

BRISTOL Journal

TEL BRISTOL 231061 (ADS) 231151 (NEWS)

No. 821 APRIL 29TH, 1994

'BRAINWASHED'

Bristol man to sue cult for over £10,000

A BRISTOL man is suing an organisation which he claims taught him to lie and reject his family, whilst charging him over £7,000 for the pleasure.

John Simpson, aged 24, (not his real name) is a former member of the controversial cult of the Church of Scientology or Dianetics, as it is otherwise known.

He finally 'escaped' last month after seven months in the group.

If you had quizzed him last year about his involvement with Scientology, he would probably have told you a few 'acceptable truths'.

He explained: "For example, if your parents ask you how much you have spent on Scientology courses and you don't want them to know that you've spent £2,000, you would say 'more than £500'. They taught us to say that they were acceptable truths."

Warning

John, of Headley Park, is neither stupid or naive and yet within a few months he was spending every weekend at the cult's UK headquarters in Poole, taking part in self-improvement and PR courses.

In all, he spent over £10,000 on courses and is now warning other Bristolians about the cult which is currently promoting itself in the city.

The cult boasts famous pupils such as film stars Tom Cruise and John Travolta.

According to John, one of the reasons he was first attracted to the centre in Poole was because of the people.

"The people there were intelligent,

By Emily Compston

there were dentists, architects, lawyers and these are the kind of people that Scientology want. They are bright and have inquiring minds."

Within an afternoon he had signed up for a £90 Success Through Communication course and he returned the following weekend.

He says the techniques used by the centre to enrol candidates are subtle.

"I went into an office and had an interview. I really thought they had my best

**'The mission
will look into
this case'
See page 5**

interests to heart. By about 2am I was tired, I had work the next day. They kept on saying 'just a few more minutes', but it was more like an hour."

By the time he had set off back to Bristol, in the early hours of that September morning, he had parted with a further £400 and was enrolled in another two courses.

John was elated - he felt more confident and his life became a cycle of work in the

week and intense study at Poole at the weekends. Soon John was learning the Scientology language. He stopped having chats with his friends, but instead was in 'com' (communicating) with them.

His parents began getting worried around December last year, but any attempts to talk to their son ended in an argument and tears - "never mine" wrote John a few months later.

In desperation they sought help from an ex-Scientologist Gary Fryer who is now committed to 'exposing' Scientology for what he believes it really is.

Persuaded

John was persuaded to visit him too and slowly he came out of his 'brainwashed' state and began to question all he had learnt.

John left the church in March and managed to persuade five other people to leave.

"I'm not very popular there, I have cost them around £50,000 already and I could cost them millions if I persuade any others to leave."

He is now suing the church for over £10,200 - the amount he spent, after loan interest, on courses at Poole.

A couple of months ago, he was paid a visit by an American private investigator, employed by the church to discredit members of the anti-Scientology fraternity.

"I applied scientology to every side of my life. I really went for it. Now I just want to get other people out of it."

BRISTOL JOURNAL

W/E April 29th, 1994

5

Scientologists: We're taking legal advice

THE Scientology mission in Poole is seeking legal advice over attempts to sue them for over £10,000 by an ex-Scientologist from Bristol.

Peter Mansell, director of public affairs at the Poole Mission, admitted this week that they had received a letter for John's solicitor, Beverly Ryall.

In a letter to the Journal Mr Mansell said: "...The Church is under no legal obligation to refund donations; but on the other

hand, we are proud of the services we provide and on the rare occasions when someone is dissatisfied we do consider requests to have donations returned."

He went on to call John's allegations against the Church as 'ludicrous' and claims that many thousands of people are happy with Scientology.

Another Scientology spokesperson claimed: "He's just out to make trouble for us."