

**Excerpts from**  
**Experiencing Creativity: Breaking Free of Spiritual Abuse**  
**& the Emergence of the Creative Self**

*Including true stories by former Scientology and Children of God members*  
 An upcoming publication by Karen Pressley with Miriam Boeri @ 2010

Here you'll find a condensed version of my experiences as I entered the Scientology world's revolving doors through Celebrity Centre in Hollywood and exited 16 years later from the International Management Base during Miscavige's Golden Age of Tech madness. Now more than 10 years out of the trap, I've been exploring how a totalitarian group such as Scientology affects (among other things) one's creativity. The importance of creativity should not be undermined, since that is the individual's ability for free, original thinking that leads to such things as solutions through creative problem solving, and entrepreneurial actions that represent the uniqueness of the individual. Cult life suppresses this, strips the individual bare of creativity, and causes deep damage. Once the individual comes to his/her senses and re-claims sovereignty over his/her life, a personal renaissance can evolve. I hope that reading this helps you in some way. Please let me know.

- Karen Pressley

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**Excerpt from Preface to the Case Studies**

In *Experiencing Creativity*, authors Miriam Boeri (Case Study #1 – The Children of God) and Karen Pressley (Case Study #2 – Scientology) use personal life experiences to show how the suppressive social environments of cults as “total institutions” (places where people are physically isolated from normal activities and bureaucratically processed by being required to sleep, work, and play within the confines of the same institution) (Goffman 1969) may be fertile ground for the birth of a *secret* creative self. Once this secret creative self is developed, it empowers cult members to express a *strong* creative self that, outside of the group, is resistant to power dynamics.

Our case studies provide a look at cults as models of the domination-subordination power dynamic found in total institutions (Mills, 28). This power dynamic challenges people's ability to sustain a balance of creativity and humanity. Cults practice labeling (Becker, 163; Lemert, 195) and naming (Charmaz, 263) within hierarchies that are incompatible with member's self-initiated creativity, freedom of communication, justice, and a healthy self-identity (Griffin, 135).

We posit a process by which cult members develop and protect the secrecy of their creative self. We use sociological and communication theories to explain this process, along with Figure 1, Symbolic Interaction: Development of the Self and the Birth of the Secret Creative Self, and Figure 2, the Hegemonic Communication Model (HCM) of Power Dynamics in Cults Affecting Creativity. HCM shows how cult members decode (interpret) meanings from leaders (Hall, 378), (e.g. being labeled "non-creative"); how members process thought by choosing a route of response (Petty and Cacciopo, 216), (e.g. compliance, negotiation, or rebellion); and how members suppress or enable their secret creative self dependent upon how they manage sovereignty in their life (Elshtain, 172).

### **Preface to Case Study #2 – Scientology Background**

Thanks to the Internet, stories and facts about the Church of Scientology International's (CSI's) past and present are now easily accessible, in contrast to pre-World Wide Web days. Then, information about Scientology's mystical spiritual beliefs and subversive operations against government agencies and private individuals was kept under lock and key; CSI bound members with covenants of confidentiality under half-million dollar bonds and threats of expulsion if violated. Making Scientology's advanced, secretive spiritual technology (which earns them \$300,000 - \$1 million per customer) accessible via the Internet poses an ongoing threat that could pull the rug out from under its financial empire. Facts about Scientology's crimes and Hubbard's contradictory background now fill website pages easily accessible to researchers. Widespread member computer access sustains the institution's worst nightmare; CSI currently provides computer filters to its members that block out negative Scientology postings, emails, and news. Most people don't know what Scientology actually stands for; they only know about Scientology's celebrity members' claims and what the organization tells them to believe.

The following brief summary provides context for my case study as a former member of the Church of Scientology: Science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard (LRH) released his book, *Dianetics: the Modern Science of Mental Health*, in 1950, before he opened Scientology organizations in 1954. *Dianetics* self-help centers sprang up around the U.S., providing a timely outlet for private counseling in the cold war atmosphere of post-World War Two, when Americans coped with fears of atomic war and the loss of democracy through the spread of communism. During the McCarthy Era, suspicion of people's "unusual tendencies" ran rampant; discussion of personal mental health issues remained private at the risk of people being thought unstable. *Dianetics* promised a mental health result called "the state of Clear" (a mental state wherein customers no longer possess their own reactive minds) achieved by erasing from the mind powerful, negative memories called "engrams" (moments of pain and unconsciousness experienced during traumas and accidents stored since birth that, when triggered, hinder people from functioning at full potential). Capitalizing on the fears of the times, Hubbard drove people into *Dianetics* centers under threat of atomic war, providing a spiritual and mental destiny, a safeguard for eternity comparable to the promises of salvation offered by traditional world religions.

The practice of *Dianetics* do-it-yourself therapy offers procedures based on regression therapy, recalling memories of this lifetime back to birth. Hubbard claimed his work as original, failing to cite sources that informed his work or to subject his theories to scientific peer review. Hence, the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association rejected his work, thus beginning Hubbard's war (which continues to this day through Citizens' Commission for Human Rights) with the mental health field. Minimally, for regression therapy, he should have cited the modern works of Madame Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, and French educator Alan Kardec, both of whom adapted ancient works from the Upanishads of ancient India, the Yoga sutras of Patanjali, while others adapted from Tao Te Ching.

While Hubbard claims he created the word "Scientology" from the Greek *scio*, "knowing how to know," and *logos*, "the study of," the term Scientology was originally created in 1910 by writer Allen Upward in his book, *The New Word: The Meaning of the Word Idealist*. The issues

about the very creation of Dianetics and Scientology reveal Hubbard's beginnings as a charlatan and a plagiarist. One of many dichotomies found within Scientology is that Hubbard calls his works "original" and his followers call him "source" and uphold his publications as the works of a genius and messiah, not to be questioned, doubted, or altered. Plagiarism of ideas from many others who came before him mark much of his "work."

Hubbard claimed his *Dianetics* clients encountered "pre-birth" memories during therapy, which necessitated his development of Scientology religious philosophy to address individuals as spiritual beings recalling past-life incidents. He devised "processing" or "auditing" (counseling) procedures that involve an auditor (counselor) who uses an electro-psychometer (similar to a lie detector) in the counseling session. Hubbard claims that mental activity (recall of memories) registers on the meter's needle, and the auditor interprets the different needle reactions to represent changes in the customer's mental activity. The auditor is trained to help the customer reach a specific desired result for each auditing session, as indicated by the meter's needle reactions. Scientology materials assure customers that everything disclosed in auditing sessions and written on the worksheets remains confidential in the "confessional folder" marked "priest/penitential privileged file." In fact, sometimes a dozen staff members read these "confidential" worksheets and discuss the contents at organizational product conferences to plan what auditing service to sell the customer next, depending on the type of aberrations detected in the auditing sessions. Some celebrities fear leaving Scientology because of the strong probability of blackmail. Scientology materials do state that if a member leaves the church and criticizes Scientology to the public, the church has the right to seek vengeance against the member, and may publicize personal matters disclosed in their auditing files. This could include crimes, sexual perversions, adultery, thoughts of suicide, and the like. This practice used to be called "fair game" and continues in the church today, though under the name of "attacking the SP."

