively took them down to the fireplace and burned them one by one, watching as the fire curled the edges of the heavy papers and transformed them into equally-worthless ash.

I was still experiencing the uncomfortable mental phenomena that had originated on OT 3. Sometimes it would seem as if my mind were disintegrating into a thousand tiny pieces which imploded into an internal cosmos. Instinctively, my father had bought me the jigsaw puzzle, and for two weeks I did nothing else than assemble the intricate pieces. Symbolically, I was attempting to assemble the scattered fragments of my mind.

I wrote a letter to the Director of Technical Services at Flag. Would they please reconsider their action and allow me to return to Flag, I pleaded. A week later, I received my reply. No, I was informed, in a short and terse note. I was to continue with the program that had been given to me when I left Florida. When the program was completed, I could then reapply for membership in Scientology. The letter was written on official Sea Org letterhead.

So, lacking any better plan, I decided to begin working on the program. I saw no other alternative for my life than to work, no matter how slowly or painfully, my way back into the good graces of my group.

A few blocks from my parents' house there was a busy restaurant. I applied for a job and began to work at waiting tables. I knew that my mind was still too disorganized to work at anything more complex. Office work was, at least temporarily, out of the question. I was still not even able to concentrate on the mundane task of reading the morning newspaper. I could not extract the meaning from the printed word, a condition that was to last for several months.

I buried myself in restaurant work, signing up for the maximum hours possible. Each week, I sent a few hundred dollars to Flag to be credited toward my debt of $30,000. At the rate I was sending money to Clearwater, I calculated, it would take me approximately eight years and four months to pay off my ''debt.'' Even though outwardly I was an outcast, in my heart I was still a dedicated Scientologist. I proudly wore my Scientology jewelry to work, and when anyone asked about it, launched into a fervent testimonial about the incalculable benefits of auditing. At home, I buried myself in my Scientology books, working feverishly at the essays I had been required to write. I lived only for the day that I would be exonerated and accepted back into my group.

The months went by. I continued to wait on tables and to surrender my earnings to Scientology. My parents had insisted that I see a counselor, an act strictly forbidden by Scientology, to whom any mental health practitioner was a mortal enemy. But to satisfy my parents I finally agreed to some sessions with a social worker in a nearby clinic. In the year that I met with this counselor, I never once mentioned Scientology. Why should I defend my group to a suppressive enemy who would probably be constitutionally incapable of appreciating the wisdom of Hubbard and his ''tech''?

A year and a half after being offloaded from Scientology, a new phenomenon began to emerge. I became increasingly irritable both at work and at home. I was unable to explain my explosive outbursts. Finally, I was forced to take a leave of absence from work.

I had a compulsion to read about other cults. My mind was attempting to heal. Like the young green plants in the spring poking through the melting winter snow, my mind and my emotions were stirring to life in some unknown subterranean region within.

I wrote a new letter to Florida begging to be allowed to return to Florida. One day, several weeks later I received the reply. ''We are proud that you are doing so well,'' I read. ''Just continue to do well.''

I became more and more angry as the day wore on. They were not answering my question. Why couldn't I go back?

Anger churned inside me all day. At night, an unthinkable thought surfaced into consciousness. I wanted to call a lawyer. I wanted to sue Scientology. I was overwhelmed with terror. To sue Scientology was one of the very worst suppressive sins. Even the thought was suppressive. Committing a suppressive act would leave me no hope for redemption for trillions of years. To sue Scientology would be to call down doom upon my soul.

Yet the strange urge persisted. One night, without thinking, I made the call. I called information for the number of an attorney in Boston who I knew had litigated in the past against Scientology. I was able to reach him and I told him about my situation. He agreed to consider my case. I needed to send him a complete report. He would probably refer the case to an associate of his in Florida, he explained.

My heart was thudding as I put down the phone. There. I had done it. It could not be undone.

The telephone call to the lawyer precipitated a crisis. I became acutely suicidal. I planned to take an overdose of medication I had been given by the clinic for anxiety. I knew the dose I was considering would be fatal. I emptied the bottle of pills into my hand. The point of no return was just a swallow away. Suddenly I threw the pills into the sink, grabbed my father's keys and ran outside to his car. I drove for hours through the city, trying to think. My situation, it seemed to me, was hopeless.

I stopped at a phone booth and looked through the yellow pages. I called the city hospital. Could someone please help me, I cried into the phone. It was a Catholic hospital. Soon I was talking to a priest, Father Steve. He gave me directions to the hospital.

