



MONDAY 31 JANUARY 1994

**T**he middle-aged German student started screaming. He seemed to have lost control. He was a Scientologist, a member of the world's largest cult, on a course of study that, he had been promised, would bring him closer to the secrets of the universe and, eventually, give him the key to eternal life.

According to eyewitnesses, the man, whose name is known to the *Independent*, was taken to an isolated room in a communal building not far from Saint Hill, a 17th-century manor house in East Grinstead, West Sussex, and the UK headquarters of the cult.

For two weeks, the room was locked. The German had been placed on an "isolation watch" – or what Scientologists more informally refer to as a "baby watch". It is a treatment that was prescribed by the founder of the cult, L Ron Hubbard, a science fiction writer, for members showing signs of psychosis or mental ill-health – people who are, literally, plagued by evil spirits. It is the last resort for dealing with difficult Scientologists. It is a treatment that the organisation has so far kept secret.

The subject of the watch is observed at all times, and not allowed to talk to anybody. He or she is, in the language of the cult, "muzzled". Our witnesses, who have asked to remain anonymous, remember that the German was sometimes incontinent and that they had to wash him down at the sink in the otherwise bare room. The five people who guarded him were only allowed to communicate with him in writing. Eventually, he was allowed to return to Germany.

Scientology stands accused of many things: of warping people's minds, of financial corruption, of preying on the vulnerable. Thirty years ago, a group of MPs tried to have it banned in the UK after a girl with a history of mental illness was found wandering around East Grinstead, having a nervous breakdown. Finally, the Government banned all foreign nationals coming to the UK to work or study in Scientology, until 1980.

Since then, the Scientologists have worked hard to improve their image. But they remain a secretive, frightening group. Despite the proliferation of their "literature", little is known of the inner workings of their organisation.

Most people have walked past high street shops outside which smiling youngsters offer free "personality tests". Russell Miller, in his biography of Hubbard, showed that Scientology is a monumental con and that its founder was a charlatan. Almost everything Hubbard said was palpably untrue – he claimed to have been awarded a Purple Heart for being wounded in action, which was false; he claimed he was crippled and blinded at the end of the Second World War, also false. Despite these fabrications, dedicated loyalists believe Hubbard was a genius, the designer of a new path that could lead people to a secular Eden. In the main, they are educated, white and middle class.

For the past few months, the *Independent* has been investigating claims that the cult employs quasi-psychological techniques that are possibly illegal and potentially dangerous to the long-term health of its more vulnerable members. Disturbing new evidence, provided, at some risk to themselves, by existing and former members of the cult may renew calls for Scientology to again be banned from the UK. In the United States, the cult was recently granted the tax exemption enjoyed by genuine churches, but this may soon be overturned. In November, in a landmark ruling, the Californian Court of Appeal agreed that the techniques of Scientology constitute "brain-washing" and "thought-reform" similar to that practised by the Chinese and North Koreans against American prisoners of war.

Hubbard regarded the law as a tool to be used to the advantage of the cult (he once

L Ron Hubbard



The Scientologists call it 'baby-watching', but it has nothing to do with looking after infants. **Tim Kelsey** and **Mike Ricks** investigate the potentially dangerous, and possibly illegal, secret treatment that the world's largest cult uses to deal with difficult members