Faulting all religions in history for failure to stop or revert mankind's dwindling spiritual, mental and social spirals, Hubbard deemed Scientology "mankind's only solution" and defined his new religion as "the study of knowing how to know oneself as a spiritual being."

Hubbard's psycho-political worldview is expressed in his "Aims of Scientology:" to "clear the planet" of the engrams that stimulate the world's population to destroy itself, and

achieve a world without war, criminality and insanity, where able beings can prosper and honest people can have rights. Thus, CSI marketing specialists devised various campaign slogans which include “Go free,” “Go clear,” “Move up the bridge to total freedom,” and “Religious freedom now.” Scientology leaders would not achieve these goals through a democratic process, however, but through their totalitarian control of members with plans to ultimately control the people on Earth. In a Scientology world, if people had rights, then Scientology’s ethics and justice system would name and define those rights. If humankind became free of insanity, Scientology would claim that achievement by replacing psychiatry and psychology as the world’s mental health solution. If humankind consisted of able or honest people, they would be the Scientologists, because non-Scientologists are aberrated and need Scientology to resolve their mental and spiritual ills.

Originally, Scientology’s existence on five continents impressed me, while I was unaware its popularity had wavered in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to Scientology’s involvement in scandals with the IRS, the FDA, FBI raids, felony convictions, and imprisonment of several Scientologists, including Hubbard’s wife, Mary Sue. Hubbard fled to private ships on international waters where he could avoid legal intervention. Following a decline in Scientology membership, Hubbard launched the Celebrity Centre Network (CCNW) strategy in the early ‘70s to spread Scientology through the arts, sports, management and government to gain new recruits. Hubbard targeted the “movers and shakers,” people whose celebrity status would add credibility to Scientology and break down resistance to it. The strategy included open doors to government officials and lawmakers willing to influence legislation in Scientology’s favor. Celebrity Centres were tasked with recruiting more and more opinion leaders and media pundits who would embrace Scientology “technology” and agree to propagandize it through their personal contacts. Following the questionable death of beloved Celebrity Centre leader Yvonne Gillham Jentsch, celebrity membership slumped again and the organization floundered without a charismatic leader. Celebrity Centre Los Angeles (CCLA) was tasked with greater expansion by establishing a network of Celebrity Centres in hot spots—Paris, London, New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, Nashville, and more. New adherents became highly motivated by the ten- to fifteen-percent commissions they earned on everything their recruits purchased in Scientology, particularly

celebrities who could afford the high dollar price tags on courses, counseling and materials. Despite the price tag, one celebrity after another joined the ranks of CCI members, though not at a rate satisfying to the new church leadership of David Miscavige.

Many other celebrities have opted to get out. Actor Jason Beghe, who left Scientology unhappy around 2007, reported he spent over \$1 million on Scientology counseling. (The average budget is a minimum of \$300,000 - \$750,000 to progress through Scientology's "bridge to total freedom"). Hollywood film director and writer Paul Haggis (*Million Dollar Baby* and *Crash*) renounced his membership from Scientology in October 2009. Numerous celebs over recent decades (Nicole Kidman, Brad Pitt, Frank Stallone, Larry Anderson, -Van Morrison, William S. Burroughs, and others including convicted murderer Charles Manson) slipped out the revolving doors of Scientology, though that news remains comparatively quiet.

The media first reported L. Ron Hubbard's death in 1986 as a heart attack, though the coroner's report showed he died of psychotropic drug (Vistaril) complications—interesting, considering his maniacal stance against psychiatry and drug use. Hubbard's body was cremated within twenty-four hours of his death, averting an autopsy. David Miscavige, who bullied his way into the role of church ruler, announced to the Scientology world that Hubbard had departed his body according to plan to continue his research into higher spiritual levels unencumbered by his body. Since then, Miscavige has assumed totalitarian control of the Scientology empire and reigns as Chairman of the Board of the Religious Technology Center (RTC) at the Church of Scientology International Management ("Int base") outside of Los Angeles, California, near Palm Springs. There, Miscavige manages projects down to minutiae detail, despite his false claims to the IRS that he's not involved in church management. Within the past few years, more than five hundred staffers have left the Int base, including several dozen senior ranking officers (such as Marty Rathbun, Amy Scobee, and Mike Rinder) and RTC staff who worked directly under Miscavige. Many of these defectors now defy the risk involved as public critics of Scientology, exposing to media Miscavige's cruelty to staff and his squirreling of LRH tech. By his critics Miscavige's church is dubbed "Miscavology," "Church of Miscavige," "Church of mest," and more. At the time of this writing, Miscavige is named in a lawsuit filed by two ex-staff members for physical and verbal abuse of his workers, and for CSI's violation of labor laws,

coerced abortions, and other human rights violations. Celebrity Centre Paris was found guilty of fraud in late 2009 and fined for nearly \$1 million. Hundreds of people who have recently left Scientology convene on blog sites, including the Ex-Scientology Kids site founded by two young women who were born and raised in Scientology and chose to leave it when they reached the age to do so (their parents subsequently disconnected from them). This year In Australia, Senator Nick Xenophon has succeeded in conducting a parliamentary-led investigation into Scientology's activities in their homeland. This has already revealed how Scientology is succeeding in evading taxes due on their England operations by claiming them as an Australian-based charity, and aired an interview of Mike Rinder, former Church of Scientology spokesman, who is blowing the whistle on Miscavige's abusive leadership and crimes.

While CSI continues to receive protection in the U.S. as a tax-exempt, non-profit religion, it continues to struggle with religious identity in Europe, particularly in France, Germany and Belgium. Even Tom Cruise's film *Valkyrie* (Cruise played a German officer who tried to kill Hitler) hasn't won CSI the expected acceptance they hoped for in Europe; I believe Europeans have wised-up to "Trojan horses." Tom Cruise's crazy antics on major talk shows since 2005 haven't helped Scientology in the U.S. either, particularly after he criticized Brooke Shields and Matt Lauer in a televised interview, made a fool of himself jumping on Oprah's couch, and laughed insanely in his infamous YouTube video that Scientology has since managed to suppress from many websites. Miscavige is nevertheless determined to "keep Scientology working" and fulfill Hubbard's dream to make this a Scientology world.

## **Case Study #2: Karen Pressley and Scientology**

Scientology's utopian goals attracted my husband and me in 1982. We had no religious beliefs with which Scientology clashed--at least, so I thought, considering the fact that information is revealed in gradients, and none of the secrets of Scientology were available to us at the beginning. Peter Schless and I knew little of Scientology's background before joining, a huge failure on our part to do our homework. We had moved to Hollywood in 1980 to advance our careers, Peter as a musician and composer, and me as a fashion designer. I designed stage clothes for a growing clientele of actors and entertainers. Some of my first included the co-star of

the film, *An Officer and a Gentleman*, an actress on the Carol Burnett show, a musician from the band Journey, and some whom I met through my husband. Peter's job playing keyboards for Cher's band, Black Rose, and then for recording artist Melissa Manchester, drew us into recording studios and night clubs where we met artists and celebrities who were Scientologists. We had already achieved some success by 1982 with our hit song, "On the Wings of Love," recorded by Jeffrey Osborne, and I had started a music publishing company to house my husband's growing catalogue of compositions, including the theme song to *Rambo: First Blood Part II*.

