

Dianetics: an expensive con game

by Gilbert Bouchard

I was shivering outside the Hub cigar store waiting for the #64 (late as usual), when I noticed the Church of Scientology display for perhaps the 100th time. But now the church advertised under the name of the southside Dianetics center. Everybody's seen it I'm sure, a couple of doors down from the Princess Theatre and right next door to that pizza place. The display isn't much, just a few posters and an advertising for their free personality tests. I wondered why they no longer advertised under the original name of their organization, I did remember a scandal a few years back and wondered if that could be the reason. Anyway, I did have a little time to kill and my curiosity had been piqued so I clambered up the narrow stair way to the book lined Dianetics office.

By book lined, I mean *book lined!* Copies of Scientology Head honcho L. Ron Hubbard's massive tract, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, were stacked up all over the place, along with other titles, like: *Child Dianetics*, *Dianetics 55*, *Dianetics: The Original Theory*, *Understanding The E-meter*. At this point the receptionist popped out from the backroom and accosted me, I told her I'd like to write their little test so she swooped to her desk and handed me an exam booklet and answer sheet.

Now after looking over the booklet and answer sheet, titled "The Standard Oxford Capacity Analysis", I noticed that it was copyrighted under the name of L. Ron Hubbard! Now how objective can you get? I answered questions like: Do you enjoy giving away your money, do you enjoy giving away other people's money? Needless to say I was a little bit leery.

Since the only place I could sit down to fill out the sheet was right in front of the

receptionist's desk all I could hear was her cajoling voice cooing to some jerk 'phoning in about the newspaper ad run by the church. She assured him that Dianetics was a science, a discipline created by dear old Ron after years of study in all the religions and philosophies of the world, not only is he well read he is also a nuclear scientist, a mathematician, a medical doctor, and a prolific science fiction writer. (When does the guy find time to sleep.) At no time did she mention the name Scientology.

When I returned that evening they lowered the boom. This youngish female councilor ushered me into this cluttered little cubicle (with mandatory copies of Dianetics strewn about the place) looked me straight in the eyes and told me the bad news. Pulling out my answer sheet she showed me this red pencil graph on the back, it looked a bit like those Biographs in the newspaper. Dropping long meaningless scientific sounding gobbledegoop she proceeded to explain the results. Babbling

right.

Then came the zinger, (horrors) I'm not in control of my own destiny, my own future! Hotstuff! But wait, Dianetics can help, it can aid me regain my own soul!

Great, so I don't have to jump off the High Level Bridge after all, I can just read your little book a few times and then I'll be perfect! She frowned, and replied that my reactive mind (Scientology terminology for your subconscious mind) is so totally in control that only a trained Scientology auditor with an E-meter can help me over come this terrible receptive mind, I knew there was a catch.

She must have sensed that I wasn't impressed, so she ushered me deeper into the cavernous depths of the building and showed me this trite insulting little film, featuring this slick con-man yelling and screaming, at first about science and Dianetics, then blurring to souls and Scientology, endless shots of real losers becoming even bigger losers thanks to scientology auditing. I wasn't thrilled, shots of smiling children and catch words like science and discipline switching mid-breath to religious hookum.

Walking back to the reception area I passed this little suggestion box with a message taped above it urging us to drop notes which would go directly to Ron himself, I restrained myself, and walked by.

Just as I was about to leave, the same young woman who had explained my exam urged me to attend an open house that weekend, I said I'd rather not. I then asked if I could have my exam paper back, she refused. Then, having noticed a Xerox machine in the corner, I asked for a photocopy, she refused again. After a while, and a whole bunch of insisting on my part, she agreed to copy out the graph on a clean answer sheet, I agree, mainly because I just had to leave that place.

Stepping onto the street the wind blew snow down my shirt, I zipped up my jacket then decided to pop in the pizza joint next door. I had a terrible coffee, sat there in the half empty joint, listening to the Eagles on the juke box, feeling wonderfully free, and very happy that I had left the madmen behind.

I still had a few unanswered questions that I answered by zipping over to the periodics room. First of all Scientologists believe that all of us are "thetans" who have previously existed in outer space.

Problems called "engrams" (negative experiences from our past, and other past lives) plague our "thetans" (soul??) and prevent us from developing fully. Only a Scientology "auditor" with the help of an "E-meter" (Skin galvanometer, seized by the food and drug administration in the mid-seventies and labelled deceptive) the "auditor" exorcizes the "engrams" and allows the "thetan" to become "clear". In Edmonton 12 hours of this auditing will set you back 600 dollars! Sounds sort of "stupid" to me.

The movement began with L. Ron Hubbard, a pulp science fiction hack, who dreamed up the 1950 best seller: *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. Four years later Scientology was made a church, saying Ron from paying tax on the 100 million dollars a year he fleeces from his congregation, mainly from auditor fees. Leaving Mr. Hubbard free to lunge about his 55 acre estate writing tracts against the evil of materialism.

Now for the serious part, the scandal I mentioned at the start of this piece. In the years between 1973 and 1976 Scientology operatives broke into American government offices with a skill the Watergate burglars would have envied. They stole *thousands* of documents, some classified, most not even pertaining to the cult. If not for the defection of one of the ring leaders in 1977 this spying operation might still have been active to this day.

The documents varied from IRS files on the church, confidential AMA files, and many non-scientology files stolen to blackmail government officials. They went as far as to break into the IRS identification room and made false credentials for themselves. Now that's gall.

Nine high ranking Scientology officials, including Sue Hubbard Ron's wife, were found guilty of conspiracy charges.

An FBI break-in on the LA headquarters uncovered thousands of files, lock pickers, a blackjack, two pistols, eavesdropping equipment, and a vial marked "vampire blood".

The church is also famous for harassment campaigns, mainly against reporters, civic officials, and anyone else who dares critique their policies.

My research didn't even scratch the surface of the tons of information on this frightening cult. Yet people still flock to the auditing sessions plunk down their 600 dollars and smile. Edmonton has three Scientology centers, and I have this sinking feeling that the cult is growing.

All I can say is that anybody out there even tempted to even take the test, of one of their "free" auditing sessions is this: Why bother? Each one of us is more in touch with our potential our strengths and failures than L. Ron Hubbard will ever be. We are masters of our futures, let us not lose that future to a charlatan wielding an E-meter.

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I handed in the exam and answer sheet and asked straight out if Dianetics was a part of the church of Scientology. She looked a bit surprised and stammered yes. Just out of curiosity I bought a copy of the book, the receptionist warned me to be very careful reading it, since many of the words used within were not used in University. Sure, I said to myself, now tell me a cowboy story. She then told me to come back later that night about 8 o'clock, gave me a few tracts, and sent me on my merry little way. I began to worry about what I had got myself into.

about ARC triangles, work spheres and desirability ranges with such natural skill that she would have made a great tarot card reader or palmist. She attacked the universal anxieties, sort of the vague type of personality description that anybody could identify with some point or another. According to their little test, boy, I'm in real rough shape. I'm totally unstable, depressed, quite nervous, very uncertain of where I'm heading, too aggressive, a workaholic, irresponsible, critical, lacking in accord, and having great problems communicating. Yep, that's me all



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