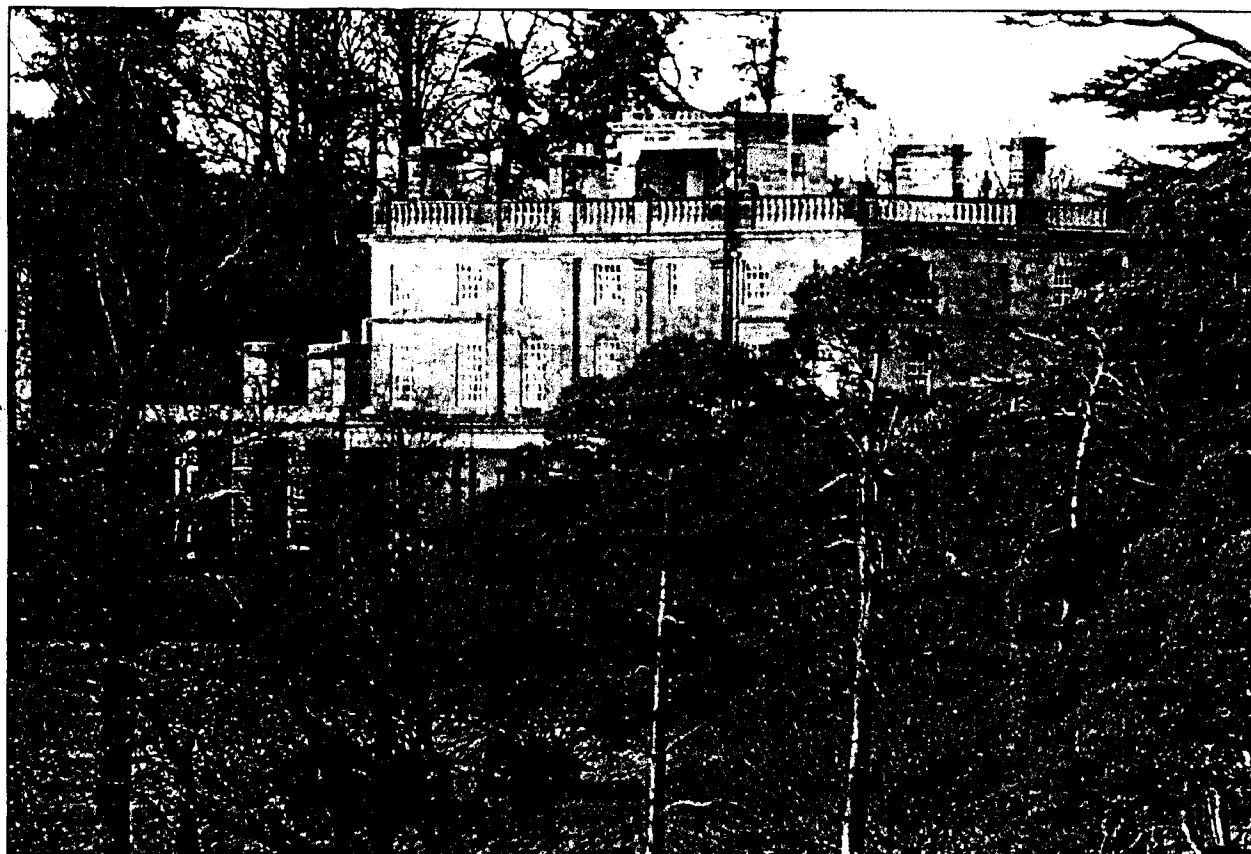
# THE PRISONERS OF SAINT HILL

said: "The law can be used very easily to harass"), and the cult has become notorious for issuing injunctions and taking out libel actions – none of which it has so far won. But the tide seems to be turning: there are a series of legal actions pending from former members seeking damages for a variety of reasons, including false imprisonment.

The "baby-watching" incident with the German student occurred in 1991. But the technique has been used more recently, according to confidential church documents dating from September 1993, which have been leaked to the *Independent*. These show that the Scientologists mounted an internal investigation after a baby watch conducted on another German, again at Saint Hill, last year. The investigation was instigated because the woman put in isolation was already suffering from an acute mental disorder – in the terminology used by the investigating officer, she was Type III, which translates as "insane". She went insane, according to the document, while she was working for the organisation in Europe. In early 1993, she arrived in Saint Hill and was put on a baby watch because she was thought to be a "security risk". Her boyfriend was put in charge of the watch. But something went badly wrong, and the watch was "very extended" because of incompetence by local officials, reports the document. It is not clear whether she was locked in a room throughout or allowed, as

is sometimes the case, to walk around during the watch. There seems to be some dispute about whether the local staff, were adequately trained to deal with such a case, and permission for her "treatment" finally had to come directly from the American leadership of the cult.

Several of the most senior officers of the



Saint Hill, the 17th-century manor house in East Grinstead, West Sussex, which is the British headquarters of the Scientologists

Photographs: Nick Turpin/Camera Press

# THE PRISONERS OF SAINT HILL

British arm of the cult were blamed for allowing this woman to remain a member of the cult – according to the internal memo, she apparently had a history of drug abuse. These senior members were ordered to attend an internal tribunal. If found guilty of failing to ensure the “security” of the member, they will be demoted and sentenced to a period of “rehabilitation” through hard labour. According to the report, it seems that the woman escaped from Saint Hill, was arrested by police and then returned to Germany.

One former senior cult official who worked in the Californian section of the organisation was involved in several baby watches. On one occasion, a woman staff member was put in isolation after she started throwing furniture out of the window of her flat, which overlooked Hollywood Boulevard. She was then locked in her room. “We had to take all the furniture out of the room, strip it completely and leave her in there on her own for more than a week,” the official said. “She was just crazy, talking to herself and screaming.” This woman had been engaged in one of the most demanding of the Scientology courses, during which students are taught that 75 million years ago the earth was part of a galactic confederation ruled by an evil prince called Xenu. He shipped the inhabitants of 76 planets to earth. The spirits (or thetans) of these extra-terrestrials inhabit the souls of contemporary human beings and have to be exorcised.

