

SCIENTOLOGY

versus

Jim Berry

Last month, former AAEC President Jim Berry found himself exchanging e-mail with a man named "Ray Randolph." Here's a copy of their correspondence, as provided by Jim:

11/11/97

Jim,

Greetings! I'm a long-term reader of yours, and a critic of the church of scientology. In going through some recently uncovered documents about scientology, I discovered some documents concerning yourself.

In 1977, you did a cartoon captioned, "I was into EST, Primal Therapy, Yoga, Scientology, Hare Krishna, Transcendental Meditation — Now I'm into money!"

In response to this cartoon, L. Ron Hubbard ordered his followers within the church of scientology to harass you in an attempt to cost you your syndication. Some of the text of that original order:

INFORMATION: Jim Berry has l.led [sic] Scientology in attached cartoon: It is desired that this fellow no longer has a syndicated [sic] publication.

MAJOR TARGET: To cause Jim Berry to lose his syndicated publication so that he can no longer SP Scientology.

PRIMARY TARGETS: All US BI Secs

are on Post Operating.

The worthwhile purpose of this action is to remove JB from his position of power, so that he cannot attack the C of S.

The "operation" of getting you removed from your syndication was called "Operation Funny Bone." The church of scientology then implemented investigations into your background, into your employers, political leanings, finances, and much more. The operation was uncovered during FBI raids of scientology offices in the very late 1970s, although no charges were ever brought for this particular incident.

The documents that were discovered during those FBI Raids were recently posted to the internet by an individual calling himself "RonlsXenu" at the *alt.religion.scientology* USENET Newsgroup, which is populated almost entirely by scientology critics. The entirety of the documents posted at that time, including an old, old photocopy of the original Cartoon can be seen at this address: <http://www.ezlink.com/~rayr/doc/>

My question is this: Would you Please consider writing something up about that period of time during which you were harassed? Any feedback at all. Were you aware of this? Did the FBI notify you when THEY found these files or did you have any idea at all that any of this had happened?

Can you relate any specific incidences of harassment from that period of time?

Thank you very much for your time.

Regards,
Ray Randolph

Dear Mr. Randolph:

Thanks for your message. The subject of Scientology brought back upsetting memories.

Years ago a reader sent me an article about Scientology that appeared in a northern Florida newspaper (Tallahassee?). It was about how the "church" operated with respect to dealing with the people on their "enemies list." It seems I did one or two cartoons that they didn't like. In the piece there was reference to "Operation 'Berry's World,'" or some such title. It told about the leader of the church of Scientology urging all of its members to write and call newspapers across the country and complain about my feature telling editors and publishers to drop "Berry's World." This was an organized effort to kill my career and I had no idea that it was happening. It's a wonder my feature survived the onslaught.

I decline to write anything further about this subject.

Sincerely,
Jim Berry

Mr. Berry,

Thanks so much for your reply! You might be pleased to know that the tables have turned somewhat on Scientology. In 1995, in response to a few vocal critics on the internet, scientology attempted to silence discussions critical of itself that were taking place. The "internet culture," as it were, is extremely sensitive to censorship, and the church's actions managed to literally create tens of thou-

sands of new "critics" of this church.

I, myself, am a computer nerd for Hewlett Packard who was introduced to scientology through their heavy-handed censorship attempts on the net. This "war with scientology" on the net has grown to become the group's worst nightmare. Many, like me, have taken on this cause and have become experts in the field of understanding and exposing Scientology.

Unfortunately, the harassment you received was not the exception, it was "the rule." Scientology holds that people who speak negatively about it are "Suppressive persons," out to destroy the future of mankind. Hence, scientology wasn't merely attacking you for saying bad things — in the mind of L. Ron Hubbard, you were destroying humanity! The Mayor of Clearwater Florida, a journalist named Paulette Cooper, an author named Jon Attack and countless other individuals have been harassed in similar ways as yourself.

For the first time since the 1950s, an entity has taken on the church of scientology that cannot be "harassed into silence." Thank god for the internet.

Check out some pages regarding scientology on the net: <http://members.aol.com/blackpr/>, and <http://www.ezlink.com/~rayr/scieno.htm> (my main page)

Thanks again for your reply, and I shall certainly respect your wishes to remain silent on the subject.

Regards,
Ray Randolph

Jim,

Could I have permission to place your initial email reply to me re: "Berry's world/Scientology" on my web page?

Regards,
Ray Randolph

Ray:

About putting my comments on your web site — let me think about it!

Jim B.

Response to my not wanting to appear on the Randolph Web Site
11/15/97

Ray,

I've been thinking over the idea of your posting my message to you on your web site. I prefer that you do not do it. One of the reasons is that Scientologists undoubtedly check out your site on a very regular basis.

[They do, in fact, do this. —RR]

The inclusion of my name and feature might be like waving a red flag in front of a bull. As you may know, my approach to cartoons is one of subtle humor. I am not what you would call an "attack-type" editorial cartoonist. If the Scientologists decided to organize another drop "Berry's World" campaign, it might be devastating to my career.

[I will respect this, although the days of those sorts of attacks on people are over for the scientologists. Their hands are full with so many active, aggressive critics, lawsuits, etc., and their resources so taxed now, that I doubt they could do something if they wanted to.

They simply aren't the monolithic organization that they were in the 1970s. —RR]

On the other hand, I think that such tactics used to destroy a cartoonist or writer should be aired.

[We have to wonder how many others have been "shuddered into silence" without any memorial at all? It's pure luck that the pages with your name on them surfaced in the first place. —RR]

Accordingly, I have sent a copy of our e-mail messages to the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists for consideration for publication in the organization's newsletter, the *Notebook*. I hope that's

all right with you. if it is not, please let me know, and I shall withdraw the submission.

[Definitely all right! Although it should be mentioned that these documents have been recently posted on the net and on discussion groups. Discussions regarding your harassment have taken place in forums known to be monitored by scientology.

As far as any harassment as a result of this coming out — in my professional opinion, you simply needn't worry about it. They've got ten thousand much larger fish to fry these days, and Hubbard is dead — which managed to rob them of some small amount of their criminal fanaticism.

Even so — the proper response to any harassment is to be extremely noisy about it. So do let me know should anything come up, you will find that you have more support than you know what to do with. The internet, and the freedom fighters who live here are an amazing bunch of people.

It must be exceptionally creepy to see yourself discussed in these documents. The "Operation Funnybone" documents are unique in that they specifically implicate L. Ron Hubbard in crimes that were claimed by the cult to have been done by "rogue agents" working within the church. For that reason, they are exceptionally valuable to us critics in exposing the true nature of this organization.

Are there any questions I can answer for you? Or any information I can provide to you in relation to all of this?

Ray

Dr. Michael Ray Randolph (rayr@ezlink.com) — SP4 w/Clam Cluster Unemployed German Psychiatrist, Prozac abuser, and rogue agent aiding in the suppression of silly cults. Member: Cult of the Anti-Cult Scientology KILLS T-shirts <http://www.ezlink.com/~rayr/t-shirt/> •

Reprints of several *Editor & Publisher* pieces about the Orlando convention were postponed till next issue to make room for this article, which arrived just as the *Notebook* was going to press. Curious readers can find them in *E&P* for August 9, August 23 & September 6.