Peter and I were introduced to "Chateau Scientology"--the seven-story French Chateau Elysee built by William Randolph Hearst in the 1930s, home to many stars of that era, which houses Celebrity Centre International (CCI) and its Manor Hotel on Franklin Avenue in Hollywood to this day. Artistic people—actors, singers, musicians, writers, designers, dancers—of all professional levels congregated there. We possessed self-confidence as creative artists, but found the high level of competition in Hollywood somewhat intimidating, so we welcomed new ways of thinking to help us overcome this. We saw CCI undergo transformation when, in 1990, CSI management poured a few million dollars into renovating the Chateau Elysee to bring the Manor Hotel up to four-star standards, and transformed the Celebrity Centre quarters into posh offices and classrooms fitting for Hollywood's wealthiest customers. Elegant French gardens, an outdoor bistro-cafe, and performance theatres provide a haven for celebs to network when not in the plush course room studying, in counseling sessions, or networking making contacts through the President.

CCI offers spiritual advancement through Hubbard's teaching that spiritual authority resides solely within the self. His philosophy elevates artists to a higher realm of abilities where they are taught they can change the world in ways no one else can. He wrote:

The artist has an enormous role in the enhancement of today's and the creation of tomorrow's reality. He operates in a rank in advance of science as to the necessities and requirements of man. The elevation of a culture can be measured directly by the numbers of its people working in the field of aesthetics. Because the artist deals in future realities, he always seeks improvements or changes in the existing reality. This makes the artist, inevitably and invariably, a rebel against the status quo. The artist, day by day, by postulating the new realities of the future, accomplishes peaceful revolution. The artist

injects theta (spirit of life) into the culture, and without that theta, the culture becomes reactive. (Hubbard 482-483)

As a person whose life passion was creative expression, Hubbard's description of the artist's role in society baited me. Added to that was Scientology's training program to become super-literate, which drew me in because I had aspirations of finishing college and teaching. When I read Hubbard's view that the real barbarism of Earth is stupidity, and knowledge of self brings responsibility and control, I naively thought I'd flourish in the Scientology environment.

Scientology students are expected to be "on source" (strictly applying LRH technology to one's life) by immersing themselves in Hubbard's spiritual technologies ("LRH tech," or "the tech") and letting it permeate their every thought and action. Followers are required to apply the tech to every aspect of their life, from how to read a book or study a course, to how to maintain a successful marriage, communicate well with others, raise children, conduct a business, and create art. I learned Scientology's pattern for the life cycle, "create, survive, destroy," and immersed myself in creating and surviving across all eight dynamics (compartments) of my life (self, sex and family, groups, mankind, non-living things, living things, spirituality, and the [undefined] Supreme Being). LRH tech is disseminated to members through his books, policy letters, technical bulletins, tapes, videos, and training films. I adopted the on-source identity that came with becoming highly trained in Scientology's spiritual and administrative doctrine. I encountered heavy pressure to buy my complete "LRH library" (Hubbard's hundreds of books and tapes) early on. If I didn't own this book or that tape I would be labeled as "off-source." I quickly accumulated \$30,000 in debt for my training package and library.

A highly legalistic system, CSI punishes any deviation from LRH tech, from minor corrections by a supervisor in the course room, to increasing gradients of Scientology "ethics and justice" actions that fill 270 pages of Hubbard's *Scientology Ethics* book. I quickly discovered Scientology demands an all-or-nothing lifestyle from its adherents. CSI's police-state-like operations of its labyrinthine management organizations monitored my attendance and progress, and claimed rights to setting my schedule and questioning deviance from it.

Lulled by my learning, I gradually succumbed to the organization's control and the "dangerous environment" threats posed by Hubbard's materials, by recognizing Hubbard as a

leader in possession of superhuman wisdom. With a sense of personal abandon, Peter and I adopted a sense of duty toward Hubbard, obligated to credit him for all positive changes in our lives. My identity changed from fashion designer and music publisher to a fanatically dedicated Scientologist. Progressing up the “bridge to total freedom,” unblocking creativity, and developing spiritual abilities as an “operating thetan” (OT), all developed into an obsessive quest for knowledge about my omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. I chose not to protest or even voice my skepticism about CSI’s obvious operation as a retail religion selling courses, counseling, and materials which promised the intangible product of “total spiritual freedom.” A member keeps skeptical and critical thoughts to themselves because of the belief that CSI holds the keys to personal immortality, so, personal fear deters one from saying or doing anything to jeopardize this promise of eternal freedom.

I adopted Hubbard’s label that people outside of Scientology were *wogs* (coined by Hubbard from the phrase “worthy oriental gentleman”), or common ordinary run-of-the-mill garden variety humanoids who aren’t even trying to get informed about the superior spiritual technology understood only by trained Scientologists. As a dedicated Scientologist, it was also my responsibility to attack CSI’s “wog” opponents—psychiatry, psychiatric drugs, psychology, ex-members, media, and any form of critics—and defame their reputation in order to protect and preserve Scientology’s. An advanced Scientologist holds status in the Scientology world and views the label “wog” as extremely demeaning—one’s worst fate aside from being declared “suppressive” for renouncing Scientology or for publicly criticizing it.

Labels, hierarchies and identities mark Celebrity Centre’s alluring cultural system that reflects spiritual progress and measures one’s spiritual power and control within its leadership-follower dominion. For example, until I reached the mid-level “state of Clear” on the chart of levels that go up to OT VIII, I was labeled a “pre-Clear,” spiritually comparable to a child in the church versus an ordained priest, though far higher than a wog. More was expected from people labeled at a higher spiritual case level. Scientologists place extreme significance on these labels, as if one’s case state represents a billboard of one’s spiritual abilities and identity. This labeling system clouded my inner view of myself and self-esteem, and shaded my self-identity in the group, especially regarding my creative abilities. I always questioned this because I had already

demonstrated a high level of creative ability prior to Scientology, and wasn't relying on Scientology technology for my creativity to emerge. However, I discounted my skepticism about this labeling, assuming I would become even more creative as I advanced up the spiritual levels.

The Scientology system spins an invisible web around one's life like a mirroring cocoon, which fosters an obsessive urge for knowledge about the self. It wasn't until years later that I realized this system locked my thoughts and behavior into submission to the Church of Scientology, to Hubbard, and to Scientology leaders. Scientologists are oblivious to this enslavement because they believe they are working to achieve total spiritual freedom for themselves. A Scientologist is daily dwelling on self—from looking into the mind during the auditing process to examine all dimensions of their memories and past lives, to increasing their knowledge and abilities to control life. One's strong craving to be fully "OT"—omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient—becomes an obsession for knowledge about oneself—an effective system to build a new breed of narcissistic individuals, leading to megalomania.

I later discovered that the cause of narcissism is a defense mechanism intended to deflect hurt and trauma from the victim's "true self" into a "false self." This obsessive quest for knowledge of self pinnacles at Scientology's most advanced level, OT VIII "Truth Revealed." Scientologists complete this level when they're certain they've achieved the spiritual ability of being in control of life, thought, matter, energy, space, time and form, and when they know they are no longer affected by the "cases" of their body thetans, and thus able to operate at full throttle as a spiritual being with or without a body to control life. This level also compels the Scientologist to forsake any remaining belief in Jesus Christ or any other messiah or god, finally coming to realize who God is through personal cognition.