Dr Betty Tylden, a retired consultant psychiatrist who is regularly called as an expert court witness on cults, has treated Scientologists recovering from the effects of baby watches – both the victims and the guards. She has seen several in the past six months alone. “People are terribly frightened of it,” she said. “They come out of it suffering from something very similar to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, the ‘prisoner’ syndrome. There is hyper-arousal, flashbacks, fear and obsessions. It is very nasty, and even if it doesn’t break a law, it is a gross curtailment of an individual’s liberty.”

**I**t is not just baby-watching that is causing concern. One Zimbabwean man, Noel Matarandirotya, who has now left the organisation and has been advised by his legal counsel that he may have grounds to seek compensation from the Scientologists for, among other things, false imprisonment, claims that he collapsed as a result of intensive interrogation. He came to Saint Hill in 1991, on a ticket paid for by the cult, but the following year he was suspected of subverting the interests of the organisation. He alleges that he was interrogated for two or three hours every day, often with a lie detector connected by electrodes to his hands.

His concerns about the cult started before this, while he participated in a Scientology course – called a “purification rundown” –

during which members spend long periods in a sauna and take large quantities of vitamin pills. According to Dr Tylden, the massive quantity of pills, combined with the physical stress of spending long periods at high temperatures, could be fatal. “I found it very difficult,” said Mr Matarandirotya. “There were some children doing the course when I did it. I saw at least two, the youngest around 10, and they were taking the vitamins, too.”

He is prepared to speak out. Most are not. Scientology has a reputation for hunting down its critics. One man has taken to wearing an armoured vest because of alleged threats against his life. One American former cult member claims that he was ordered to kill two opponents of the organisation.

Those claims will shortly be tested in court. If they prove true, they could mark the beginning of the end for one of this century’s most bizarre, powerful and secretive social phenomena.

## Scientology pulls out of suit against ex-member

■ Church lawyers said they did not want to subject celebrity parishioners to questioning by defense attorneys.

By WAYNE GARCIA  
Times Staff Writer

In a decision that has Scientology critics crowing, the church has dropped its multimillion-dollar defamation lawsuit against a former member and his psychiatrist.

Defense lawyers for Steve Fishman and Uwe Geertz say the move also "guts" the church's case against *Time* magazine, a separate \$416-million libel suit.

Scientology officials disagreed.

"The original issue on which the church filed suit — the obviously defamatory remarks by Fishman and Geertz — had become obscured by the defendants' litigation strategy of outright harassment and irrelevant scurrilous attacks," said Linda Simmons Hight, a Scientology spokeswoman in Los Angeles.

Scientology makes its international spiritual headquarters in Clearwater.

Fishman and Geertz were quoted in Richard Behar's *Time* article that portrayed Scientology as "the cult of greed." In the May 1991 article, Fishman and Geertz claimed that Fishman was ordered by Scientologists to kill Geertz, who was his psychiatrist, and then kill himself in what was termed an "EOC," or end of cycle, which the article said was a Scientology term.

Scientologists, however, say there is no such term or provision for suicide in Scientology training, which is based exclusively on the philosophical works of the late science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard.

After the article was published, the Church of Scientology International sued Fishman and Geertz in Los Angeles, saying their statements were absurd, false and designed to harm Scientology.

In a deposition, the president of the Church of Scientology International, Heber Jentzsch, said Fishman and Geertz's remarks "are the most egregious portion of that article," said Graham Berry, a Los Angeles lawyer who headed a team that represented the two men.

Without that point to argue in the *Time* lawsuit, Scientology doesn't have much of a case left, Berry said.

"The effect of that is to gut a large portion of the church's case against *Time* magazine," Berry said Thursday.

Floyd Abrams, the New York lawyer who represents *Time*, could not be reached for comment Thursday.

In addition, the federal district judge in the Fishman case is considering awarding legal fees to Fishman and Geertz and levying penalties against Scientology, according to an order signed Tuesday by Los Angeles-based Federal District Judge Harry L. Hupp.

In asking Hupp to drop the case, Scientology lawyers said they didn't want to subject their parishioners to questioning by defense attorneys. Berry had sought to question celebrity Scientologists Kelly Preston, Juliette Lewis, Maxine Nightingale and Isaac Hayes.

But Berry said he also believed the church didn't want to give his defense team a chance to question top Scientology officials, including church leader David Miscavige.

Fishman, a former Fort Lauderdale resident, began serving a five-year prison term in 1990 after pleading guilty to two counts of mail fraud for stealing blank stock ownership slips from his employer and using them to profit from class-action lawsuits across the country. The take: \$1-million over a five-year period.

Fishman claimed Scientology had subjected him to "thought reform," leaving him unable to distinguish right from wrong. He said he used some proceeds on Scientology books and tapes.

