



Family save son who paid cult £100,000

By SEAN RYAN

THE son of a wealthy landowner has been rescued by his family from a cult with whom he spent more than £100,000.

Andrew Dobie, 22, was held a virtual prisoner by his family in a remote cottage where the windows had been nailed shut and the keys hidden.

There he was rigorously de-programmed to reverse the teachings of the cult, the Church of Scientology—an organisation branded 'immoral' in a High Court judgment last year.

'It wasn't the money they took that made us resort to this,' said his father. 'They had taken his mind and his future as well.'

Andrew was studying to help run the 4,000-acre family estate when he joined the Scientologists.

Within a month, he had spent £90,000 on books signed by the cult's reclusive founder, science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.

'I'd inherited £200,000 which I hadn't lifted a finger for,' said Andrew. 'I was happy it was going to our cause, and I thought the books were worth that much.'

But Christie's, the fine art dealers, confirmed his parents' suspicion. The leatherbound volumes, a mixture of Hubbard's pulp fiction and philosophy, were 'virtually worthless' on the open market.

Secrets

An expert at the auctioneers' Glasgow office concluded: 'This is the worst example of profiteering from cheap and fairly commonplace material I have seen.'

'I cannot but reel back in astonishment that anybody has the gall to offer them for such extortionate sums.'

Andrew also paid more than £10,000 for bizarre courses of self-improvement and psychotherapy run by the church, which numbers film stars John Travolta and Karen Black among its followers.

A happy, normal student according to his former tutor at Seale Hayne agricultural college in Devon, he became convinced that the sessions had unlocked the mystical secrets of his past lives.

The Scientologists recruited Andrew to spearhead a gruelling nationwide campaign to promote their

Days of tough arguments . . . and a guard on the bedroom door

Son saved from cult

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leader's latest bestseller, *Battlefield Earth*.

Terrified of losing the youngest of their four sons, John and Helen Dobie at first entertained cult members at their Berwickshire home, and visited him at Saint Hill, the cult's headquarters in East Grinstead, Sussex.

They decided on the kidnap only after Andrew telephoned in tears demanding access to a further £53,000 for Scientology.

'It was frighteningly out of character,' explained 68-year-old Mr Dobie. 'He was shouting so much that I had to hold the receiver away from my ear.'

'They were obviously putting him under enormous strain to get more money out of him. That's when I knew we had to act.'

Lured

The Dobies heard through a family friend of Martin Faiers, a 31-year-old former Moonie turned de-programmer. They paid £10,000 for his services.

Andrew was lured by his 27-year-old brother, James, to the six-room stone cottage where he was held prisoner.

Andrew had been invited home to celebrate a grand family reunion. He suspected nothing as James drove him on to a neighbouring estate, ostensibly to pick up a party guest.

But when they reached Greenhope cottage Martin Faiers was waiting with a team of de-programmers, including three former cult members.

The kitchen shelves were stocked with a week's supply of food, while in a bedroom were several changes of clothes for Andrew.

There was, too, a library of



Andrew Dobie (left) with Martin Faiers

documentary and video evidence forming a case against the Church of Scientology—statements from disillusioned Scientologists, court judgments, Press cuttings and psychology texts on the art of mind control.

The de-programmers—two men and two women—had devised elaborate plans to wrest Andrew away from any Scientologist accompanying him, by force if necessary.

In the event, those plans were not needed.

For the next eight hours,

until 4 a.m., it was Andrew who appeared dominant, animatedly praising the cult in language peppered with its terminology.

Faiers knew he could not afford to lose a single argument, but struggled to reason against an astonishing series of allegations.

Chain-smoking roll-up cigarettes, Andrew, the product of a Christian upbringing and a public school education, claimed Mr Justice Latey's High Court denunciation of Scientologists, along with pol-



Mr and Mrs Dobie, the relieved parents.

ice reports of reprisals against church enemies, had all been 'proved wrong'.

'There is an international Nazi conspiracy against us,' he declared.

At one point during the days of arguments, Andrew was brought to tears.

'Your problem is you can't see reality any more,' said Faiers. 'You're not foolish. You've been fooled.'

Another day Andrew broke down at the realisation that he had been pressured into parting with his money.

He had begun by boasting of

his swift decision-making — 15 minutes' thought had gone into his move from college to the Scientologists' headquarters at East Grinstead after he had read a Hubbard book.

And he had casually agreed to buy his first books over a drink with two cult members.

The boast turned into a confession. 'I lost reality in terms of the amount I was spending. It was a big thing, but it didn't seem like a big loss. It was stupid and irresponsible.'

Later Andrew agreed to leave the scientologists and return home.

Last night he was with his family planning to go into the forestry business with his 30-year-old brother Willie.

Church spokesman Mike Garside denied that Andrew had been swindled. He claimed that Chirstie's new nothing of the 'specialised' Hubbard book market. And he alleged that Andrew had been 'kidnapped' by a common criminal.

Mr Dobie said: 'At no time was physical force used. All I have done is free my son from a cult which a High Court judge described as corrupt and dangerous.'

'Surely that is every parent's right.'

'Sell Scientology to your friends'

The Church of Scientology, believed to have 10,000 followers in Britain, hotly denied that it exercised mind control or placed supporters under high pressure to spend.

Confidential church documents from an international Scientology conference in London last month tell a different story.

One, a policy letter entitled *How to 'sell' Scientology to Your Friends*, lists 'control' among four steps necessary

to interest potential recruits.

Another, headed *Hard Sell*, says: 'The art of Hard Sell is you tell people to do something . . . Hard Sell means insistence that people buy. It means caring about the person and not being reasonable about stops or barriers.'

In a High Court tug-of-love case last year, Mr Justice Latey said of the church: 'It is out to capture people, especially children and impressionable young people, and indoctrinate and brainwash them so that they become unquestioning captives and tools of the cult.'