I recall conversations with advanced Scientologists who said, "I created the universe, so I better learn to live within it," or, "I created time, it's just a consideration, time is not real." I never believed I had "created myself" before the beginning of time as Hubbard taught, and never believed that I was God or a god. I discounted my doubts about Scientology by thinking I needed to get to the top of Scientology's bridge to discover the "truth" about myself, but hid those doubts so I would not be perceived as "off source." This lack of freedom to express myself honestly underlined my query: who is sovereign over the creator/creative process—the

individual, or Hubbard and the leaders? Burying my doubts planted the seed that grew into what I would later discover to be my “secret creative self” (more on this later).

My indoctrination accelerated in 1985 when CCI issued a call to arms for a “religious freedom crusade,” master-minded by long-term Sea Org public relations specialist Vaughn Young. This crusade beckoned to my desire to make a difference in the world. This strategy persuaded celebrity support to overthrow a lawsuit filed by disgruntled former Scientology customer, Julie Christopherson, against the Church of Scientology in Portland, Oregon. My husband and I, along with hundreds of other Scientologists, jumped onto that bandwagon. Within forty-eight hours, we rounded up musician friends from various bands including Santana, Stevie Wonder, and Journey, and filled a small private jet with musicians and equipment to take a stand for religious freedom. For thirty days, we lived in Portland hotels and participated as activists picketing, marching, and holding events in the park to draw local support and media. At times an impressive cast of talent appeared on stage like Stanley Clarke, Nicky Hopkins, Chick Corea, Frank Stallone, and Edgar Winter. Religious leaders, including Sun Yung Moon, head of the Unification Church, and Reverend Jesse Jackson supported “religious freedom” at our crusade, as if this court case actually challenged that issue for all religions. When CSI defeated attorney Michael Flynn and his client, thereby averting millions of dollars in fines, we came to see how powerful we could be when united in a cause.

The euphoria of the Portland crusade victory served as a turning point in my Scientology journey. I had dedicated myself to a larger-than-life course, making my career seem comparatively unimportant. I desired to contribute to a renaissance of the arts at CCI, thus playing a bigger role in helping Scientology to “clear the planet.” Believing that the potential spiritual benefits of Scientology outweighed my skepticism and doubts, I decided to dedicate my life’s work to Scientology and signed a *billion-year* contract to join the Sea Organization (Sea Org)—the “elite” management of Scientology organizations worldwide. At first, Peter did not want me to join the Sea Org without him--and even threatened me with divorce if I did so--so this at first caused conflict between us. I carried through with my commitment, and we gave up our home and recording studio near the Hollywood Hills and moved into Celebrity Centre’s Manor Hotel.

Sea Org policy requires members to live in Sea Org berthing, extremely meager quarters amounting to a tiny room in the squalor of one of Scientology's dilapidated buildings, a dead give-away for senior management's real feelings towards their "elite" staff. Because of our CCI roles, Peter and I received permission to live at the Manor Hotel instead, though we paid rent for our apartment. At least we avoided the degradation of typical Sea Org berthing and the usual arrangement of living with another married couple, as Sea Org members were not allowed to live in privacy. I donned the Sea Org pseudo-military naval uniform that all Sea Org members wear (white or blue shirt with epaulettes, black cross tie, navy blue pants or skirt, black shoes) and went to work. Peter and I both worked 16-hour days, me in my Sea Org position, while he worked in his recording studio that we established in the basement of Celebrity Centre.

Once a Sea Org member at Celebrity Centre International, my choices and decisions about my life were no longer my own. Senior leaders selected me for full-time executive training, which I resisted. I wanted to be involved in creative roles, creating events to attract new artists, and running the ten "artist associations" I had started, doing what I thought I did best. I didn't want to become a puppet-on-a-string, hammer-and-pound executive who rarely slept, like most I had seen in the Scientology leadership ranks. But a Sea Org member must support "command intention" unconditionally, unless willing to undergo vicious repercussions. Scientology ethics and justice actions bring for deviance or for trying to exercise thought independent from management control. After my training, I was appointed to the position of Celebrity Public Executive Officer, responsible for recruiting new celebrities into our courses and services, ensuring they were well-trained and counseled. I supervised staff who hounded members to bring in new celebrity friends so CCI could earn more gross income and the members could earn commissions on the money their "selectees" spent in Scientology. I managed to remain involved in creating events that would attract our type of customers--people involved in the arts at all levels of success. I established 16 different "artists associations", and held the first "Renaissance of the Arts" event in 1987 where I called artists and celebrities to sign the pledge to forward the Aims of Scientology through the arts. Thus marked the first Celebrity Gala event which continues to be held annually today.

In 1988, leadership promoted me to the post of Commanding Officer of the Celebrity Centre Network, responsible for the establishment of new Celebrity Centres around the world and management of the existing network. I experienced extreme duress to recruit new celebrities into Scientology. My office phone and telex lines burned with directives from the Watchdog Committee executive in charge of Celebrity Centres at the International Management level (who, in turn, were hammered by David Miscavige, Scientology's leader), who spit out specific names of celebrities to contact, under vicious threat of assignment to the Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF, CSI's prison-like correctional program), if I failed. My team and I were ordered to not go to bed until we had accomplished one task after another, such as "*contact Demi Moore, Emilio Estevez, and Brad Pitt today. Get John Travolta into session today. Put an auditor on a plane and fly him to John's set,*" and on and on, thereby creating a master-slave relationship that usually involved eighteen-hour work days and oftentimes total sleep deprivation. In the mid-1980s, senior management was so hungry to get more celebrities into Scientology that they set up a "recovery" project and gave free auditing to people including Edgar and Monique Winter, John Travolta, and numerous other celebs who were not highly active in Scientology at the time.

Daily I would report to work wondering why I had subjected myself to this insane lifestyle and work environment. I had never been someone who loved pain or domination, so it's not like I thrived under abuse. I, like other artists and celebrities who entered the Scientology world, gave consent to partake in the Scientology process without fully realizing the ramifications of my involvement. Celebrities care deeply about how they are perceived by others, as do Sea Org members. Celebrities are free to perform, and come and go in their lives, but actually do so within the invisible web of Scientology philosophy which influences their thoughts and decisions. Sea Org members lives are monitored and controlled; we were constantly told to originate ideas for our post on how to raise our statistics, but really our voice did not matter. Hubbard's written policies governed every aspect of living, making it impossible to flourish as an autonomous, creative individual.

I failed to see *control* as the product of Scientology management—control over my thoughts, mental processes, spiritual urges, behavior, alliances, personal priorities, views about

non-believing family members, about critics, about the media—about most everything.

Scientology life produces a reality, a collective conscience which agrees that planet Earth will not survive without Scientology. This system offers total meaning with no room for independent critical thinking. My life was out of control, and certainly out of *my* control.

I developed health problems and became unable to endure the sixteen-hours per day schedule, seven days a week. The inability to sustain a marriage on that schedule caused me to flounder in my allegiance to the Sea Org. In 1989, under odd circumstances, my husband Peter decided to leave his career as a musician and composer to join the Sea Org with me, but at the Golden Era Productions (Gold) music department. Despite the fact that Peter had taken LSD, a disqualification for the Sea Org as specified by LRH policy as an RPF assignment for recruiters who recruit LSD cases, David Miscavige personally invited Peter to join the Sea Org. This was the first of many successive incidents where I would see Miscavige defy LRH policy, believing that he was above it.

