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## Former Scientologist Harassed After Saying Prozac Helped Her Depression

The former top-level Scientologist who told *The Psychiatric Times* in June that fluoxetine (Prozac) had helped her overcome the depression she suffered while in Scientology, has been under surveillance along with her husband, and she said her friends and neighbors have been harassed by private investigators since shortly after the story was released. Both Hana Whitfield and her husband, Jerry, have been watched in their home and followed whenever they leave. They were also investigated by police in England recently after Scientologists told authorities there that the Whitfields planned to kidnap two people. But Hana said decisions like the Food and Drug Administration's to reject the Citizen's Commission on Human Rights' (CCHR) petition to remove fluoxetine from the market make it worthwhile for former members to continue to speak out: "I feel vindicated, which is a little strong, but I believe the drug has helped millions compared to a few who may have had problems," she said. "It's been very helpful to me. I'm so glad of the decision, and I hope it helps put an end to CCHR's pantomimes." (CCHR is an anti-psychiatry group funded by the Church of Scientology.) Hana has been taking fluoxetine for a year and has had no problems with side effects.

For years, Scientologists have accused the Whitfields, who do exit counseling, of being kidnapers who force Scientology's members to leave the organization against their will. The Whitfields say, however, that they are hired by people to tell family members involved in Scientology about the organization's "downside"—for example, how members are told to break with family and friends not involved in or supportive of Scientology and how they will be hounded for more and more money to pay for courses and auditing (Scientology's counseling). *The Psychiatric Times* has spoken to families who have hired the Whitfields, and they have confirmed that the counseling involves no kidnapping or coercion. Because of the Whitfields' work, Scientologists have sometimes had the couple under surveillance and sent private investigators to interrogate their family and friends, Hana said. The harassment escalated, however, after Hana spoke out about how fluoxetine helped her overcome depression.

The Whitfields' attorney, Toby Plevin, wrote to the Scientologist's Hollywood law firm, Bowles & Moxon, demanding that Scientology stop its harassment of the couple and their friends and relatives. In July, Plevin received

a scathing letter from Laurie J. Bartilson, an attorney with Bowles. Bartilson suggests in her letter that CCHR will try to connect Hana's fluoxetine use to reasons why the Whitfields' work should be stopped. Bartilson asks in the letter: "Is Mr. Whitfield also on Prozac, or is it only Mrs. Hana Whitfield who is taking it? And do the Whitfields inform their prospective clients that Ms. Whitfield will be taking a drug which has been proven to cause compulsive violence in its users prior to taking their money, and attempting the deprogramming?" *The Psychiatric Times* left a message for Bartilson, who was in conference, but she did not return the call.

Scientology's private investigators have interrogated the Whitfields' friends and even contacted a waitress who served the couple in a local restaurant, Hana said. "We've had at least 50 phone calls from friends. They've been asking [friends and neighbors] if we pay them for leads; they don't realize that we don't have to pay for leads—our service is needed," Hana said.

Hana claims the most flagrant harassment occurred when the couple went to England recently to do an exit counseling session. A family in England who know the Whitfields was allegedly contacted by a Scientologist who pretended to be Jerry's elderly father. He convinced the family he needed to speak to his son, and they gave the man the phone number for the bed and breakfast (B&B) where the Whitfields were staying.

The next day, two police officers arrived while the Whitfields were meeting with the family and the two individuals who were involved in Scientology. They separated the Whitfields from the family and questioned everyone, telling them that Scientologists had accused the Whitfields of kidnapping the family member and the other Scientologist. "Once they were told the truth, they knew they had been used by the Scientologists and were quite angry," Jerry said. "Outside, a policeman stopped a car in which a man was attempting to take pictures of him with a telephoto lens. The man turned out to be a Scientologist from Los Angeles. The policeman told him to stop bothering us, but he and other Scientologists only left for about an hour."

Despite constant surveillance and two visits to the Whitfields at the B&B by the head of security at Scientology's headquarters in Saint Hill, England, the Whitfields said that the two Scientologists with whom they were able to spend time ultimately chose to leave the organization. ■