When I arrived, he met me and took me to the cafeteria. Over hot chocolate and out of desperation I told him my situation. He spent several hours with me, then drove with me to a small house near the university. Interdenominational Student Center, a sign read over the door.

Inside I met Frank Fuller, the director of the center. It just happened that Frank had recently been researching Scientology. He showed me to a small room in the center with a cot. Exhausted, I slept for over twelve hours. The next day, Frank sat down with me at the kitchen table and handed me a steaming cup of strong coffee. It cleared my mind. He had with him a stack of papers which he placed conspicuously in front of me.

''Now, we're going to go through some information about Scientology,'' he informed me. ''I'm not requiring that you believe everything that I show you. I just want to know if you would be willing to look at some things with me.''

''Why not,'' I thought. I knew that I had hit a dead end. Moving in any direction had to be better than staying where I was.

''Let's talk about Hubbard,'' he began. And for the next hour he told me things about Hubbard that I had never known. That he was not the person he had portrayed himself to be.

Point by point we went through the biography of Hubbard I had been exposed to in the cult. According to Frank, almost everything Hubbard had said about himself was a lie. And Frank had the documents to prove it.

His grandfather, I read, did not own a cattle ranch one fourth the size of Montana. Hubbard grew up in a house in an average small Montana town. He did not travel extensively in Asia as a teenager. His travels were mostly in his imagination. And he was not the decorated war hero he had portrayed himself to be. In fact, his war record was deplorable and the end of the war found him in a Navy psychiatric ward.

There were hundreds of lies.

''But why would he lie to us?'' I asked incredulously. It was true, I thought, I never questioned the things he told us about himself. It never even occurred to me to question him. I just blindly believed.

I looked at the failing transcript of Hubbard's college record. He had told us he was one of the first students of nuclear physics. Yet according to his transcript he had failed the course. And there was a damaging letter he had written to the Veterans Administration, begging for psychiatric help, complaining of ''periods of moroseness and suicidal inclinations.''

I sat with Frank for hours that day, as my god was systematically dethroned. Hubbard, I learned, was a bigamist and a satanist. He had been married simultaneously to both his first and second wife. Frank showed me proof that Hubbard was deeply involved in the occult, performing satanic rituals devised by his mentor, the English satanist Aleister Crowley.

Yet I still couldn't let go.

Hubbard was a habitual user of drugs, under the influence of which most of the Scientology catechism had been written. In that light, I thought, books like *The History of Man* made more sense. And he had a habit of using affirmations which he repeated every day. One of which was: ''All men shall be my slaves! All women shall succumb to my charms! All mankind shall grovel at my feet and not know why!''

After a few days, I returned home. I felt confused, stunned, betrayed. Why had I never questioned any of these things? Why had I accepted everything without thinking?

Much later I arrived at an answer to these questions. At the age of seventeen, I was naive, gullible. I had been raised in a system in which I was programmed to accept the words of adults without questioning them. My parents, my teachers had always been right. And I had made the fatal unconscious assumption that since I was honest and had good motives, then others must be too. As a teenager, I had never been disillusioned or deceived. I was unprepared for a monster like Hubbard who knowingly used hypnosis and mind control to entrap me in order to exploit me for his own purposes.

The turning point came for me one day in October of 1981. Frank had taken me to a deserted church where we sat in the empty pews and I soaked in the long-forgotten comfort of the religion I had abandoned many years before getting into Scientology. I knew in my mind that I was going to have to make a choice. Who would be my God? Would it be Hubbard? Or would it be the god of my childhood whom I had abandoned long ago?

I knew the answer. Hubbard was not worthy of godhood. Not any more. Strangely and miraculously, having made my choice, one night I suddenly snapped out of the hypnotic trance I had been in for twelve years. I literally woke up, as if an invisible hypnotist had snapped invisible fingers. And I knew from that moment that I would never return to Scientology. A decision began to emerge. I would, I decided, return to Florida to talk with the attorney to whom I had been referred by the lawyer in Boston. Over the ensuing weeks, this resolve hardened into action.

In November of 1981 I returned to Clearwater. The attorney accepted my case. And my case against the Church of Scientology, ten years later, is still pending.

Coming to know the truth about Scientology was by no means the end of my problems. It has taken me ten years and hundreds of hours of counseling to come to terms with my experience in Scientology and to deal with the considerable anger I felt toward the man and the organization responsible for my exploitation and betrayal.

I still have nightmares about Scientology. The healing process continues. But I am free. And having been once deceived by a great master of deception, I know I can never be deceived in the same way again. I will never again cede away the deed to my mind, not to anyone, no matter how convincing they may be. My freedom has been purchased at a tremendous cost, and neither my freedom nor my mind will ever be for sale again.