For Peter, this meant that everything he created at Gold would be for Scientology's benefit—no more royalties or rights on new music that he composed. All the music he wrote would henceforth be written according to Hubbard's policies about composing music, and everything Peter created would be attributed to LRH for inspiring it. After a great musical performance at a Scientology concert, Peter would give a standing ovation to LRH, since he was not allowed to accept personal praise from audiences. I questioned his decision to forsake his public career and retreat into the reclusive world of the Golden Era Musicians, believing that he would fall out of touch with his immense musical talent once he was subject to the horrendous grind of the Sea Org as I had come to know it. Peter thought the Golden Era Musicians' style sounded out of date and liked the fact that he would enter the group with a certain star quality which could give him an edge as a leader who could turn the band into something great. I guiltily acquiesced to Peter's choice to join the Sea Org with me, because at least we would be on the same schedule and live the same lifestyle together; it had become extremely unmanageable having a marriage with one of us in and one of us out of the Sea Org.

The name "Gold" serves as a cover name for the CSI International Management base, also the manufacturing organization that produces Scientology materials and propagandizes them

globally. To be with Peter, I was moved out of CCI up to Gold, located in the Moreno Valley desert near Palm Springs. There, I would lose my identity of celebrity/artist/CCI executive, to blend into the 800 minion-slaves who labored for International Management. I committed my first grave error by compromising myself the night I arrived at Gold. I observed the chain link fences topped with barbed wire surrounding the property, a questionable sight for a church in the middle of the desert. In response to my question, "Why the barbed wire?" my greeter, Kevin O'Hare, relied "That's to keep out intruders." My gut feeling told me it was to keep in the staff, which I would later learn was true. This incident began a series of compromises at Gold that would become my demise.

I gradually developed a deep resentment for the restrictions placed on my life at the Int base. We were not allowed to have a television in our room, or to watch TV in general; we couldn't have a phone in our room nor own a cell phone. We couldn't receive phone calls from family or friends on an office phone during work hours without a security guard or senior listening in and then interrogating us about the content of the call. We couldn't receive mail at our berthing address in Hemet nearby; all mail went to 6331 Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. Since none of us lived at that location, Gold managed a driver who made several runs per day between Los Angeles and our desert base at 19625 Highway 79 in Gilman Hot Springs. Security guards read the mail before it ever made it into our hands (if the mail did get delivered to us). On one occasion, I found a letter from my mother lying on a desk in Gold's communication office, postmarked about fourteen days earlier. Angered by the delay in the letter getting to me, I questioned why anyone had held the letter without contacting me. An ethics officer then interrogated me about my anger and asked what my mother would be writing about that would cause me such concern.

Security policies restricted us from accessing the Internet through our work computers, nor could we own a personal computer, or log on to anyone else's computer off base, at the threat of RPF assignment. We couldn't leave the base without permission, and lived under 24/7 security watch. There was no such thing as going out to eat or going shopping when we needed to. That freedom didn't exist. In the rare cases when we received "liberty" days off, seniors in our chain of command first had to approve requests for liberty. Prior to Scientology, my creativity in

design and writing had always stemmed from a high interchange of ideas that came from various stimuli like TV, movies, books and magazines, visits to stores and museums, and conversations with other artists. At Gold, the suppressive restrictions on my freedom of speech and information, absence of creative stimuli, and lack of connection to the outside world nearly drove me crazy.

I think about my nine dark years at Gold in three phases, marked by various identities assigned to me, all determined by my “post” (job) title and the organization for which I worked (five organizations [“orgs”] existed at the Int base). Leaders called us not by our names but by our post titles, which we wore in the form of plastic tags Velcro’d onto our uniform shirts.

In my first phase from 1990 to 1993, I worked in Golden Era Productions, the most junior organization in the hierarchy of the base orgs. My first identity was as a Cinema or “Cine” (sounds like sin’-ee) Division crew member where I was named Cine Research In-Charge, providing research for the Art Department to design sets, props, and costumes for Scientology training films. Once the leadership realized that I could design clothing, I was named Costume Designer. I worked with the rest of the Cine crew to produce training (propaganda) films, subject to Miscavige’s frequent criticisms, verbal abuse, and harsh discipline through deprivation of sleep and other necessities. Leaders controlled our lives through a five-card system, each card entitling us to a “privilege”: liberty, full food, pay, berthing, and post. Depending on how much we quantitatively produced on our post every week (measured by statistics we kept daily and reported weekly), the master-at-arms would pull or restore cards. If we carried all five cards, we wore a star on our uniform shirt pocket as a label of “ethics protection” which also entitled us to one day of liberty every two weeks (though it was rarely granted, subject to various other arbitrary conditions dictated by Miscavige). “Liberty” was typically reduced to getting off post Friday night around 8:00pm and watching a movie on the base.

Miscavige frequently held Cine under siege, as he rarely found the quality of our film production to suit his liking. This was despite the fact that while he worked as a cameraman under LRH, he and his team personally shot the most embarrassing, unprofessional films that were sent out to Scientology organizations for the purpose of training Scientologists. Miscavige

had never achieved a level of professionalism in film making, yet he elevated himself to the level of god when it came to doing quality control on all aspects of making films--from lighting, set design, camera work, sound, editing, music scoring, you name it.

During one six-week period of discipline, he hijacked the Cine crew from post to build a new mess hall on base. We worked like slave labor night and day constructing the new building for the whole base to use for dining, base briefings and events. After about a week, I broke from the sleep deprivation. I walked myself off the project to go to our isolated medical facility (ISO) with a fever, flu-like symptoms, and exhaustion. At 11:00pm, an irate senior executive heard of my "desertion from post" and sent a security guard to order me out of ISO and back to work. While finding my way down the dark path from the Old Greenskeeper's House which housed the squalid ISO rooms, back to the mess hall project around midnight, white spots crackled before my eyes and I began to black out. I wondered if I was cracking up. The ground had begun to sink beneath my feet. I still had enough sense to recognize that I happened to be near the spot where Peter parked our car. I stole a moment to recover myself and slipped into the front seat, as if I had a space that was mine; as if being inside brought me protection. I soon saw a security guard's blinding floodlight flashing across my windshield as he moved toward me. He barked, "What are you doing? Get back to work!" I opened the glove box and fumbled around, pretending to look for a flash light, justifying my reason for being in my car. I returned to labor around midnight, severely disoriented, hating my life. I guess I didn't have it as bad as Marc Yager, who was sequestered at the snake-infested swamp near the Old Greenskeeper's House where he was made to cut down marsh weeds under 24/7 security watch. Or Ray Mithoff, forced by Miscavige to sleep in a pup-tent and urinate outdoors, or...there were too many stories to recount.

