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Hard to get out of the cult. Scientologists bought Weines silence

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The Church of Scientology is often accused of "braiwashing" their members. Weine Pettersson are one of those who went to court to get his rights. But the scientologists preferred to settle the differenses outside court and offered Weine Pettersson 50 000 sek (app 7000 usd) for his silence.

By Anna Bodin

Stillness in the room we sit in. The cat that sleeps with its back against the radiator. The other cat on the stool , with eyes half closed and the tail vertical over the edge as a pendulum in an old wooden watch. The timeless ticking of time. And this shaking story.

Weine Petterssons words about years of useless treatment and hundreds of thousands cronas , decided to sue the Church of Scientology.

The calls from the OSA office. The underlying and percieved threats. The mechanisms behind the cults power over the mind. The relief to be free at last.

The first time Weine heard of the founder of scientology, L Ron Hubbard, was on the Narconon centre at Huddinge. He was sent there by his socialworker to get cured from a juvenile potsmoking that turned into a hidden amphetamine abuse.

Gratitude and curiosity made Weine continue with Hubbard courses in the Church of Scientology. At the age of 23 he met a man who was part time working in the church , a so called auditor, a spiritual tutor , and arranged with him a personal guidance plan.

In a room located in a basement , the treatment continued. Weine hold a can in each hand. Through them the auditor sent a weak electrical current through his body. On the device was a meter with a moving arrow. The auditor called the device an e-meter. Weine describes it as a kind of liedetector that was supposed to register tensions in the individual. The auditor went through a peformatted checklist of questions. When a question was registered on the e-meter, new followup questions was asked.

- You go back to troubling things and dwells on them until interest and tensions are gone, Weine says.

The method , according to him, aims at creating mental sensations. It feels like something lets go of you. But Weine felt worse and worse. Nevertheless the treatment continued for seven years. In total he paid the auditor approximatly 20 000 usd . The first 7000 he had to borrow. The resting 13000 was from a lifeinsurance when his father died.

- I finally had to realize that the auditor was swindling me. It was a very hard blow straight to my glassheart. I felt extremely bad and went to the Church of Scientology and told what had happened.

The church held several interviews with him and then recommended him to buy new courses straight on from them. Another 12000 usd should correct his and the auditors mistakes. The sum was not exceptional. Weine remembers how sellers in scientology duped people to buy courses for tens of thousands of dollars. They had provision and followed the buyers into the bank themselves to borrow money.

Today Weine sees things clearly , the auditor fooled him for 20 000 and that could of course not be cured with therapy. At the time his loyalty was stronger than his doubts and he paid the money.

-The scientology teaching is totally overwhelming , he says. It is a indoctrination that goes everywhere and any place . The teachings are completely covering every aspect in such way that when you are looking for a backdoor to get out it is very hard to find one. They have created a mental barrier around you.

The fact that Scientology is hard to see through can be explained with the eternal truths behind the teachings , Weine thinks.

-The teaching gives you something true , a truth that has been around as long as the humans. Hubbard compiled these truths in a very intelligent way and got himself money and power by selling them.

Weines 13000 dollar course lasted less than a year. Then the church wanted more money. This was when his faith died. At the end of 1995 , Weine broke up with the church. He had earlier on seen the posters on people accused of being enemies of the church, now he was one of them.

- It is an unbelievable mental press they put on you not to criticize, debate or question the church. You can call it brainwashing.

More than anything else , Weine is upset over the fact that the Church of Scientology is totally undemocratic while using the laws and rights of democracy themselves.

Without the constitutional right of religious freedom and the possibility of copyrighting its written material, the cult would not make the billions it does today.

- The question is not if their courses work or not , the question is the goals of the movement.

The moment Weine started to ask questions his case was sent to the Office of Special Affaires. Different people called and talked about problems that a relative , still a member of the church, would get.

According to Weine there never was physical violence or directly expressed threats , but the church created a sense of danger that was very nasty.

Despite his fears Weine sued the church and last year he was offered a settlement outside court , an offer he accepted. Into the agreement it was written that neither party was to disclose the agreement to anyone else or to the media.

The Church of Scientology did however the mistake to register the settlement in the district court of Stockholm. He treaty became public and anyone can request a copy and read that the church tried to buy Weines silence for the sum of 7000 usd.

The story is finished. Silence once again takes place in the room. Weines commonlaw wife picks up their 7 year old daughter and the third cat jumps to the warmth in the perambulator. This week Weine will stay home with his family. On Monday it is back to work again.

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