Scientology denies Fishman's allegations and points out that Fishman was not only convicted of the crimes but was also convicted of trying to leave Scientology. Fishman pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice in the case.

Either way, Fishman holds some unusual beliefs. In an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Fishman's lawyer, Marc Nurik, said Fishman believes he was the biological father of Jesus and he was stationed for 10,000 lifetimes in a faraway galaxy, where he polished and repolished a single brick.

## CULT GROUP HIT BY TELEVISION BAN

THE controversial Church of Scientology has been banned from advertising on TV, after an investigation into public access to its meetings.

The cult may not put out any adverts after the Independent Television Commission ruled it is "not an acceptable advertiser."

The Commission's

### 'Advertising is unacceptable'

rules say a religious group can only advertise if the public has direct access to its meetings, but commission investigators found they had

to buy a book and pay upwards of £30 for a "course."

The move comes after the Conservative Family Campaign complained

about an advert shown last year on the satellite superchannel.

The advert showed a number of happy, smiling faces, and ended with a call for people to trust each other to make the world a better place.

But the Commission said this was against the rules, as religious groups are not allowed to push any aspect of their philosophy.

Andy Wilson, who was case officer for the investigation into the complaint against the cult, stressed the Commission was not trying to brand any particular groups as good or bad.

"From our own research we know the public is concerned about religious advertising and we have made rules which reflect their concern that vulnerable people could be exploited for their money or their souls," he said.

The ruling means the Commission will not accept any advertising by the cult, unless they successfully appeal against the decision.

## DUO VOW TO EXPOSE

## 'EVIL CULT'

### High Court gives green light

**TWO FORMER** Scientologists left the High Court last week, vowing to expose the organisation as 'evil'.

The Church of Scientology now faces massive legal bills and publication of its secret papers, after it ended a legal action against an East Grinstead dentist and his friend who they claimed unlawfully obtained them.

Both men are former cult members, who say they will now expose it as an "evil organisation that preys on the weak and vulnerable."

Judge David Sumner of London's High Court ordered the cult to pay legal costs of Ron Lawley of St James Road and Staffordshire accountant Robin Scott, and also return their copies of the documents.

In 1983 the men disguised themselves as senior cult members at its offices in Copen-

hagen, Denmark and "obtained copies of what are described as the New Operating Thetan Materials," the Judge said.

These were seized and returned to the cult by British police after Mr Scott was arrested and imprisoned for four months by Danish authorities, while the copies were given to cult solicitors following injunctions against all

those involved, Judge Sumner said.

Ruling the cult could discontinue its litigation despite the men's wish to have a day in court, the judge ordered the copies returned to the two men, and all legal costs to date paid for them.

The court heard Mr Lawley now intends to publicise the documents on the cult's practices "in the public interest".

Outside the court he said: "It now means we can expose this organisation for what it is."

Mr Scott said: "By ending this litigation prematurely the Scientologists have basically lost everything they set out to win

He added he would have liked a day in court, and estimated legal costs could run to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

# East Grinstead Courier

Tel: EG 323652

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30p

## Scientologists picket house

POLICE were twice called to disperse pickets from outside the East Grinstead home of an anti-Church of Scientology campaigner.

On Sunday, three Scientology members stood outside Jon Atack's house in Cranston Road.

Mr Atack said they carried placards proclaiming: Stop destroying families, Get a proper job like the

**By David Thompson**

rest of us and Support your own family and stop destroying ours.

"They were an absolute nuisance. I was incensed," he said.

"They had no answer when I asked them which families I had destroyed."

The demonstrators left when the police were called to the scene.

They returned on Tuesday morning but left again when the police arrived.

Scientology spokesman Peter Mansell said: "It was a peaceful protest, they were just expressing their views."

# EAST GRINSTEAD OBSERVER

East Grinstead Observer, Wednesday, March 23, 1994 3

## Cult picket man's home

FOLLOWERS of the cult Church of Scientology have been picketing the house of a former member, who claims the church practices "mind control".

Scientologists bearing placards accusing John Atack of breaking up families and owing the cult money, have demonstrated outside his Cranston Road home six times.

"They came on Saturday and the police told them that if they returned they would be arrested," Mr Atack told the Observer.

Mr Atack left the cult in 1983, after being a member for nine years.

Since then he has counselled former members of the cult, and written books he says expose their methods of encouraging

"fanaticism".

"I gave them a lot of money to damage my mind," said Mr Atack, who claims he has amassed a quarter of a million pages of documents proving the cult's founder L. Ron Hubbard is not the war hero and explorer he says he is.

Mr Atack has had no

protesters since Saturday, and is relieved they have not returned, but says the cult has systematically put pressure on him for the past ten years.

"I am not anti-Scientologist, I want these people to come to me for help, but I am anti-Scientology itself," said Mr Atack.