More discipline took other forms for the worse. In our typical sixteen-hour work day, we were supposed to receive two hours of "enhancement" time to study Scientology in the classroom and progress up our spiritual path or increase our administrative training skills. We frequently forfeited this time due to feeling guilty for leaving our post when there was so much work to do. Learning Scientology and gaining the promised spiritual abilities had been my sole reason for becoming a Scientologist and my prime reason for joining the Sea Org. We had just received notice from Ted Horner, the Commanding Officer of the one of the base units who

supervised Gold, that Cine crew were no longer allowed to attend study until they finished a film. This outraged me--as I knew that, based on the history of Cine, our division took months to finish films, largely due to the fact that Miscavige would order superfluous reshoots of things that didn't please him. It would drivel on and on...no--I wasn't going to allow Ted Horner to take away my ability to learn Scientology. Deprivation of two hours of enhancement per day reduced me to nothing more than a pawn on the Scientology chessboard, working to please the management, earning \$45 a week. I was outraged by the unjust treatment of staff, particularly in my Cinema division.

I defied my fear and risk of speaking out, and wrote a report about the violation of LRH policy eliminating our enhancement time. Just hours after I filed my report on our internal computer system, I felt the wrath of management. Seven motorcycles mounted by security guards and senior executives wearing three to four gold stripes on their black shoulder bars pulled up outside the Art Department where I worked. Outraged executives filled our room, slamming clip boards and fists on the desks, demanding to know what out-ethics situation I was involved in as the reason for why I was "not supporting command intention." An interrogator hauled me off to a room and questioned my intentions, doing the same to my direct senior. Later that day, Miscavige called the entire crew of Golden Era Productions (about 400 people) together to an emergency muster in military formation, and proceeded to scream at us using profanities, haranguing us as unethical and unproductive in a stream of verbal abuse. He named numerous people as troublemakers, including me. The fact that I had been successful and productive on my designer post meant nothing at the time; the fact that I had stood up for what I felt was right, perceived as counter-intention to Miscavige, mattered more. I spent hours with security guard Kevin Caetano, debasing myself to the point of convincing him I had seen my out-ethics and would "turn around."

Unexpectedly, I was allowed to go home with my husband that night (I thought I was going to be confined to the base). I convinced Peter to drive past our apartment gates, instead of going right in as we were required to do. We drove into Hemet to just go somewhere and be alone for a few minutes before retreating to our apartment (knowing we would have to explain ourselves when we got stopped at the home gates). We drove to the little airport near Hemet, and

parked along a road where we could watch the runway lights and planes coming in. I remember the dark night, and the windshield wipers slashing back and forth in the pouring rain. I cried harder than the rain coming down, begging Peter to see the lunacy of our lifestyle. I pleaded with him to recapture our life as we had known it before the Sea Org. Peter would not allow himself to entertain the thought of leaving and said we'd just have to get through this.

Over the next few weeks, as hard as I tried to persuade Peter to leave with me, he refused. I finally escaped alone in the middle of one night, stashing some clothes into plastic drawstring garbage bags, so if a security guard stopped me before I got outside the gates, I could make an excuse of taking out the trash.

My “getaway” lasted about a week. Though I was coerced into coming back, I only returned to keep our marriage together. After two months being sequestered out at OGH, prevented from residing with or even seeing my husband and other base staff, I was sent to the RPF, was labeled an out-ethics treasonous individual, and was assigned to hard labor, humiliation, isolation, and mental duress. After about six months in this camp, I came back to post as if “rehabilitated.” What actually happened during this RPF assignment, while I had time away from the vicious control of senior leaders, was that I developed a “secret creative self,” an essential core self that contained my true life essence—creativity, original free thought, opinions, feelings—buried deep inside the outer shell that I had become in the Sea Org. I came to realize I was a creative and idealistic woman who knew she had talent and potential despite leadership’s attempts to destroy my self-esteem. I also learned this creative self could and should survive secretly while functioning as a Sea Org member, subject to verbal abuse and violations of human rights, tolerating outside attempts to suppress most things about me, as if I was tough and could take the abuse along with everyone else. Inside I maintained who I really was, talented and with potential despite what Miscavige would do to Peter, to me, or to anyone else, and despite what Hubbard’s writings claimed: People who leave the Sea Org are thought to be *degraded* beings, and will never make it outside of Scientology if they leave.

It wasn’t until I got out of Scientology in 1998 that I learned why the power brokers of the Int base descended on me after I wrote that report on Ted Horner. It wasn’t Ted’s idea to change the study schedule policy. He was just a puppet carrying out Miscavige’s desires.

Miscavige wanted to implement this change in the Cine division's enhancement time based on a statement from Tom Cruise about how films are shot—a crew works full-time on a film until it's done, and when it's finished, crew get to resume normal life at home. How dare we counter what Miscavige's celebrity advisor Tom Cruise suggested him to do!

During the early to mid 1990s, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman frequented the Gold base, receiving service on a Gold platter. My first encounter with Cruise was by accident when we ran into each other outside one of the base buildings—the mess hall that the Cine division built through slave labor. I rarely saw him because he and Nicole stayed in one of Gold's private villas (that had been built by the RPF), and ushered by security guards to other private quarters for private auditing and training so as to not be distracted by the staff. Miscavige sequestered the celebrity couple to prevent them from seeing many of the staff who Miscavige said had a poor image and could not communicate well. Factually, staff at the Gold base frequently looked pale and slovenly partially because of sleep deprivation, lack of time to shower and groom, and many wore worn out, pseudo-military uniform clothing that needed replacement. Miscavige and Cruise would buzz around the base on their motorcycles and work out at the expensive gym built by staff labor. I personally helped construct and decorate the villas, along with the rest of the Gold crew, many who went without sleep for days until it was done. I find it impossible for Cruise not to have known of our slave-labor conditions, and of the expense we invested to please them, waiting on them hand and foot, providing for their every need.

I often reflected on my life before Scientology. I had been a creative artist, a fashion designer; Peter had been a successful musician and composer. Not belonging to any religion prior to Scientology, we each had been sovereign over our creative processes. We allowed our creative thoughts to flow freely through original designs and musical improvisations. Once we consented to being part of the Scientology world, the leadership claimed—and we relinquished—sovereignty over our (my and Peter's) creativity. Here, we tolerated unbearable conditions.

I especially hated seeing Scientology leaders disciplining Peter for work that didn't meet David Miscavige's desires. Miscavige held the power to label Peter as a good or bad musician, and his distinctions caused mental and physical effects on Peter's sanity and confidence level. This, at times, resulted in Peter going without sleep for days on end, frantically trying to write

music under impossible duress and deadlines. I recall a time when Miscavige had so badly berated my husband that Peter thought he should forsake music and work in the kitchen flipping hamburgers. Peter forgot that in his musical career, his composition, *On the Wings of Love*, won a Grammy nomination. He scored the theme song to the film, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, and wrote other songs recorded by artists and broadcast around the world. Ironically, Scientology emphasizes the value of the artist, and special courses exist to help develop creative abilities, since artists appear to be so valued in Scientology. The difference here smacks of suppression, since leadership treats celebrity customers completely different from (and contrary to) CSI's dedicated, "elite" Sea Org staff.