Epilogue: Blood on the Bedroom Wall

Fighting against Scientology can be hazardous. Since initiating litigation against the ''Church'' ten years ago, I have learned new meanings for the word ''harrassment,'' ranging from the macabre to the ridiculous. On one steamy Florida summer night several years ago, I returned to my apartment late at night to find the door wide open. No one seemed to be inside. Nothing in the apartment appeared to be disturbed. However, when I went into the bedroom, I saw that a dark red liquid had been splashed against the bedroom wall just beside the bed. It was blood, and it was still wet and still dripping.

On other occasions Scientologists have come to my apartment or accosted me at the mall where I worked. Sometimes they would call my boss and ask when and from which door I would be leaving. Occasionally, they would wait for me and come up to me as I walked to my car. On two occasions, my life was threatened. ''If you don't drop your lawsuit against the Church,'' I was told, ''you know what will happen to you.'' They didn't use the work ''kill.'' They didn't have to. From my experience working for the Guardian's Office (now renamed the Office of Special Affairs), I knew what they meant. Twice my car has been vandalized. I have received threatening phone calls at all hours of the night and day. Ominously, mail has been sent to my siblings who have small children. And in the most recent campaign against me, someone has been leaving my phone number on the beepers of various men in my city, resulting in some curious late-night phone calls.

My old friend Antonio is still alive, and, to my knowledge, still in Scientology. Aileen, the lovely lady who was the founder of Celebrity Center in Los Angeles, died about fifteen years ago from a brain tumor, remaining until her death a dedicated and loyal Scientologist.

I believe Scientology to be one of the most, if not the most, vicious of the three thousand or so cults in the United States today. I believe that many Scientologists, if they should come to know that their mission on planet Earth is doomed to failure, would willingly commit suicide on command. There are rumors that one of the secret upper levels contains suicide training. If this is true, Jonestown would pale in comparison with the potential for disaster in Scientology.

Most Scientologists are good, loyal and well-meaning, though misguided, people. Most Scientologists are very likeable. But all Scientologists are fanatic about one thing, Scientology, and, as many parents have discovered, concerning that one subject they are impervious to reason: the result of years of hypnotic training.

Parents are helpless against Scientology. The one effective way of extracting a loved one from this cult, deprogramming, is illegal, because restraining someone against his or her will is considered kidnapping, a felony under United States law. The fact that the loved one, often a minor, has been psychologically kidnapped by the cult, and in the case of Scientology, hypnotized without knowledge or consent, is not taken into consideration by the courts. Hopefully, in time, that will change.

My life is different in many subtle ways because of my experience in Scientology. I have psychological scars similar, I believe, to someone who has been raped. I frequently have nightmares about the cult. I feel deceived and betrayed on many different levels: mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. I will never again trust in the same way that I did before Scientology.

There are other scars as well. It is not possible for me to see displays of Hubbard's books in the bookstores, especially the Dianetics book, which has successfully lured thousands of unsuspecting people into Scientology, without feeling a sense of revulsion. I have the same reaction to the Scientology ads on television. I feel a certain anger, and the sense of powerlessness of a victim.

Last week, I was wandering through the flea market at the local university. Once a week the university sponsors an open-air flea market where vendors can sell their wares, and students can buy inexpensive clothes, plants, and books, etc. Last week I noticed a new display. A young man was selling Dianetics books to the students.

And as I watched, a young girl, perhaps seventeen or eighteen years old, was listening raptly to the Scientologist's spiel. There was a forlorn air about her, an air of one who is lost and who is seeking. Instantly I was thrust into a time warp, as I watched myself twenty some years earlier listening transfixed to the beguiling message of hope and promise. I, she, reached out for the book.

''Excuse me,'' I ran after her through the crowded market. She looked at me in surprise. ''That book you have there,'' I pointed to the Dianetics book. ''That book is about a dangerous cult, Scientology. I know because I was in it for twelve years.''

She looked suspicious. ''Look,'' I continued, pleading, desperate to save her, myself. ''Here, I'll give you the five dollars you paid for the book. You don't need it. It's a cult. I don't want you to have to go through what I have been through.''

She smiled, and handed me the book. ''Fine,'' she said as she took my money. ''And thanks.'' Then she disappeared into the crowd.

I walked over to the trash bin and buried the book deep inside the bin. Then I, too, turned and walked into the crowd.

''If only,'' I couldn't help thinking, ''if only someone had been able to warn me.''

But I had the great satisfaction of knowing that, because of my experience, there would be one less victim of Scientology. And that one is enough.