

Portland Mercury: A Former Scientologist Marketing Guru Turns Against the Church

Selling Scientology

A Former Scientologist Marketing Guru Turns Against the Church

by Matt Davis

In the mid-1980s, more than ever before, television advertising was about big budgets and excess. Bucking that trend was Scientologist and marketing whiz Jeff Hawkins, whose understated, minimalist TV ads for L. Ron Hubbard's Dianetics helped launch the book onto the best-seller list—and arguably sparked a worldwide interest in the religion.

Hawkins' ads featured simple questions like, "Why are you unhappy?" in white print against a black background, backed by edgy music supplied by Hawkins' friends, and finally, a shot of the Dianetics book splashed against a volcano. The ads cost around \$2,000 to make, yet within months of their first nationwide appearance, Dianetics made the New York Times Best Seller List for the first time since its initial publication in 1950—and a special commemorative edition of the book was printed to mark the occasion.

Hawkins estimates he made more than \$200 million for the church in his 35 years of marketing Dianetics. Nevertheless, he ultimately paid for his success by being thrown out of the church in 2005. Now living in Portland, Hawkins is writing a book about his experiences in Scientology.

And boy, is he pissed....

"Batshit Crazy"

Hawkins joined the church of Scientology in Los Angeles in 1967.

Full article at [Portland Mercury](#)

Savaged by Miscavige

Hawkins is currently 62, soft spoken, and has no retirement savings,

having worked 100-hour weeks for the past 35 years for what he estimates was a salary averaging \$2,000 a year. He moved to Portland with his brother Kimball—also a former Scientologist—and started a design firm.

Hawkins is a member of a Yahoo group called Ex-Sea-Organization, where he is in touch with around 120 friends/former members of the church's management group. Other ex-Sea Organization members vouch for Hawkins' importance to the church.

"He was a giant as far as Hubbard's marketing branch went," says Chuck Beatty, who was a training supervisor in the Sea Organization during his 27 years in what he calls "the cult" from 1975 to 2003.

"He was a long-term trooper of the movement with a huge production record. If you can compare the Sea Organization to Vatican staff, Hawkins was in the marketing and promotion branch of the Vatican for the last 30 years."

"Jeff was very, very high up over marketing," adds Larry Brennan, who was a member of Scientology's Watchdog committee between 1982 and 1984, supposedly comprised of the top 10 members of the church at the time.

"Jeff, probably more than anybody, was responsible for getting Dianetics back on the best-seller lists, and he was very closely involved with Miscavige."

Hawkins' own journey out of Scientology began in 1987, a year after Hubbard's death, when Scientology's current leader, David Miscavige, took control of the church. Miscavige placed his brother, Ronnie, in charge of Hawkins' publications organization, and according to Hawkins, began a systematic campaign to discredit his work for the church.

"I think it was because I had been so successful," Hawkins says. "Almost untouchable. Nobody was going to speak out against me, and I think that frustrated Miscavige."

Hawkins thinks Miscavige may have resented "sharing the stage," and the new leader attacked and threw roadblocks in his path. At the end of 2000, Hawkins was allegedly subjected to an "evaluation," where he was accused by Miscavige of wasting \$75 million of church money with bogus

marketing.

Hawkins says he survived the evaluation by providing evidence of bringing in over \$200 million to the church, as well as a personal commendation for his efforts from Hubbard. Nevertheless, Hawkins says he was assigned to menial labor, but slowly worked his way back into marketing. Then, after writing an infomercial on Dianetics, Hawkins claims he was called into a conference room where Miscavige allegedly hit him in front of 40 people.

"He wasn't even talking to me but he was saying, 'This thing that Hawkins has written is just a piece of trash,'" says Hawkins. "And he'd look at me and say, 'This guy's evil. See how he's looking at me?' And everyone was saying, 'Stop looking at him like that'—and I'm like, 'What the hell?'"

Miscavige allegedly asked Hawkins to confess to his "crimes"—from his current, and past lives.

"And then all of a sudden he just jumped up, launched himself across the conference room table in front of 40 people, and beat my face," says Hawkins. "I had scratches, and bruising, and my shirt was all ripped. Then he knocked me on the floor, and walked out."

Hawkins is not the only former Scientologist to allege experiencing or seeing violence at the hands of Miscavige. Brennan and Marc Headley—both former Sea Organization members—have made similar accusations.

"Dave would punch or slap people in the face repeatedly when they delivered bad news, or when people talked back with anything other than what he wanted to hear," says Headley. "I would say over a period of five years between 2000 and 2005 I saw him do this maybe 30 to 40 times. I saw him hit Jeff on at least one or two occasions."

Hawkins says Miscavige also punched him in the gut and hit him on the side of the head repeatedly on other occasions.

"There was also a lot of verbal abuse, threats, profanity, and on and on. He was just a bully, basically."

Hawkins was "offloaded" from the base and brought back into

marketing three times. "Offloading" meant Hawkins was no longer welcome at the Sea Organization, and that he was in danger of being declared "suppressive," or a threat to the religion. Once someone is declared "suppressive," they are forbidden from having contact with other Scientologists.

Eventually, Hawkins decided he'd had enough and wanted to quit. After announcing his intentions, Hawkins claims he was kept for months in a detention center surrounded by barbed wire fences and security cameras, called the Old Gilman House, on the northwest side of the Sea Organization's base, where he was forbidden departure until he'd gone through "security checks."

"They get every single 'crime' that you've ever supposedly committed—and I think, really, they're collecting potential blackmail material," Hawkins says. "I eventually confessed to whatever they suggested, just to get offloaded. And following all that you have to sign these gag orders promising never to speak about Scientology, which I did."

Hawkins says he signed the agreements under duress, and that he is not afraid to speak out, now. He also says that Scientology's reputation for aggressively pursuing its critics no longer concerns him, because so many people are leaving at once—the base, he says, gradually got more and more restrictive through the 1990s as Scientologists started leaving in greater numbers. Now, he says, the whole thing is surrounded by barbed wire, and Sea Organization members are prevented from leaving. Another former Sea Organization worker, Shelly Corrias, confirms this level of security on the base.

Hawkins also supplied the Mercury with an alleged map of the base, that he cobbled together using images from Google Earth.

Full article at [Portland Mercury](#)