I reacted differently than Peter did to Miscavige's abuses, after working a few years at Gold and observing Miscavige's power games of abuse and control. I actually got fed up with the verbal abuse and left the first time in 1990. As I said earlier, I agreed to return and subject myself to Miscavige's conditions only because of my marriage to Peter. At least I *tried* to recover my right mind. There really was no way to win in Miscavige's Sea Org. The environment at the Int base had shaped my sense of self into a puppet-like fake. Whenever Miscavige accused us (individuals, or the organization as a whole) of committing group "transgressions" (a frequent occurrence), called us "criminals," and labeled us with an "ethics condition" (confusion, treason, enemy, doubt, liability, non-existence, or the higher conditions of normal, affluence or power)—these labels were always wrong. That's because these labels were used to suppress and disempower us, rather than to improve our conditions. Also, the condition assignments required the application of one of Hubbard's "formulas" to resolve the ethics condition. For instance, the formula for no longer being perceived as an enemy of the group was "find out who you really are." The only "right" answer to that question was to find out that one is a Sea Org member, dedicated to the only technology that exists to save mankind. There was never a way to find out who you *really* are outside of that answer. One could never discover or expose their true self if that self differed with the one that leadership wanted. As a Sea Org member, I perceived that my sense of self formed through others' perceptions about me was never my *true* self, but an identity I had to create and maintain (my identity as a Sea Org member) to function in the group. I kept trying to get out of the Sea Org in order to recover who I knew I really was. I knew I was *not* the

pseudo-military officer as depicted by my uniform; I was not a Sea Org member who would sacrifice this and all my future lifetimes to the cause of this fanatical group.

After I escaped the second time in 1993 and came back, until the last and final time I escaped in 1998, I was there for one reason—to continue to be married to Peter. I was in denial about the fact that I had lost Peter to Scientology groupthink; he adopted a requirement that in order for us to be married I had to be a Sea Org member. Of course, he hadn't come to that conclusion until he had been at the Int Base for several years and after relinquishing his soul to Scientology or, more specifically, to Miscavige.

My second phase at Gold was marked by my return in 1993, when I denounced my true self, and rejoined the group again. My eventual ticket out of Gold to a higher-echelon level organization on the base was my creative ability as a designer who managed to survive (thanks to my secret creative self). Once the leadership decided to capitalize on the fact that I could design professional clothing and manage manufacturing projects, I was put in charge of the international uniform design and staff image project, under close supervision of Miscavige. Hubbard had written numerous policies stating that a good image could increase income by five hundred percent, so my projects were more about Scientology being accepted in its communities and thus CSI making more money, than about providing necessities or comforts to staff.

Hubbard's "art technology" and policies about the image of the Sea Org and its pseudo-military look dictated my designs. But the job at least enabled me to be immersed in my passion of clothes design, outside the suffocating constraints of the Int base. I was given a special project to work with Italian designer (and Scientologist) Claudio Lugli to design and manufacture suits for the CCI staff in Hollywood. I completed the project successfully, which re-ignited my passion for creative work again. I eventually resided at most of the major Scientology bases around the world, manufacturing the clothing I had designed. I lived near London for six months producing the UK staff clothing while manufacturing shirts, sweaters, suits and insignia in Ireland, Scotland, and England; then on to Copenhagen, Sydney, and New York. Though I lived away from my husband for three to seven months at a time, I coveted this designing job as it had become my only source of creativity and my only pleasure.

My travels throughout the Scientology world revealed the denigrated, poverty conditions in which Sea Org staff lived, while I knew International Management made about \$7 million per week. I had seen worldwide Scientology staff subject to slave-labor-type working conditions and degraded living conditions (worse than my own), which obliterated their self-esteem and ability to live successfully as married couples or as a family with children. I became increasingly aware of the leadership's double standards (Int base executives were issued numerous \$150 cotton shirts, numerous pairs of tailor-made pants and shoes, while lower level staff had one polyester shirt and one pair of pants which they'd hand-wash at midnight to be clean the next day). I knew of Michele Miscavige buying her husband David a new suit costing \$10,000, hand-made for David's birthday by Los Angeles tailor, Mr. Lim. How could she afford such a gift on Sea Org pay? How was it that Miscavige owned at least three cars, several motorcycles, filled his pencil cup with Mont Blanc pens, enjoyed an elegant office equipped with a high-end sound system and custom-built furniture scaled to his small body, and kept residences around the country? I lost my naivety about Scientology's humanitarian and idealistic purposes and about the artist's role in Scientology's peaceful revolution, seeing it for the money-motivated false religion that it is, scamming millions of dollars from its customers. However, as I said, I kept my critical thoughts to myself between 1993 and 1998 to avoid severe disciplinary repercussions.

Because I completed my projects successfully, Miscavige promoted me to work for the Events Unit in the International Management Public Relations (IMPR) Office in 1995. The senior leaders, headed by Miscavige, held at least six promotional events around the world a year to hold the membership together, to propagandize Scientology's expansion plans, and to sell more products. As Deputy Events Art Director, I helped create stage designs (which got increasingly ostentatious and expensive, upwards of \$100,000 per event), trophies and awards, and the dress of senior executive speakers (custom-designed silk ties and cummerbunds, tailor-made tux shirts, and the like).

A year later, Miscavige promoted me again to a senior post of International Management Public Relations Officer (IMPR), working directly with him and the senior executives of Scientology. This post could have been a highly creative position writing speeches and scripts, writing and editing for the *International Scientology News*, doing event planning, and writing PR

programs. However, Miscavige micro-managed the script writing, the speech writing, the magazine production, and every proposed program. Nothing was ever good enough or correct enough for him, so he constantly berated us and stepped in, claiming the ability to do it better alone. He enjoyed chronically bypassing the staff to defer the work to Danny Sherman, his puppet speechwriter (and a former member of the Guardian's Office).

Miscavige's demands frequently led to sleep deprivation for me and my team to repeatedly redo our work, and undergo endless other disciplinary measures including abusive tongue lashings, berating in front of a full staff assembly, and physical abuse to certain staff. This included arm punchings, head bashings, and pushing staff into walls or down onto floors. He or his security staff made some staff sleep under their desks or outside, and worse (not to be mentioned here). After nine months, I resigned the post. Within an hour after my resignation, two RTC security guards escorted me out of the building to a work site at our property's drainage canal. I hauled rocks in the desert heat (temperatures exceeding 100) for two weeks to build up the canal's retaining walls with two other senior staff (Fred Schwartz and Fran Harris) under discipline. Compared to the abuse I had seen and experienced, hauling rocks was a welcome relief.

My third and final phase began in late 1996 when I requested to return to my Uniform Project In-Charge post, where I had been the happiest, undertaking a project at Miscavige's favorite organization in Clearwater, Florida. For six months I developed a new image for the Flag Land Base staff, creating everything from image makeovers to an intricate uniform program covering the functions of more than one thousand staff. I went on to design clothing for the senior organizations of Scientology management, including the International Association of Scientology (IAS) execs (who managed the Scientology financial war chest that financed most of CSI's lawsuits), and the Freewinds execs and crew who worked on our ship in the Caribbean where the highest level of Scientology (OT VIII) was delivered. Miscavige twice labeled me the most productive staff member on the Int base. This was announced during Saturday night base briefings, complete with a framed award certificate. Having two of these on my wall above my desk not only validated my identity as a creative individual, but brought me ethics protection where other staff wouldn't mess with me, and a promotion to a higher officer rank.

Two urges constantly tore at me—my secret creative self desiring to survive as an individual free to live and communicate without suppression, and the commitment I had made to my husband to be in the Sea Org. My desire to salvage my life and be free from Miscavige’s Sea Org finally surpassed the overbearing sovereignty of Scientology leadership in 1998. Without my secret creative self intact, I could have gone completely insane or attempted suicide, like some did. Though I had talked with Peter throughout 1997 about leaving, I failed in my last efforts to get him to leave with me. One of his biggest fears about leaving was the visual idea of Marty Rathbun coming after him with an e-meter. (This was after Marty had blown and returned to the base and had a rather monstrously vicious presence among Gold staff). I made my third and final escape August 1, 1998, alone.

My forthcoming book, *Escaping Scientology: An Insider’s True Story*, narrates the unlikely circumstances of my actual escape, including how I got out of the Los Angeles area undetected by Scientology’s security system with only forty-eight dollars in my wallet and rejoined my family in Atlanta after living apart from them for nearly twenty years.

My final departure resulted in the loss of my husband of twenty years and everything connected to my worlds of music and design. The loss of Peter was so devastating, I couldn’t stay in touch with his family or daughter, as the pain was unbearable. Once out of the Sea Org, I also severed all ties with Scientology, my world since the early 1980s.

*I’m free, I’m free, thank God I’m free.* Those thoughts woke me up nearly every day, and closed my eyes nearly every night, once I rejoined humanity (the non-Scientology world). I rediscovered life without the Scientology polemic, and gradually re-formed my self-identity. To do that, I purged every aspect of Scientology from my life—from my vocabulary, my spiritual beliefs, my worldview, my mental processes, and my behavior. I also chose not to connect with many people who had left the Sea Org, as I wanted to end any connection with ideas, words, habits, or complaints about what had happened. I didn’t want to dwell on the past, or commit vengeful acts (which was tempting) like some ex-Sea Org members and ex-Scientologists did. I’m not saying this to judge them; I wanted to learn how to forgive others for their actions so I wouldn’t remain entrapped in bitterness over the loss of my husband and nearly half of my adult life. I wanted to learn to forgive myself for my choices. I wanted to heal, so I knew I needed to

disconnect totally from anything to do with Scientology. I wanted to rediscover the world, and myself.

It wasn't until I left CSI that I learned the secret behind the cover design of Hubbard's book, *Dianetics*. Once the story about "Xenu" hit the Internet for worldwide eyes to see, I read the "forbidden confidential" texts of Scientology's spiritual level "OT III, the wall of fire." Not until then did I finally understand why a volcano was on the cover of *Dianetics*. The image meant to restimulate people of a past time-track incident Hubbard claimed happened about a trillion years ago. Many Scientologists deny this story is true; they deny it because either they don't know about it yet, or because they're not willing to violate the bond of confidentiality they signed when they reached the level of OT III and learned of this story: Xenu, a galactic ruler several trillion years ago, dealt with his overpopulation problem by paralyzing people with an alcohol-glycol injection, and shooting them out of his galaxy. These cast-offs landed around the base of volcanoes on Earth (described as hell by Hubbard), killed by detonated H-bombs. As hopeless, body-less souls, these body thetans attached themselves to people everywhere. Hence, one of Scientology's highest kept secrets is the existence of these *body thetans* who must be purged (through Scientology counseling) from our spirits in order to be free of them, thus giving meaning to Hubbard's quest for "total spiritual freedom." This confidential story comprises the much of the content of the "fourth dynamic engram" which a Scientologist eliminates from their spirit at the level of OT III auditing. According to Hubbard, everyone possesses this engram that makes people want to annihilate all of mankind (the fourth dynamic of life). Many Scientologists who reach the level of OT III want to leave Scientology upon discovering this story since it is too ludicrous to believe. Some people have psychotic breaks while doing OT III. Discovering this body thetan secret was just one discovery of Scientology lunacy after another I made outside of Scientology.

Separating myself from the madness of the Scientology world, I realized I had lost one huge aspect of my creative self—my desire to design. I felt I had prostituted myself by promoting the image of Scientology for its financial gain, thus compromising my personal integrity to such an extent that I lost the desire to ever design again. Instead, other creative urges emerged in my life. My ability to express opinions, talk freely, openly and honestly, had been so

suppressed and controlled that a non-stop desire to write, speak, and express myself every way possible burst forth like an unplugged fountain, and led me to become a defender of freedom of speech.

Thanks to my rebellion to Scientology sovereignty, my *secret* creative self was free to emerge and develop into a *strong*, creative self, highly resistant to power dynamics outside Scientology. After I left, Scientology authorities attempted to threaten, influence, or otherwise control my life but I had begun to overcome what had been the giants in my past. Overcoming each incident with Scientology officials served to strengthen my resilience against power dynamics in general.

As for Peter's and my marriage, ex-Sea Org members who defected from the Int base told me that Miscavige personally controlled our divorce process, utilizing his legal minions to file divorce papers in the Riverside County Courthouse, and then personally controlled and edited Peter's final "disconnection" letter to me. Peter and I have never spoken a word together since the day I left in 1998, and got divorced through the mail in 1999. His sister Lacy and some of his cousins occasionally contact me. Early in 2009, I emailed Peter's family to notify them of worsened conditions at Gold to which Peter was subject (which I found out about from people who left the Sea Org), his assignment to the "SP hole" where staff lived in degraded conditions as dehumanized individuals-- in case his family wanted to look into it and help him get out. Lacy, Ely, and Beau concluded that it was Peter's choice to be there and as a 58 year-old man, what else would he do if he left Scientology? His career was gone; this was all that he knew.

Around 2000, I tapped into a network of organizations who wanted to hear about my Scientology experiences, from churches to colleges and women's organizations. Ignoring "helpful advice" from new associates about needing professional speaker training before going out on speaking engagements, I have since spoken at nearly one hundred events and conferences and have lectured in numerous academic settings. Others told me I shouldn't speak about Scientology at all to avoid becoming "fair game" for Scientology's indiscriminate, vengeful tactics against me as a critic. Nevertheless, I've been interviewed by dozens of radio talk show hosts, television shows, newspapers and magazines, including *CBS Inside Edition*, *NBC Dateline*, *CNN*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and two documentaries on Scientology made for

television in France. Biographer Andrew Morton interviewed me and quoted me in his book, *Unauthorized Biography of Tom Cruise* (2008). I co-authored one non-fiction women's inspirational book in 2005, and authored several entries in the new *Baker Dictionary of Cults* (forthcoming, 2010). I've written two manuscripts about my Scientology experiences under book contracts to Broadman & Holman Publishers in 2000 and to New Hope Publishers in 2006, both which CSI legal officials suppressed from publication. (More information about this is available on my website, [www.karenpressley.com](http://www.karenpressley.com) and will be exposed in *Escaping Scientology*).

Christian friends cautioned me against getting married soon, but when the right man came into my life two years later I decided that I, too, could have a successful marriage and took the leap to marry Greg Pressley. Greg and I enrolled in Kennesaw State University in Georgia in 2004. I graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Communication in 2008, and am pursuing my Master of Arts in Professional Writing degree with plans to teach at university level, and to publish, publish, publish books. .

I attribute my "new" life and the creativity which continues to emerge to the power and drive of my secret creative self which, I believe, is God-given. Frequently, I think of how Scientology couldn't reach, control, or destroy that part of me. I survived through the trauma with my life intact, and made it to the other side where I live freely and can become all I was meant to be. I never take my freedom for granted, and I never forget where I've come from.

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